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So Few on Earth: A Labrador Métis Woman Remembers

Josie Penny

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Short-listed for the 2011 Democracy 250 Atlantic Book Award for Historical Writing

Josephine Mildred Curl Penny grew up in Labrador during the 1940s and 1950s. Like many Métis, she and her family lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle, moving *inside* to the primitive settlement of Roaches Brook each fall to hunt and trap, and *outside* to Spotted Islands in the spring to harvest the rich fishing grounds.

Sent away to hospital at age four, to boarding school when she was seven, and forced out to work at age eleven, Josie lost the family bond so important to a young child. She recounts the years spent at Lockwood Boarding School where she suffered atrocious punishments, merciless teasing, and the humiliation of two rapes. The depersonalization and constant punishment eventually took their toll, and her once free-spirited nature was broken. Reading became her only escape

Set against the beauty and ruggedness of the Labrador coast, *So Few on Earth* is a story of perseverance in a harsh environment and the possibility of life starting anew from shattered beginnings.

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