

## The Seniory

*There was emotion there once: she remembers crying under a tree.*

Mary had a tumultuous beginning. Abandoned at age two along with her newborn brother she was adopted to parents in La Grande, north of McBride, BC. She was raised in the wilderness on a railway right of way, had only one year of school and very little contact with the outside world. Her adopted mother was schizophrenic, had a difficult demeanor, and her biological baby brother was accidentally shot at age 16. Mary eloped with Albert, a soldier back from the front lines, at 18, and I entered my mother's life in Port Arthur, Ontario. She was reclusive, shy and emotionally flat and had a difficult demeanor. In her 60s, she was diagnosed schizophrenic, medicated, and I entered her life again.

For the past five years I have been immersed in my mother's world. She is under my care and living with me on our family farm in Northeastern BC – right where she doesn't want to be. She is confined to a wheelchair, and since being diagnosed with a brain tumor, she can no longer feed herself, is incontinent, and has little comprehensible speech. I have heard the stories of my mother's beginning and now I live her ending.

Mary's last days are influencing my art. Her emotional plateau pushes me into emotional peaks and valleys – I am her emotions. I am her only daughter, and there is a string attaching us, a very female connection. Through my questions and struggles an intrinsic beauty emanates.

From toddler Mary crying under the tree to the last dance we share as I move her broken body each day, I will use my varied mediums, ceramics, clay, glass, solder, found objects, and cow placenta to create ten new sculptures, most life size or larger. I have begun work on the central piece, a life size sculpture of my mother as I know her now and plan to complete the nine remaining pieces of *The Seniory* by 2011.