

## W8BANAKI

Christine O'Bomsawin-Lamirande

**M**y name is Christine O'Bomsawin-Lamirande. I was born to an Abenaki mother and to a father whose mother was Mohawk. I lived in my community from birth until I was eleven years old, then I moved to Boucherville and came back once I was thirty-two years old. I am a mother of three children, also a grandmother, an artist, and a teacher of Native American art. For my whole life, writing has been a way to take refuge in a world other than the one I live in. Through my writings, I also wanted to make known the words I said to my children and grandchildren, a world created from scratch that is often part of our daily lives.

## THE ONE WHO DREW THE SINGING WIND

Near the river, Little Bear saw a very old Indian, the wise man of his village, sitting on a rock and drawing on birch bark.

As he approached, Little Bear saw that the old man was drawing with his finger on a piece of bark, but nothing appeared.

Then Little Bear asked him, "What are you drawing?" And the old man retorted, "Don't you see that I have drawn the singing wind?"

"The singing wind?" said the child. "But I don't see anything."

"Look," said the wise man. And the child replied, "I still don't see anything."

Then the old man said to him, "I will tell you the legend of the singing wind. Many moons ago, during a very strong storm, a woman from our village disappeared. Many said she would come back but she was never seen again. Then, one day, I, the wise man, sat by the river and spoke to the wind to ask where the woman

was, and the wind answered me. *Draw the woman's name on bark with your finger and by my wind she will sing. Then you will know that she will always be there.*

“Since that day, when I want to hear that woman's song, I go to the edge of the river, I draw on a piece of bark and the singing wind answers me.

“You see, Little Bear, for many people it's a legend, but even if you don't see anything, life is still there... For the woman was my wife and the wind gave her back to me.”