

CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEW

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**BOOK: "An Algonquin Heart Song: Paddle My Own Canoe"**

BY: Amber J. Keyser

ILLUSTRATED BY: Dawn Sherman

PUBLISHED BY: Friends of Algonquin Park (Canada)

ISBN: 978-1-894993-272

READING LEVEL: Ages 7-12 or anyone who loves being in a canoe

Author Amber Keyser wrote this fictional story based on the life of Esther Sessions Keyser, one of Canada's only female canoe guides during the 1930s and 40s. Esther was also Amber's grandmother. Esther died in 2005 at the age of 90, and had been taking canoe trips in Algonquin Park till the age of 87. She was an amazing woman, indeed.

This high quality book is written in rhyming lyrics with the refrain throughout: ***Paddle my own canoe.*** The beautiful illustrations of Dawn Sherman, along with the exquisite wording by author Amber Keyser, makes this quiet book feel as if you are stepping back in time, to a quieter place, a gentler time as you ride along with the young girl as she leaves the hustle and bustle of the city behind. You feel the hushed beauty of nature surrounding you as the young girl pushes off the lakeshore into the gleaming waters of the lake as she paddles along. You observe the lake's brook trout; you feel the serenity of the cathedral formed by trees and the warbling birds during the portage. A moose is observed by water's edge, so she doubles back so that she doesn't disturb him. A sudden storm presents a challenge for the young girl to steady her canoe. Was she successful?

As one and at total peace with nature, this delightful story made me feel the same way as I soaked in the surrounding natural beauty along the way and had the confidence to continue my journey with her when the going gets a little rough. The lyrical flow of words combined with the outstanding illustrations of nature make this gentle book a "keeper". What a wonderful life Esther must have had if the journey described in her granddaughter's book is like the rest of her experiences in the wilds of Algonquin Park in Canada.

This book is not available for purchase in the US, but can be purchased directly from the publisher: [www.store.algonquinpark.on.ca](http://www.store.algonquinpark.on.ca) or through the author's website: [www.amberkeyser.com](http://www.amberkeyser.com)