

Snapshots

Northern pleasures



Biking down South Access Road toward town, I breathe in the mountains, each a distinct character of rock, ridged or rippled. Grey Mountain dominates. Its slate top turns purple with the evening sun, and whitens gracefully as winter first approaches.

The city sprawls carelessly astride the Yukon River. That big H on the far side marks the hospital, kiwi-green against the woods of Grey Mountain. Downtown squats the false-log frame of Klondyke Clinic. My place of work.

The rhythm changes with each season. In winter, the dark comes quickly, but when the moon shines, I turn off my headlamp and ski in crisp and luminous night. In summer I finish at the office while the sun is still high, and take my sea kayak to the lakes. The kayak is emerald with an ivory hull, its bow turned up proud as a Viking ship. Close to town at Chadburn Lake, I can watch the beavers paddle their afternoon rounds. Just north is Fish Lake, windy and chillingly blue in its own mountain setting.

Like most doctors, I make myself busy. But always within reach is the gently wild land that spreads out and forever. It's that beckoning outside that keeps me here. — *Brendan Hanley*, family physician, Whitehorse, Yukon