

C.B. Sikstrom

## Before there were Mirrors\*

My name is Terregannoewuck – or White Fox, as you call me.  
I was tall before I met you.  
Now my beard is white, and it reminds me of you.

I have lived a long life in the Shadowlands.  
Shadows are my friends.

Look!  
There, on the shadow ridge!  
There are trees beside us,  
Below us tree-green and moss-green too.  
Above us is deep-water blue.  
A low sun and shadows are upon us.

I jump up-and-down to see myself.

Yes! There I am, walking the shadow-ridge  
towards this big rock.

Yes!  
Here I am, taller now,  
taller than I used to be,  
rocking this side, and that, on this big boulder.

That side is the other ridge,  
with dirty-white lazy breakup ice  
sleeping on the foot of the ridge – melting.

On this side there is gravel, boulders  
and the rock I stand on.

I say, "This is our looking place,  
– see my friends, see us.  
See me jumping up-and-down?"

You say, I look like a tree.  
"Take this looking glass," you say.  
I see, and throw the glass away,  
"I shall never kill deer more."

*\*John Franklin met Terregannoeuck on July 16, 1821 near Bloody Fall on the Coppermine River. "... On seeing his countenance in a glass for the first time he exclaimed, 'I shall never kill deer more,' and immediately put the mirror down." (Franklin, John. Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea, in the years 1819-20-21-22, Volume 2. Retrieved April 29, 2009 from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/18985/18985-8.txt>.*