



The Jesuit's Teapot

It was suddenly cold. The river froze, cutting off their hopes of leaving this rough, northern place. The brothers knew that they were stuck there for the duration of the winter. Snow fell, the flakes falling gently and persistently, so beautiful and white, piling up on the branches of the trees and on the ground one flake upon the other until it was so deep that they needed snowshoes to walk. There was no winter like this back in France.

The dark, short days and the cold were frightening, and there was also the added threat of the people. The brothers feared for their lives. The bishop's wife feared for them too, so she let them live secretly under the porch where they would be safe all winter.

The days were long and thin, punctuated by the food she gave them and card games played deep into the dark nights.

Spring finally came to the Canadian north and the river unfroze freeing the brothers. They escaped to France, finally, and felt grateful that the bishop's wife had saved their lives. To thank her, they sent this tea set.

The first time this story was told to me I thought the two men were Jesuit priests, come to spread their Catholic message in an Anglican community. I think I thought this because when the word "brother" came up that is what I assumed. So that's why it is "The Jesuit's Teapot." Later I discovered that the "brothers" were French traders in a commercial struggle with the Hudson's Bay Company so you can think of it as "The Trader's Teapot" if you like.

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Oil pastel on paper, texted sintra
13.75" x 19.5"
July 19, 2007