

SHAWN RIOPELLE

Subtitles

Watched a movie the other night with a crowd of thirty-five per cent Dene. The plotline tight, pictures vivid. Captivating imagery filled the screen. And at every crescendo, every magic moment that unfurled the sails of imagination to full bloom, something caught the wind and snipped it, like scissors through a kite string. Voices behind me. A row of teenage boys.

As if tuned to my experience, their jabs and whispers and naked curses shot through my back, tossed weighted anchors, just as I was beginning to be swept away.

I turned at one point—a lull between two lovers with no conflict between them but the flimsiest of misunderstandings—and saw that each boy wore a t-shirt endorsing the word: *regret*.

And I knew that, like stars and aluminum siding and tumours of the bones, this was how it would always be. Life, so full of wonder, synthetic and genuine. Happiness, not so elusive, if you know where to look, can take a hint, respect a mood. With regret, always there. Kicking the back of my chair in a darkened theatre.

The colours of regret, so beguiling, they paint their image to every canvas. Like looking at a masterpiece, after staring at the sun.

