"I still don't understand why you *Qal-lunaat* [the Inuit word for white people] mix your food together. I still eat like I did back then: I cut pieces off my meat with a knife. And I don't mix my food."

After four months in Moose Factory, Jusie was transferred by train to the Mountain Sanatorium in Hamilton. He would spend the next year there without ever receiving a diagnosis. He received no antibiotics, no surgical intervention, never underwent another x-ray. And he was kept on strict bed rest.

"Weren't you angry?" I asked. "I can't imagine how frustrating that must have been!"

"No," he said. "We didn't know angry."

Jusie was placed in a ward with other Inuit men in the same situation. They spent all their time in bed, not even allowed to get up to use the toilet. If the men crossed their legs to sit in the Inuit way, a nurse would come and forcibly un-cross them. Day after day passed in the same regimented fashion. Meals in bed, rest after meals, carving to pass the time. They weren't even allowed to speak to friends passing in front of their open window.

Once a week, someone came to collect their carvings and gave them tokens in return. Mass was also said weekly by a visiting English-speaking priest, although none of the men understood a word he said.

Smoking was actively encouraged, Jusie said. Each man was provided with

six packets of cigarettes per week and coached by the doctor to "smoke as much as possible" to induce coughing. In fact, Jusie and his friends share a horror of quitting the habit to this day. When I suggested during our first meeting that

Each man was provided with six packets of cigarettes per week and coached by the doctor to "smoke as much as possible."

he cut out smoking, Jusie had been quick to tell me of a friend whose retained mucus had organized into a tumour only a few months after he smoked his last cough-inducing cigarette.

"He didn't cough it, and that's what happened," he said, philosophically.

Eventually, Jusie was given permission to return home, and began the long and arduous trip back to Fort Smith. He travelled again by train from Hamilton to Moose Factory, by canoe to Moosonee and by float plane back to the tundra on the eastern shore of Hudson Bay. He finally arrived in Aculivik in 1957, only to find the former village site deserted. The Hudson's Bay Company had closed its post the year before, and the villagers had all relocated down the coast to Puvirnituq. Jusie eventually rejoined them, but he was a much different man than before. Over a year of bed rest along with the ravages of tuberculosis on his lungs had left him much weakened, and he

never again returned to his former hunting prowess. He began to learn English word-by-word, and still makes a point of learning a new one everyday.

"But that's my life," he said. "I can still make an igloo and live in a tent."

I knew that Jusie had been hospitalized in Montréal the previous month, and as our time came to an end, I couldn't resist one last question. How did the emergency department at the Montreal General Hospital in 2010 compare with his experience at the Mountain Sanatorium in 1955?

His answer was not what I expected.

"So different. I could walk anywhere: up, down, outside. I couldn't believe it. We were so free."

Barbara M. Young MD

General internal medicine
Montreal General Hospital
Montréal, Que.

This personal essay was written following a conversation with Jusie Tullaugak in Puvirnituq, Nunavik in August 2010. Jusie died in Puvirnituq on Dec. 8, 2010. His daughter consented to the publication of this essay.

CMAJ 2011. DOI:10.1503/cmaj.110562

ART

Sight unseen

What does an expert in vision bring to the art of photography? The ability to "adjust people's visual perception," offers renowned photographer and optometrist, Larry Louie. Over the past two decades, Louie's work has garnered over 24 awards and honours including, most recently, Britain's Travel Photographer of the Year award. And while these travel images are stunning in composition and con-

tent, it is his work as a social documentary photographer that promises a meaningful adjustment.

Documentary photography as a powerful tool for social reform dates back to nearly the beginning of the technology and art. Thomas Annan's photographs raised awareness about the living conditions in the slums of Glasgow, Scotland (1868–1877), while American Lewis Hine's works in the early 1900s helped bring about reforms

in child labour laws. The US government recognized the power of the form when it hired Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange and others to bring a human face to the plight of impoverished Depression-era farmers. And the form flourished in the postwar era with Diane Arbus and Robert Frank among many others. Many readers will be familiar with W. Eugene Smith's images from the late 1960s of people suffering from mercury poisoning in the Japanese fish-

Larry Louie

"My Braille Typewriter" Tanzania (2008). Students at the Mwereni Primary School for the visually impaired work on their Braille typewriters. "I want to engage people in inspiring stories of perseverance and strength, not only of those who have found themselves caught in such a plight, but also the amazing individuals and organizations who are lending a helping hand," Louie stated. This image recently won third prize in the UNDP-Olympus-AFP Foundation Photo Contest (2010) and is exhibited at the United Nations buildings in Tokyo and New York.

ing village of Minamata. The aims of social documentation continue today in Brazilian photographer Sebastião Salgado's images of workers in 26 countries, and Puerto Rican Manuel Rivera-Ortiz's heart-wrenching photographs of lives in poverty.

Louie's documentary work similarly exposes some of the poorest regions of the world and some of the most disenfranchised people: the sight impaired.

The Edmonton, Alberta photographer brings these views to the uninformed developed world, while simultaneously spreading awareness and raising money for Seva Canada, a charity that aims to eliminate preventable and treatable blindness around the world (www.seva.ca).

Despite being contemporary, Louie's intimate black-and-white images harken back to an earlier period. Some are reminiscent of Lange's work in their artful composition, dramatic lighting and subject matter. As Lange documented farm workers, Louie, in his series, *A Working Day in Dhaka, Bangladesh* (2010), documents the appalling working conditions in the shipyards, a tannery and elsewhere.

In his images from the balloon factory and scrap metal factory, Louie delves into Hine's territory in depicting child labour. Working conditions are likewise explored in *In the Underbelly of Kathmandu* (2009–2010), in photos of labourers in brickyards and in *Factories* (2009–ongoing).

Like Jacob Riis' depictions of the garbage and decay of New York City in 1888, Louie documents the environment degradation in several Asian countries: the Kathmandu, Nepal children amid garbage in "Playing by the River," the mounds of trash and broken trees in the eerie, postapocalyptic "Campground," the deterioration of "The City of Dhaka" and "Urban Slum." Louie also speaks to the woe-filled living conditions in Dhaka, where 80 per cent of the population lives in poverty, with images such as the heart-wrenching "Cataract Woman with Children."

Not surprisingly, Louie has focused his photography on his area of professional expertise: sight. Since 2008, Louie and his wife, pharmacist Joanna Wong-Louie, have travelled (at their own expense) for Seva Canada to Tanzania, Nepal, Tibet and Bangladesh.

Louie has created two online portfolios in *Touched by SEVA* (2008–ongoing).

The first documents the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology in Moshi, Tanzania, with gritty, yet uplifting images such as "Hope," "The Need" and "Chance," interspersed with clinical images of examinations and surgical scenes.

The second portfolio from Dhaka, Bangladesh includes hopeful, even joyful scenes of opportunity at the Baptist Mission School for Blind Girls, including "In the Classroom" and "Born With No Sight," along with images of patients and clinical scenes at the overcrowded Islamia Eye Hospital.

Louie also fundraises for Seva projects and recently donated \$15 000 from the sale of images, cards and the like. Currently, Louie and Wong-Louie are raising \$5000 through a documentary toward holding a surgical eye camp in geographically isolated Humla, Western Nepal.

Louie has wielded a camera for more than two decades, initially as a travel photographer; this work has been published widely in *National Geographic Traveler* magazine and elsewhere. His awards include the Int'l Photography Awards' Lucie, the *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine Grand Prize and the National Geographic Photo Essay Award.

Gradually, Louie refocused his work on capturing a moment in time and on social issues such as global blindness, poverty and indigenous peoples who are losing their way of life (see his online portfolio, *Vanishing Faces, Disappearing Places Series*). For seven years, he has been devoted to shooting documentary, black-and-white photographs.

As he explains, his passion is photography and his work is optometry. "This has been a marriage between the two things I love," he says. "I do what I love to do, but I help too."

Barbara Sibbald BJ

Deputy Editor, Analysis and Humanities
CMAJ

Louie shoots with a Canon EOS 5D Mk II
(www.larrylouie.com).

CMAJ 2011. DOI:10.1503/cmaj.110817