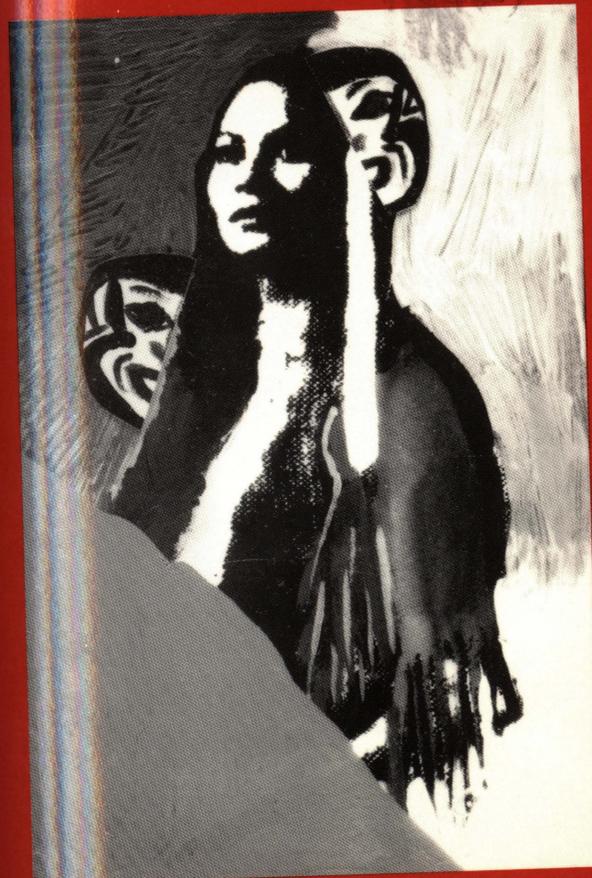


GATHERINGS

*The En'owkin Journal of
First North American Peoples*



VOLUME II

TWO FACES:

UNMASKING
THE FACES
OF OUR

DIVIDED

NATIONS

EN'OWKIN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF WRITING

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GATHERINGS

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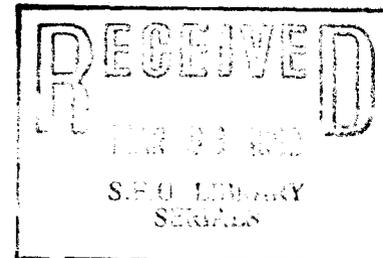
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Theytus Books, Penticton, British Columbia

GATHERINGS:

The En'owkin Journal of First North American Peoples

Volume II - 1991

Published annually by Theytus Books Ltd. for the En'owkin Centre
International School of Writing

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A price list will be mailed upon request.

Please inquire about our advertising rates and contributors' guidelines.

Please send submissions and letters to 'Gatherings', c/o En'owkin Centre, 257
Brunswick Street, Penticton, B.C. V2A 5P9 Canada. All submissions must be
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Typeset by Theytus Books Ltd. Printed and bound in Canada

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ISSN 1180-0666
ISBN 0-919441-38-6

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EDITORIAL

It is with great pride and excitement that Theytus Books Ltd., the En'owkin Centre's publishing house, presents the second issue of "Gatherings: The En'owkin Journal of North American First Peoples". "Gatherings" is an annual journal compiled, produced and published entirely by Indigenous people at the En'owkin Centre in Penticton, British Columbia, and featuring the work of Indigenous writers from across Turtle Island. Writers are invited each year to submit works centered around a particular theme. The theme that was selected for this issue is "Two Faces: Unmasking the Faces of Our Divided Nations".

In choosing the "Two Faces" theme, we were looking for writing dealing with the alienation, the stress, the strength and the amazing tenacity (among other things), that Indigenous people have felt and displayed while having to live with "two separate worlds": one "world" which was created, carefully developed and nurtured by our ancestors throughout the generations and carried into this time; and, one "world" which has imposed itself on this continent and in the process attempted to over-ride, undermine, dominate and obliterate OUR WORLD.

Some of the works featured in the following pages show that the people of the First Nations have worn the "mask" of one world while walking through the other (and vice-versa); wondered which "mask" is more comfortable, and where and when; and worn a "mask" to hide the fear and despair created by the dilemma, even from one another. Other works speak of coming to terms with the two realities, the process of self-discovery and the joyous celebration of empowerment. To be sure, the reader is given deep, enlightening, and sometimes frightening, insights into the incredible range of emotions and reactions that arise out of weaving through two worlds.

The perspectives presented herein could ONLY be held and conveyed by Indigenous people themselves and reflect an undeniable aspect of our present condition as we move together -- sometimes slowly, but certainly surely -- to tear off the false faces and put OUR WORLD back in its rightful place.

In the Spirit
of uncovering
ancient truths
through discovery
confrontation
and healing.

Greg Young-Ing,
Editor

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GUEST EDITORIAL

People are mirrors. We see our many faces in one another. Some mirrors reflect hope, courage, strength; others reflect despair.

Ever since the time Elijah Harper held the eagle feather in his hand and quietly stood there in Winnipeg, ever since the Native people in the long line came forward to greet him -- the wise older women, their faces full of thanks - ever since those heady days, I have felt the hope of a wonderful mirror being created among us. A face that Canadians everywhere recognize is now in our minds and hearts. We can feel the power of justice in that face.

We can be on the side of justice, or against her. We can begin, as Elijah Harper did, by saying "No." No, we will not be subject to other people's definitions of us. No, we will not be marginalized. No, we will not be humiliated and made to feel inadequate. We can look at him and see ourselves reflected there, in his calm strength and his steadfast spirit. We can see that same spirit in the evolving work at the En'owkin Centre and be glad because something wise and old and important is being birthed again in the world -- a new day of power for Native people.

I feel privileged to be allowed to share in the vision. I look in the mirror of your faces and am made stronger by it.

Joy Kogawa



Photograph of "From A Washico (Fat-Eaters) Country Garden"
by Simon Paul-Dene

MASKS

How The West Was Lost: An Artist's Perspective

"There is no attempt at resolution; instead it attaches support to contemporary Native perspectives on the humorous and malignant inconsistencies of this stereotypic equation. The works were completed during the summer of 1990 and exhibited at the McMichael Canadian Gallery, Kleinburg, Ontario, in February 1991."

Some time after the opening of my exhibition, "How The West Was Lost", I paid another visit back to the gallery hoping to see the paintings once again, because I'd not seen them together after they left my studio. As I entered the gallery, I noted the occasional chuckle coming from a visitor as he or she understood the work's text. At one point some viewers glanced at me, then gave a double-take making me self-conscious. I was happy to be rescued by one of the gallery educators.

We began to talk about how she presented the show. What were the reactions of the viewers – children and adults? Her response was, "there is quite a range. The children see the works as messy, and could not understand why you wrote on the paintings. A visiting corporate dignitary expressed his revolt and said it was disgusting!" An art critic referring to the work's "literary efforts were devoid of that self-conscious flatness that marks much artists' writing." My mother, more spontaneously asserted, "That Trick or Treaty painting you did, I just love how you said it!" A Cree elder who performed the traditional ceremony at the vernissage said he appreciated its "spirited" approach.

I became deeply preoccupied with the comments and the additional questions and responses that they roused within me. I was prompted to write this essay to address a number of issues that extend beyond the overt scope and intent of the exhibition itself.

"All interesting reactions," I thought, "but, do they mean anything?"

INDIGENOUS ARTIST

Responding to these reactions it should first be pointed out my position on being an Indigenous artist today. That I can assume a dual role as an Indigenous and a contemporary artist, makes it possible for others to realize that to accept only one role weakens one's conviction and resolve. Therefore, before discussing these dissimilar reactions, it is necessary for me to state briefly the predicament of being both an Indigenous Canadian artist and a contemporary artist at the same time.

What is a contemporary artist in the Western sense of the word? The continuous bombardment of images, ideas and issues, encourage the artist to provoke critical responses. In doing so, several questions come to mind: How do I translate these images, ideas and issues into something for public consumption? Will they see work in disbelief? Will they make the effort to probe beyond the picture's surface? Will they see what I see? Might they even agree? And, will they return a second, or a third time? To be a contemporary artist offers unparalleled opportunities for critical reflection and absorption, endless possibilities for the artist to win every viewer to his way of seeing or thinking.

What, then, is an Indigenous artist?

As a contemporary artist in the Plains Cree tradition, the notions may appear to be similar, but its differences are more critical. I may be a spokesperson with a discreet yet high respect for my cultural heritage. As this artist-spokesperson, my status can be both cultural and political. Culturally, through the illumination of Plains Cree culture, whether internal or external; politically, on the other hand, it may take form through determined action. The final choice is always personalized.

Furthermore, the culture must be safeguarded to ensure it will not be subverted by insiders or outsiders, that it will give back to Cree culture the relevance that might otherwise have been unsalvageable in a modern, post-industrial world.

At one time, to be a contemporary Indigenous artist was to be at a crossroad, choosing between one's culture and the Western European world. If you wanted to be a contemporary artist you chose the West-European tradition -- bringing new meaning to the phrase, "go West young man," i.e., acculturation and assimilation. Many Indigenous artists were ambivalent in their reaction to this cultural predicament: somehow life in the fast-lane, catering to the art market seemed more appealing.

During the recession of the early 1980s, many that didn't survive as artists turned to other preoccupations. However, those who did prevail, eventually realized they didn't have to choose between their culture and the art-market after all -- being both Indigenous and contemporary was possible. This newly recognized

duality allowed the artist a sense of transcendence. The two sides could coexist and even allow other meanings in their art. Furthermore, they knew the choice one made would always be respected in the Native community, as long as they respected the culture. This disparity is what made the contemporary Indigenous artist at once misread and misdirected. An understanding of this new faculty should encourage many more Indigenous artists to resolve potential dilemmas.

The contemporary Indigenous artist views history with a split vision of sadness and anger, yet with great humility. I see how irrevocably altered Indigenous nations have become under repeated government legislations. I see how foreign Western laws forbade my people to practice their religion, sing the songs, dance the dances, or speak in their own most beautiful aboriginal tongue. I, as a contemporary Indigenous artist, see how white man's time has distanced me from my ancestors. The contemporary Indigenous artist sees himself as someone with very little left, but ironically he sees an unlimited potential for articulation of the modern experience. He sees that time, understanding and respect will liberate possibilities, which before were thought to have completely vanished.

For example, Robert Houle (Saltleaux), is one artist who believes Indigenous people and artists are, "coming full circle...[through the] reexam[ination of] what happened in the Renaissance, and see[ing] for ourselves." He also says,

We've been here for 40,000 years or more... now we are going through a rebirth, everything is thawing out, and this is being spearheaded by the [Indigenous] artist. We don't need a prescription from anyone but ourselves!

His coming full circle typifies the honour, respect and humility aboriginal people have for the past, while knowing the importance of the present. The importance is also in knowing the power of the spirit. Indigenous artists are establishing this by re-investing that spirit in their cultures with identity, place and magic.

It is for some of these reasons I chose to show my work at McMichael. I did not expect so much reaction! I've mentioned the comments briefly already. Here are my further musings which they stimulated.

THE CHILDREN

The gallery educator said the children thought my works were "messy" because I didn't stay within the lines and that I dripped paint all over. They also could not understand why I wrote on the paintings. Also, she said they did struggle, beyond that, to address the issue of stereotyping.

The children may have been unimpressed, still I believe that this and ensuing generations will be in a better position to act on the issues they discussed in the gallery. My optimism sees them better educated to see the mistakes past generations made, and angry enough to criticize. I remember that after finishing high school I was irritated by the lack of Native content in the school's curriculum, and I wanted to do something about it.

I continue to wonder about our children, Native and non-native, what are they being instructed? What is it they are learning in schools? From the media? Can attending like exhibitions provide new perspectives they could not otherwise get in their curriculum?

When I'm old, will silly Hollywood War-hoops be heard in school yards? Will everyone still want to cheer for the cowboys? Can the 'official' history books take a longer, harder and perhaps even extensive look at other histories, by including Indigenous history? Certainly Indigenous children are asking for this, but what about others? Will the west be the place for gloriously setting suns, or will the children of tomorrow still face the same hegemonic nightmare I did? Will history be corrected for them?

The success of *Dances With Wolves*,² despite some of its flaws, has helped reshape North American (maybe European as well) views of Indigenous people. One elderly Lakota (Sioux) gentleman is quoted as saying, "Finally we have won a victory over Hollywood." I encourage children (and adults) to see this movie, for the same reasons I as a child went to see numerous westerns: to cheer for the good guys, of course! But why are the good-guys in *Dances*, Sioux, not Crees? As one Native American reviewer put it, "now the only good Indian is a Sioux Indian." But, what the heck, bathe in its romance. It's worth the price of admission.

Our children have new privileges (or do they?).

McMichael's gallery educators challenged the children not only on the meaning of stereotypes, but notions of the significant Other, the Indian Act, and the Oka crisis of last summer. They described to me how the children were completely exhausted following the gallery's programming -- much the same feeling we get following theatrical play. These children were encouraged to think. That's what these works were inspired to evoke. Maybe these educators should have tried this dialogical exercise on adults. For instance...

THE CORPORATE EXECUTIVE

Remember the corporate executive's remarks? "Disgusting," he said. What were his insecurities? What was at stake that he reacted so disapprovingly? Had Indigenous truths never been so direct? In his mind, did McMichael sell out? Did he feel that Indigenous artists were not supposed to be vocalising these ideas?

I hate to bite any hand that feeds me, but in this case, what about my principles, my feelings, my pains and scars? Is this not a territory of expression for artists like me? Would you rather I paint landscapes like a good artist? And if I painted landscapes, what would they say to me? The landscapes are lovely yes, but they're slowly disappearing under the heightened programmes of deforestation, acid rain, nuclear waste spills, and urban sprawl. I couldn't paint them because my message would subvert his reality, and we'd be back at the beginning. I hope in the end this does not affect the galleries funding!

THE ART CRITIC

What has not been said about them that I can add?

The cowboy/Indian show is my first show in the 'big time'. I have sensed the 'big pond'. The pond created by the West. How am I to float? Coming from a region with very little water, my competence must be doubly good. So, what kind of strokes am I to use? To this, the answer would likely be, "in this game, boy, you stroke any way you know how!" Nobody informed on how cold the water would be, nor how deep. I'd also heard stories about the pond's numerous frogs. Crooak! Ribbet! Snarl! Who are these amphibious wonders? I soon found out they weren't prosaic frogs, rather they were very exclusive. They safeguard the pond's boundaries from

various intruders, including Indigenous artists. Lucy R. Lippard writes in *Mixed Blessings* about such a pond:

[Its] boundaries being tested today by dialogue are not just "racial" and national. They are also those of gender and class, of value and better systems, of religion and incoherent territory, virtual minefields of unknowns for both practitioners and theoreticians. Cross-cultural, cross-class, cross-gender relations are strained, to say the least, in a country that sometimes acknowledges its overt racism and sexism, but cannot confront the underlying xenophobia -- fear of the other -- that causes them. Participation in the cross-cultural process, from all sides, can be painful and exhilarating. I get impatient. A friend says: remember, change is a process, not an event.³

The old frogs retreat.

The critic from the *Toronto Star* elaborates on, but disguises some of the pond's rules, by ending his review of *The cowboy/Indian show*: "gone are those hoary romantic notions about Indian art as a spiritual quest, a legend-based evocation of ancient ways of life ... McMaster draws from mass media sources with which we're all endlessly familiar. But he filters them through his own sensibilities. Like many people who find themselves strangers in their own home, he wants to change the world." I do like that last part. It does seem, however, to oppose the "self-conscious flatness" he addressed earlier. Perhaps my concerns could be described instead as a 'self-conscious ardour.' This should make the old farty frogs take notice!

MY MOTHER

Like other artists' mothers, mine was rather aloof from my interests in art-making. To her it was too dissimilar from entertainment like sports, concerts or television. All mothers, however, want to be proud of their sons because it reflects on them.

After *The Cowboy/Indian Show*, and its wide coverage, she was barraged with telephone calls. Sure enough, this immediately stimulated her interest. For my mother and the local Battleford

citizens I am now mentioned in the same breath as Allan Sapp (my cousin twice removed).⁴ No more self-conscious flatness! A local newspaper even interviewed her about my reported accomplishments. I don't think my agent has anything to worry about. It might seem like simple excitement and pride in a son doing well, but mother's reaction to *Trick or Treaty* has another source as well.

She grew up on the Red Pheasant Reserve and attended the local Indian Day School, which I also attended. Her mother (my grandmother) was among the first generation of children taken from their homes and forced to attend the Battleford Industrial School.⁵ After quitting school prematurely, my mother left for Alberta during WW II in search of work. She married a Blackfoot man and gave birth to my elder brother. After the death of her husband she returned to the reserve.

I was taken care of by my grandmother, because my mother was working in Battleford. My two brothers and I eventually moved into town in 1962 to be closer to her. She worked approximately 25 years in a hospital as a member of its cleaning staff. I often heard her work stories, which were rarely happy. They were filled with incidence of racial intolerance, bigotry and debasement. As young as I was these stories were most difficult to hear and accept. I felt her pain.

In retrospect, I believe her generation bore the brunt of many racial indignities. Her mother's generation was able to return to the safety of the reserve and pick up their language and much of the traditional customs. Her own generation, on the other hand, was pressured to leave the reserve in search of work, even though the Indian Act still withheld many liberties enjoyed by non-Indigenous people. After having worked off the reserve she had little to return to; she managed to keep her language and customs still less than the previous generation.

My generation was totally absorbed by the dominant society. We were lucky to learn our language at all. I heard Cree spoken only at home. My interests were only in keeping pace with non-natives. I felt the pains of indignity, but I doubt it was the same as hers.

World War II did change the social fabric of this country. Indigenous people began organizing political organizations, with many sympathetic non-natives helping to lobby for revisions to the loathsome Indian Act. A year prior to my birth in 1952, Indigenous

Canadians were finally allowed religious and cultural freedom, but seventy odd years and many generations had drastically altered Indigenous life.

Thus, I understood what she meant by her all too brief enthusiastic response to Trick or Treaty. Perhaps she saw someone finally able to stand up and say something she'd only dreamed of, hoping that it would eradicate some rotting feeling that only her generation had experienced. In her, the West was lost. For me and other contemporary Indigenous artists, she now silently cheers.

THE ELDER

Mr. Vern Harper is a contemporary of my mother's, having lived through the terrible realities of racial intolerance, the crushing blows of the Indian Act, and the demands the dominant society lays upon all Indigenous people. He, in turn, demands from everyone a respect for Aboriginal culture, whether through his private ceremonial presentations or his public lectures. Satisfied, he can now pray in his own traditional way without fear. He was proud to have been asked to perform the traditional ceremony before a distinguished and mostly non-native audience at the opening of The Cowboy/Indian Show. I got to know him to be a very warm man, very similar to our elders back home.

From him my works evoked a response similar to my mother's reaction. The difference was that he saw the spirit -- the ardour if you will -- the propelling imperative for contemporary Indigenous artists to express themselves.

For many years, Mr. Harper operated a Survival School in Toronto, teaching Native traditions to urban children. Thus, he brings with him a pedagogical perspective, but he is as willing a student as he is a teacher! He believes we can still learn much about our traditional ways without fear. Through him, and others like him, my generation strengthens its ties with the past. He gives us leadership and strength of purpose.

By our elders the notion of the West is obliterated.

Instead they teach us that all directions converge in us individually as the sacred centre, allowing us to know our direction along the sacred path.

CONCLUSION

A simultaneous invention and loss of the West happened in 1492.

It makes little sense for Indigenous people to respond to the outrageous historical fictions of the West. On the contrary, we must focus on our own perspectives. For this reason The Cowboy/Indian Show and other shows will happen; as disgusting as it may be for many art patrons, it is all inevitable.

Indigenous people, have no fear of going West. The West is disintegrating. A number of contemporary critics believe this to be symptomatic of the establishment's worst fear, for it too is inevitable.

No indigenous person should ever want to be accused of being an apple -- red on the outside, white on the inside. You must understand this; we temporarily lost consciousness when we started cheering for cowboys. Indeed, many of us become cowboys. Its facade is so intoxicating. However, we ask that you look beyond the surface -- beneath all the turquoise, beads, feathers and buckskins. We've recovered from that terrible hang-over, and now we wish to facilitate in cleaning up the mess.

This antithesis of the West comes at just the right time: on the eve of the quincentenary celebrations for a man who travelled west and "discovered" America and Indians. Christopher Columbus is lucky not to have run into the Lakota chief Red Cloud, who, in 1865, directed this piercing attack at United States Col. Henry B. Carrington. He said,

You are the White Eagle who came to steal the road! The Great Father sends us presents and wants us to sell him the road, but the White Chief comes with soldiers to steal it before the Indian says yes or no! I will talk with you no more! I will go, now, and I will fight you! As long as I live, I will fight you for the last hunting grounds of my people!⁶

Red Cloud, Poundmaker, Riel, our parents, and others like them are who we look back on. They were the warriors who stood up against the massive onslaught of western civilization. Their legacies live on in all of us who are armed with only our fierce pride. All contemporary Indigenous artists will now feel the power and know the meaning of their death chants.

ENDNOTES

1. Conversations with Robert in February 1990. See also, Gerald McMaster, "The Persistence of Land Claims," Robert Houle: Indians From A to Z, Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1990. pp.32-44
2. At the beginning of the Awards I noticed as the stars were arriving in their limos, a good looking Indian (Rodney Grant) also arriving in his limo. He was wrongly announced as Graham Greene ("Kicking Bird"). Yes, we all look alike in Hollywood's eyes. My confidence that Hollywood had somehow changed their views of aboriginal Americans had almost been persuaded, but that faux pas told me otherwise.
3. Lucy R. Lippard, Mixed Blessings: New Art in Multicultural America. New York: Pantheon Books, 1990. p. 6.
4. There is now an Allan Sapp Museum in the city of North Battleford, where I attended school. Quite an accomplishment for a man who sold his work in the streets of that city in the early sixties for literally a few dollars. Equally amazing is that its the only museum named after an aboriginal artist, living or dead. Oh, how times have changed.
5. My grandmother gained family notoriety for having shaken hands with and given flowers to Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier at the boarding school.
6. Brown, Dee and Marting F. Schmitt, Fighting Indians of the West. New York: Ballintine Books, 1974. p.9.

Masks of Oka

Of all the images that flooded the press and TV screens during the Oka resistance of 1990, those that had the greatest impact -- both positive and negative -- were the images of masked warriors behind the barricades. The very fact that the warriors were masked at all seemed to strike a deep-seated chord in reporters, commentators, and politicians who were reacting on air to the events of Oka.

Many, like the Minister of Justice, reacted specifically to the masks as proof that the defenders of Oka had something to hide and were criminals of some description. Others, like myself, saw the masks as a kind of theatrical device designed to heighten the media impact of the warriors. After all, anyone who really wanted to know could find out the name of the warriors in a matter of hours. But it was the children who truly grasped the significance of the masks of Oka. They put on masks too.

Like thousands of other Aboriginal observers, and hundreds of thousands of other Canadians, I was glued to a TV screen during most of the Oka resistance. At one point, towards the end of the second weekend after the Canadian army moved in, I heard my five-year old son, Wanekia, coming down the stairs to the living room. I turned toward him and got quite a jolt.

"That's it," he said to his mother as he came into the room. "If I hear that they have hurt my people or are going to take us off our land, I'm going to fight them and put them in jail."

He had pulled a red ski mask over his head and planted a single feather on one side of it. He was wearing a set of football shoulder pads, a belt stuffed with toy ninja weapons, and a pair of boots, and was carrying a toy machine gun. To be perfectly honest I was delighted with his reaction. I wasn't aware he was paying that much attention to what was going on, but I was glad to see he had picked up the basic message -- his people were fighting back.

Over the next several weeks the press featured pictures of masked Indian children at Oka doing similar kinds of things. I heard a lot of reaction to those pictures and, from non-native people, most of it was negative. The warriors were a "bad example" they said, and the kids were getting the "wrong idea." This reaction often included specific reference to the fact that the warriors and the children, were masked. I found myself defending the masks by saying my son now had a better image of his people to grow up on than the image of Indians as stone age stumblebums that I grew up on.

I thought it strange that these same people readily accepted the image of Zorro, or the Lone Ranger, or even Ninja Turtles, as masked heroes, but when it was the Indian that put on the mask, "Tonto" suddenly became a criminal. I don't recall a single instance of a news commentator or columnist pointing out that some of the Canadian soldiers had "masked" their faces with camouflage paint.

The more I thought about how people reacted to those masks, the more significant the whole idea of "mask" became. Do we use masks to hide ourselves from others, or do we use them so people will have no doubt who we are? In a bank full of customers, how can you tell the bank robbers from the customers? It's easy. The bad guys are wearing masks. But what if the bank, and its customers, are part of a dictatorial regime of drug dealers that are using the money to oppress and enslave the people, and the bank robbers are freedom fighters who want to end that regime. Suddenly the guys with the masks are the good guys.

Obviously, the idea of "mask" is not as simple as it first appears, even though the impact of "mask" in a given situation is usually quite direct and unmistakable. Most cultures, and most certainly Aboriginal cultures in North America, use masks in ritual or ceremonial contexts. Those masks enable everyday individuals (familiar to others in the group) to become fantastic and powerful spiritual beings in the context of the traditions of any particular ceremony. Are these people "hiding" behind the masks? Or are they using the mask to reveal or embody a traditional or spiritual power or teaching?

In Euro-Canadian culture the overt use of masks is confined to theatre, to Halloween or costume parties, or to criminal behaviour, and most often has the idea of "disguise" or hiding. At a psychological level Euro-Canadians, particularly men, are taught to "hide" their true feelings behind a mask of indifference or objectivity. This internalization of the mask then becomes a technique by which we communicate who we are, or at least, who we want others to think we are. These others, in turn, learn to expect to see certain kinds of masks on certain individuals in certain situations. In effect then our very personalities can be described as a kind of mask we present to the world.

In a functional sense, the "mask" becomes the image of whatever role we happen to be taking or "playing" at any given time in our lives. The roles of father, mother, lover, boss, employee, teacher, athlete, etc. each have a kind of "mask" associated with them, that others learn to recognize and react to in predictable ways. By the same token, we, and others, can react very negatively—even violently—when somebody unexpectedly changes their "mask" or refuses to present the mask we expect them to wear. In this situation a particular mask can become, on the one hand a stereotype, or a kind of psychological prison, and on the other hand, a technique for announcing to others that we have changed our role.

The masks of Oka were just such an announcement. In a single stark image, the masked warriors of Oka changed the way most Canadians think about Aboriginal peoples, and the way many Aboriginal people think about themselves. That doesn't mean, of course, that all the changes were the same, or that all the changes were either positive or negative. But it does mean that thinking by and about Aboriginal peoples in Canada is forever changed.

Until very recently, the "mask" that most non-Aboriginal Canadians would expect an Indian to wear would involve elements like "drunk", "lazy", "stupid," or "primitive." If an Indian person was not one or more of those things, many Canadians would assume that person was not an Indian. In fact, within living memory, if an Indian achieved a university degree or became a religious minister or priest, he or she was stripped of their Indian status under the Indian Act. That same Act once defined "person" as "other than an Indian." In an Angus Reid poll taken just before the army withdrawal from Oka, a very different "mask" for Aboriginal people was described by Canadians. The majority (?) of respondents to the poll saw Indians as "hard-working," "spiritual" and "environmentally wise." It would seem that Aboriginal people are successfully changing the "mask" that other Canadians expect them to wear.

In 1983 I experienced an incident in an Indian craft store that capsulized the situation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. I picked up a craft from the Six Nations (Brantford) area and opened the little tag that was attached to it. It had "Made in Occupied Canada" printed under the name of the craftsman. I felt a cold,

shuddering chill as I realized that it was not a joke. I have told this story in dozens of university classrooms and conferences over the last seven or eight years as an example of the difference of perception between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada.

Before Oka, the first knee-jerk reaction of most groups to the story was to laugh. Since Oka, the laughing has stopped. If there was ever any doubt about how true the statement on that tag is, the masks of Oka have unmasked the Canadian establishment and eliminated that doubt forever.



"Life on the 18th Hole"
by David Neel

my red face hurts

my red face hurts
and i walk with my head down
to hide the tears

my red face hurts
as i watch my brother die before me
white bullets riddle my body
and i hide my face to cry

my red face hurts
as i watch my father stagger out of neon lit bars
and crumple on piss-stained sidewalks
as hate filled eyes step over him
i hide my shame behind shadows

my red face hurts
as i watch a white man hiding his white sheet
beneath his suit and tie
condemn me because of one man's greed
sentencing me to an early death
my red face hurts as he smiles

my red face hurts
as i see my sister stand on darkened streets
selling her gift to strangers
that use her till she has nothing left to give
and i cry as i pull the needles from her arms

my red face hurts
when i hear the hate on the radio
directed at my hopes and dreams
and another party is born
on the wings of a white horse
and i scream in anger as i watch the door close on me

my red face hurts
as i see the stirrings of a white nation
follow blindly the words of a salesman
with visions of a wall between us
and i cry for my unborn brothers and sisters
for they will feel the sting of this party's hate

my red face hurts
but the feel of the gun
comforts me

The title of this poem was inspired by a painting done by Charles Favell of Winnipeg, Manitoba. He is a student of Argyle High School, an inner city school in Winnipeg.



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i lose track of the land

at night there are no voices
singing me gently to sleep
though i know they whisper
outside these strange walls

i look to the sky for sweet light
of stars
but night is never dark here

i long to join the dance of the earth
- i knew the movements once

i dream of the wind
the damp smell of the earth
and the footsteps of animals dancing
by moonlight

my body is tired and aching
blood rushes to my feet
drains into the pavement
is pulled through my scalp

i lose track of the land

My Secret Tongue and Ears

i

as dusk falls from this autumn day
 (like a blood red leaf)
 the darkness whirls madly to the earth
 carried by windfury

still

i sit alone
 against the lamp's dim light
 staring at the hieroglyphics in my skin
 thinking
 if i could simply read these symbols
 tell my own story to myself
 and know i had spoken a truth
 but these lines mean nothing to me
 except a number of years gone by and
 a certain lack of understanding

so

sadly as the day flies
 the truth remains
 a secret i keep from myself

ii

in a second of silence
 raindrops pellet
 the roof and walls
 echoing off
 the tin and glass and brick
 like a verbal assault
 that i cannot say i understand
 though i would cross a sterile desert
 or stand naked in a December snow
 to gain that wisdom

iii

so another day passes unceremoniously
 while i sit like a fool

in this easy chair
 the stars shining above
 (like asterisks to some important note)
 tempting us to close our eyes and forget the rhetoric of hate
 that was spoken
 moments before
 in the space
 between us

iv

but
 i cannot close my eyes to myself
 and let sleep steal away
 my secret tongue and ears

in the darkness
 of my house
 i seek
 perfect vision clarity
 within my own deaf silence
 i strain to hear
 syllables unspoken

v

and still
 i don't understand
 the intricate design
 of raindrops rolling down my face at dawn
 or the map of my vision against my skull
 still
 i have not learned the language of my quest

even as sunrays sneak past shadows
 and i wake in a shower of falling stars and your
 light caress
 still

i have no words to say

Stray Bullets

my touch is a history book
 full of lies and half-forgotten truths
 written by others
 who hold pens and power

my heart is a stray bullet
 ricocheting in an empty room

my head was sold
 for the first shiny trinket
 offered

my beliefs were bought cheap
 like magic potions at a travelling road show
 with promises
 everyone wants to believe
 but only a fool invests in

my name was stolen
 by bandits in black robes
 my world was taken for a parking lot

Journal*First Contact*

Today we met with the white men in the blackrobes. They showed us an object which we knew only as the four winds. When we asked why the man was holding the four winds, they did not answer. When we removed the man so the winds could blow free, they became angry. The Chief blackrobe struck me for having removed the man. This made my brothers angry and they struck the blackrobe. The other blackrobes fled down the river with the help of the strange speaking men.

We are sorry the Chief blackrobe was injured. We only wanted to know... why the man was on the cross?

Return of the Blackrobes

Late last evening the blackrobes came back. They have been gone for two seasons. They return this early planting time with a special gift for all of my people. The women are busy preparing-hunters went out early and returned with much game. Tonight we feast and dance. The blackrobes say they will give the gifts at that time.

It is now after the feast and we are very sad and angry. The blackrobes lied. Our women worked hard to prepare a feast. The women put on their best dresses and the men their ceremonial best.

The blackrobes came and ate our food. Then they took our drums, our rattles, our staffs. From each home they took the medicines, the sacred items, our pipes - these they put into the fire. They gave each of us a Black Book. This they said is all we need to survive. This book is small and cold. We cannot eat it, nor will it heat the lodge.

How is this all we need?

The Book

Today the blackrobes gathered all the people they wanted to talk of the book. The people are all sad, the old ones wish to die, they do not want to be without their ways. The blackrobes say all that is needed is in this book. They read about men of strange names doing something we do not know. We ask what the men are doing and are not told. We do not know how to beget.

All through this day they talk to us of the book. All the time others search our village for any sacred items they missed last night. My woman is good. She took many of my things away late last night. She has put my things in a safe place. The Grandfathers have looked with favour on me for she returned safe.

We listen but we are empty.

Language Lessons

The blackrobes have been here for a moon. Everyday they gather us at their camp and tell us we must learn to speak as they do. Our old ones do not like this. The old ones say they will speak no more if the blackrobes insist they learn the other tongue. The blackrobes punish our children if they speak in our tongue. The children do not laugh as they did before the blackrobes' visit.

It is now close to time for harvest of the wild rice. The blackrobes have made the people seem old. Some of the people have learned the blackrobes' tongue. My woman has learned much but only lets the blackrobes know a little. She has done this so she can listen when they speak of plans for the children. She told me a boat is coming to take the children to a school. It is to be good for the children. They will be fed and warm through the cold months. This school thing will help the children learn the blackrobes' tongue. The children will return to us at planting time.

The old ones are fearful, but the children will be warm and safe.

Confession of the Men

We men have had many meetings with the blackrobes and the other strange speaking boatmen. They tell us we should not let our women push us around as we do. We should not allow our women to speak in the open to us. Our women are not important; they are our slaves.

We do not understand how the gentle creature that gave us life is not important. We do not know why our respect for our women is wrong. We do not know what is a slave.

They say we should beat our women if they do not work hard. They say that we should have only one woman in our lodge.

They say if a woman gives only female children we should leave her. They say that we should not waste time teaching our female children for they are not important.

We do not understand why we are not to teach our teachers. We do not know why we are to strike our women, the Creators upon our Mother the Earth. How can only one woman care for a lodge of much work. Why are our female children less than our male children?

They are all gifts of the Creator.

Shame of the Woman

Today I write as a sad human being. My woman has come to me with much pain. Over the warm season the blackrobes have gathered the women many times. During these gatherings the blackrobes have told our women how they should act toward their men. They have told the women that only one woman can stay in a lodge. They said each man must pick one wife and marry her with the help of the blackrobe. They told the women that all of their children have been born evil because their parents are not married in the Creator's eyes. This makes the women sad. The blackrobes tell the women they are dirty during their moon time, but they are not to stop their work as they do now. The women are sad. They do not understand how their gifts from the Creator are Evil and Dirty. They do not want to stop living with their sisters. The women paint their faces and hide.

Our strength is in hiding. What will happen to our people now?

Our old ones say if our women are shamed and broken so shall our nations be.

They Took Our Children

Today the boat came. There were blackrobe women who spoke with our women. They told our women that they would care for our children at the school. These blackrobe women hid all of their body with cloth. They seemed to have no hair and only skin on their face and hands. These women were soft spoken and kind. Our

women agreed to let the children go for the cold months. Tomorrow the children will leave, those from the age of the first hunt to our young warriors.

Much sorrow is in our village today. The children all dressed in their best boarded the boat with the blackrobes. There was much crying from our women and the old ones. We men will sweat tonight so we too can let the water flow. The village will feast for a safe journey for our little ones. Soon the cold months will be here, we will face it in our lodges, our children in a warm school. We must look to the coming of the grasses; then too will our children return.

Our old ones fear they will never see their Grandchildren again.

The blackrobe men will return with news at the next moon.

A New Moon

The blackrobes returned as our Grandmother turned her back for her time. The women rushed for news of the children. They were told the children are fine. The children cried during the trip but once safe on land they calmed down. They told of the large wooden building with beds and stoves where the children are living. They said the children are happy. This news made our women smile. The women prepare a feast for the blackrobes to show their joy.

The old ones are happy to hear the news but do not believe it. They say men of good do not arrive when our Grandmother has her back turned. They say men who arrive at this time must be watched. They can slip in things our Grandmother moon would not like.

We listen to our old ones.

Ceremonies

Our old ones were right; all is not as the blackrobes have said.

Today we men were preparing a sweat. The blackrobes questioned what it was for. We told them it was to be shared with them for the news they brought. They became angry and tore the

lodge apart. We were told no more sweat lodges, no more dancing, no more ceremonies or feasts. Our ways are evil. Only the way of the book can happen. We must decide on one wife and only one. The other women are to move out of our lodge. There is to be a book marriage ceremony tomorrow. That day they call Sunday. From tomorrow on every Sunday we are to gather for a book ceremony, this Sunday is seven day breaks.

I know of our seven Grandfathers but I do not know which one of them would be Sunday. They say each day break has a name. and that Sunday is the most important. How can one Grandfather be more important than the other? Each sent a life gift; which gift is most important? I do not know.

The blackrobes say they will tell us.

Winter

This winter seems colder without the children. The blackrobes have been here very long and still they talk of the book. That book just sits where once my pipe lay. My lodge is full but empty of children. I have chosen one wife, but the others still live here as my sisters. Many of our old ones have gone on, their hearts broken. We could not put them to rest our way, but had to do as the book instructed. We still speak our tongue when the blackrobes do not hear. Most of the people have learned enough of the other tongue to speak to the blackrobes. They still gather us on Sunday and talk about the book. We still do not know which Grandfather is which. They speak of a Christ and a Christ-child. They say we must celebrate the Christ child's birthday with much joy. How can we prepare a feast during this winter? We cannot waste so much on only one meal. Our supplies are low, because we did not have the young ones to help at harvest time. They say we can dance, sing and celebrate this Christ child, but only with their songs and their board with strings, which they stick under chin and rub on. It screams like a scared owl. The old ones do not like this board.

They say we are to dance, but our feet are heavy. They say we are to sing, but our voices do not come. They say we are to celebrate but we cannot hear our mother, the earth's heartbeat.

Who is this Christ child?

Old Ones Speak

The old ones have been very quiet through this winter. They grow weak without their medicines. They have listened to the blackrobes' talk of the book. They still do not understand. The medicine man and his woman do not visit others as they use to. Nor do many visit them. The blackrobes do not like the medicine man and his woman because they still speak our tongue and sing our songs.

The old ones have called a meeting at my lodge. It is to be only our people. The blackrobes are not to know.

The old ones spoke tonight of the many things they have heard. They told again our story of creation, they told of the women's moon and the sweatlodge. They spoke so we would not forget. They again warned us of the firewater and what it will do to our people. They spoke of their dislike of the day, Sunday, where they must take the firewater. They gave warnings to our people of dangers to come. They spoke of the strangers who will visit, that we know well.

They cried, the old men cried.

Put On My Mask For A Change

See the stripe that divides my face in two.
A vermilion dot marks the tip of my nose.
Take this ancient advice and face up to me.
This is not some recent ritual I picked up.
My beloved cave sister let us dab mud together.
Let us meet at the creek to apply the clay.
Make our healing salves original cosmetics.
Anoint bites, scratches, bumps and lumps.
We then wouldn't mistake each other for ugly.
Let us take back ceremonies to paint our skins.
You be my Zingu mother designing my face.
I the Zingu daughter lift my face from the water.
Then you, then me, take turns smiling Jaguar.
The corners above your lips curl in laughter.
Under healing masques we are twinning spirits.
We are masks within each other holding out.
Whatever we must face is in the winking eye.

Storm Dancer

sun
falls
down

in front
of you
and cloud

gathers up
darkness
beneath your hand

reaches
out to where
you now stand

and thunder
crackles up from
the horizon
starts to run

and dances
dances
a wild jig
bobbin around
with a crazy
wind it's
partner
howling
and dipping

black hair
flying
everywhere

until you
become the dancer
again
storm dancer
climbing
around in the
lightening
and thunder
drum pounding
everywhere

until
there's no
difference
anymore

you can't
tell anymore
difference
between the black
storm dancer
and raven

flyin
and flyin
and crashin
and flyin
in the wind
and rain

House Of Panthers

This morning the panther of heavens peers over the edge of the world at the perfect end. She sees the stars blessing the sun and moon, and my love washing the lean darkness with the water electrified by these prayers.

All over the world someone is waking, someone is sleeping. My granddaughter sleeps on the breast of her mother with milk on her mouth. A fly contemplates the sweetness of lactose. Her father approaches the red hills of *hozho*ni and they recognize him and sing for him. Her mother has business in the house of chaos where prophets sleep. They walk and talk of war in the valley of Arabic sandstorms. Some are lifted to the heavens by rainclouds to partake of a memory of wings and beautiful thunder. Others are led by deer and antelope of mist in the wistful hours to the villages of their ancestors. There they eat cornmeal cooked with berries that stain their lips with purple while the tree of life flickers in the sun, the sun who knows the true history of earth, beloved earth.

It's October when the world tilts toward the northern star and all things northern. On the street lit by false yellow are travellers searching for home. Some have been drinking and intimate with strangers in their sweaty masks. Others, escapees from the night shift, sip the last bit of lukewarm coffee, shift gears to the other side of darkness. **Oh baby, what would I do without you.** A woman stopped at the light, turns over a worn tape to the last chorus of a whispering blues. She has decided to live. The stars clap, as do the half-asleep flowers, prickly pear and Chinaberry tree who drink exhaust into their roots, into the earth. She guns the light to home where her children are asleep and may never know she ever left. That their fate took a turn in the land of nightmares towards the sun may be untouchable knowledge. It is a sweet sound.

The panther who thinks she dreamed me puts my head between her paws and dreams of a house of panthers and the seven steps to heaven.

My Name Is Lucy

It's welfare day
but I gotta find Lucy
maybe she's down
East Hastings
so I truck down
cracked streets
marked by stinking
sidewalks
covered in vomit
smelling like piss
lots of indians
everywhere

eyes like dads
looking for
a vodka sandwich
the kids never
ate yet
make them a
roach submarine
or how about
a beer soup

lots of indians here
gotta find Lucy

his smile
is venomous
his teeth sparkled
like crystals
of cocaine
blinking towards
Okalla prison
stick around honey
my bottles want
to break you
my needles want
to suck you
my violence wants
to kill you

I trucked on
further
knowing that
there are lots
of Lucys
down here
the trouble is
she probably
can't even
find herself.

Death Mummer

Yesterday I walked
by Thunderbird Park.
Tonight
With blood stained fingers,
I remove my mask,
I think
walk
past garish totem-painted store fronts,
down avenues that echo.

There are no Indians here.
None
even in the million dollar museum
that so carefully preserves
their clothing, their cooking utensils
their food;
for taxpayers
from all over
to rush their children by.

There are some good Indians
hanging around Kings hotel
and they are dead,
preserved in alcohol.
It would be neater though
to kill us all at once.
Whole clans and tribes
could be dressed and stuffed.
Add a fifth floor to the museum
to accommodate us.
Better yet
pile us up like cordwood
in those longhouses
we would be home at last
and it would be good value.

I walk slowly and think back.
I stagger under
the raw
hide pack
that I carry,
and the clever mask that I have fashioned
for myself,
from the bones and skin
of my dead tribe
and dipped in the fresh blood
of my brothers and sisters
scooped from old battle streets
near hotels.

BREATH TRACKS

by
JEANNETTE ARMSTRONG

"Speaking to newcomers in their language is dangerous
for when I speak
history is a dreamer
empowering thought
from which I awaken the imaginings of the past
bringing the sweep and surge of meaning
coming from a place
rooted in the memory loss....."

THREADS OF MEMORY

The writings of Jeannette Armstrong who is an Okanagan Indian is eloquent,
forceful and innovative. Her tone is clear, her stance honest, her words
shimmer in beauty.

This book of poems tracks with words the lives, pain and resilience of Native
peoples and their long memoried past.

Jeannette Armstrong, novelist, poet, children's story writer, and educator lives
in Penticton, B.C.

TO ORDER:

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The Native Experience

What is the Native experience?

One might say that it is to be a person who at birth is given the power
of tolerance, generosity and the knack for being naive with a pure
and innocent forgiving heart. To have instilled in one by one's gods
a cosmically spiritual and natural bond with this Earth we so
harmoniously walk upon.

Another might say that it is the unspeakable horror of watching
beaten and silenced parents pickle themselves in alcohol and send
their children out every last Wednesday of the month to walk
barefoot downtown through broken glass, bird-shit and perverts to
a welfare office clerk who will, wearing a pearly white smile, grant
a government approved piece of paper that would unconditionally
guarantee their parents another forty litres of immature vinegar.

What is the Native experience?

One might say that it is to have the "Injun-uity" that the Natives
have had since the early days of this proud country, enabling them
to sustain themselves with their simple, but thrifty usage of such
nifty trinkets as bows and arrows, woven baskets, and soft furry
blankets. Or that it is myths and fairy tales that have kept a people
carefree and happy even to this day.

Another might say that it is to sleep, eat, and breathe the undying
death that has crippled the right to life. Or that it is to descend and
disintegrate into the bottomless pit of the seemingly everlasting
cycle of imperialistic and racial domination; to be gawked at but
never seen, and heard but never listened to.

(Written at age 14)

Scream The Ages Of Pain Away

Wicked laughter lashes out
It holds me tight
like a vice
squeezing, crushing, choking, killing

I can't breathe

I mask my face to hide the pain
This laughter, so haughty and cruel
rips through me
Virgin winds
can not know the pleasure
of seeing my dignity
defaced

I scream
I scream
loud and long in raging agony
at nothing
Iron grips crush the life in my heart
smothering screams alive inside

Let me scream atop mountains
and below on ocean floors
Let me scream
Let me hold the world in my crying hands
envelope her in my pain
With the world I shall scream
the ages of pain away
ripping the wicked laughter of silence
from sacred life denied
I shall scream buried shame away

The fantasy of passing
through a peace-filled dream turned reality
leaves concrete scars of suicide
haunting like a fireside tale

The Hungry Moon

It is winter
the snows fly
in the wake of
passing cars
as I learn what
it is like
to be hungry
to be alone
in the vast emptiness
that stretch out
into unimaginable
distances from
both sides
of a Prairie road
taking its emptiness
into my soul
into my bones
wrapped in a red
blanket I dream
of fat sizzling on
my fingertips
on my tongue
and I am hesitant
to awaken
from the dream
I have so carefully
woven to protect
myself from
the too real nightmare
that I walk through
with open eyes.

Toll Free Number

Can you believe the rage,
stretched to the limits of sanity,
 pulsing madly like the river,
neverending.

Times are tough for people without
direction.
 Insurrection is on the move,
 like a speeding bullet piercing
the heart.

Each day passes, confused generations,
 ...spawned on the seeds of greed.
 My heart soars, tantamount,
 choreographed violence striking the soul
of the downpressor.

Roots movement coursing blood,
 pockets of cultural entities realizing earth's answer,righteous
 and true.

Patterns of discontent begin to form
 like wind strafed sands.
 Insurgency, counter-insurgency,
oceans of tidal waves wrought by centuries
 of genocidal god fearing inundation
Be saved
 Call our toll free number

Pock Marked People

It's not
 just bows
 and arrows
 tommyhawks
 and feathered
 lances
 or war cries
 that pierce
 the heart

I
 feel
 the shame
 but what
 did I do
 more of me
 stands behind
 that
 primitive
 regalia

I am reduced
 below
 society's
 value
 my skin colour
 will soil
 the business

I am of
 more use
 in the
 back
 though in front
 I am only there
 to show
 fair play

no braids
 adorn
 my breasts
 a good Indian
 is pressed
 and clean
 they have
 tried
 to save my
 heathen soul

you can find me
 in line
 at the food bank
 with my hand held
 out
 in return
 down on your knees
 prayers
 for nothing
 is free

you can
 tell when
 you're on Indian
 land
 the ruts are
 skin deep
 we are a
 pock marked
 people

it is the
 age of
 awareness
 yet again
 closer to
 the earth
 second time generation

Indian print
 is the
 in thing

I have rolls
 of it
 hidden under
 my spring
 bed

I am
 a road blocker
 I am
 the tax payer's problem
 I am
 society's
 noise maker

Alongside The Highway

Alongside the highway
lying in a snowdrift
empty wine bottles,
glass shards,
beer cans and
a gaunt, blue nosed Coyote
pondering
what death might teach him.

Beyond Death

i was there but was soon returned
i saw life spawned in ponds
visualizing endless drones of tones
and with me were droves of ghosts
wailing hymns by the creek
near the mountains
by the skyline it serves loyally

fields of waist high grass
gave my soul the new feeling to wonder
gave me the creed to concede
gave me my birth in death
gave me the power to pursue
gave me the strength through and through

i was there and saw great kingdoms
reveal screaming eternity
i saw molecules in beautified rainstorms
i saw its thriving evolution
i saw possibilities in all forms
i saw a morning arrive with no warning
i saw the creation of midnight
with its colours all golden blue
i was finally infinite i could search
to find what could have been mine

i was in death within its cradled soul
ready to unwind and unfold
i was there and it wasn't a dream
i was there knowing where i've been
but now i'm returned to the world of material things
and i long to return back to death
and all the fulfilment it did bring.

Desert Island

lonely landscape wet by rain
storm laments mountain heart
anxiety pulsated by hail storm
inner being torn apart
thrown against awaiting cliff
inside
past sheltered through reflection
echoed outward
worn by external wind
i too am fragile

internal hell fire
exhausted from flesh burnt to bone
fire in throat scorched by salt
valley of water becomes ocean
ash in hand
coals simmer
rage through piercing eyes

bucket lowered into well
scraped along stone's darkness
i drink water from clouds
numb my thirst from hovering heat
stranded my feet walk on warm sand
grains sink with each step i take forward

tears escape my eyes
into sea
travelling
quickly against the wind
i remain in the sun
surrounded by water
ready to intersperse
with other islands

I Know Who Charlie Is

(after reading Chrystos': "I Was Over on the Res")

i have seen him
he sits and sleeps on benches in front of confectionaries
surrounded by walls crumbled with graffiti with no hope of
restoration a period in the past that fills pages with
colour so pleasing that rich people can make themselves feel
useful and buy collect art

in a glance our eyes draw toward one another
years of pain pour and we do not have to act proud
nothing to prove no white people in sight
Charlie squints though no sun shines

Charlie points out his garden
it is a highway
white lines pave over his power to satisfy his hunger for
miles and miles over hills, mountains and along prairies
he is Charlie
hi Charlie
he could have been warrior in another time
he waits his turn at a soup kitchen in silence
he eats though he is not hungry
it is not his choice
times of nourishment are set accordingly
form a single line Charlie

Charlie remembers hunting
he remembers snow up to his waist
winter mornings with his uncle and father
he smiles and
unfolds prairie chicken tail fans
until it flies back to memory
he wore mukluks to balance his feet on earth
a surface between him and mother
he remembers the women who embraced him
until he could walk alone
and who supported him while he explored
beyond the limits of the reserve to city bars

coming home drunk
they still loved him
they still accepted him
he remembers these same beautiful heart women
skinning moose and slowly cooking meat
smoke burning eyes
laughter from teasing
children playing excited
and the treat of moose meat and lard

where are the women
where are his uncles
where are his brothers
where are the moose
his mukluks are buried somewhere in lost gardens
dotted lines confuse him and me
six feet deep is not far enough
i have seen him
Charlie

Reservation Blues - A Song

Left all my family back on the Rez
Been gone so long I don't know
who I is
How did I get myself into such a
mess?
Life in the city, caught in the race
I'd give it all up for a slower pace
But when I get blue it's all I can
do
Those Reservation Blues

Chorus:

I got those Reservation Blues
Traded my moccasins for those
whiteman shoes
I got both feet in two canoes
I've got the Reservation Blues

Assimilation is all I hear
This life I'm living ain't nowhere
near
The one my grandfathers
Lived for a thousand years
Life in a conflict, caught in a
swirl
Trying to live the best of both
worlds
But when I get blue it's all I can
do
Those Reservation Blues

I got those Reservation Blues
Traded my moccasins for those
whiteman shoes
I got both feet in two canoes
I've got the Reservation Blues.
(repeat refrain)

Self-Government: A Parody

A long time ago, according to legend, an eagle got bored with living in isolation, so he said to his eagless, "This is a damned dull life - I'm tired of this togetherness, just the two of us always together."

So he began to think. He would assemble and organize all the winged creatures and live like a king.

He decided to call his bright idea 'Bird Self-Government.' What a clever idea! His grandiose scheme would give him recognition all over the animal world.

He made up an agenda for a Bird Summit. He would have a referendum, and reach a consensus, no less.

What a m  lee this conference created. What confusion! Never had eagle seen anything like it. Birds-of-all-feathers converged from every direction. Birds kept talking louder and louder. Big birds were screeching their opinions. Little birds screamed their counter-opinions. Ancient birds muttered to Big-Bird-In-The-Sky. And young birds kept strutting and preening and making eyes at all the good-looking chicks. Throughout this, Grouse, a traditionalist, kept trying to exhibit his culture by doing a rendition of Crow Hop.

Passions were flaring. Birds were hyperventilating. And no Sergeant-At-Arms was there to bring order to this chaos. But the eagle was impressed, nonetheless, with the one positive note: no birds broke the law...probably because there were no laws!

Presently the racket died down. Birds-of-a-feather-flocked-together in think tanks to discuss the price they would pay for their Bird Self-Government Rights and Freedoms.

Next, eagle formed a skeleton Shadow Cabinet in his mind. He summoned the hawks and owls and said to them. "Get all the winged creatures together again, I want to talk to them some more." He wanted to reach an Accord and introduce legislation about "existing Bird rights" and its "notwithstanding" clause.

The hawks and owls flew off in different directions. First, they rounded up a bunch of Crows, herded them in and registered them. The loons organized into a brass marching band; and the Raven, not because he was a thief, was given the only other key - besides the one eagle had - to the treasury. In the end, the eagle had set up an infrastructure that he was truly proud of.

But scarcely had these Self-Government Birds put their by-laws into effect when they realized that something important was missing. For a long time, they puzzled their Bird-brains over what it was. Finally, it stared them right in their Bird-faces! In every creature's establishment, the Arts and Sciences are always represented; the eagle's had neither.

To make a long story short, the Birds started pestering and pleading their cause to the eagle. He listened intently to the report on the necessity of introducing it to the debates. But he just couldn't understand it at all. So he sat there clacking and looking down his beak at the others. Humph!

After mulling this over, owl was called in for a second opinion. He affirmed that the Arts and Sciences should be introduced into the infrastructure. Life would then be made interesting for the eagles.

No sooner said than done. The next day, a renaissance started in the establishment.

And thus, a limited form of Bird Self-Government was a fait accompli. It was entrenched.

But there was an over-riding feeling from the first day that all this commotion about Rights and Culture would come to a speedy and ungracious end; apparently these premonitions were well founded. The real problems began when eagle stipulated that he would listen to all the Chicken Littles who were chattering "the sky is falling, the sky is falling".

It was plain to everybody that the renaissance was drawing to a close. Up ahead they could see the darkness of ignorance, with its attendant companions, social and economic problems of all kinds.

In a month's time, not a single trace of the renaissance remained. And, so, in order to clear themselves of any responsibility, the eagles expediently put all the blame on Enlightenment. Self-Government, they said, is no doubt useful, but our grandfathers got along without it, so can we.

Self-Government had run its course.

The infrastructure dwindled. There remained only the eagle and eagless, while in the distance was a horde of Crows who kept on multiplying shamelessly.

The eagle was at a loss for what to do.

At that moment, history itself stepped up its flow in order to put an end to all this turmoil. Something extraordinary happened. The Crows, noticing that they had been left untended, suddenly

wondered: "Let's see. What did the Elders say on the subject?" But before they could rightly remember, the whole horde instinctively took off and flew away. The eagle tried to pursue them, but it was no go.

He turned to his wife and said, "Let this be a lesson to all eagles!"

But just what he meant by the word 'lesson', in this case - whether Self-Government was bad for eagles, or eagles were bad for the other, or both at once - wasn't clear.

Strawberries

"What will be next?"

We'd been asking each other that question for the last two hours and it still brought deep thought and even deeper study of the drink menu. As was our yearly ritual, me and Joby Snowball were blowing our first paycheck of the season on absolutely nothing worthwhile. It was a time honoured tradition we loyally kept. I had started a new job for the summer at the Band Office, Day Camp and Regatta coordinator for all the little ankle biters of the village. It was work on the Reserve, therefore no income tax, and close to home so I could save more money for the next year of college.

Joby's paycheck was different than mine. We had grown up together, played together, chased girls together, and even caught a few together, but in many ways we had drifted apart. I did the collegiate thing while he remained on the Reserve and did odd jobs, mostly seasonal things. During the winter he'd plow and sand the roads, put up storm windows, things like that, while I was off in the city eating Italian food that he'd never heard of. But every summer I'd come home, he'd still be there, and we'd try to pick up where we left off.

This summer Joby was groundkeeping for the baseball diamond and the cemetery, life and death, cheering and quiet, action and peace. In many ways, the contradictions in his job sort of reflected our relationship.

That is how we found ourselves sitting at Charley's, an upscale bar in downtown Peterborough. I had gotten my first paycheck that day, not nearly enough money for looking after two dozen little Indians that evidently believed in human sacrifice. Meanwhile Joby had received his from the day before and despite tremendous temptation, it was still firmly lodged in his back pocket. Until today, that is.

When we were younger, we'd spend our first check on movies, comics, toys, food and various other things of no great or lasting importance. And like clockwork, our mothers would chew us out, like it would have some sort of effect or something, for wasting our money.

And gradually as we got older, our tastes changed. The comic books gradually changed into other magazines of questionable quality. And if our mothers ever found out about some of the magazines we spent good money on, we would've received more than a lecture.

"Well, what do you think?", Joby asked again.

I couldn't decide. We were having a drinking contest. I was showing off, ordering all sorts of interesting yet bizarre drinks I had learned about during my brief excursion into the equally interesting and bizarre Caucasian world. Joby on the other hand was matching me exotic drink for exotic drink, having watched many a soap opera movie. We had just finished a Vodka Martini, shaken not stirred. I believe Joby had picked that up in a movie or something.

We had been there two hours but we were by no means drunk by any measure. Joby was a beer person, and I still had an affinity for Rye, the liquor I was weaned on. So with all these new liquors, we were taking it slow and carefully, as all scientists do with their experiments. So far we had tried White Russians, Black Russians, Brandy Alexanders, Sea Breezes, Singapore Slings (We thought how international we were being).

Now the ball was in my court. "How about a Strawberry Daiquiri? I hear they're pretty good."

"The hell they are. My strawberry days are over, pick another one." "What do you got against strawberry daiquiris?"

He looked at me for a moment. I could tell he was remembering. Not the kind of memory that follows a story line or pattern, the sort you see in the movies, but the kind that brings back a random series of emotions, and experiences. Sort of like having a pail of water suddenly dumped on you. Judging by the look on Joby's face, the water was cold.

"You were lucky," he said, "all through high school you got to work at the band office. Ten minutes walk from home, air conditioning, and a chair. You forget what I did all those summers."

Then I remembered. The fields.

"For Three goddamned years I picked strawberries. I'd come home with my hands stained blood red, my back ready to break. A sixteen year old shouldn't have back problems, it ain't right. When I turned seventeen, I swore I'd never pick another strawberry in my life, or eat one, or look at one, or think of one."

That's the way it used to be when we were young. Local farmers would send in these huge flat bed trucks to our Reserve to pick up local Indian kids to pick strawberries, we used to be like those migrant workers except we weren't migrant. The rookies would gorge themselves on the berries for about the first three days, but then the novelty would soon wear off. Picking strawberries was on the low end of the totem pole when it came to jobs. Most of my uncles and aunts at one time or another picked strawberries, they referred to it as "paying dues". But by the time our generation arrived, Pick Your Own Strawberries were coming into vogue for Yuppies, all that health and get back to nature stuff white people like, so Joby was one of the last group of kids to be hired in our area.

"One time, my sister had her room wall papered with that cartoon character, I think her name was Strawberry Shortcake. I coulda killed her. There were strawberries all over her room," he was getting excited, all over. "I think that was her way of making sure I never went into her room. I had nightmares for a week. Andrew, to this day I've never eaten a strawberry or even touched one. To me they're the devil's own food. Now for God's sake, pick another drink."

Nodding my head sympathetically (it's easy to be sympathetic in a bar), I ordered a grasshopper. We were quiet for the next little while, the spirit of our outing having been spoiled by the berry from Hell.

We tried to recapture the spirit of our outing but the moment had been lost. We had a few more drinks then went on our separate ways. As he walked away, I realized how much I missed the closeness we had shared as kids. No amount of this new age "male bonding" can ever come close to two fourteen year olds trying to convince our female Day Camp counsellors to go skinny dipping with us. And I couldn't even swim.

It was two days later that I heard the news. There would be no more drinking contests, no more summer reunions, no more berry horror stories. Joby was dead. He'd been hit by a produce truck at the Farmers' market in town. His mother, Winnie, always used to send him in to do some early shopping.

The village went into shock. I went into shock. He had been my best friend, nothing could take that away from us. Life would go on for me but not for Joby.

The wake was held two days later. I went to see Joby, lying there so peacefully, wearing the scarlet coloured tie he always hated. His head was framed in red satin. He looked healthier and wealthier dead than he ever did alive.

Afterwards we all went to his mother's place. Everybody was meeting there and bringing food, something I could never understand since nobody ever felt like eating. All I could find to bring was a bucket of chicken from you-know-where. Poor Winnie, she never slowed down for a minute. Playing the perfect hostess, she refused to let anybody help her as she put out dishes, set out the food, even wash the odd set of dishes. My aunt said it was her way of dealing with the grief.

I looked across the table laden with food. There were about thirty people in the house, and everybody had brought something so the table was sagging under the weight. Everywhere there was food of every description, casseroles, salads, chicken, apple, pumpkin, and strawberry pies.

I sometimes wonder about the irony of the universe, but as my Grandmother would say, "who am I to decide what is ironic, that's for God and English teachers to decide".

That night I ate my fill, somewhat guiltily enjoying the strawberry pie but my perpetually dieting sister reassured me that food and guilt always go together. Pretty soon I left for home, I had to get up early the next morning to fulfil an obligation and do my last favour for Joby.

Since Joby had looked after the cemetery, and then died, it left an interesting vacuum. But in my community it was considered an honour, albeit sad honour, to be asked to dig a grave for a particular family. So oddly enough Joby had never dug an actual grave, something he was very grateful for. So I found myself at the gravesite, shovel in hand, and a lead weight in my heart.

It took me a moment to psyche myself up, this is not a thing one normally learns about in school. I'd dug many holes in my life but none eight feet by four feet. But digging that hole made me think about Joby, all the paychecks we had planned on cashing in the future, and all the fancy drinks there were left to discover. Something again made me think about the food last night, and Joby's consuming hatred of strawberries. I thought of my Grandmother too and wondered if God had a sense of humour.

A little over an hour and a half passed before I finished. Digging a grave in a ground moraine is a real pain, every six or seven inches there was a rock, sometimes a huge mother of a rock, sometimes a whole bunch of rocks. But I managed to pull it off, limiting me to only three pulled muscles. It barely gave me enough time to get home for a shower and a change of clothes before the funeral. Joby always hated suits and he was being buried in the only one he had ever owned, the one his mother had bought him for high school graduation eight years before.

The funeral went well, as well as funerals can go. It was a good turnout; his mother appreciated all the extra mourners. The minister said some nice words about a boy that never went to Church, as Joby lay quietly in the coffin, reminding me he was slightly claustrophobic too.

It took me less than a third of the time to fill in the grave. The only company I had was the lonely sound of rocks and dirt hitting the casket, and that gradually disappeared. Before long I was padding the dirt down solidly but gently. I stood there for a moment, looking at the gravesite, saying a quiet goodbye to my friend, and coming to a conclusion. By then I had decided that God did indeed have a sense of humour. As I turned to leave, I was careful not to step on some tiny white flowers no bigger than a dime that littered the area around the grave.

They reminded me wild strawberry season was just around the corner.

Let's Get Ready

"Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen
 Let's get ready tooo RUM-M-M-M-BLE!
 Among the brothers we say, "This is Heaven"
 And stagger away,
 A fist held high,
 Carrying a football shaped wine jug
 Thru all the bar rooms and bingos
 A sigh goes thru the crowd
 God makes the final call, "Let's drink em' up"
 Back in the alley,
 Among the broken glass and rubbers
 A touchdown is scored
 And we collapse in unknown fields
 Our faces gutted
 Urine dripping off our cut lips
 A busted cheek and SA black shoes
 Our white sox are exposed
 But for how long?
 Our saliva *droools*
 past the grains of sand
 Past drought *strickken*
 deserts of time
 And bake into a *glazzed*
 surface of vomit
 So round, the upside down
 Pyramid lake spins
 Fishes float underneath,
 Underneath our breath
 Waving so long and *good* luck

Some sober sister slaps us
 "Wake up you silly fool." Hell has got to stop
 The bed creaks - our backs crack
 The buckles on our belts never buckle
 Instead we wear suspenders and walk Scarecrow style
 Along moving concrete escalators
 Into one highrise welfare office to another
 Shifted,sifted, and stiffed by a number
 We stand as two-by-four's would
 And have our detox pictures taken for the yearbook

On The Line

Sign sign on the dotted line
 and you will be mine forever
 and ever,
 like the mountains
 and the lakes, the sky
 the soil
 and everything I take.

I will supply you with all
 of your needs: a school,
 a bible,
 a blanket,
 rations and beads.

If you can't understand me
 don't worry
 or whine
 just heed what I say:
 What is yours is mine.

So sign on the line, what more
 can be said, my word
 is law, you have nothing
 to dread.

You can't resist so don't
 even try, I have cannons
 and armies
 and cities and spies.

Oh, yes, I do have a home
 it is far far away
 but I like what I see
 and I've decided
 to stay.

8 o'clock Monday Morning

Cracked sunlight leaks
through a pane of glass
filling the measured hour.
I slip a red necktie
over my head
and pull it tight
(as if this
 must be done).
The silky noose
extends from me
like an extra tongue



"Shadow Dance #2"
Silvergelatin Print
by Glenda J. Guilmet

Walking Both Sides of an Invisible Border

It is never easy
Walking with an invisible border
Separating my left and right foot

I feel like an illegitimate child
Forsaken by my parents
At least I can claim innocence
Since I did not ask to come
Into this world

Walking on both sides of this
Invisible Border
Each and every day
And for the rest of my life
Is like having been
Sentenced to a torture chamber
Without having committed a crime

Understanding the history of humanity
I am not the least surprised
This is happening to me
A non-entity
During this population explosion
In a miniscule world

I did not ask to be born an Inuk
Nor did I ask to be forced
To learn an alien culture
With an alien language
But I lucked out on fate
Which I am unable to undo

I have resorted to fancy dancing
In order to survive each day
No wonder I have earned
The dubious reputation of being
The world's premiere choreographer
Of distinctive dance steps
That allow me to avoid
Potential personal paranoia
On both sides of this invisible border

Sometimes this border becomes so wide
That I am unable to take another step
My feet being too far apart
When my crotch begins to tear apart
I am forced to invent
A brand new dance step
The premiere choreographer
Saving the day once more

Destiny acted itself out
Deciding for me where I would come from
And what I would become

So I am left to fend for myself
Walking in two different worlds
Trying my best to make sense
Of two opposing cultures
Which are unable to integrate
Lest they swallow one another whole

Each and every day
Is a fighting day
A war of raw nerves
And to show for my efforts
I have a fair share of wins and losses

When will all this end
This senseless battle
Between my left and right foot

When will the invisible border
Cease to be

Métis Woman

Métis woman
alone and angry
still
Your genes seed no contentment
in the child yet unborn
Your taut nerves waiting
the fill of an empty cup

Priestess of the wild
challenging anywhere
the homeless ones
the curious
the men
of all kinds

Seekers who leave
their mark on you
Better to run than face them
or stay becoming weaker

Restless journeys take you
many places
escaping a lot of ways
here and there

Métis woman alone
midst all the faces
No Indian nor other forbear
could understand your fear
or pride or pain
The way you drifted
waiting for the rain

The Anglais, They Say

In the voice of Louis Riel

The anglais they say
I am crazy
The francophone and the Metis.

But you old man
Why do you smile?

Because you are gifted Louis
with second sight like me

But you are not a man.
They do not perceive
you as such.
You are a savage
who drifts
over crosses
and churches
and votive candles.

Louis, learn to use this gift.
Smoke your pipe and wear your sash.

If I am gifted
as you say
Why?
do you allow me
to suffer?
Why?
do you turn into silent
wings
that disappear
in the night?

Testimonial

She looked White
whitewash
neatly picket fence
enclosure
She could easily
pass for White woman
She could even pass
for cover girl
playboy magazine
someone's material
world

Even her facial features
delicately fine
In spite of it all
She kept a low profile

The finest hairdo
she arranged her tassels
Piled high in neat buns
braids inside hair nets

Her bluest eyes would make
sure she appeared just right
to meet every white social
function in her best

Expensive dresses of latest
fashion filled
wardrobe
of finest taste

Into stylish hats of sturdy
felt and straw
All fit neatly on her crown

Only a very pretty picture
could expression fulfil

This maiden who had so much
She had it all to give
One day she was called home
leave she did her
high fashioned world
Back to the reservation home
To help look after younger
brothers and sisters
do farm chores task

One day while fetching cows
these cows who decided to
roam a swampy area
She got raped by negative forces
disguised as Native men

"They attacked me
hurt me real bad
they ganged up on me"
She had to answer
when she was questioned
by her only illegitimate child
Years later when curiosity
took its toll

It's no wonder for now
this grown girl child
was so often beaten
up by her own mother
The many questions why
of her childhood
without a father
growing up in wonder
remembers that once
her mother looked
so beautiful in photographs

She did not look
at all like her mother
Today this woman child
could never hate the white race
Today this woman child
could never hate the red race

Yet honestly she
silently hurts at times
especially when she's alone

Where is Your Pride Redman?

Where is your pride red man?

I ask this question because I am Red and I feel little pride. There can be no pride in coming from a family with a beaten mother and emotionally battered children. There is a fear that this behaviour is instilled in me, like, that's how life is. There is fear that the children will discover that stash of "feel good medicine" of yours and drink until they become violently ill or dead. Family members, uncles, cousins, nephews, you know, have gone down in defeat, gone down in convulsions of poisoned spirits. But, their spirit was dead before they were physically dead, I know. Their eyes told the story. The windows to their souls were clouded over, murky, shallow, repulsive. The family pride extinguished. Their burnt out bodies, pickled brains, aged beyond their years.

Theirs is not pride in the longevity of our family; longer life would only mean the extended agony of shame. For them there is no pride.

The old pictures, Mom's aunt and uncle, Johnny Long Pants and his wife, show a hard life but that's how it was in the old days-hard. But they had pride and a desire to live. And Stemteema, God damn it you were old. I thought you would never die. I was proud of you, the oldest person I had ever known, I thought you would never die. I was proud because there was only one old lady who knew who you were, knew who our family was. Our family showed little respect to your words, unfortunately, because the ugliness continued.

Maybe they thought you were just a run down old girl with no wind left in her sails. I don't know their reason but they should still have listened to you, Stemteema.

We, the children, should have stayed out of that "feel good medicine" cause it's bad but we still drank it, ritually. Collecting that DIA or welfare cheque was a ritual, too, but that money never went into positive use. The only ritual I can remember was the "ritual process of charcoal treated and distilled to perfection," thing I read on the bottle. Do the producers and distillers of this fine beverage have the right to cause perfect rage and hatred in my family? I don't think so. This shit has been going on since I was a baby. I'm almost thirty and the cycle, the pattern continues. The

booze, the fights, the cheques, the booze, the fights, the cheques.

One person dies in this scheme of things and another is born into it. This process makes no sense at all. Why give birth to a child who may never have a chance to live, to be proud of who he or she is and who their family is? When this child feels threatened his instinct is to lash out in violence, beat another child. And later on in life when the going gets tough, they don't get going, they go drinking, doping or whoring, just because they can.

The images of slovenly dressed, ill-kempt, vomit scented Native men and women strewn on the grass of Oppenheimer Park or yelling obscenities to each other in the Kal, National or Coldstream makes my heart pump acid and not my proud red blood. But, that's only part of it. I look at these people and see me just a few short years from now, and it's disturbing, revolting. The whole pathetic process, the degradation, the suicide rate, the prison population, the process of elimination only solidifies and deepens my shame.

This is a very sophisticated method of destroying the spirit. By using alcohol, drugs and racism, society's wish to divide us. By controlling the economy, the monies and funding governments wish to debilitate us.

And by assimilation, sheer numbers and military power their wish is to destroy our spirit.

They've tried, perhaps too hard, to wipe us out as a race, but they can't; Native people have never and will never die. We have caught on to their way of thinking and now it's working against them. We still grow in the face of a culture that wants to wipe us out. I look back at my short life and I see the decay, the chaos, I see that the foundations of the family structure, the family tree, has been levelled or by today's terms "clearcut" and it hurts my feelings, but I know that they can burn the family branches until they are unrecognizable but deep, deep down the family roots hold firm.

Gladys Johnson (1930-1976)

I

sidestepping miles of broken glass
 streams wind endlessly to my feet
 batbones spread fragment wings around empty eyes
 empty save for silent scream
 of ravens
 Gladys Johnson shivers on the hot pavement
 avoiding the sound reliving the parting shots
 of slavedriving paperpushman
 into the glass menagerie crawls a name
 mine
 I soundlessly scream with empty eyes
 drown
 in the endless stream

II

Arabesque figures placed in forgotten corners
 of a courtroom cell
 listening gods
 paperpushman letting my name crawl across a page
 legal document
 Gladys goes to the front of the line
 Ward of the Court left to avoid the parting shots

III

Nestled in a cool, mudpacked midden
 are the remaining fragment bones
 screaming from empty eyes
 in an endless stream.

Poem of Twenty-Nine Lines

from the middle of the belly
of the snake
she mourns
lately it seems crucial
to avoid those screams
always rising rising

xylophonic burps bumping catcalls
GET OUTTA HERE GET THE NEXT ONE ON
TAKE IT OFF JUMP

she dances to a slower rhythm
avoiding the shots
riding the tide
riding it out

each afternoon at precisely two
she knocks at the door
splits herself down the middle
exposes...
drops her shit on the midden
for some far-off scientist digger
Burps bumping KEEP ON TRUCKING
a car rumbles by her window
loaded down with shells
filled with clammeat
poached WELL DONE
jesus swings from the rearview mirror

a fine, slow mist carries her gently
across miles of leering faces
to a cool sanctuary

Expression

I long out of loving,
and love out of longing;
that one day we might be free.

Free:
first from self-imposed bondage;

last that imposed by the presents
of others,
presence

last that imposed by the profits
of others.
prophets

This Is Our Split

Dubois studied Color in Philadelphia,
and Chester county is not --
nor in the city could they be lumped as one.

Go southwest and the land rises.
Turtles once thronged there.
The people did not create the 500s,
the Jack & Jills. They visited Quogue
and Montauk, not Sag.
But yes, there is a twoness here.
The census people came and scanned us.
Shaking their heads they scribbled
illiterately on their lists and moved on;
to be followed by land thieves and
bounty hunters seeking money for new slaves.

We have strong roots, though mingled.
A longtime ancestry gives us our faces.
We came here from nowhere in particular, but
we are Lenapes left over, Nanticokes,
stray Piscataway families, stealthy Minquas
the Paxton Boys thought they'd wipe out;
we are shirt-wearing Tuscaroras
hiding in the Blue Mountains hearing
about the Minisink;
we are asteroid Cherokees drifting around
the Susquehanna valley and the Schuylkill.
Our names like Swannock became Swan.
Our names are Cook and Grover and Pierce.
Our names are West and Greenhill and Gray.
Our names are Mason, Bowers, Proctor and Draper.
Our names are Welburn and Tyre, Shippens and Burton.
Listless in this survival
we belong to nations we do not remember
and to people who have forgotten us.
We are the lost ones and the outcasts.
Our children never seem to know the trees,

nor have moments with the blades of grass;
the nuthatch's scolding means nothing.
Our children must be reminded
that crow is the first bird one hears
in the morning.
Thus our twoness answers DuBois.
This is our story;
this is our split.



"Sisintl/Full Moon"
Painting by David Neel

Masks

And we too
wear a mask
stoical, frowning
an open-faced look
that is no look
if not unforgettable,
a look that can look through you.
under this mask
we smile and laugh and
twist our faces
like corn husks and
the grains of trees.
we know, listen to
a whole lot of coyote jokes,
with and without coyote,
whole nests of them.
we can trick you off your trails.



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"Half-Assed Indian"
Painting by Rose Spahan

DISCOVERY

Skyros Bruce: First Voice of Contemporary Native Poetry

The Native community suffered from a long period of cultural arrest from 1900 to 1960 in Canada, during which time the residential school system and cultural prohibition laws artificially created cultural stagnation.¹ However, prior to the 20th century indigenous culture influenced the development of North American literature much beyond their numbers.² Colonial domination created a dichotomy between both the citizens of the colonizer Nation and the citizens of the colonized Nations. One set of laws and standards were established for the colonized and a separate set of laws for the citizens of the mother country. The changing legal framework of these laws altered the influence of First Nations people on literary development. Periods of liberalism gave rise to the publication of oratory in translation and idealistic lamentations about the "vanishing race," while periods of conservatism produced stories of ignoble savages.³ Throughout the historic development of "modern American literature" Natives remained either ignoble or noble savages nonetheless. The periodic publication of oratory did influence the more radical writers of the 19th and 20th centuries among them R. W. Emerson who in turn influenced hosts of antecedents. Indigenous thought continues to influence Turtle Island literature. However much of this influence is adulterated by the outright appropriation of stories by white writers who claim to be writing as Native People.⁴

This phenomenon is a direct by-product of the colonial system which segregated post-colonial Native students into industrial or agrarian residential schools, forbade them to speak their own language and impeded their mastery of English, creating an entire population, with a few exceptions, who were unfamiliar with language in general. Liberal literati responded by taping Native stories in semi-literate English and 'working them up' into literary novels, short stories etc. Aside from the outright theft of stories themselves this has created a new dilemma for modern First Nations writers: authenticity of Aboriginal perspective.

Invariably European cultural norms invade the story and obscure the original meaning. Secondly, racially discriminatory attitudes impose an element of racism distorting the story. Last the function of the story as part of a relevant system of governance is

lost. This is of critical significance to the development of a body of modern First Nations literature by First Nations writers themselves.

The simplistic re-telling of old stories, intermingled and distorted by European cultural values, makes it next to impossible for First Nations writers to study old stories, decipher their meaning and use the principals and laws of governance inherent in them to re-create new stories as part of an historic continuum.

The burgeoning literature of the sixties which was a product of First Nations people finally accessing the English language reflects this dilemma. Much of the poetry was externally influenced or "lost".⁵ "Lost" literature is the body of rhetoric outlining what we think Native traditions are, absent of any internal understanding of the meaning inherent in the metaphors presented. A host of rhythmic poems about eagles or feathers, etc. without any indication what eagles or feathers, represent was the result. The result was the development of simplistic statements of faith arranged in poetic style absent of genuine poetic meaning. "Life is a Circle" by John Keeshig is a prime example.

The externally influenced poetry led to the development of a body of literature in which the voice, rhythm and style had no roots in First Nations cultures. "Loneliness" by Wah-zin-ak is typical of this body of work.⁶

There were a few poets who wrote poetry in traditional style, but the poems themselves tended to be beautiful re-telling of old stories, particularly creation stories, that spoke of the past without carrying the past into the future. Blue Cloud's "Turtle" sounds like a beautiful rendition of an old story.⁶ The "modern voice" of First Nations writers was seriously crippled until recently by systemic colonization and the absence of a forum to discuss traditional oratory, the intrinsic meaning of our own metaphor and the function of oratory.

A few exceptions paved the way for the development of a truly modern literature that was rooted in the past but spoke to the future. Skyros Bruce, or Mary Bruce of the Squamish in North Vancouver, published a small book of poems in 1973 in which modern concerns were penned in the voice of her people.⁷

*once i dropped 500 micrograms
and you know where i sat?
I sat on our sister's grave
wishing it was her
sittin' on me...*

The above desire is rooted in an old story of the twins - the Lions - who show up again in the poem as the mountains of Skyros' ancestors. The story of the twins is told because it directs children to the sacrifice of one of the sisters life in the interest of the whole people. It is double pain for Skyros who cannot sacrifice her micrograms of whatever substance she was abusing in the manner that her ancestral sisters had done. She is living dead, while her sister is actually dead. This condition dogs our present and Skyros reaches into her past to try and sort it out.

Rooted in her own ability to give up her micrograms is the loss of heart of her brother. "...you watched while i cried...like someone watching the rain". It is a clear recognition of the impact of the colonial process on Native lives. More than loss of land, even loss of life of the sister, is the loss of love we feel for one another. We are unable to live as our ancestors did because we are unable to love each other in the same self-sacrificing way.

"the mountains are real...i slept beside these mountains" speaks to the mountains as home, as place in the First Nations sense of the word. Mountains are alive, they represent our lives, our struggle for aliveness, for heart, to love and cherish life. "i slept beside these mountains near this water long before i was born" speaks to the lineage memory of Skyros, herself a historical continuum of a "long line of chiefs". In her memory she sees the face of white people when they first came in the context of her present.

This blending of times defines the lack of space between lineage memory and present thought. The structuring of past and present together as a single unit of time elucidates memory as present and diminishes the distance between past and present. This mixing of time in non-chronological order is contrary to the structure of orthodox English. Few stories in translation reflect this non-chronological, lineage structuring of time. Thus the capacity of modern writers to use this structure to move from pre-contact understanding to modern understanding in lineage structured time is limited. Not only is the "art" of this perception lost, but the use of

use of lineage memoried time structure is all but prohibited by publishers and their editors.

The chronicling of time, the ordering of it in accordance with what happened first, is culturally foreign to west coast First Nations. The re-constructing of time into European chronicling alters significantly both the author and the work. The philosophical 'raison d'être' for mixing past and present establishes the speaker as both ancient, present and future without distinction of importance placed on the present. To distinguish the present as primary by chronicling time is to exacerbate the past.

The ordering of time is both cultural and philosophical. The structure of time of First Nations cultures is the least understood of our philosophical precepts. To claim lineage memory and juxtapose it with current memory is to articulate the most sacred of one's entire thought from the beginning to the present and is intended as future memory. Our origins are as thought.⁸ Thought, sacred being of heart, mind and spirit, in lineage articulation is the subject and result of ceremony and sacred being.

The "bearded head...half filling the inlet" speaks of prophecy from the past into the future and acknowledges the capacity of the self to see into the future. She sees the impending coming of the white man, his overrunning of the inlet and his dredging of it and actually filling it up, both before it happens and as it happens. She sees it from the bridge and from the "cocoon of her mother's womb."

That she sees both far into the future and far into her past at the same time agrees with who she is: Wolf clan. Wolf is the seer of past, present and future on the west coast (Dan George). Skyros is from the wolf clan of the Squamish people. She sees from the arc of the bridge and from the lions at the same time. To posit the same vision from two opposite angles is to see both what is in front of you and what is behind you at the same time. The imagined vision from behind is as real and the same as the actual vision. The positing of such vision is considered impossible by European logic and so not understood, except through the concepts intrinsic to understanding wolf story from an internal perspective.

"They (mountains) are known to me; they house the same memories, the same long distance vision and the same spirit." The identification with the self as mountain and the mountain as self articulates the concept of earth mother in pure poetic imagery free

of exposition, prose and rhetoric. "They are me" articulates the essential point of view of First Nations people that "the land and the people are one".⁹ The mountains shape her thinking, her memory, her sense of place and her understanding of self.

Skyros then takes a rest to reconsider all that she has seen and said. She looks again at the mountains, the sun, the water, the land, sky, and enjoys. The vastness of her world, its beauty and the peace the natural world brings her; the joy of her aliveness and oneness with the world are imaged during this rest. This technique of reflection to enjoy is part of the traditional oratorical style of the Squamish people.

It is the voice of the speaker intervening in the story. This rest or intervention allows the listener/reader time to contemplate the meaning of the poem, to seek its depth and identify personal significance of the words to the listener/reader. The speaker has altered the pace of the story and at the same time broadened its significance through allowing the listener/reader time to reflect. "The earth is soft and curved under my/your body and I remember what he said...the mountains, the oceans and yourself" The significance of the poem is articulated by a third party. Permanence and continuity ring in the words. "when all your friends are gone" the earth is permanent and in the end you can rely on yourself and your relationship to the earth and the oceans.¹⁰

Wolf is independent and self-reliant yet capable of great cooperation.¹¹ Skyros calls for this sense of independence and cooperation by delineating self-reliance in conjunction with earth/ocean bonds. "to stand for long spaces of time" is to think, to recreate one's relationship to earth and water, sky and mountains, to re-think oneself. Cooperation is rooted in bonding with earth, sky and water and joy arises of the re-consideration of the self in that relationship. There is no other joy worthy of consideration except to experience this same joy with another human being.

*someday soon before you leave
we will go far away to a cabin
in the trees
and enjoy
silence...*

The bonding of thought leads to bonding with earth and reconciling one's entire lineage, including future, with all creation. The micrograms of substance brought Skyros no joy but rather to a point of death in wish form. Substance abuse finds her on top of her sister's grave. It is irreverent and disrespectful and can only lead to death-wish self-destruction.

To be disconnected from earth is to be alienated from one another. To be oblivious to earth is to be self-destructive. To indulge in substance abuse is to be unable to think clearly, to see things in lineage structured time and to be blind to memory. Heartlessness and alienation are by-products of alienation from the earth and births the need for substance abuse.

In "A Letter from my Brother from Atantis" articulates the social debilitation process of First Nations peoples as a function of the colonial process. From the present she retreats to the past. Skyros articulates the journey of colonialism, self-abuse, and in lineage memory expresses the need for solidarity and the inevitability of it between whites and Natives.

She articulates this process from the position of the daughter of wolf - the visionary, the lineage seer, independent, self-reliant and co-operative. This is not her reality; this is her memory. Her reality is the opposite. She is dependent. Dependent upon drugs and dependent upon her own need for the apathy of her 'brother' to become caring. Because white folks are more than capable of watching us die, she despairs, becomes despondent, seeks artificial uplift through substance abuse. She becomes dependent.

The path out is both painfully simple and next to impossible without an absolute faith in the possibility of unity between herself and apathetic white folks. This too is connected to a belief by the Squamish as articulated by Dan George's vision:

*I see the faces of my people
your son's sons,
your daughter's daughters,
laughter fills the air
that is no longer yellow and heavy
the machines have died,
quietness and beauty
have returned to the land.
This will happen!*

The contribution Skyros makes to the development of First Nations culture is immeasurable. Positioned in the present, she pulls herself from her death wish into the future where a different story colours the world. She relies wholly on herself, her lineage, her indigenous sense of the world to extricate First Nation's people from a state of chemical dependence and unloved despair to a prophetic vision of the future upheld by her ancestors. She does this at the same time that she takes old metaphors into the modern world. Culture, ancient and present, comes alive, becomes a breathing living being with future significance. She pioneers the end to the stultification and stagnation of what is perceived as Native traditional oratory.

She moves our sense of poetry of the past beyond the lines separating modern from ancient and spearheads a cultural revolution that has both feet in the past and points to the future.

ENDNOTES

1. Native Literature in Canada Canadian writing essay:
2. R.W. Emerson American Scholar
3. Native Literature In Canada
4. Daughters of Copperwoman, Anne Cameron
5. Awkwesasne Notes
6. Black Panther Party - Newspaper
7. Many Voices
8. Trivia
9. U.B.C.I.C. newspaper - slogan
10. My Heart Soars Dan George
11. Ron Hamilton Story of Wolf

Book Review**Setting the Truth Ablaze****Sojourner's Truth by Lee Maracle**

Press Gang, 1990

With *Sojourner's Truth*, Lee Maracle has done it again: she has written a book that speaks directly into the heart. In the early 70's she wrote *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel*, an account of her journey in life and the political struggles of the American Indian Movement and Marxism. *Bobbi Lee* was re-issued by the Women's Press (Toronto) in 1990 and continues to serve as an extremely valuable history about growing up in Vancouver.

Bobbi Lee was like an oxygen mask for me at a time when I suddenly awoke to the horror of the pollution of oppression I'd been breathing as a person on the fringe - mixed blood, urbanite, poor and raised by a single, hard working, generationally stressed-out mother. Reading *Bobbi Lee* changed my life, encouraged me. Maracle's words convinced me that I didn't have to rise into the elite echelons to be counted a human being - that where I came from was just as valuable and important to the creating of this world.

Over time, I have moved beyond the euphoria of political validation that *Bobbi Lee* provided. Now, I am more acutely aware of how critical the understanding of one's emotions is to self-identity, community growth and unity - even global health. In this new place in my life, I procrastinated for weeks before reading Maracle's latest book, *Sojourner's Truth*. Rather than the usual social and political issues, I now want to know only what someone struggling to be a truthseeker feels and does to be true to themselves. It seems to me that far too many people live hypocritical lives and hide behind banners of politics, careers and even art. I am looking for hope and, right now, the only hope I trust is the bare bone expression of feelings; on the ways to be courageous, on how to deal with the day-to-day hypocrisies, rationalizations and plain old abuse people hurl at each other to hide their pain - rather than express it - and thus to be free to fearlessly and unwaveringly love and nurture each other.

When I finally picked up *Sojourner's Truth* it was with the idea that "oh well, I'll just read a paragraph and get this procrastination anxiety off my back ". What a gleeful jolt it was to have the important thoughts I had been struggling with come rippling out

of the pages of the book. *Sojourner's Truth* has the power of *Bobbi Lee* all over again, but this time with the issues and approaches of the 90s.

Maracle has written an emotional, philosophical book about her thoughts, experiences and struggles beyond the glorified religion of politics and the "boys club" of swaggering rules. Her voice is moving and beautiful to encounter; the heart and truth of her language is almost brutal because such qualities are rarely awakened in the defensive positions we make in order to continue our political struggles.

In many of *Sojourner's Truth's* stories, Maracle looks at morality and values, the quest for the procession of one's own mind and the power of memory. In "Too Much to Explain," she writes:

"The little girl, traumatized by the scene, had jumped inside the same trap, running a marathon of imprisoning relationships because she had not wanted to remember. Now the trap sunk...If he accepted her insanity he would have to declare insane his own maddened binges of the past...'You don't have a monopoly on craziness,' he said dully. She laughed at his flat sense of self, at the hopelessly two-dimensional perception that he clung to, and she wondered if the man who defined neurosis wasn't a little like her lover. She left him there in a tangle of confused babbling...and drove out of his life. 'I don't feel desperate anymore,' was all she had come up with. As the cab sped away she could hear him holler in self-defense, 'You really are crazy.'"

The title story expresses the haunting wisdom of a protagonist who speaks from inside his coffin: "Hell just might be seeing all the ugly shit people put each other through from the clean and honest perspective of the spirit that no longer knows how to lie and twist the truth."

Unlike the autobiographical *Bobbi Lee* much of *Sojourner's Truth* is fictional. Maracle has moved her imagination over the stories she has heard and the experiences she has felt to give us an original, meaningful work. Her stories are descriptive, opinionated and intimate, much like a diary entry or kitchen table conversation.

Sometimes the result is piercingly strong. At other times I felt there were too many words and descriptions, and I wish Maracle had indulged herself in poetry and let the full meaning of each word be taken into account and, like in poetry, had let the spaces between words have meaning as well. *Sojourner's Truth* does contain many beautiful, poetic lines, like in "Who's Political Here."

"Rolling, changing emotions float around inside me as I lie looking at the old hand-besmudged wall and wonder what is happening to me...Somehow what I am feeling seems more important to me than Tom's incarceration, and I think they should see it that way too...The changing emotions roar around inside, taking up speed and intensity until fear starts to ride over it all like the surf in a stormy sea."

The transition from oration to literature is not simple. In her preface to *Sojourner's Truth*, Maracle comments on the differences between the two modes of telling, as well as between Native and European storytelling: "The difference is that the reader is as much a part of the story as the teller (in Native Traditions). Most of our stories don't have orthodox 'conclusions,' that is left to the listeners, who we trust will draw useful lessons from the story - not necessarily the lessons we wish them to draw, but all conclusions are considered valid. The listeners are drawn into the dilemma and expected at some point in their lives to actively work themselves out of it."

Lee Maracle has been called a gifted orator but, to me, immense courage is her greatest and rarest gift. Her ability to shoot from the hip and set truth ablaze continues to be an eye-opener for all.

Untitled

I am a woman
I am the backbone of the Nations
I am the caretaker of the future generations
and
Sacred Turtle Island
I have many gifts
and
burdens to carry
I am a woman
who needs to heal
myself
my family
and
my community
I am a woman
who needs support
to carry my burdens
who needs strength
to break cycles and centuries of abuse
I am a woman

In The Sky

He looked down
 As though looking down from the very clouds themselves
 The down below
 where he first walked
 Toward the edge of the wood, fog rolled and lifted
 Dew glistened in the meadow
 The sun was rising
 onto the shoulders of the eastern sky
 He peered down from the clouds
 saw many women dancing
 They offered him food
 He honoured them with feathers of eagle
 He honoured them with songs
 They danced the dance of women
 circular, with a side step
 toward the rising sun
 In a vision of old and new
 they celebrated
 There in the meadow, at the edge
 of a green and beautiful wood

A staff of many coloured ribbons
 she offered; red, green, yellow, and blue
 The ribbons were wrapped around the wooden stem
 a small hoop at one end
 long leather fringes hanging from the other
 a staff of many coloured ribbons she offered
 He took what she offered
 The wise woman with long grey braids smiled gently
 then left
 The coloured ribbons danced
 and he lived

He heard the drum songs in his dreams
 sacred voices sounding
 He was afraid
 He sat at old man's drum
 in the light of early evening, singing

He stretched the hide of the deer over a new drum
 with a younger brother
 stretched the hide of wet skin over the sacred hoop
 and celebrated
 In a circle they sat, singing
 Each pole, each leg, supporting the drum
 represented with four colours
 feathers of eagle staff
 drum pulsing to earth
 gift from a distant star

Rising to the cacophony of the brotherhood of crows
 he hears that a brother has fallen
 from the branches of earth
 Crow laughter spreads
 through the arthritic fingers of bone bare trees
 His story is one that spreads
 from the roots of trees
 that tells of earth
 that spreads up into the heart of layered truths
 that spreads out onto the branches
 that spreads out onto the arthritic fingers of bone-bare trees
 cacophonous laughter rising
 He listens until he is hungry
 He rises
 A lone deer in the meadow, at dawn, moves slowly
 muzzling green shoots of grass
 She is hungry too

He does not know if his dreams are ghost
 of prophecy
 He does not ask

Fallen brother
 The one who threw caution to horses
 The needle in his arm
 leaving bloody track of equine poison
 He was no equestrian
 He was dirt under the hooves

His only bloodline
 from the needle in his arm
 He was not proud of his bloodline
 This was not part of his Horse Nation
 That which was his real legacy
 The horse ran south

He saw a young man last night
 with a gaping hungry mouth
 A mouth that could only mouth the words
 to sacred sounds
 with no sound to emit from his inside
 He studied the hunger in his face
 in his eyes, the rough face
 that peered over the singers
 the drum, the women, and wondered
 He studied the young man
 tough leather jacket
 street black boots
 touched him
 reached to him
 with his mind

The young sister at the circle
 Telling of her abuse at the hands of the older men
 He saw her sigh
 letting out huge breaths of air
 What was she saying?
 He did not know. He did not ask
 With watchful grace
 she peered from safe vantage point
 He once saw a wolf do the same thing
 He recognized that look
 her pure coat ruffling
 silently in the wind
 elusive from pursuers and companions alike
 she is detached from the pack
 moving silently
 leaving the surge of her energy
 briefly with tall standing birch

No scrolls would tell of her passing
 The birch would yield no clues
 Her footprints disappearing in time
 becoming one with tracks of snowshoe hare, squirrel, and fox
 Would she ever know the healing
 energy of tall standing birch
 peering with watchful grace?
 He did not know. He did not ask

Sometimes the search was desperate
 Other times, he couldn't give a damn
 Sometimes, the blues were as deep as the darkest blue could be
 Other times, they were indigo
 or the colour of the sky
 Still, other times, they were a fierce swirl of all hues
 All hues of the colour blue
 Sometimes, lonely felt like a bone scraped clean
 chewed, and spit out like powder
 This reminds him of a story about an Aborigine in Australia
 who filled his mouth
 with powder that came from the earth
 and made colours; white, and red
 After filling his mouth
 placing his hands on the rocks
 or the hidden walls of caves
 spits the colours all over his hands
 leaving an outline on the rocks
 or on the hidden walls inside caves, forever
 If he could do it
 he would fill his mouth with the powdered bone
 and spit the outline of his soul
 Someone would come along
 see a splash of blue alongside white and red
 they would wonder who left
 imprints of powerful hands and blue soul
 A blue whirlwind soul
 spit from the mouth of hollowed bone
 The mouth
 a sacred tool of earth paint
 blue bone mixed with spit and sky

Oratory

'Indian History Through Indian Eyes'

Excerpts From Keynote Address

National Aboriginal Youth Conference

February 11, 1989

Ottawa

You know, we, all of us, belong to something I would like to call "imagined communities". Imagined communities in the sense that we imagine ourselves to have some thing to connect with really broad numbers of people. I think of that in terms of myself once in the streets of Paris, going along where no one else was speaking any language I spoke and I bumped into a fellow there who was from rural Georgia. Now I am a Seneca fellow. I was born and raised on the Cattaraugus Indian Reservation, a very rural area and I grew up in a house that was built in the 1780's. It was an old house; it didn't have any running water, it had electricity. We had gardens and that kind of business and heated with wood. I grew up in a Longhouse community, a very traditional community and the people all around me were of that persuasion. And that was sort of my background.

So I had bumped into this fellow in Paris and he says: "Well, you're an American" and on some level there is some truth to that. He says: well, he was from Georgia. He started telling what he was about and all this stuff. We were walking down the streets of Paris and here we were "fellows" somehow, you know. I have thought about that experience a lot because the guy from Georgia, he was a brother in the John Birch Society. You know, I am sure he had strong social feelings for the Klu Klux Klan which were positive. In America the guy probably would not talk to me, but in France all of a sudden we were "fellows"; we were Americans. We shared a kind of imagined community. It takes a lot of imagination for a Seneca fellow and a Georgia cracker to be together. I can tell you that it is not easy to do this. It is an imagined thing.

Go back some hundreds of years and I think a good place to start to tell the story of the Americas is to go all the way back to the eleventh century in Europe and begin to get an angle on who the peoples are. Because my talk today is about who we are. It is about who are the Indians and also who are the non-Indians. I want to locate that in the peoples' minds.

In the eleventh century, the Pope -- his name was Gregory the Seventh -- announced to the Emperors, Kings and what ever nobility of Europe that the vicar of Christ on Earth actually should have more recognized power than the Emperors and he began to claim the right to ex-communicate, to throw people out of the Church. And that is what was called the Papal Revolution; it was about 1057 this happened. This revolution started a big stir and people were called upon to have opinions about this idea; the community of Europe was actually formed around this idea. Europe didn't have an identity until this time. The people of Europe were called upon to see themselves as the Christian world. Christ was believed to be coming back; they thought there would be a second appearance of Christ. So the mandate of the Christian world, as it was proposed at that time, was that upon Christ's "re-arrival", he was to find his Kingdom in good order. But the Pope was pointing out that the Kingdom was not in good order and that, in fact, the homeland where Christ was born was in the hands of non-believers.

So the pope started at that time to organize a series of foreign wars, in which the nobility of Europe was called upon to provide the military service to this effort. To go across the Mediterranean to seize the lands of peoples there in the name of a sort of now pan-European nationalism. It was kind of an imagined community for them at the time. I mean, Polish Princes were called upon to unite with Italian city states in a way that they had never done before. These people had all been at war, or at least had some mutual hostility, and they all spoke different languages and had different histories. At any rate, they were called upon to unite themselves and they did do this.

Imagined communities are extremely powerful. They caused people who lived in western Europe to gather themselves together to march to lands they knew nothing about, to find ways to cross the Mediterranean and to engage in wars with people they knew little about. This went on for generations, and you have to understand the crusades went on and on. Children went on crusades; warriors went on crusades; people went on crusades. It was a powerful movement of ideology of people being imposed upon to think of themselves as having obligations to do things which I think clear reflection would have denied. But it was a powerful movement that

went on at that time. I always found it to be a most extraordinary movement because of the way it would later affect my own peoples.

European peoples had come to an adoption of spiritual ancestors who were not their own ancestors. In the Christian experience, western European peoples, Germans, Czechoslovakians, Scandinavians, who had absolutely no lineage whatsoever, connected with the Middle East; were called upon to recognize as their spiritual ancestors' nomadic tribesmen who were a specific nationality of ancient Israelites. Their ancestors became Adam and Eve; became Abraham; became David. The western Europeans, who have absolutely no ancestors with any of this relation adopted them as their ancestors. As this nationalism would spread we find that this community, which is expanding, which has attacked the Middle East, is now an imperialist power that intends to extend over the world and over the minds and identities of the peoples of the world.

In the mid 14th century, Portuguese sailors discovered islands in the Atlantic. The first one that was discovered was Lanzarote Island in the Canaries and then shortly after that, Madeira Islands in the Atlantic, which were actually part of the same group of islands. The Canary Islands was the first instance of the invasion of European expansion, the European invasion of the rest of the peoples of the world. The Canary Islands were inhabited by a race of people called the Gouches, who were said to be a brown-bronze skinned people. The Spanish basically launched a war against them that went from 1404 to 1496, a war of conquest. The purpose of the war was to basically take over the Islands. Now, during this period of time one island was unoccupied, and that was Madeira Island. No people had ever lived there, and the Spanish tried to occupy that place.

By the 1450's, Madeira was the most successful colony in the world. It had become the world's largest exporter of sugar and sugar cane products. At any rate, the Gouches were finally overcome in 1496. If you will notice, this is four years after Christopher Columbus sailed to the Americas. Today there are no Gouches; they are completely exterminated; they are wiped off the face of the earth as peoples. We know very little about their languages. There is a little bit left of their patterns of their clothing and stuff, but basically, fundamentally, they don't exist anymore.

Christopher Columbus went to the Canary Islands and he prayed to his God when he was getting ready for this trip to the Americas. And he had a pretty good plan. He was planning to sail west across the Atlantic. His purpose for sailing west actually is in his log in which he states that the reason for his trip was to find gold. The purpose for finding gold was so that the Crowns of Castille and Saville would be able to raise more armies to continue the crusades in the Middle East. So the crusades were still alive in Christopher Columbus' mind when he came. People who get a chance should read about this moment in history because it is a very telling moment. He tells that, on October 12th, 1492, they had seen land the night before. On that morning the first thing he says is not that he sighted land. He says the first thing that they saw were naked people.

Christopher Columbus was the first one to begin the invasion and the so-called development of the modern world, the invasions of Europeans around the world. He is the initial viewer, from the deck of the ship of the Pinta and the Santa Maria.

You know, these two worlds existed apart. They did not know of each other's existence. There was the western hemisphere -- and in some ways you have to include Australia, New Zealand and those other places where Indigenous people live -- and then there was Europe. Europe, with its own form of history, its ideologies, and just an incredible imagination in Europe. And here they arrived in the Americas and they saw what they described as naked peoples. And what they really came into was paradise. Listen to Christopher Columbus' description of the peoples he finds. When they arrive at Hispanola, the Spanish say there are probably eight million people living on Hispanola. They described this incredible rainforest and mangrove forest area covered with peoples and gardens, and fruit trees, peoples who paddle out in their canoes and bring fish. They talked about peoples who were dancing, happy and friendly.

The first Indians invite the Spanish ashore and the Spanish are experiencing a moment like no other in history: friendliness, happiness, and everybody is getting along fine. There are large populations of well fed people and there is nothing here except what we would have described as paradise. The temperature varied from 68 degrees to 79 degrees. There was always food, there was always whatever people needed. You would want to read these

accounts that Christopher Columbus has of his moments of entering this place, his description of the trees, of the birds, of the people. It is an incredible world and one of the greatest adventures. In fact, no one will ever have an adventure like it again. And then you would want to read the other part in the book called, "The History of the Caribbean" in which it describes that between 1492 and 1496 two-thirds to three quarters of the population of Hispanola disappears. Two-thirds to three quarters of the population! Four to five million people disappeared in four years! How could that have happened? Well, it happened!

And Columbus' arrival is a story that is celebrated in the West. The West celebrates this as a powerful achievement, as a positive thing. But, within four years of the Spanish seeking for gold ...we saw the enslavement of the Indians, the incredible cruelty visited up on the Indians by the Conquistadors, the diseases, the warfare -the population of Hispanola was diminished by five million. Cruelty did that. Cruelty that was built around this ideology which the Spanish brought with them. You will remember the Spanish were looking for Asia. They were thinking that they were going to find India. And so they looked at the first peoples who they saw on the shores and said, these must be Indians.

There were hundreds of different kinds of Indians just on the east coast of the Americas, from South America along the Mesoamerican shore, all the way around the Gulf and into Florida and up the coast. Hundreds of different types of Indians, speaking different languages, with different personalities, with different cultures. And all of these Indians standing on the shore were lumped into one group. They were described by the Europeans as "the Indians". And the reason for that was because the Europeans did not know who the Indians were. They had only just invented the idea of Europeans a couple of hundred years before. But at that moment in time the Indians were understood by the Spanish to be "the others". They were the people who were not Europeans. The Europeans did not know who the Indians were; they knew who they were not. And from that time to this the Indians are still a mystery to the Europeans. The Europeans and their descendants in the Americas still don't know who the Indians are. But they know who they are not. They are not Europeans.

Europeans, when they described the Indians as "the others," really interpreted "the others" to be some others less than human, less than they were. So the designation of the Indians, I want to say, has two connotations. The first is a connotation of what it is not, and it is not Christian and, therefore,, not human, not equal. And the other connotation is that it is used as a designation to disarm people about what they really are. It is phony designation. We are not Indians. Come on, give me a break. I am not an Indian. I am a Seneca. I have a very specific identity, a language, a land base, a right in my land base. But the term Indian recognizes no rights in the land, and it recognizes no rights in self-determination. It recognizes only a difference and the difference is, when you're an Indian you're "an other".

The Spanish conquest was the greatest crime in human history. It made the holocaust that the Germans did on the Jews in the forties seem "Mickey Mouse" compared to the holocaust that visited the Americas between the years 1492 and 1989. Consider this for a moment: when the Spanish arrived in Mexico, in 1520, the estimated population was about 25 million. One generation later the estimated population of Mexico was one million. Twenty-four twenty-fifth's of the population of Mexico was destroyed in the space of a generation. There has never been anything like it, except that it did not stop in Mexico. It went down into what is now Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Yucatan. It went to Bolivia. It went to Peru. It went to Columbia. It went to Brazil. And where it went it brought the most horrifying death and destruction ever seen on the face of the earth: the most terrifying enslavements, the most miserable lives, to peoples who up to that point were living really very sustained lives.

Before we leave the Spanish, I want to paint a picture of what life was like in the Caribbean and in Middle America. Who were the Indians really? They are now doing excavations of the Indian cities and civilizations of Yucatan that demonstrate that the Indians lived in the rainforests, with populations in the millions, where we today cannot seem to support populations in the tens of thousands. The Indians lived there in a way which did not destroy the rainforest. They had a system of building canals and they used to weave mats to put on top of the canals to raise hydroponic gardens to raise food. They raised food where we cannot raise food

with the modern technologies. They had an ideology and a way of living with the environment that regenerated it, that made it possible for peoples to live there over millennia instead of destroying some place in two centuries.

The Indians are the peoples who worked out how to sustain human life, tree life, bird life, plant life, and make humans prosper in the middle of that process. They developed technologies to do it. And now we are seeing that modern agronomists are studying Indian agriculture. They are studying Indian ways of making an irrigation system. Well, who was it who made the foods of the world, the food products of the world? I would like to just point out that we have not even scratched the surface of Indian agriculture yet. The Inca produced more kinds of food than all the other peoples in the world put together ever produced. They were the world's greatest evaluators of environments. Today Indians in Bolivia are raising foods at higher elevations than anyone else on the globe. Indians produced enormous types of foods; from chilies, to potatoes, to peppers, to cucumbers, to tomatoes. It is just remarkable. Whole bunches of stuff that we haven't seen yet up here: grain products that haven't made it out of South America yet. But Indian agriculture moves to the desert. Indian agriculture goes as far North as agriculture can go. Indian agriculture is in the rainforest. Indians are the saviours of the human race, if you can look at it from a point of view of need of food products!

The process of making this diversity of food products, while maintaining the integrity of the environment, shows the Indian was using the land in a rational way to sustain human and other life. There is no question that they did it better than anybody else in the whole world did that. If you had left Indians alone there would still be prosperity; eight million people would still be living and eating on Hispanola and there would still be a rainforest there on that terribly devastated and destroyed island. But the Spanish did not know who the Indians were. The Spanish only knew that the Indians were not Christians. And, as time goes by, the definitions of these things will change because the Indians will be given a choice: you will become Christian or you will become dead. And the Indians are forced to learn how to speak Spanish, English, or what ever is the language of the conquest.

In the beginning Indians were nationally Indian. Then, Indians were biologically Indian. As time goes by, most of the Indians are not quite "biologically pure" and after awhile it is hard to tell anymore where the nationality and biology are connected. And so we have this transformation of the identity of the Indian. People have lost track of who the Indians are. Sometimes I think that the ones who have lost track the most are the Indians.

In the 17th century, we saw transformations take place in the English speaking world. The English, by the way, before they were here, were going to colonize Ireland. They sent colonists, to Ireland, just like they would send to North America. And the idea was to get rid of the Indigenous Irish, and take their land, and cut down their woods, and sell all their assets. So they did that, They invaded Ulster in about 1565 and started a war there, which I believe we can all agree is still probably going on. You'll notice that the Irish are physically similar to the English. And the Irish had been Catholic in 1565 for about eight hundred years. But, when they arrived, the English colonists decided that the Irish were not Catholic, and that they probably were not even Christians. They even started to think they were some kind of pagans and then they started accusing them of being cannibals. They did all of this in order to rationalize attacking them and stealing their land. In fact, they were going full blast when the Spanish sent in Armadas in 1588. And, of course, the English beat the Spanish and that meant that the Atlantic would no longer be patrolled by Spanish boats and that English boats could now cross it. And that is why we started having the English colonization in the early 17th century in the Americas.

When the English arrived in the Americas, what they were doing in Ireland is what they started to do here. They take up the same fight. Except here, of course, the Indians were different, they really weren't Christians. This is the main excuse that English speaking people had about why they can take Indian lands and abuse Indian people.

In the 17th century, about the same time, John Locke proposes his theory of "possessive individualism", which goes roughly like this; he says, that with the appearance of money in the exchange system, rational human behaviour will be the organized behaviour which will lead to humans accumulating the greatest amount of money. And possessing-that is what the theory of

"possessive individualism" is all about. And he says this rational behaviour is going to be what will dominate and control human activity in the world. He goes on to state, as an explanation of why there are governments, that there is a social contract that is made. But I think the important thing that we want to understand is that John Locke is the founder of modern European ideas about representative government because of his ideas of "possessive individualism". This theory says that greed is the source of human government.

I was once reading a piece by Vine Deloria which says that the purpose of a corporation is to own a planet. That's about as succinct a description that I can get to the realities of Western legal thinking. Western legal thinking is that rational behaviour leads to money and, therefore, the theory becomes prevalent throughout the West -- especially in the English speaking countries -- that the proper use of land will be that use of land which generates the most money. Subsequently, if a trustee believes that the proper use of land is the use of land that generates the most money, than that trustee will always act to see to that the people who have the most money to put into the development of land, will get the land.

The second part of this thinking, it seems to me, is that "rational use of land" means that there is a land use which has priority over human beings living on the land. The enclosure system in England was based on the idea that there are some ways to make more money using the land than having people live on it. Now tell me, doesn't that mean that, ultimately, the whole planet is going to be transformed for the purpose of making money and humans will have to live in the sea. It means that the priority use of the land is always for money. There is no priority for use of the land for life. No priority for the use of the land for the future. There is no future! There is just this mad and crazed idea that money is rational thinking -- that people who are insanely greedy are the only sane people. That is what that means! Well, I say that the Indians do not agree. The Indians would not agree to transform the planet into a shopping mall!

I think one of the things that the reservation system has done is that it has infused the Indians with the mean-hearted spirit of the Europeans when it comes to being able to reach out to people, to care about people. We don't have that like we had.

I am one of the writers of a book on the subject of origins of a democratic tradition and on the influences of the Indians on the U.S. Constitution. I said earlier that the white people have this imagined community. The United States is an imagined community. When the United States Constitution was written, the Americans said something along these lines: they said, "We are the people who represent the principles of democracy".

When the United States wrote its constitution, it said; "All men are created equal." But we all know that there was slavery in the United States, and that some people were not created equal. It said that all men are endowed with certain inalienable rights; but where were the Indian's inalienable rights? Those rights were not real. It went on and on. Women were not given the right to own property or even to have the rights to enjoy the fruits of their labour; their wages belonged to their husbands or their fathers. It was not a country of equality and it was not a country of liberty. It was a country of cruel slavery and of factory systems and all kinds of horrible thoughts and horrible times that were happening -- a country of peoples in distress. But the Americans believe that they represent democracy. They have represented democracy in upholding some of the most horrible dictatorships on earth. They have represented democracy, and they represent it now, in countries of the world where there is no democracy. The United States arms and protects some of the most horrible processes in the world. If you don't believe me, please pay attention what is going on in El Salvador, in Guatemala, in Indonesia, in many of the nation states of the world which are the allies of the United States. So this ideology isn't real, is it? I mean, it's just an imaginary thing. It is imaginary that the United States is in favour of democracy. They don't care about democracy. But almost every American will embrace that idea.

I mention it because I say that there are in the world such things as imagined communities; that we are all subject to them. So I raise to you some questions that I want people to put some attention to. What is your imagined community? What is your Indian Nation? What does it stand for? What is it about? What are you about? What is real in your life? And how do you connect to reality? You have been presented, since the time you were born, with a whole list of things to believe that aren't real, a whole list of

things to tell you who you are which are all lies. Things that are intended to enable the Canadian Government to more easily integrate you into their process, their process of finding the way to use the land with the highest degree of return on investment.

Who are you? What does it mean to be an Indian? What is this imagined community that we share in the Americas, from the Arctic to the rainforest and to the tip of Tierra Del Fuego. Who are we? What do we stand for? What are we when we are being the best that we can be? And, as much as anything else, what have we lost? What has been brainwashed away from us? What has been taken away from us that leaves us now in this condition that I would describe as a condition of extreme distress. What are the issues that we really need to look into? What is the identity that we need to reconstruct for ourselves? How can we use our imaginations to make our world a better place for us and for the future generations of our people?

The Nazis were the culmination of a thing that I like to describe as the Aryan model of history. There was a century in which the Aryans, the white people, the indo-Europeans. Caucasians, whatever, imagined themselves to be the superior race of the world. They imagined their biology to be superior to everyone else's, their brain capacity bigger than everyone else's. They were smarter, they were stronger, better off whatever it was needed to be, and they called themselves the Aryans. And in their quest for domination they rewrote history. The way they rewrote history was that they discounted all of the contributions and all of the accomplishments of every other people on the face of the earth. They said that the Aryan culture came from ancient Greece and Rome.

So during the time of the crusades one was imposed upon to imagine that one's ancestors were ancient Semitics. And, in the time of the Aryans, one was imposed upon to imagine that one's ancestors were pure blooded Aryans living in Greece who had no interaction with anybody else. And when it got to the Americas, the anthropology in the Americas was built around the idea of the Aryan ascension also. Their argument was that the Indians were one of a stage of social evolution that was going to one day evolve into civilized human beings. Except that we would probably die off first, so they had better study us to see what we were doing during

this stage of development. So anthropology was originally designed to be an argument to sustain the superiority ideology of the West, the Aryan ascension.

When they did this, they wiped out from history all of the Indian stuff. Everything that Indians ever did was wiped out. The Indians were whited out, and are still being whited out. Their history has been distorted. Their philosophies have been demeaned. Their reality has been denied. We are as much the victims of pernicious history as we are the victims of colonialism.

No wonder so many of our young people arrive at this time thinking that to be Indian is to be nothing. Because if you read the history books, it is to be nothing. If you read the anthropology text books, it is to be nothing. So it is being proposed to you; you have been given this ideology. You are to imagine that Indians just sort of sat around here half naked and waited for the sun to go down and woke up the next morning and walked around in the woods. They never had a thought; they never produced a culture. There was never anything here of any substance whatsoever. It is a piece of the ideology, a piece of the propaganda that has been proposed to you. You are supposed to imagine that, and way too many of us do it. Way too many of us imagine that.

You have a right to self-government that you define, that is not defined by the Canada Indian Act. That means you have a right to land separate from Canada's right. Because Canada thinks the only right that you have to land is there until somebody else comes along with a better way to make more money off of it. Why not argue sovereignty? The right of sovereignty means Canada has no trusteeship; you have the right. I know that it is hard when you have been told forever and ever that Indians aren't capable of being responsible for themselves. The trustee thing says that Indians aren't responsible people; therefore, Canada has to think for them. But really it is an insult. It is Canada saying that Indians can't think. That is what they have been saying ever since they got here. They say Indians cannot think because they are not Christian and they have the wrong ancestors.

When Indians relate to Canada, they relate to Canada in one of two ways. There are only two choices. They relate to Canada as distinct peoples who are going to assert political rights, or they relate to Canada as part of the Canadian general population who have only

civil rights. There is no middle ground here. You have a right to a continued existence or you are going to disappear. It is that simple. If you have a right to a continued existence, then you must insist on rights of sovereignty. Because the right to sovereignty is the right to continue to exist. That's all. That is how it works in international law.

I want people to ask themselves some hard questions, and I want to help direct that discussion a bit. The identity that the Americans laid out for the Indians was of the "vanishing American". And they were not passive about them vanishing. They took active steps to see to it: shot them, chased them away, starved them and did everything they could to them. Finally, they tried to put them on reservations. And the Indians, stubborn souls that they were, refused to vanish. But they also sent them among people who would help them vanish in their minds. Schools were brought in. And that is what they were for, people. The schools were to provide two things. One, was to provide you with the ability to do the work that they wanted to hire you to do to become wage labourers. You had to learn how to speak English. You had to learn how to file horses hooves, and all that kind of stuff. You had to learn how to become servants, so they put schools there.

But the other reason for having schools was to teach you that there is an order of priorities, that there is a ranking of worth in people. This ranking of worth was what the schools led you to believe. To believe that some people were smarter than others and, therefore, should have more say in things than others. And that you elect people to speak for you and after you have elected them you have nothing to say about it. That some countries are smarter and better than other countries are. It takes years to teach you that. So they keep bringing you back and they test you; time after time you rank in these tests. Then after awhile you are a "B" student. You're "B" student, because a "B" student means there is an "A" student above you and it means a "B" student should be subservient to an "A" student. It means that your rights have been diminished. This is what the purpose of an education is in Canada. It's a socialization process to brainwash you into their way of thinking.

I propose that we need a new imagination. You guys have to imagine that you are going to be around for three or four generations, or fifty or sixty more generations. People have to start imag-

ining that we are going to continue to exist. Our great Grandparents were told that Indians were going to disappear and they were getting shot at, they were dying from small pox and all kinds of stuff was happening to them, but they didn't believe Indians would disappear. How come the people of this generation think they are going to disappear? How come you guys are lying down and giving up?

Our peoples in the past really put up a struggle. They put up a hard tough struggle. In the United States Indians put up a military struggle. They put up a military struggle for over a hundred years. They fought until they fell down dead, most of them. And we lost most of our population. Now our people have begun to come back a little bit. But they have come back a little bit brainwashed. And I am sympathetic about that brainwashing process, because I went to school as long as any of you did.

I think it is time to start questioning. We need to ask ourselves some hard questions. For me, the first hard question is; who are your ancestors? Are your ancestors nomads in the Arabian desert of two thousand years ago? If those people are not your ancestors then where's your culture? Where is your belief about who you are and what you do? And how do you put that together? And what are our Nations? Are our Nations not real? Are they negotiable? Do we take our Nationhood, and our peoplehood, and our culture and all that is dear to us, and do we put that on the auction block! How many dollars is it worth? How many program dollars? What is it worth?

A people must have a vision of themselves. We must develop a vision, a vision of who we are and of who we are going to be and what we are going to like. Not something handed to us by somebody who hates us. We must have a vision of what is positive and powerful among us. We have to learn to start respecting that which is real about us, in the past, in the present, and for the future. We have to do that.

Then there is the very question that nobody wants to answer, that has to do with our relationships with Canada and United States. Because, ultimately, I say this: the real measure of our relationship with Canada and the United States asks the question, what is going on on the land? Not what is going on in Ottawa. And

what is going on on the land is not pretty, is it? How is what we are doing creating, promoting, and helping that which is going on on the land? And how do we devise a way to see something that we want to see go on on the land?

In my mind, our ancestors lived a very interesting life. No money, no computers, no television sets, none of this stuff. But our ancestors, across the Americas, from the Arctic Circle to Tierra Del Fuego, carried one thing that the whiteman never had; they had communities of people who cared for one another. The whiteman has been here to tell us that that is not important, that what is important is rational thought and making money on land. But on the land in North America people cared about one another. All the ceremonies, brother making ceremonies, sister making ceremonies, ceremonies of family, ceremonies of Clan, ceremonies of Nation. All that stuff made people belong and they cared about each other. They fought for each other. They made a life for each other. And we are losing that, people. We are losing it.

When we look at what is happening, what is important is not what is happening at the board rooms or the council meetings; it is not what's happening in Ottawa. It is what is happening in your homes, what happens with your families. It's what happens in your neighbourhood. It's what happens when somebody floods land that you grew up on and that your grandfather's bones are buried in. It is what happens on the land. Some of our representatives are going around representing our rights and they don't seem to notice what is going on in the land. Too many of us have lost track of what is going on on the land. But it is on the land that your children will live. It is on the land that your grandchildren will live. It is on the land that life is made.

Reality has been presented to you in all kinds of forms. Reality has been presented to you in the form of phony ancestors; in the form of ideologies that made no sense; in the form of biological superiorities that have been proven to be ridiculous. All kinds of things have been presented to you. What is your version of reality? What is your version of what goes on on the land? What is your version of the future? Could we be a loving, caring and sharing peoples again? Could we continue to ask our peoples to sustain themselves as distinct peoples? Can we transform the land into a

thing that supports human life? Can we envision what we are doing here on this continent? Can we take some pride in what we have done in the past?

They are not easy questions and I don't expect people to come up with answers to them in minutes. But I think they are the questions that we need to have. And we need to urge our leadership in the States and Canada to show us more backbone. They are not showing enough backbone. And they are only talking tough to us. If you go talk to them and say: "Hey, you're goofing up," then they will turn around and slap you. But when they are talking to whiteman with a suit on, all of the sudden, they are on their knees and they are just little old Indians again. So I say we need to show more backbone. We need to give our leadership more backbone. And we know how to do that. So anyway, those are my thoughts that I wanted to share with you. - *Thank you*

**Stolen Past
(The Stolen Graves of the Mayans of Guatemala)**

You are the kings of our past
 You are our brilliance
 Like the Pharoahs of Egypt
 You are their equal

You lay in your cast
 Knowing your advancement
 Knowing your script
 Someday we will know all

You have made it first not last
 We will dance
 And honour your crypt
 You make us equal

But now I feel I have been raped
 Someone stealing you
 is stealing our past
 Raping your tombstone

I feel I have been robbed
 Someone killing you
 is putting us last
 by stealing our beloved ones

Turtle-Medicine Told Me

"Turtle-Medicine told me
that there is no end
to truth in this universe,"
said Lone-Hare.
"That's true," replied Coyote.
"But, I thought that it was lies
that were endless."
"That's true too," Coyote nodded
as he began to explain
and went on and on and on and on...

Indian Research on The Snaeporue

When the Snaeporue came to the continent of North America in the late 1600s, the Natives of this land found them to have strange customs and practices.

These people seem to be a boisterous and lively people, always talking and gesticulating in a loud and frenzied manner. They talk incessantly, whether or not they are being spoken to, interrupting the speaker constantly. They are so noisy one wonders if they have success in their hunting expeditions. In reality, one can hear them coming a long way off as they are travelling on the trails.

They build large structures of logs to live in. When these are finished, the women work from dawn to dusk cleaning and washing them, performing the same tasks each and every day. The men insist on tearing up the earth to plant something called 'crops'. The women also work a smaller portion of the earth called a 'garden'. They have also been heard to say that they now own the land where they have planted their 'crops' and built their houses. How can someone own what belongs to everyone?

The men have an abundance of hair on their faces and bodies. The face hair must be scraped off daily, so it must be offensive to some, but some leave it on to grow. They are a light skinned people, and turn red in the sun, which may be why they dress from head to toe in clothing. The women, especially, wear an abundance of clothing, with long skirts to the ground. This must be very hot in the summer and, although probably warm in the winter, very cumbersome in the snow. They never go out without covering their heads with round things called bonnets or hats, which are similar to the fur caps the Natives wear. These are worn everywhere, so they must be quite attached to them.

They have a method of hunting that causes the Natives to be astounded at their stupidity. They hunt deer, moose, or elk, as well as bear, mountain lion and beaver. They do not like to kill smaller animals, but must have large ones, because they prize the head and antlers of the deer species and the skins of the bear, lion and beaver. Many times the Natives have come across the rotting carcasses of the animals the Snaeporue have killed, taking the head and antlers or skins only. These they dress and hang on the walls of their homes or place on the floors to walk on.

The Snaeporue have strange customs and practises. The Natives are concerned for the world as they know it. How long will the land and the animal resources survive if more of these people come and do the same things these ones are doing?



**Princess
Pocahontas
AND THE BLUE SPOTS**

by MONIQUE MOJICA

A compilation of two plays by dynamic actor and playwright Monique Mojica.

"...her purpose is to debunk white appropriation of Native history that romanticize Indian princesses like Pocahontas and ignore the horrific truth of their lives under white domination."—METROPOLIS

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Unbounded Warrant

Take
me away
from
hurt
and pain.
Let
my people
live
their
way.

cut
out
welfare
dominance.
Show
pity
empathy.

Imprisoned
by
our beliefs.
I am
their
voice.
I cry
with pain.
I sing
to free
them.

Spirits
talk.
Tell the
legends.
Show
the path.
Pain is
forever.
I cry.

The
spirit
world
is safe.
No pain,
No prison.
I take
a path,
I enter...

Maka Nagi (The Earth Spirit)

We see the beggar man
Our eyes closed, we try to forget
He sees our pain and forgives us

We see the drunk Native woman
Our step quickens, we know it will pass
She understands our spirit and forgives us

We see the blind man stumble
Our hearts tell us to help
He feels our excuses and forgives us

We see the starving child die
Our money buys us worthless items
The child is gone and forgives us

We see the people who are ruled
Our government tells us it's alright
The people protest and die
They forgive us

We see the land and the water
Our children know the destruction
They try to clean our mess
Again out of love they forgive us

We see the animal spirits
Some are gone, never to be seen again
The eagle cries for those who cannot
The raven laughs at us
He humbles
The salmon swim in polluted rivers
My people eat rotted fish
My people die from booze
My people try
They try to forgive

The Earth, A Woman and Her Baby

Raped, plundered and torn
the Earths screams
go unheeded.
the cement provides no food.
Empty bellies echo
to each other.
A mother and her child,
helplessly ignored.
the strings they hold
cut deep into their flesh
one string is cut
the string swings
the baby cries
drops
and is dead.
the air is full now
with the putrid smell of
ageless rotting flesh
Dampness can almost be touched
It's the warmth of fresh blood
you try to relax
your face...to breathe
- you can't
your throat, your head
pulses.
You open your eyes again.
No words can you speak
there are no words to justify
what just happened
Nothing could - ever.

Sister You Are Mixed Like Me

Sister; you are Mixed like me
holding on to our quarters
in spite of everything
it has been a long journey

sister; you look white to me
but secretly we know
our ancestors features
are apparent
though others cannot find them
in our faces
or physiques

sister; you are a lot like me
but we agree
stereotypes help no one

you've changed your name
to remind yourself
of who you are
to make it so
you'll never forget

everyone asks us to forget
at least for a little while
everyone offers us denial
but we refuse

(you make people pronounce it right too
although the consonants collide)

I grow my hair long
and dig thru the shards of
an exploded family memory
piecing together
with my own sturdy one
something resembling the
absolute truth

sister, you are a quarter like me
and its good to have you
some kind of magic that we were neighbours
during these strange times

sister, you are an eighth like me
you have retrieved that piece of your identity
set it among your other things
you lead publicly now and
this part of you trails behind wherever you go
follows you
like a flag in the wind

sister, you are a sixteenth like me
you want to know if it's ok to say
your mixed heritage
or bi-racial
it's been your secret
all along

now your silence around it grows
more complicated
and purposeful
than you would like to admit
so you're asking me
is it ok to claim it?

I'm telling you yes
and promising you that
it will never be uncomplicated
starting out
or going all the way

I'm holding your hand
I'm smiling your struggle down
you are free now to plot a course home

glad to have been here
at your new beginning
scattered thru bloodlines
we will claw our way back
delicate urgency
homebound and free

Daddy I Wish

Daddy I wish for the
time to turn back
To a time of togetherness
To a time of the things
we missed
Of being able to talk of
father and son things
Oh my daddy
I wish we were able to
share
Of things I yearned to know
Of things that went through
my mind
Of my questions of growing up
Of the changes I was going
through from a child to
an adult

Daddy I wish
For those days when I needed
answers
for those days when there was no
time, to make time
for those days that we could
have sat down and talked
of anything and everything

Of life of love of laughter
of pains of joys
of the sunshine of the flowers
and of the trees and the stars

To talk about the weather
the grown-up things of money
bills shortcomings and of
great things done

Daddy I wish
and long for the sit-down
talks of handshakes and of
man-to-man talk
over coffee over pop
over tea
Of anything that made you and
me happy and to share those
feelings

Those are what I
missed
Of not being able to
talk and share as I
noticed other fathers and
sons share
And a feeling of pain and
emptiness washed over me

But daddy we shared
We shared and talked
of news of helping you
and leading you

We shared of laughter
of fights and how
you felt of your
family your children
and in-laws

There were things that you
told me and no one else
That you trusted me with

We shared non-important things
of cars of prices and of
who was visiting who

On warm summer nights
When we'd sit on the bench
on the hillside
on a plank
on the make-shift chairs
and benches

We shared
I aided you
I talked for you and
helped you in town I
supported you and talked
to you slowly and carefully
as your eyes went and
your hearing faded

Oh my daddy though
there were no father-son
talks as such
As I helped you as you
did with your father
I will cherish
those warm and wonderful
and genuinely once-in-a-time
times with you

So daddy we still shared
and we always will

Nightmare Trails

My ancient land now covered with paved paths
leading nowhere
does a heart fall into dusty dream trails or
follow blindly

for real camp or just another inspirational pit stop
not really meant
just for games as the tires spin by

The hat sitting in corner
middle of nowhere but entry too
A video black filled snap shots
sorting collection digging hole too deep
far below Taber Child
fingers and bone melting
"Toss it in" she says "forget it only wants More"
of what?

pain cracking crystal
watching repeat after repeat

Old yellow diseased bone lying on top of exam sheet
"identify all traits, as many
as anything you can find" they say while
he that voice says "Unwrap Carefully"
"Just a game" they and that voice say
"Just a game to play"

The other way
somewhere
back there
Living room four times story goes
four times to solve puzzle
laughing at stupid no joke
blowing in the trees and prairie wool

Story time begins
laughs one telling, story

more woman sitting on accumulation pile
bundle give a way ancient custom
sold

to one for every occasion
one for pool table
bar
study sitting in middle

surrounded by every occasion
laughing at gossip
nothing better to do
crosses heart to say
"finished just a game"

black night blue moons Dreams
Same one come true
Deep eyes Searching
hungry cat
clawing at Stoic images
Shimmering in the afternoon
Bolting up screaming
Just a dream game

Same Dream Image
fading bit by bit at that Hat
sitting among old bones on a pile of bones
watching
listening to trees artificial grass
waiting to see prairie wool grow
in cement tracks

She
old woman porcupine drew circles
of one trail to the cat's heart
guiding bear disguised as a mouse
Pencil poking out old bones
does this image like games

More Questions Still (For Mishom)

where did you go
when we put you in your land
after singing your spirit
to flight
for two of the longest sunsets
through hovering hurricane night
(leaving me with this feeling
that I only know two things)

I know you were there
you took a picture of yourself
dancing
to your own Honour Song
across those thick air patches
(which hung so heavy)
for me
to witness your departure

but where do you sleep
after gliding weightless
through open skies
and how will your Pipe be passed
if not by your gentle hands

where is the place
that keeps your quiet power now
the power that turned our salt-laden tears
into sparkling liquid passages
running through Clear Water Lake
to cleanse our wounds
(the same power
that changed a world of hate
our vision of this new wasteland
into something of hope
right before our clouded eyes)

and where are your eyes now
those eyes that watched Nations
hurled through boiling oceans
and saw which bubbles to breathe
to guide us homeward

are your eyes on me
more than ever now
disappointed
(even as I write this poem)
while I am searching still
for the wisdom
you silently planted
somewhere
in dark corners
of my hard head

the other thing I know
is that your familiar laughter
is resounding
somewhere in the universe
but I want to hear it
Grandpa
I need to hear it
now

you were old and swift
pouring your spirit wide
over every remaining season
while I was young and slow
your strength blinding me
to your mortality
(dreaming
you were there
for me
forever)

I still listen
for my name to be called out
I long
to Sun Dance in your shadow
but how do we get to South Dakota now
(and I can feel them
down there
dancing strong
this very moment
uncovering old truths
even as I write this poem)

so why
do so many questions
still ring around my ears
after hearing all the answers
spoken between lines
in your clear voice
and how can I still want more
even after all you gave

"Too Red To Be White" - A Song

G C
I'm too red to be white
G D
And I'm too white to be red
G C G
A half-breed, in-breed, no breed I'm called
D G
But I think they're playing a trip with my head
D G
But I think they're playing a trip with my head
G C
I'm too good to be bad
G D
And I'm way too bad to ever be good
G C G
A half-breed, in-breed, no-breed I'm called
D G
But I think they're playing a trip with my head
D G
But I think they're playing a trip with my head
D
A no mans land
C
A no womans land
D C
I don't know what it's called
D C
Am I dirt on the ground or am I trash on the streets
D
A place in between life and death we meet

(CHORUS)

Shirley Flying Hawk d'Maine

G C
Well I'm too Red to be white
G D
And I'm too white to be Red
G C G
A half-breed, in-breed no-breed I'm called

D G
But I think they're playing a trip with my head
D G
But I think they're playing a trip with my head

(MUSIC BREAK****)

D
A no mans land
C
A no womans land
D C
I don't know what it's called
C
A no womans land

D C
I don't know what it's called
D C
Am I dirt on the ground or am I trash on the streets
D
A place in between life and death we meet

(CHORUS) & THEN ENDING WITH:

G D D
But I think they're playing a trip, playing a trip
D G
Playing a trip with my head

Patricia Bennett

Walking Two Roads

It was a beautiful Saturday as the bright sun beamed through the window in Alex's bedroom. He woke up to the sound of someone rustling paper in the next room. He pulled the striped blanket over his head and realized he could not sleep anymore. Taking the blanket off his head, he stared straight up at the ceiling. He rolled over to look at the clock; it read 12:31. His head was pounding from the party the night before. He could remember going to Monty's Pub, a local white hangout, with his friends, Trevor and Ron, who were also white.

He quickly got dressed, throwing on a pair of faded Levis jeans and a T-shirt. He headed straight to the kitchen, grabbing a large glass of orange juice. His brother Andy was sitting at the table, reading the newspaper. Although Andy was two years younger, he was more mature.

Andy looked up and asked, "You going to check out that dinner tonight?"

Alex looked in the fridge, not paying attention to his brother, "What dinner?"

Andy said, "The one at the Friendship Centre!"

Closing the fridge, Alex replied, "Nawh, there's only going to be a bunch of Indians!"

Andy lowered his eyes back down to the article he was reading, not wanting to comment.

"Did anyone phone?", Alex said as he poured himself another glass of juice.

"Yah, your white friend, Ron!", Andy replied, not taking his eyes off the paper.

Alex shook his head and started to mess up Andy's long black hair which was tied back in a pony tail.

"Why don't you get a haircut?" Alex said as he laughed. "What for? So I can be like you and all your white friends!" Andy replied sarcastically.

"What's that suppose to mean!" Alex said as he tried to take a few swipes at his head.

"If you don't know, I can't tell you!" Andy said as he began to stand up to defend himself.

Andy's arm blocked the next hit, accidentally knocking the juice out of his hand. Shattered glass and orange juice spread across the linoleum floor.

When he returned to the kitchen Andy was gone, the paper still open where he left it. The broken glass still on the floor.

Alex started to pick up the pieces, throwing them in the garbage. He took a dry cloth and it immediately soaked up the juice. Alex wondered why Andy was so mad. He shrugged it off and tried not to let it bother him.

The sun was still shining as Alex walked down to the pool hall where his friends usually hung around. Beads of sweat formed on his face as he took a piece of kleenex and wiped it off. Ron and Trevor came out of the building, laughing as Alex walked over to them.

"Hey guys! Whats up? What's so funny!" Alex said as he took off his jean jacket and ran his fingers through his short brown hair.

"Ah, not much!" Ron said as he gave Trevor a knowing look las if something was up, his hands placed behind his back.

"We were just joking around with your little brother."

"Yah, so, and..." He squinted his eyes from the glare of the sun and he knew something was wrong. His friends were always picking on someone.

Ron brought his hands to the front and a chunk of black hair slowly fell to the ground. Alex's eyes went big as Andy came running from the pool hall. His long silky hair was now shorter. Andy and Alex came face to face; their eyes met.

"Well, I hope you're happy; you wanted me to cut my hair!" he said as he pushed past him. Andy started to run in the direction of their house.

He watched his brother, until he turned the corner. His friends continued talking but he couldn't hear what they were saying. His mind was miles away, thinking of what had happened. He looked down as the hair slowly blew down the street. He thought 'how could they act like nothing happened?' His friends were still joking around, not even noticing him. He glanced in the pool hall window but noticed his reflection instead. He dressed and looked like them but he was different. Even though he ignored his Native heritage, he knew that his brother's hair was important to him. He looked at his friends, then back to his reflection. He wasn't white, he was an Indian.

Akak Timisowa

We are losing our identity
we adopt foreign value systems of gain and economic social power.

Maybe this is what Black Elk, a Lakota holy man,
called "walking the Black Road"
every man and woman for himself,
a time of darkness and ignorance,
of confusion and traitors.
We can see this around us
in our people squabbling over funds and positions,
selling out or cheating their brothers and sisters.
As if the threat from outside were not enough,
we destroy ourselves from inside.

It is an ocean out there
and the old style people feel like islands,
surrounded by madness and pitifulness.

There is grandmother whom I visited in the summer
telling with bitterness the drunkenness of her grandson,
who leaves on weekends to drink
and comes back sick.
He and his friends with their loud cars and laughing voices.

She found a beer bottle cap on the ground
and laughing slightly
as if the beer cap was there to agree with her,
she picked it up and tossed it into the bushes.

A time of hardship
each person making a tiny reservation
whose inmate is himself.
We forget the circle and become thousands of reservations.
As if the reservations they put us on were not enough,
there are reservations for our spirits.

Why do I tell these things?
These stories are my burden and they are my strength.
Telling them and thinking about them,
remembering
is a way to understand myself
as part of the history of my People
I can understand,
forgive
get angry
cry.

It's important so I don't forget
and be lost
feeling no identity,
it's not a good way to be.
Also it is a freeing from the chains on my grandfathers,
and their descendants.

With the reserves is a long history of oppression
which each person carries
unknowingly or knowingly.
We have the history of the reserve
in our cultural memory,
in our flesh and blood.

Also the better times
when we were a strong and happy people.

The work of the circle is
breaking through our reserves
which are prisons.
When a person opens himself to his voices,
opens to another
accepts who they are
the Nations' hoop is being mended.

Healer

I walk
By virtue of
En'owkin doorway
Spiritless
Into guidance

Make the grade
Off the street
A lost soul
Asleep
Partial state of adolescence
Alive
In a man's body
Tasteless values
Entertain
A stagnant mind of institutional knowledge

The "Okanagan Stud"
I horde bread
And breathe fashion
Lifeless thoughts
Possess
Polished flesh
Sparkled
By gold jewellery
Add a tie
Enter a "brut" man
Adaptation
Compels
The civilized world

I sit
And wait
One last chance
To drink the remedy
Of "get me a job"

She speaks subtle
And clear
Into shallow ears
Knocking on closed doors
Words
Open windows with ease
Hesitancy
Teased by faith

Tames the "wild"
Gently
It soothes
Mixed emotions
Of identity

Wisdom drips
To fill Half filled cups
Of polluted waters
As screams continue to echo
And slowly fade away

Who am I?
What am I?
Help me!

Therapy cures
Warpness awakens
The dead
Breaks the ice
Enlightens
The superficial
Okanagan voice
Teaches
Shapes and conditions
Cleanses
bath tub rings
treats
open sores
Of inflicted generation patterns

Sacred bead of light
Appears
Filtered
Enough to listen
A mentor
Cultures a protege
Slow down
Now!
Share the message
And write
Arise and awake
And learn everything you can
But remember...
Forget politics
And come to class

"Lim' Lim't Jeannette"

I Dreamed

The turtles were huge and coloured
With a greyish black hard shell
Standing in full strength
On muscular short legs
Halfway in a foot of clear water
I dreamed

Nine women powerfully dressed
In deep red fancy designed coats
All standing in a row
With their black hair tucked in
A strong line of ancestry
I dreamed

The power of our women
They danced in protest
Another blockade
Along a snow tire pathway
Yet past another fresh fence
I dreamed

They sang as well
Facing towards the 10th person
The leader
Dressed in a dark navy
Fancy designed coat
I dreamed

Sitting on a large stump
A Drummer in his not-every-day buckskin
The 11th person-a Traditional Warrior
Drums in unison
To lonely cries of justice
I dreamed

While the women dance Traditional
In Kneehigh buckskin mukluks
Grandfather is being buried again
Relations wear black
Everyone has grieved
I dreamed

Since Grandfather died 3 years ago
The reeds have grown greener
Still a Native child is born
The unmarried parents
Do not want this child
I dreamed

Journey of a Native Child

A Native child growing up too fast and hard
sleeping with 3 other siblings
on a double bed with made up pillows of old coats
sometimes a single bed
or doubling on a bunk bed
waking up on a pissy bed

A Native child being a babysitter so that the parents can go on a
drunk
whether you liked it or not
a house cleaner
expect everything to be cleaned up
or suffer ridicule in front of guests and
mind your opinions or get slapped on your so-called
big mouth--learn of oppression at an early age

A Native child learns to cook quickly
"better cook those spuds before mommy and daddy get home"
is a door opener late at night
whenever they want to come home and sleep from a drunk
or you have to be their audience for them
worrying what to feed your younger siblings
when the parents are not there day to day

A Native child sees and hears
the gossip that daddy is living with another woman
it is okay for mommy to do the same-play the cheating game
alcohol makes everything fun and everyone-as if
'wife-beatings' is a part of our way of life
Husband and Wife should stay together
"because of the kids"

A Native child is taught
there is nothing wrong with more abuse
when mommy takes off
daddy waking you in the middle of the night
"where did your mother go?" repeatedly

with a rifle pointed at their little innocent heads
screaming, "I don't know" fearing their lives

A Native child gets shoved here and there
a visit to your favourite Grandma
turns out to be a permanent one
only place you can be a child
play as a child if only you knew how
you don't have to do any chores
or look after your younger siblings 24 hours a day

A Native child diseased with tuberculosis
sent off to the sanatorium at an early age of 8
coming home nothing has changed
except you find younger siblings have grown too
"no mommy, no daddy" falls on deaf ears
feeling of rejection sets in
"why didn't you come and visit?", no explanation

A Native child gets shoved into another 'visit' again
this time it's to the unfeeling grandmother's home
the Catholic priest comes once in a while
we all have to go with the aunties to church
the priest hands out cans of Klik for the hungry
I ask for one so we can eat meat instead of spuds and bannock
only to be taken away by the vultures (aunties)

A Native child still waiting for the "acting single Parents"
to come and get you at grandmother's home on long days
being treated differently
blamed for your cousins whining cries
being scolded constantly
called "a little bitch or a little bastard"
because your mother is from a different reserve

A Native child in white foster homes
thinking things may be better here-ha!
food and shelter has been paid
yet they put you to do dirty chores

there children are suddenly on vacation
too good for the "chores" because 'brownies are here"
being blamed for crippling a baby chick

A Native child is remembered by the other siblings
who was taken away by "Children's Ward of Social Services"
because the foster parents had no use for a two year old
wondering if she was better off where she was
or what is going to become of us
better still how can they separate us
"I could have helped look after my younger sister, can't I?"

A Native child shoved from school to school
different towns, new faces each year
"are we staying long this time?"
sure learning a lot...of time wasting
ends up at Catholic boarding school
only your little brother but you can't talk or look at him
"FORBIDDEN" to speak Saulteaux or you will get slapped

A Native child is sent 'home' for Christmas from the Catholic school
only to be sent back with no explanation
we know mommy is in the hospital but why?
did daddy hurt mommy again when they were drinking?
the boarding school is closed
so we have to stay at an old couple's place
while they play cards my younger brother lies sick unnoticed

A Native child moves to the city to get away from the "reservation"
only to find out we are poorer there
accessibility to alcohol is easier for parents
have to go on a supplementary budget on welfare
because your father can't support 7 persons with his cheque
oppression is already part of us
no matter where we go

A Native child is an adolescent
growing up in the city
trying to find comfort and love by running away from 'home'
only to find trouble in order to survive the streets
landing in juvenile courts, detention, and foster homes
being a teen age drunk trying to forget your upbringing
finding out 'there is no better there than here abusively'

A Native child is a grown person not finding stability
with the relationship they establish
common-law is easier to get in and out of
can cut out of responsibilities-the Native children-anytime
alcohol has been embedded in you-only sane way to have fun
also take the beatings-it is our native way, only right
no one wants a 'good for nothing lazy alcoholic Indian anyway'

A Native child becomes an understanding adult
through education-is a way out of oppression
has a strong will power to say "NO" to alcohol
stays away from negative ways of 'abusive upbringing'
has learned 'do unto others as you would have do unto you'
unattached from any negative verbal, mental & physical abuse
with a healthy mind to live peacefully & to teach others wisely

Untitled

She is fragile
if she breathes too sharply
or allows someone to touch
she knows
that she can shatter
into a million glistening
pieces
which can pierce
cause damage
to anyone
standing
near

She knows
that shadows
can never be
without light
so candles
from the present
and ones
borrowed
from hopes
to the future
blaze
in every hallway
and entrance
every nook and cranny
to exorcise
shadows
from the past

Casually Speaking

Cautiously drifting in the chaos.
Dodging the cynical arrows of the new breed.
Days pass, nights wander.
With each step, the dream of the seventh generation is illuminated
by chilling, prophetic visions of leaders, past.
Walk softly, brother.
Speak lightly, sister.

Calculatingly observant of the confused masses.
Millions of voices saying nothing, collectively.
Light fades, darkness now.
With each blink of the eye, mother earth screams for rebellion,
father sky yearns to protect, for the future.
Speak lightly brother.
Walk softly, sister.

Carefully touching the attitudes so grey.
Anarchistic reflections aimlessly travelling cement path.
Days pass, nights wander.
With fingers clenched, a fist forms, bred on the heartfelt
hoping eyes of the children, righteous and true.
Walk softly, brother.
Speak softly, sister.

Mountains I Remember

I loved the Kootenays and was content there
midst the towering peaks
sculpted by erosion
knowing even they would be levelled
as all are humbled eventually

Through time such redundance must be spoken
and memories preserved in rocks
fade under a system of weather patterns
so unpredictable that we are amazed it works

The goats know these things
showing it in their stares
Circumspect and vigilant they cruise
over each mountain path
limber and sure as dancers

Later we missed the ocean
maybe because we'd known it longer
wishing for the place where life began
billions of years ago

Still I recall looking down
sensing order even in things
I feared the most
While under the earth's surface
constant turmoil lurkes
earthquakes and volcanoes
occur in clearly defined paths
and I understood that a matrix of patterns
exists throughout the earth
connecting all that is

Feeling a part of
not separate from
I trusted in those mountains
loving more than I could remember
and fearing less and less



"Just Say No"
Artist: David Neel

CONFRONTATION

"Indigenous Reality in the Twenty-First Century"

If we, as Indigenous people, believe what white people try to tell us we will be extinct by the 21st Century.

We hear a lot about the past; we deal with the present every day, and too often we are told how to prepare for the future by outsiders who don't really know us. The history that is taught about Indigenous Peoples to the majority of people in Canada, including ourselves, is a white creation full of lies that reinforce white values, white images and white interests.

BIG LIE #1: History starts in 1492 when Columbus "discovered" America.

BIG LIE #2: Indigenous Peoples have no history before 1492 (that is, "prehistory").

BIG LIE #3: There are no "'real" Indigenous Peoples in the present; they exist only in the past.

BIG LIE #4: Indigenous Peoples "immigrated" to North America from Asia across the Bering Strait. (This lie says that we are just immigrants like anyone else; that we have not been here since time immemorial).

BIG LIE #5: Anything good about Indigenous cultures and traditions exists only in the past tense. (History tells us, for example, that Indians **were** a noble people, **were** great environmentalists, and **had** a holistic world view.)

White society uses these lies to rationalize the colonization of North America by denying that the present generations of Indigenous Peoples are the original people of this land, and that as such we have special rights.

We must learn to recognize these lies and counter them at a very young age. If we want a safe and secure home for the future generations we must dispel those lies by changing the history books,

by making sure we know what is reality and what is a lie, and by teaching the truth, as we see it, to our children. This is how we will take control of our own future.

We, as Indigenous Peoples, exist in the present as distinct peoples with distinct worldviews, distinct histories and distinct rights. We are what we are, and we must base our future development on that reality.

Inter-Cultural Education

Inter-cultural education is a big issue in today's society. It is an issue because more and more non-whites are beginning to think about their futures and the goals which they would like to achieve.

Sometimes an inter-cultural education can pose problems for the young adults who are attending white schools. This experience may be hard at times, but somehow we have to learn to cope with it.

One of the biggest drawbacks with going to high school is racial discrimination. When Native students first go to a school, pressures that they've never had before are placed on them. The feeling that they're being discriminated against is hard on them. By staying in school, students become better known by other students, become more comfortable in the school, and very often do better in their school work.

The drop out rate of Native high school students is very high. This is a major problem when talking about inter-cultural education. If you are not there, you cannot be educated. Students find that problems at home force them to quit. When they fail classes, they become frustrated and can see no alternative except quitting. Many students, especially where I come from, have long, tiring, monotonous bus trips to make from home to school and back again and simply cannot handle it. There is another group of students who have developed bad attitudes about their lives. Some don't have parents to guide them and so they adopt the values of peers. These attitudes are responsible for people not completing school.

School life in a high school isn't all that bad. It can have its ups and downs. One good thing that can eventually occur is that we, the Natives, can have a great opportunity to live and learn more about the other side. When I say "other side", I am referring to the whiteman's way of life; the way they dress, the way they communicate and, especially, the way they view us Natives. The more we understand cultures other than our own, the more we are able to control our own futures. It is very important that, as Native Indians, we must learn the ways of the world around us in order to have a better lifestyle for ourselves and families.

The more we Natives begin to communicate and associate with whitemen, the more we become self-confident and also start to let others know more about ourselves.

By attending school, Natives can get a better idea of why education is so important. They learn how to cope with many different situations and how to handle life better. Inter-cultural education is a first-class ticket to a satisfying future. By blending the Native with non-native ways, both groups gain. As Natives, we cannot survive in a world without knowing and using the best of both cultures. By getting a good education we have so much more chance of succeeding in a world where so many fail.

There are many events from the past and in the present that show people that the future is ours. Native issues have made big news in recent times. The most publicized event was the Oka Standoff in Quebec last summer. Natives are also fighting for land they know belongs to them in British Columbia. Southern Alberta Natives refused to allow the Old Man River to be dammed in order to save some of their land. These events really told people that Natives care and truly want to build a future for themselves and their families. What these Natives did is something which should have been done a long time ago. They actively tried to change their lives for the better and this is good. But no lasting changes will be accomplished with the use of weapons and violence. The futures of young Native people lie in education because we must fight for our causes using not weapons but the knowledge acquired through education. Many more young Native people are finishing high school and going on to universities and other post-secondary institutions. These people hold the future Natives in their hands. Things will be changing quickly in the next few years because of the dedication and hard work of Native people who are educated. By encouraging education and supporting this new generation of ambitious young people and by working hand -in-hand with those of us who have traditional knowledge, we can make tremendous changes, changes which will be positive and lasting. At this time in our history, now, we can truly say that the future belongs to us.

But pretty soon we will have to pay for them. The only way to survive in today's world is to get as much education as you can. To get a decent job now-a-days a person must have a minimum of a high school diploma, which is a lot.

I am in an inter-cultural school, where sometimes it can be very rewarding and at other times can be very disappointing, but I've been able to cope with it so far. Right now I am in Grade Ten and am pleased with the progress I have made. Sure, at times I feel like giving up but, then look at all the unfortunates around me and say to myself, "Do I want to fail or succeed in life?" As I say this to myself I think of all the people who have failed in life and ask myself, "Will I ever become like that?" Saying that to myself, it makes me want to try even more and makes me want to succeed even more in life and in my future career.



"Shadow Dance #10"
Silvergelatin Print
by Glenda J. Guilmet

What Old Man Magpie Said To Old Lady Crow

Old Man Magpie boasted to Old Lady Crow of how beautiful his voice was compared to hers. He went on to brag that he could even sing her songs better than she could. She responded by saying, "It isn't the sounds which are important, but the meaning of the messages which are important."

Old Lady Crow must have had the astuteness to foresee what was about to happen in the literary world. In the last decade numerous writers from different ethnic origins in this country have emerged to spread their words throughout the universe.

Two of these writers are: W.P.Kinsella, the author of many stories including Dance Me Outside, who is Canadian white; and Jeannette Armstrong, author of the well known novel Slash, who is Okanagan Native born. The two writers have one thing in common --- the beautiful sounds they express through their work. Something significant in their works is that both writers are distinct voices in their genre of writing. They focus their work on contemporary Native style as is evident through the development of their characters. Though both writers focus on Native style, there is a distinct contrast in 'voice' between Anglophone Kinsella and Native born Armstrong.

W.P.Kinsella's pace throughout his work is fast moving. This genre of writing is incorporated by many Anglo writers and is used primarily for entertainment. Action oriented novels very seldom draw the audience to clear resolution but are effective in preventing boredom. Kinsella's focus may be Native based, but unlike Native writers, his characters are disconnected from their environment. He has developed a knack for mimicking (sometimes to extremes) the turn-of-the-century broken English/Indian lingo, which he uses throughout his novels. He achieves this through dialogue and scenes created for his characters such as Silas Erminskin and Silas' buddy, Frank Fencepost, who are central characters throughout Dance me Outside.

Kinsella writes, 'I am used to Papa get drunk, but I guess I hope Wilbur was not the same. We a long way out of town when I remember we forgot Wilbur's Hat.' (33) 'We hardly get off the bus downtown when Frank's boots with metal heels slip on the slushy

sidewalk. Lucky he fall backward cause he slide abut 50 feet on his back in the wet with booby held tight to his chest. He is some mess when he stop. A white man helps him up. "You drunk, or what?" the guy says to him ' (52).

It is a type of tired battered Hollywood imagery, created for entertainment, but reflects subtle white supremacy. Worse, those mimic skills lead naive readers to believe that his work is uniquely Indian.

On the other hand, Jeannette Armstrong, who is uniquely Indian, posits a much more realistic view of Native voice. In Slash, her pace is much slower. She moves through each chapter slowly to emphasize particular points to be learned. She develops the character Slash to prove that human beings belong to someone, somewhere, and something. Armstrong creates him as an entity connected to family, friends, community and environment. She presents reservation life as it actually is.

She writes, "Mom was waiting inside. She hugged me real hard then she said, 'Tommy, how come you're so skinny? I cooked some deer brisket just the way you like it and some biscuits. We were waiting all evening for you. Uncle Joe told us you were coming. He had a dream. Eat now, Tommy. We'll catch you up on everything.'" (79) This particular scene with its dialogue depicts Indian people as every day normal, speaking people, neither pretentious nor superior to anyone else. Jeannette Armstrong does not need to create elements in voice to manipulate her audience for the purpose of entertainment. She uses the natural voice she was born with.

W.P.Kinsella is no match for Jeannette Armstrong despite his attempt to reflect the true Native 'voice'. Cultural uniqueness is something people are born into. It is not something that needs to be strived toward. The voice of Old Lady Crow clearly reveals she knew what she was talking about in her gentle response to Old Man Magpie.

Suicide Kiss

Judas, will you ever give up
what never belonged to you?

Your twilight followers smile
at your raised hand, as you
lift the sledge hammer
ready to smash another rusty spike
into my people's rawhide layers.

I am convinced that your only salvation
occurs at the precise moment
your white hooded cross-burners
murmur at the sight of our blood;
more victims hung and nailed,
some locked behind iron bars and cement.

But in the crowd, your feeble voice
hollered "rape"
through the crackle of wood burning
on a star lit night:
it was an ordeal you took great pride in
because I heard you thank the same god
that listens to your 2 am calls...
it is the very same one
that taught you to pluck magic from your mother
and now she is dying in the dark:
THAT
is legal murder!

On the death of my Mother
I laid a live yellow rose next to the black one
you laid on her grave;
I was told, then, that
love and hate are the same thing:
and at my rawhide layers breaking point
I will return
the same love or hate
you have blessed my Mother with.

And who will you pray for then?

Professional Indian

A professional Indian?
A professional Indian!
No, not the kind you want.
No, not an ancient brave
dancing war dances
yelping stone-faced
around rock-bedded fires
and smelling like poplar smoke

I am not the museum Indian
adorned in beads and leathers
freely weaves to grass dance songs
just before the forty-niners

Back at Weasel Tail,
She asked me to Owl Dance
but changed her mind
when I stood up in my three piece suit:
I was insulted!!
I wanted pay...a horse... land.

Queenie stole my land...
Indian men spoke kindly of her
while wrinkled Indians watched
their prophecies unfold:
1) Asian people
dig thud nail ties

2) Their words
"as long as the sun shines...
as long as the sun...
as long as the...
as long as...
as long...
ass..."

"Making love between the fine print,"
my Grandma said,
"but they shoulda at least kissed us
before they screwed us."

Damn old fool!
What does she know
after twenty years of being dead ?

ask again...
ask again...
ask again...

Well, what kind of professional
would listen to a dream-speaking dead Indian?

Professional Indian, my ass

An Account of Tourist Terrorism

History is just used pampers on the
grave of Sitting Bull at Yankton but
because of crushed beer cans, obvious
Lakota visitors to this historic site
know what is under the earth, the lake,
the black cook who died the same day.
McLaughlin buried both in the fort
with quicklime to foul up those Mobridge
businessmen's rendezvous with the right
bones to connect to make one skeleton.
What is history and what did happen
is a deeper question than tourists
dumping dollars in an empty memorial.
The words not written on the plaque or
between the lines are ghostwritten graffiti.
Glow in the dark instructions if you dare
to landfill history, deposit postcards,
return artifacts, souvenirs and the clutter
of plastic tomahawks buried in our minds.
Indian raids are nothing in comparison.
Tourist terrorism is ceremony without fuss,
and who takes the bother stops desecration.

High-tech Teepee Trauma Mama - A Song

Chorus:

I'm a high-tech teepee trauma mama
a high-tech teepee trauma mama
plastic replica of mother earth
plastic replica of mother earth

Souvenir Seeker

You may think you can buy me
Cheap!
Plastic woman
Long black hair
Silent.

Chorus.

Souvenir Seeker

Hang me from your keychain
Watch!
While I dangle in distress
Feel! Like you know our way.
Come on! Let's walk.

Chorus

I am not
I repeat
I am not
an American movie
nor am I related to Running Bear.
I come from a place.
Yeah, somewhere just north of here.
I bet you met an Indian
who came from there once.
Am I right?

Chorus

Souvenir Seeker

I know you are not a bad person
free me from this plastic.
Come on! Let's talk!

Trinkets may have bought our past
but now our eyes are open.
We can see a long way
very far ahead.
Come on! Souvenir Seeker
free me from this plastic.

Chorus

Journey Toward Possibilities

Nothing should be left to an
invaded people except their eyes for weeping.¹

Like Mary
My mother and father created
An Immaculate Conception
Well almost
Who in his right mind would think
He was immaculate
There are plenty of souls out there
Who will make such a confession
Woebegone to this vulnerable world
Nothing immaculate in what I
See, hear, feel, taste, or smell
But I have always expected immaculateness
Ever since being able to comprehend
My fellow man's outpourings
But as these years pass by
My great disappointment is still endless
Man's penchant for immaculate discovery
In human beings will always fail miserably
Simply because he is doomed to a to a
Finite failure
Civilization in its very nature is violent
And we are a small portion of its victims
Although it can be said that
Because of man's violent nature
We as a distinct entity
Have survived obliteration
For now
Manipulation has played a central role
Within our side of the world
The circumpolar world

But to manipulate men, to propel them
towards goals which you - the social reformers -
see, but they may not, is to
deny their human essence,

to treat them as objects without
will of their own, and, therefore,
to degrade them.²

Our homelands have been stamped
With these very words
For as long as dominators
Of dominant societies
Have dominated us
Unfortunately for the foreseeable future
These very words will remain
Comfortably cemented
Unless a new era dawns
In our circumpolar world
A yearning not quite like any
Other hunger is growing
Along with a desire
To break away from the grasp
Of colonialism
So we may once again squire dignity
Within our hearts and minds
And replenish our souls with pride
Until we are given back our
Lost pride and dignity
We shall drape indignation
On all those who
Enjoy our friendliness
And the splendour of our homelands
Until these chains tied
Around our will are removed forever
We as a collective
Will continue to be denied
Our freedom
Allow us to imagine that
Wonderful state of mind
When ecstasy runneth over
Our goose pimples
In the final realization
Of our greatest desire

To be freed from
Our dominators' cage
The hand that may well
Secure our sacred freedom
Is contained in the
Embodiment of a new
Arctic Policy
For our circumpolar world
Our greatest hopes
Have found a perfect
Guilded foundation
On which to build a protective existence
As a distinct entity
In this global cultural mosaic
Since many of our cherished dreams
Still fade unfulfilled
We are determined as ever
To embark on a journey
Toward possibilities
For our people
And our homelands

Godspeed

¹Prussian chancellor, Prince Otto Von Bismarck, late nineteenth century

²Sir Isaiah Berlin, Fellow of all souls, Oxford University

Letter Home
Christmas, 1990

"I pay rent on a run down place.
There ain't no meals
But there's plenty of space
In my heart....
The heart that you own."
.....Dwight Yoakum

Dear Maybeline,

My old man is off to the day labor pool. At least it will get him out of my hair and give me a chance to saw off the fingernail I broke yesterday trying to get a letter off to you.

I am doing well enough, despite an attitude problem. I get little pissed off at the half-wits at the food kitchen. Like I enjoy sittin' next to a bunch of freaks? I've decided that a college education and light skin do not save one's ass from a phony cast of characters.

A woman who sounds like a stand-in for Margaret Thatcher; a make believe workaholic who burnt out on the Stock Exchange; a former Hollywood producer; a disenchanted Matron of the Arts; and a guy who chants matras from outer space, are but a few Maybelline.

Leo....that's what I call the big guy who smokes the streets in a white van...is always smiling like he knows what everybody's thinking.

"We're all here temporarily."

And there's always the "wash out" at the end of the table, or the bar, or hanging onto a parking meter. This one gives long, drawn out sighs and wishes we would all drop dead and leave her alone.

I don't care if I'm here forever. I don't care about the Great White Hunter's wife who drives the hell out of her cadillac. I don't care who the next chair of the English Department will be. I don't care that I didn't win the Belle Bonnet Book Award this year. I don't care that Janet Jackson is prettier than me.

I never got mad when Charlene spent hours putting on her face before going to the bar. Or the way she drank Kool-Aid screwdrivers. Or even the fact she had to turn tricks once in a while. It was the way she let her girl hang out with her when she did.

Why.....Charlene was one of my best friends.

It's just that I thought Charlene, of all people, would remember how it felt to get tossed out of bed by a drunk. And have to listen to hours of fake moans, waiting for the last drawn out expression of love.

"Heya....it's Christmas! Let's pretend he's Daddy."

So what if I'm a little cynical. I hate the shit on the radio that's called Hard Rock, where the hero saves the entire universe and gets blamed for being a Satanist.

So I'm a little sick with it. I enjoy taking the alley to the filling station for a pack of Generics. Gives me a chance to see what really filthy people throw out in their trash.

So get off my back, Maybelline.

If Leo sneaks up behind you and dares you to make "just one more goddam crack about somebody lookin' for a handout" it's no skin off my teeth.

What about the time you kissed some chicken shit undergraduate's ass because his uncle had money? Then sneered at the Pell Grant recipient from Okmulgee you plagiarized? Or when you cheated on that grant proposal saying you were an understudy for Vine Deloria? Or secretly admired Oliver North for pulling the whole thing off?

I think I'll try finding a "Political Philosopher" and ask her "if war is economically based, how come they aren't coming down and enlisting us?"

"Because we're outside the margin, stupid. You know.... like footnotes at the back of a book."

YEAH, MAYBELLINE WE'RE ALL UNMARKED GRAVES AT McALESTER PRISON, LOCKS LEFT TO PICK BY SOME WARDENS RIGHT HAND MAN. WE'RE ALL THE GREAT FANCY DANCER IN THE SKY WAITING FOR THE MUSEUM TO OPEN.

One day we will be released Maybelline. We will walk the shores of the Arkansas, baptized in the glory of our opinions, born again as the biggest fools on the planet.

"If the political barometer is based on how old the sandwiches are they hand out, it looks like war for sure."

Which only means less mouths to feed.

So Maybelline, gotta sign off. Our man James Brown is planning on entertaining the troops. Now there's a skin who don't forget his roots.

Take care and dig deep. If your last penny is Canadian just remember....things could be worse.

Mon-in Wa-he-he
Charlotte DeClue
The Poet

PS.....Leo wants a low-rider for Christmas.

Poem for Duncan Campbell Scott

(Canadian poet who "had a long and distinguished career in the Department of Indian Affairs, retiring in 1932," The Penguin Book of Canadian Verse)

Who is this black coat and tie?
Christian severity etched in the lines
he draws from his mouth. Clearly a nobleman
who believes in work and mission. See
how he rises from the red velvet chair,
rises out of the boat with the two Union Jacks
fluttering like birds of prey
and makes his way towards our tents.
This man looks as if he could walk on the water
and for our benefit probably would,
if he could.

He says he comes from Ottawa way, Odawa country,
comes to talk treaty and annuity and destiny,
to make the inevitable less painful,
bearing gifts that must be had.
Notice how he speaks aloud and forthright
(This or Nothing.

Beware! Without title to the land
under the Crown you have no legal right
to be here.)
Speaks as though what has been long decided wasn't.
As though he wasn't merely carrying out his duty
to God and King but sincerely felt.

Some whisper this man lives in a house of many rooms,
has a cook and a maid and even a gardener
to cut his grass and water his flowers.
Some don't care, they don't like the look of him.
They say he asks too many questions but
doesn't wait to listen. Asks
much about yesterday, little about today
and acts as if he knows tomorrow.

Others don't like the way he's always busy writing
stuff in the notebook he carries. Him,
he calls it poetry
and says it will make us who are doomed
live forever.

City

My head aches
from all its recorded thoughts
 mindless history
 scapes of rolling concrete

My memories
are of other people's memories
 now in books
 and of other's short spoken words
They are of tall and powerful
WARRIORS
and now 100 years later
(in the city)
slouched near voiceless
near unheard
The City
paternal government
the death of our people

"Now death to D.I.A."

Indian Agent's ghosts
are in my dreams

"Home is where your neighbours are", He said

They're all in the City now
Breeding and dying
Laughing and crying
All of my Clan
in between the buildings and the alleys
Looking for themselves
Looking for family
Even looking for our dead
whose graves have been long gone
and robbed

City

Do I look for my family
in your phone books?
Are they even here?
or are they dead?

Do I walk to my Reserve
now empty
with old totems
tall grass
and darkened nights?
Nights so silent
singing and drumming
can be heard
All sounds of the past
when we were
and thrived

Aboriginal Original - A Song

I am a certain kind of person. An Aboriginal Original. Though some treat me like a criminal, I have had my chance. Chances my type rarely get. Not to worry.

The way I am isn't always the way I want to be. I haven't had it easy. Don't feel sorry. We have all had our struggles, as others appoint their form of punishment for those just like me.

We are never the same. My type is different, a mysterious sort. Yet we are a threat, always have been and always will be. I'm not mistaken. Some rights for Umm-m you and no rights for Umm-m me. Right? Ah ah. No Our questions are alive and so am I. Yet you continue to evade what we have to say.

We all have a right to ask? And we all deserve an Answer.

AN ANSWER TO OUR PRAYERS. No matter who we pray to or not pray to.

Imagine what we all would be like if we all did as we were told. Should we all be like you? You the man who takes all he can. From Aboriginal girl to Aboriginal land. You polluted our minds with your social ways, to the point. Aboriginal still suffers from things still being done. It's all in fun.

Now the land is suffering too. Mother earth is hard to find. She is polluted with your kind's progress. Your kind's progress causes mother Earth to regress. We gave you an inch and you destroyed for miles and miles and miles. Still you take for miles and give us nothing but an inch.

Where do we stand? Where do you stand? You're standing on aboriginal land. Where do we stand? On the front line of the barricades?

Put It On

I am going
to put it on

wear my old coat
this day

my sleeves
have dried

snot patches
on the side

tear stained pockets

lined with lint

clutters of the past

toting shrivelled up
toilet paper

from soaking up
the memories

perhaps it is
not the right
colour and will
never be

the disdain of
society's fashions

this coat was
passed on to me

a grandmothers legacy

with pride I stride
that dirt road

It may have a few
buttons missing

the wind might
howl through
threadbare seams

yet it holds me together
perhaps it has
missed a few of moms wash days

But I am going to put
it on

my lapels may be
thick and hard

from days
spent surviving

cold and sneering weather

and when it has served its
purpose

I will store it

and adorn my back
with fine new
threads

till then they will
know me by the
colours of my coat

For Ola

Spinning
 silken threads
 she stretches
 her arachnid legs
 around the
 network of
 lobbyists
 weaving cocoons
 to create eggs
 for conscience minds
 visualizing
 the web
 as struggle.
 her spinning
 becomes difficult
 she finds them
 hidden
 covered with
 dust
 in empty jailcells
 or a bureaucrat's
 filing box
 she spins
 interlacing
 twisting
 winding
 a particular pattern
 showing a
 complex plot
 that
 spiderwoman
 is free
 from
 narrow minds
 she weaves
 in favour of social
 political
 change
 linking
 an intricate cobweb
 across
 178 this nation

Time

That spring:
 She was Earth, he the sower.
 It was their ancestors' land.
 Sky, water and winds
 were their guidance.
 Led into peace
 a strong nation
 destroyed by new ways.
 Now, in a crumpled world,
 they can no longer plant and harvest
 for seeds have turned
 and land is rotting.
 Turn to the elders
 again
 or strength and pride will never
 Return.

Faces

Warm
Bronze
Joyous
Proud

Contorted
Changing
False faces

Pale
Cold
Pained
Shamed
Silenced

Acquiescence
Anger
Resistance
Acquired knowledge

Voices in
Proud
Joyous
Bronze
Warm
Faces

Eagle

Glowering you come
till I feel you soon
will pierce between
my eyes

What right you eagle
to frighten and regard
with such animosity

I know the way
your power came
the way you suffered
and endured

They left you for dead
and laughed at your carcass
vultures circling overhead

No one wept at your demise
You went to the land of the dead
and returned

In your towering glory
and pinnacles of power
perhaps you glower
from what you know

Walk On

Tread softly
over the brown earth
tread softly
and walk on

past confusion's bitter home
past whispered gossip
or insults shouted

walk on
past these
the hurts of others
they will find a balm
let it not be
your soft dreams borrowed
but walk
gently
on

**A FIRST NATIONS FALL
AT FIFTH HOUSE PUBLISHERS**

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

Conversations with Canadian Native Authors

Hartmut Lutz

Eighteen Native authors discuss their writing, backgrounds, philosophies, and politics.

KÔHKOMINAWAK OTÂCIMOWINIWÂWA

Our Grandmothers' Lives, As Told in Their Own Words

Freda Ahenakew and H.C. Wolfart, eds. and trans.

The stories told by seven elderly women provide insights into the lives of several generations of Cree women.

THE BOOTLEGGER BLUES

Drew Hayden Taylor

A new play about love, family, and what to do with too much beer by "one of Canada's leading Native dramatists". (*Montreal Gazette*)

**THE TREATIES OF CANADA WITH THE INDIANS
OF MANITOBA AND THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES**

Alexander Morris

First published in 1880 and reprinted in its original format. Any serious discussion of treaty issues today should include a read of Morris' text.

KEEPERS OF THE ANIMALS

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'Aboriginal Youth : Warriors In The Present Day'

Excerpts From Keynote Address

National Aboriginal Youth Conference

February 11, 1989

Ottawa

I am very honoured and humbled to share my thoughts with you. I offer my thinking with this in mind: I ask you to look from your own perspective at the words that I have to offer you.

It is a really, really frightening future in front of us. I want to tell you that there are some realities that have occurred out of our past and in our recent history. Realities that we need to look at and that we don't have answers for. In order to look at the world today we are relying on this generation. We are looking at your responsibility and we are saying that we didn't have the answers. Maybe if we look at some of those realities that we blinded ourselves from, there is a chance and a hope.

Sometimes we look at ourselves and we see what our skin colour is, and we see what our families are, and we see the conditions in our homes and in our nations, and we can go across this country and we can see similar kinds of conditions. We hear a lot of different points of view about the kinds of things that we should be considering and how we should prepare ourselves. These are different points of view that are told to us. Understand the whiteman's world, work it in it and excel in it and survive in it. You need their education. Understand the traditional point of view, be able to understand your culture, your values, go that way - forget about the white man's world. Some people talk about going down the middle of the road saying, understand both worlds, understand and be able to choose your way through those worlds. Those are the kinds of things that are being said to the young people. By Elders, by parents, by teachers, and by organizations that talk to the Youth. At some point we need to look at reality, to take reality and understand what is happening. What is happening to our people? What is happening to our people in relation to other peoples in the world? What is going on in our nations right now? What are the realities? Are we doing better than we were? Are we doing worse than we were?

When we look at the young people, at the age group that most of you are in here, the realities are that the suicide rate is

twenty times the national average. The statistics on the kinds of violence that come out of drug and alcohol abuse, are as bad. What that tells me is that I can't fool myself. I look at the Youth and I see what is happening. There is really a grave situation in terms of the despair, the frustration, the bitterness, the confusion, mostly the anger. When I look at that I think one of the things that we are not doing, one of the things that we are not doing as educators, as leaders, as mothers, as fathers, as parents, is that we are not looking at the realities ourselves. We are not facing the reality of what the situation really is.

We have been trying to work within the structures. We have been trying to find the best way to cope with life, and making great compromises in our lives. Making great compromises in our communities. Making great compromises in our Nations and we are continuing to do that. The whole attitude goes back to what I call a "colonized mentality". We became colonized through brutal and coercive force, through various methods at the beginning. Indian Nations came into contact with non-Native and were willing to share and cooperate and to treat these people as guests. In our area our people found those first explorers starving and they pulled them through the winter. Not too many years later there was confrontation and a lot of harsh things were done to our people.

You see, when this country was being colonized, the reason was based on selfishness, greed, power, and the need to control, the need to use the resources off the land. That is the attitude they came to this country with. The attitude that this is a country with vast resources, vast potential and they could control it. The thoughts were to use the resources to better their standard of life for themselves. They must have said, "Oh incidentally, some people live there but they may not even be people. They may not even be human. They may not even have souls." There were great debates in Europe at that time about whether Indian people had souls or not.

At some point they set up treaties so that the kind of killing that was continuously happening, the kind of open warfare would not be harsh on their people. But if you look at the attitude, it was one of supremacy, one of saying that we have the right to come to this land and do whatever we choose. We have the right to subjugate these people, coerce these people, enforce our thinking on these people.

We have that right because we are better, because we know more, because we are more highly civilized. That is the basic attitude. That attitude has not changed. That attitude is still the attitude that keeps every Native person under their control and under their power. That attitude is what the whole government system is all about, the whole bureaucracy is about, the Department of Indian Affairs is about, the elective Band council systems are about, those laws and regulations are about and what those statistics are about.

We are talking now about a systematic method of genocide that uses more subtle tools than it did two hundred years ago. And systematic and methodical it is. Our people, every day, everywhere are being told, "You are not good enough. You are not valuable as a Native person. Your language, your culture, your history, your customs, your ceremonies, none of those things are valuable, even the way you look is wrong. Your skin colour is wrong. The way you dress is wrong. Things you eat are wrong. And in order to be any kind of a human being, any kind of real person, you have to dress a certain way. You have to look a certain way. You have to pitch your voice a certain pitch because if you sound too Indian, if you look too Native, then there is something wrong with you. You are not going to be able to succeed to do anything. You'll never be any good at anything. You're ignorant. You're a savage. You're primitive. You always will be as long as you're Native.

That is the subtle message. Sometimes it is more than subtle. It is blatant in the legislative process, bureaucratic processes, in the instruments they use in the schools.

The more subtle ways we see it and feel it is from ordinary people on the streets: clerks in stores, waitresses in restaurants. You know the attitude I'm talking about. You know the look in the eyes. You know the tone of voice that tells you, "You're down there, you'll never be equal, you'll never be the same as me". That attitude continues to ravage our communities and ravage our people. That attitude I see as the main tool of genocide. It is either you become like them or you're nothing. You might as well die. You might as well commit suicide, be a drunk, or whatever. Because if you're anything else, then you're ignorant, you're savage, you're valueless. The thing about that is that they have every way of making sure you understand that you know your place. That you can only succeed if you become like them. That you can only be valuable if you become like them. What I say to that is that it is one of the biggest lies of all history.

It is one of the tools that has been used over many different cultures to terrorize people, subjugate people, assimilate people. That attitude is there in Canadian policy today, all levels of government today, all the legislative processes of today.

You have to look at reality. Every step made always has to somehow work in their systems, their bureaucracy, within their rules of the game. We bend all the time. We compromise to fit our thinking, somehow, so that we have a little bit of freedom. The reality of that situation is that every time we do that - every time we give, every time we compromise - we are giving up a bit of what we ourselves are as Native people. What we were created to be as Native people, nothing can prove to me that one nation is better than the other, that one nation is more supreme than the other.

Go back to their aristocratic system, look at it. Right back to the days of pharaohs, up through the English system, the European systems. Somebody up there had control and power and a whole lot of people down there didn't have any control or power over their lives. In many cases, those commoners, peasants, had absolutely no way to feed their children, their families; they ended up having to steal and rob. People were beheaded in that system because somebody had said, "You don't have the right to eat. The right that even the deer and animals have. You don't even own one inch of land. That's the king's land. That is the government's land." That attitude, that system, was brought over here. Our attitude, our understanding is that every person has the same right as every other living thing to breathe, to live, to eat, to have the gifts that the Creator gave us, that were for free.

Nobody owns the air. We all have right to breathe the air. The air is no different than the earth and the things that are on the earth. When you start taking the kind of thinking that says that isn't so, you start compromising your thinking and bending, you start saying, "Well, these guys do have more of a right. We have to just argue with them so we have a little bit more land, a little bit more right." It becomes dangerous. It comes to a point that somebody in that hierarchical system has all the rights and you have no rights as a human being.

As the populations grow, as the population in North America and the world grows, land gets less, resources get less, jobs get less, it becomes critical. Right now it is quite critical, but if you look at it fifty years down the road we are talking about straight survival.

It is about an age when land and resources are going to be in very, very short supply. We can then see that something is really wrong with that thinking. Something is really wrong with that process.

We are talking about the general population in North America needing to understand what creation is all about, what respect is all about, what cooperation is all about, what working together is all about. Native people had ways, which provided answers for thousands of years. We are now losing many of the answers. We are getting sucked in, getting assimilated. We are being told our way is valueless. We cannot afford to believe that. We can't afford to sit back and say that our people are not dying off.

We cannot afford to say that everything is all right, that there is no abuse, there is no alcoholism, there is not bitter political fighting, confrontation, factionalism, bitterness, and rage amongst our people. We cannot afford to sit back because that is what is killing our people. That is the hidden enemy. That is genocide. It is all coming from this attitude that we ourselves get sucked into. We ourselves fall into believing this lie.

We are valuable. We are much more valuable and much more precious today than ever before. It becomes more and more clear to me as I look at the world. I look at the systems, I look at the sickness, I look at the healing that needs to be done. The onus is on each one of us. Not on someone else. We cannot say: Well, who am I to do anything; I am just one little person; I can't change the system. Everyone of us is responsible, whether we want to be, whether we don't want to be. Things happen through action or non-action. You're always a teacher no matter what you do. You either teach good or you teach bad. People around you are affected by what you say, by what you do, by how you are, the things you work at, the things that you promote, things that you represent. Your friends, your family, your associates, your co-workers, your children, your grandchildren - all of these people are going to come into contact with you in your life and you're going to affect them. How are you going to affect them? What are the things that you are going to represent?

You have a huge responsibility for what you reflect, what you stand for. You can create change as an individual. You affect thousands of people in your lifetime. If you are a writer or a speaker of some kind, you affect even wider circles of people, who in turn affect other people. Each person you affect affects the same number

of people or more. Think about that. Think about the power that you have. You are very, very powerful people. The power that you have as you are sitting here today. In fifty years, who are the Elders going to be? You are going to be the Elders. It is going to be your responsibility to pass something on to your children and your grandchildren. Is it the shit in the world that you are going to pass on? Are you going to pass on some healing?

I can't say what the answers are. You live in today's world. You know more about it than me. But the realities that are really being told to you by the attitude I spoke of, says that you are going to bend and you are going to fall and many of your people are going to fall underneath the weight of that message that says, "Indian, you might as well die; you're good for nothing; get the hell out of our way because you can't conform; you don't even look good enough, so get out of the way". I say Indian people, Native people, indigenous people, are beautiful in the eyes of the Creator. We have been created this way. We have been made to be the most beautiful people on this earth because we have this responsibility. I look at all other civilizations and to me there is none that compares to the beauty of my people. Look at what we were responsible for carrying over these thousands of years and are able to bring it into this space age. We are the carriers of a special knowledge and a special attitude, a special understanding that encompasses all of those things that are critically needed at this time. All the prophecies are leading up to what we are going to contribute. What we as Native people have to contribute to the rest of the world, and the reasons that they were brought into contact with us.

I thank the Creator every day that I was born a Native person. There can be nothing else in the world that I would rather be, because I know the truth of what I am and what the Creator made me and the responsibilities that he gave to us as Native people. Responsibilities that we cannot afford to abdicate, we cannot afford not to give to our children. I wish all young people that feeling, to know, to understand what our gift is, to feel it, and to approach life and your work with that.

I encourage all of you to think about that because our communities, our nations, and our world is in a critical state of being. We really need you as warriors out there, promoting the thinking that needs to be learned and putting some healing back into our communities and into our lives, as individuals and as Nations.

We Will Not Forget

We will not forget that you are our mother.

Mother Nature, the great womb from which all life springs.

Millions upon billions of souls have laboured to enter into your world of hopes that eyes might absorb your majestic beauty, so that hands might touch the tender new buds of spring - soft - weeping with mornings' dew. Each soul waiting for that first precious sound which stirs the body to life.

We will not forget.

We will not forget that you are our teacher. We learn about the great Law of life, death and rebirth from surviving our first Autumn, resplendent with crimson - ochre leaves floating to the earth, blanketing it from winters clinging snows. Then, miracle upon miracle, Spring - and life bursts through the last remaining snows. Skeleton trees, death totems framed against the sky, breathe with new life flowing through their veins and emerald buds promise a future. We understand. We are the 'tree of life' and are reborn into your arms in the season of the soul.

The four leggeds, the two leggeds, the winged spirits and those who swim through your birthing waters are one of the greatest gifts you have given to the people. We have watched our allies in wonder - and then - in understanding.

We have learned that every living being is necessary - for each identifies an aspect of the psyche of the people. However, with knowledge comes some sorrow for we have also learned that with the extinction of any species so too has one aspect of our psyche become extinct. Some potential for the human soul has become extinct.

When we endanger the existence of any living thing so too do we endanger the evolution of our very soul. They give their lives that we may live; they share their spirit that we may evolve. All life is sacred and we give thanks when one of them must fall that we may live. Someday, we too will return to the earth and feed new life. We have learned - this is the way of the Great Circle.

So we will remember.

The earth does not belong to the people; the people belong to the earth. From the earth we are born - to the earth we shall return. Your soil is consecrated ground and we will teach our children that the dust beneath their feet is the ashes of their ancestors.

We will remember that the blood of our Ancestors course through your mighty rivers. Your crystal waters quench our thirst, carry our canoes and their rippling murmurs speak of the memories of our people. We will teach our children that the flow of life is sacred and to treat the waters as we would our own blood.

We will remember that the air is precious and through its spirit all life is supported. The winds that give us our first breath also receives our final sigh. And, if we listen, the four winds will speak to us of our past and our future - of what is below and what is above. We will teach our children that the air is sacred and to listen to the whispering among the leaves.

Above all we will remember that all life is connected. All that lives are allies in our beingness. There are beasts and beings that give their lives for us and those that teach us about ourselves by showing us their ways.

We do remember - our blood remembers - for we are Nishnawbeh, born of Turtle Island. We are the Warriors of the Rainbow who will lead the peoples of the earth into an awareness of the sacredness of all things and lead then into a new age.

Wolf Warrior

A white butterfly speckled with pollen joined me in my prayers yesterday morning as I thought of you in Washington. I didn't want the pain of repeated history to break your back. In my blanket of hope I walked with you, wolf warrior and the council of tribes, to what used to be the Department of War to discuss justice. When a people institute a bureaucratic department to serve justice, then be suspicious. False justice is not justified by massive structure, just as the sacred is not confineable to buildings constructed for the purpose of worship.

I pray these words don't obstruct the meaning I am searching to give you, a gift like love, so you can approach that strange mind without going insane. So that we can all walk with you, sober, our children empowered with the clothes of memory in which they are never hungry for love or justice.

An old Cherokee who prizes wisdom above the decisions rendered by departments of justice in this tilted world told me this story. It isn't Cherokee but a gift given to him from the people of the North. I know I carried this story for a reason and now I understand I am to give it to you. A young man, about your age or mine, went camping with his dogs. It was just a few years ago, not long after the eruption of Mount St. Helens, when white ash covered the northern cities, an event predicting a turning of the worlds. I imagine October and bears' fat with berries of the golden harvest, before the freezing breath of the north settles and the moon is easier to reach by flight without planes. His journey was a journey towards the unknowable, and that night as he built a fire out of twigs and broken boughs he found on the ground, he remembered the thousand white butterflies climbing toward the sun when he had camped there last summer.

Dogs were his beloved companions in the land that had chosen him through the door of his mother. His mother continued to teach him well and it was she who had reminded him that the sound of pumping oil wells might kill him, turn him toward money. So he and his dogs travelled out into the land that remembered everything, including butterflies, and the stories that were told when light flickered from grease.

That night as he boiled water for coffee and peeled potatoes, he saw a wolf walking toward camp on her hind legs. It had been generations since wolves had visited his people. The dogs were

awed to see their ancient relatives and moved over to make room for them at the fire. The lead wolf motioned for her companions to come with her and they approached humbly, welcomed by the young man who had heard of such goings on but the people had not been so blessed since the church had fought for their souls. He did not quite know the protocol, but he knew the wolves as relatives and offered them coffee, store meat and fried potatoes which they relished in silence. He stoked the fire and sat quiet with them as the moon in the form of a knife for scaling fish came up and a light wind ruffled the flame.

The soundlessness in which they communed is what I imagined when I prayed with the sun yesterday. It is the current in the river of your spinal cord that carries memory from sacred places, the sound of a thousand butterflies taking flight in windlessness.

He knew this meeting was unusual and she concurred, then told the story of how the world as they knew it had changed and could no longer support the sacred purpose of life. Food was scarce; pups were being born deformed, and their migrations which were in essence a ceremony for renewal were restricted by fences. The world as all life on earth knew it would end and there was still time in the circle of hope to turn back the destruction.

That's why they had waited for him, called him here from the town a day away over the rolling hills, from his job constructing offices for the immigrants. They shared a smoke and he took the story into his blood, his bones, while the stars nodded their heads, while the dogs murmured their agreement. "We can't stay long", the wolf said. "We have others with whom to speak and we haven't much time." He packed the wolf people some food to take with them, some tobacco and they prayed for safety on this journey. As they left the first flakes of winter began falling and covered their tracks. It was as if they had never been there.

But the story burned in the heart of this human from the north and he told it to everyone who would listen, including my friend the Cherokee man who told it to me one day while he ate biscuits and eggs in Arizona. The story now belongs to you too, and as much as pollen on the legs of a butterfly is nourishment carried by the butterfly from one flowering to another, this is an ongoing prayer for strength for strength for us all.

Joy Harjo, Albuquerque 22 June 91 for Susan Williams

Joy Harjo: Native Woman Voice of the 90's

By the 1980's contemporary poetry had come around full circle. No longer could the reader discern between 'traditional' influences and contemporary situations. The 1960's saw the emergence of Native literature heavily influenced by Native philosophy and worldview. Into the 1970's, when political voice emerged, clear confines existed. Past, present and future had yet to find union. By the 1980's *woman voice* (which emerged in the late 60's, early 70's) was no longer restricted to male perspective. Women began to write more often of their position within their own culture as well as within the colonization process itself. Less and less did *woman voice* concern herself with political restrictions brought on by the male community. She did not have to "walk behind her man's pony" in order to contribute to the community. In her quest for internal insight, *woman voice* began to make radical change from within. This movement of self involves the critical examination of both the internal and the external combined with the incorporation of the findings which cross her path.

An example of the journey of *woman voice* and the external/ internal influences which shaped her voice is Joy Harjo. In her book "She Had Some Horses" (Thunder Mouth Press) we can trace lineage memory (influenced by traditional philosophy) to the road Indigenous writers presently find themselves on (colonization). In her poem called 'Remember', lineage memory, present thought and vision of future are one:

*Remember the sky that you were born under,
know each of the star's stories.
Remember the moon, know who she is. I met her
in a bar once in Iowa City.*

The reader is asked to remember that under sky's face we are equal, that the smallest piece of life is of great significance. The stars themselves have stories to tell and despite their distance we can hear their words if we are willing to listen. This philosophy, as seen throughout "Remember," is rooted in Indigenous thought and worldview. Her encounter with the moon in the bar tells us, through metaphor, that we do indeed house the universe inside of ourselves.

Remember the sun's birth at dawn, that is the strongest point of time. Remember sundown and the giving away to night.

Dawn, new creation of thought and knowledge. Again through metaphor, we are shown the creative process. Sleep being the time of wandering and dreams make room for forward movement in our personal lives and in the life of community as a whole. Dawn also marks the time of day when creativity wakes from its rest.

Remember your birth, how your mother struggled to give you form and breath. You are evidence of her life, and her mothers and hers.

Indigenous society is predicated on matri-focal foundations. With the arrival of the European and patriarchal down pressure a shift occurred within the Indigenous community. This is not to say that matri-lineage no longer exists. Memory is called closer to the forefront of the individual as it is memory that ensures a peoples survival. Being a matri-focal culture, Joy Harjo asks that womens' lineage be remembered and honoured as women are considered the backbone of her community and paramount to physical and spiritual creation/re-creation. This creation occurs both physically and metaphysically within Indigenous culture. *Woman memory* is not lost to past, but brought forward.

Remember your father. He is your life, also.

It is easier for men to look outward and shift through external forces. What the reader is being asked to do is remember total lineage but more importantly to acknowledge that *woman thought* (knowledge) is central to the external.

*Remember the earth whose skin you are:
red earth, black earth, yellow earth, white earth,
brown earth, we are earth.*

Lineage memory sits within all cultures. It is the calling forward in time that must be struggled for because culture without memory becomes a dead culture. Earth is female in Indigenous philosophy. Therefore to remember *woman lineage*, is to remember that it is the earth that sustains all life. Care and nurturance of earth

is essential to the continuance of creation. All peoples have responsibility to earth and the care of her.

*Remember the plants, trees, animal life who have their tribes, their families, their histories, too.
talk to them, listen to them. They are alive poems.*

According to Indigenous philosophy, all living things, whether they be plant, animal or human, are equal. Our lives are dependent upon each others and with this in mind they also have thoughts which we can learn from. Great respect is to be given to the animal and plant world, just as humans are to offer each other. Joy Harjo reminds us that we continually jeopardize the earth and therefore ourselves.

Remember the wind. Remember her voice. She knows the origins of this universe. I heard her singing Kiowa war dance songs at the corner of Fourth and Central once.

The wind herself contains memory and has borne witness to the changes the world has gone through. "Remember her voice" asks that we recall that the wind is older than we are, therefore has a longer memory to draw upon. "Kiowa war dance songs" implores the reader to seriously consider the neglect of the earth. Wind carries the earth's frustration and anguish and we can hear it. We must listen. The fact that she sang at the "corner of Fourth and Central", metaphorically speaking, indicates that what the earth feels, the inhabitants of her will feel too. Her war dance song speaks of the urgency to listen and make change.

Remember that you are all people and that all people are you.

Remember that you are this universe and this universe is you.

Human need differs from culture to culture only in the translation of that need. Like the earth, we are entitled to dignity, respect and honour. In the same way, the earth is worthy of great

affection, and so too are the people who live on her. The line, "remember that you are this universe", tells us that we are not of greater significance than the smallest of earth's inhabitants.

*Remember that all is in motion, is growing, is you.
Remember that language comes from this.
Remember the dance language is, that life is.
Remember.*

Her usage of the words "motion", "growing" and "language" goes far back into Native Tradition. It is only through the gathering of new knowledge that motion is possible, that creation occurs. When the reader places herself/himself in the position that they are a part of the universe they become a part of universal birth. Knowledge of self combined with understanding creation leads to her "dance" that language is the celebration that takes place once creation is internalized.

When Joy Harjo speaks of meeting the moon in the bar in Iowa City we see the strong roots trailing back to Traditional Poetry. The moon sits in the sky for everyone to see, yet Tradition tells us that the moon in fact is a living being, brought forward in time to today. This motion forward is based on a philosophy which says that past-present-future are not separate, that one cannot exist without the other. This is contrary to European philosophy which has broken that linkage between time and moved away from creation as a whole process which takes place throughout time.

As well, the reader finds that the rhythm of her work allows for it to be spoken and not simply read. Her work reflects her view of all life. "They are alive poems" she says and so her writing is a living writing. Within this lies the ceremony involved in the creation of her work, ceremony in relationship to internal being and external being. Joy Harjo does not separate herself from lineage memory but brings it forward, so her work shows that woman voice remains as pivotal to us today as it did five hundred years ago.

Harjo, Joy. She had Some Horses, Thunder Mouth Press, New York. 1983.

The Medicine Stone

Listen,

 this woman
she burns sage and cedar,
braids bits of abalone shells
and sweetgrass into her hair
as she sings to the Moon
moss tongue soft.

Using the luminous strands
of spiders
she paints the language of clouds
onto ancient stone,
medicine for knowing spirits.

Spinning her songs softly,
visions pool at her feet,
beads of light gather on the water.
Fluids charms for her medicine bundle,
these boneseeds of imagination crystallize

Standing in Moon light
she recognizes her own solitary form,
spreads her fingers into a
four-point star
and dances the steps
of the Northern Lights.

Footprints Along The Milky Way (For Mary Jane)

The Owls come
they form a Hoop
around you.
Your stem-fingers,
as delicate
as the ghosts
of butterflies,
trace
petroglyphs of darkness
upon the future.
Walk in Beauty.
Two children stand -
the Moon
sinking in their veins.
Breath,
Life,
Creation.
"Love is the last light spoken."¹
On your long journey North
Walk in Beauty.
Dry, clocking bone-rattles
filled with stars
sprinkle out
foot-prints along the Milky Way.
Walk in Beauty.
"There is no death,
only a change of worlds,"²
Memory is forever.
Walk in Beauty.

1. Dylan Thomas

2. Chief Seattle, Moon of Changing Leaves

Discovering Our Journey Home

The drum beats songs into our hearts
reminding us of the home
beyond the stars
We are seeking

We long to touch each other's untamed spirits
like warm wind touching wild flowers
Fearing our longings
singing our song from within
dancing with each other's spirit
discovering our mysterious paths ahead

We are trying to piece the puzzles together
alone
only to discover
each other holds the missing links

We fight our love for one another
But the stars say
it is only our love
that will light up our universe
Our songs unfold
discovering lost souls on mother earth
the love of all mankind
bringing together
strength to conquer all

The drum reminds us of home
we soar beyond the stars
The songs we carry
will lead us home
journeying toward the stars.

Indian Trails

I am jarred from a peaceful sleep by a piercing scream. I think perhaps a loon is screaming out its existence on the lake behind my house when suddenly I am aware of the sterile decor of my hotel room in downtown Toronto. The screaming is made by the metal snake that burrows beneath the city. Welcome to Toronto at 5 a.m. and the beginning of my day.

I walk down Yonge street and ask directions to the University of Toronto, where I am to attend a meeting of animal rights activists. Answers to my question start at "NO speak de English" to courteous gestures of the middle finger straight up. Finally, I am pointed in the right direction by a man in uniform; the kind I saw in a picture once at the Mission House.

As I approach the conference hall I see some people outside carrying signs on sticks. "Ban Leg-Hold Traps". "Animals have rights". I move through the crowd into the building. Once inside I look for the small room...the outhouse, which I know is usually separate from the others.

After I finish "making thunder" I try to wash my hands. It's difficult because you need one hand to keep the water running so the other remains useless. I lift my leg up and use my foot to hold the tap open.

As I look for the right room, someone calls: "Chief" I wonder why everyone is Chief down here. I know I'm not a Chief.

As the meeting progresses I am reminded of the noise around a bees' nest in the bush. The same exists here. I hear through the buzzing, "Let's hear from the Chief". I wonder to which spirit I need to answer their questions.

The first one was easy, Mr. Wind-That-Blows, do you trap for a living? Yes, I trap for a living. Well, how do you feel about your occupation, Mr. Wind? I reply, "I am honoured to be a trapper because it has made Canada what it is today".

Now the ball is beginning to bounce. A lady (who resembles a crane with glasses) asks me about the types of traps I use. I know the crane is a well respected character in our legends, but I have my doubts about this one.

I name several types of traps, the last of which is the mouse trap, one Mrs. Crane knew and admitted using on occasion, herself.

*Manito: Ojibway word for "God" or "Great Spirit"

If I ever needed a Manito* to save me, I needed one now. This one came as a bell buzzing which signalled lunch time. I was herded off to a cafeteria which I was sure, was as big as our church hall and school put together.

As I moved through the line I saw a sign: "HOT DOGS". I was surprised because the last time I heard of hot dogs was in our legends. (A tribe that lived on the islands in the big lake raised them for spring when the ice melted and they could not leave the islands to hunt for other kinds of meat). Here I was, reliving history.

Well, lunch time really wasn't that. It was more like a time to ask personal questions. Ones you could ask privately and not let anyone know how you truly felt.

I remember one very clearly. "How could you kill a deer, or moose, but not a bear?". "Because I truly could not kill my grandfather," I replied. I said I respected the spirit of the deer and the moose and all other animals and gave thanks to their spirits for giving up their lives so that I could live.

Then, I asked a question. "How are cattle, hogs and other animals killed?" All one sees in the food stores are packages of meat. There's no further regard to how any animal may have suffered, or had no choice or freedom to escape.

Again a buzzer sounded, this can get such an immediate response. Maybe I should get one of those buzzers and put it in my cabin.

"Summerclouds"
Samuel Kewaquado of the
Deer Clan of the Ojibwas

Voices

i
hear

voices
everywhere

now speak
and whisper

along
the valley floor

wolf blinks
in the night

and
stares at

me and
jet streams

talk
to the cloud

swirling
all in time

and whisper
to the great river

drum
speaking
and pounding
in my heart
beats
like a turbine
beats
like a turbine

turning
in the sky

world
in front

of me
taking me home

again
and again
and again

to you
and hearing
the voices

i know
i'm not losing
it but
i can hear
the
voices
speaking
and whispering
everywhere
everywhere

i go now

Who Am I?

Moon shines bright
lemon drop
encircles
night sky
i sit
transfixed
brown eyes
search
campfire flames flicker
sputter a soliloquy
infinite
coyote
howls
sounds ancestors
past
chants and talks
to ignorant ears
warriors
whose bones and ashes
accumulate into
majestic mountains
reminders of
who i am

I Will Go And Pray

Truly, I will walk
alone into the forest
Truly, I will talk
to the winged in his nest

With the four-legged that run
I will speak to the wind
raise my head to the sun
and never look behind

I will fear, only fear
not that which I make
I will hear, only hear
true words, I want to take

Beedaudjimowin

A Voice for First Nations

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Beedaudjimowin is a quarterly publication based in Toronto, Canada. It has been operating under its current editorial team since May, 1990, and under this name since December, 1990.

Beedaudjimowin is dedicated to disseminating information about the struggles of Indigenous peoples world-wide as a means of educating both Native and non-Native and to build solidarity.

Beedaudjimowin is dedicated to promoting the uniqueness of First Nations people from the perspective of First Nations people — our history, our philosophy, our culture, and our relationship to the environment. We are committed to celebrating the achievements of Native people in many fields including the performing and visual arts and literature.

Beedaudjimowin firmly believes that to be a truly independent voice for First Nations and to maintain the integrity of that voice, it is imperative that we become self-sufficient. We do not want to be tied to government funding. The federal government decided just over a year ago to terminate the funding they had provided for years to Native publications. Consequently, several Native publications folded. **Beedaudjimowin** does not want to exist at the whim of government. As a group, we feel it is important for us to break that colonial pattern of dependency and control.

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Meegwetch!



"Shadow Dance #5"
Silvergelatin Print
by Glenda J. Guilmet

KIDS

(Children's Writing)

The Desert

From the hot blazing sun there was a man with no water. He could never stand the sun again. He had to have some food and some shade because he was sweating all over. He was in the war and he ran away because he didn't want to get shot. He never wanted to go back again. He was a scared man because he never got trained for battle and he was the last guy in Saudi Arabia. Even the scorpions were killed, because of the thousands of marching soldiers. The soldiers never seemed to stop marching. Then the next day there were tanks driving all over the sand.

Bomber planes followed the man because they were attacking him. The man in the bomber plane got hot from the sun and got out of the seat to put his head under the shady seat. The plane was close to the ground. He crashed and exploded. The man walking on the ground seen the crash, and this alerted another plane that picked the Saudi Arabia man up. They got into the plane and he had lots of water and food.

As told by Brendan Jay Blood -Rides -at -the -Door (Age 5)

Fox and Coyote

The coyote met the fox, who was eating some skimmings! He asked his brother fox, "Where did you get that?" The fox said, "Oh you will find it over there in the well! If you peep in there you will find some, I got it from there!"

The coyote went over to the well and peeped over. There was the skimmings at the bottom. But it was only the reflection of the moon that was visible. He jumped and plunged in. He thought it was the skimmings. His brother had fooled him!!!

Translation (Secwepemc):

*m - t 7eyes re xgw'leme resekleop, ec re illnes te styewllkwle.
m-tsuntes te:uqwis: the 7en k tesk wencwes? m-t suns re xgwelemc":
u ri7 me7 penminc nu7ne stsiqkwes, nu7 me7 yeqelc-k, tkllu7 ri7re
tskwekwnes, m-qwetsets re seklep, yegek, sten re styewllkwle te
tsedtsulecw. Kemell cum we7 ywre stsikts re megcen tkllu7. re
wiwey. m-llgwilcwes, m-yestsmokw. m-tsunses ri7 tek styewllkwle, m-
qwientems t e vqwis.*

A Shuswap Swimming Legend

A boy was swimming in the river and almost drowned. He saw a man on the bank and shouted to him for help, but the man just began to lecture him to be more careful.

The boy said:

First get me on the shore, and then lecture me afterwards.

Translation (Secwepemc):

*W7ec re tuwiwt ec te secwmes ne setstkwe, kekme711
esxquetsqpetkwes.*

*Wikts re sqelemcw ne qwemtsin mwewen ses esknucwentem,
kemell re sqelemcu tucw qwenmins eslleqmentes re tuwiwt esp7ecws ec
esyecwmentsutses.*

Tsuntem te tuwiwt:

Tsem kukwemestsme elle me7 11eqmentsetsemowes.

The Eagles Fly

The eagles fly
strong and free,
over the mountains
and over the Skeena River.
The eagles are my
uncles.
I am in the Eagle Clan.
And I grow strong
and free

(Maria Bell - Tsimshian)

Falcon

Awake
Noble falcon as the sun arises
Swoop into the air, and scan your
prizes.

Screech
Fierce falcon as you locate your prey
Thinking to yourself, "you won't get away"

Dive
Sleek falcon without a single sound.
With half closed wings, your victim you will
astound.

Seize
Aggressive falcon while in midflight
Fly so swiftly, soar with all your might.

Devour
Hungry falcon eat right on the spot
with your hooked beak rip it, share you
will not.

Preen
Streamlined falcon for the day is almost
done
You look so beautiful in the setting sun.

Sleep
Tired falcon, for the night has just begun.
Tonight you rest quietly, until tomorrow
brings sun.

If We Were

IF WE WERE...

LARGE AND POWERFUL AS THE BEAR

PEACEFUL AND SWIFT AS THE DEER

QUICK AND CLEVER AS THE COYOTE

A SMART HUNTER LIKE THE WOLF

SLY AND CUNNING LIKE THE FOX

HARDWORKING LIKE THE BEAVER

FREE AND GRACEFUL AS THE EAGLE

WISE LIKE THE OWL

SILENT AND STRONG LIKE THE SALMON

WE WOULD BE ONE NATIVE NATION

LIVING IN HARMONY

DREAM ON by Chrystos

In her second collection of poetry, this writer and activist brings a clear-sighted realism, outrage and wry humor to her work. These poems and prose pieces meditate on eroticism, the long-term effects of incest, and the genocide of Native peoples. Chrystos gives us courageous, resilient, and sometimes celebratory poetry motivated by the necessity to name, and in so doing, offers an affirmation of life.



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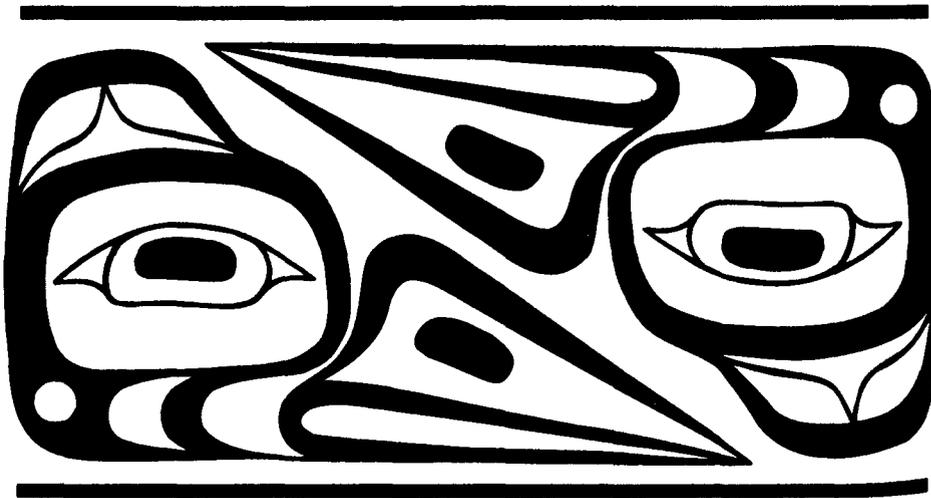
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"Two Faces"
by David Neel

GUESTS

(Writings From People
Who Are Not From
the First Nations of
North America)

**A Friendly Question:
To Native People of the
American Continent**

I speak to a people
I want to speak to a people
I am trying to speak to a people

To all of you wonderful people
scattered across this land
you once owned
you once roamed
now scattered on parcels of land
across the country

I want to speak to you
I want to speak to all of you
I am trying to speak to all of you

How shall I call you
What shall I call you
by what single name are you known
by what single name can you be known
by what single name shall I call you

I call on all of you
by all the wonderful names
by the names that are strange
strange and wonderful
names that are strange music
Iroquois and Onondagas
Apache, Sioux and Cherokee
Mohawk and Mohicans

All of you
what shall I call you
all of you with strange wonderful names
What shall I call you
by what single name shall I call you
yes, my brothers, my sisters, my friends
yes, my fellow-oppressed
by what name shall I call you
yes, my stubborn resisters
yes, my unconquerably resilient allies
by what name shall I call you

(From Salutes and Censurers, Fourth Dimension, 1982)

Aboriginal Hitchhike Rap

Travelling across the nation
It became clear to me
What was the source of frustration

Treaty rights abrogated
Sacred land desecrated
Traditional lands confiscated
Natural environment devastated

Legalese prevails
Constitutional talks fail
Legal protest no avail
Can't escape the racism
The Pas has
The overlooked rape of Helen Osbourne
Should force debate

Temagami Barrier Lake
Crisis situations to deflate
It's the Micmac Git'skan laws
They want to negate
Gov't says respect sovereignty
Yet invades with impunity
Violating Kahnawake security

Sitting by the railway tracks trying
To get a ride
Cop comes up
Nowhere to hide
Jumps on my back
Like an artillery attack

Fourth World
Going by the Manual
That's what the cops say
to get their own way
FBI seeking control
Using CO-INTEL PRO
What a joke - think we don't know

People targeted, unexplained deaths
That's why we walk with extra steps
Panther assassination
Infiltration
New contours
Provocateurs

Thinking about the Five
Made me realize

This tactic is still alive
Looked in at a roadside restaurant
Redneck atmosphere was a deterrent
Had to be on my way
In order to survive the day

Chip on your shoulder
Too emotional
Even if it is unrelated to what has been said
Well the truth is desecrated
Motives distorted and like acid
That guilt edged fear corrodes
Their well beings

Forever tainting all they deal in
No you can't dismiss this with a grin
Who knows as the story goes if you
Ignore urgent bulletins could cause your ruin

Never reported, facts distorted
Faces contorted
In dark cells, people unwell
lying in blood and excrement
Canadian torture experiment

While we on the outside abide by
Illusionary rules that are used to confuse
Allowing power to be misused

A sign of maturity is
Confronting our insecurities
No Platitudes
To substantiate
Harmful attitudes
That's what I hear
When I voice my fear

When white people stare
And there's a flow of hate
That I'm forced to contemplate
White supremacists exist
We have to admit

Even in Canada
Where the latest nonsensical stanza
From the Black Governor General
Says racism doesn't exist
Who is he trying to fool
We know injustice persists

A disconcerting fact facing
European settler descendants
Is that this concept of a nation
Was built on stolen land and deceit
Native people left with no receipt

Its more ambiguity if we complain
Check out the phrases they tend to retain
Phrases which echo their anxiety

Circle of Tira Hou Marae

Yesterday, today, tomorrow
the Spiritual Circle, the indigenous circle
is complete - always

Today - the physical circle too is complete

Embrace me
my relatives from across the waters
my grandmother
my brothers
my sisters

Embrace me
Feel my heart drum its rhythm
Feel my tears wash its healing path
Feel my spirit sing its song

Embrace me
Let me feel the strength of the turtle's back

and while Tekooti and Chief Sitting Bull
share the scared pipe
and watch over us with reassuring smile
let us dance

*(I am Ngatiporou
Aotearoa is my land.)*

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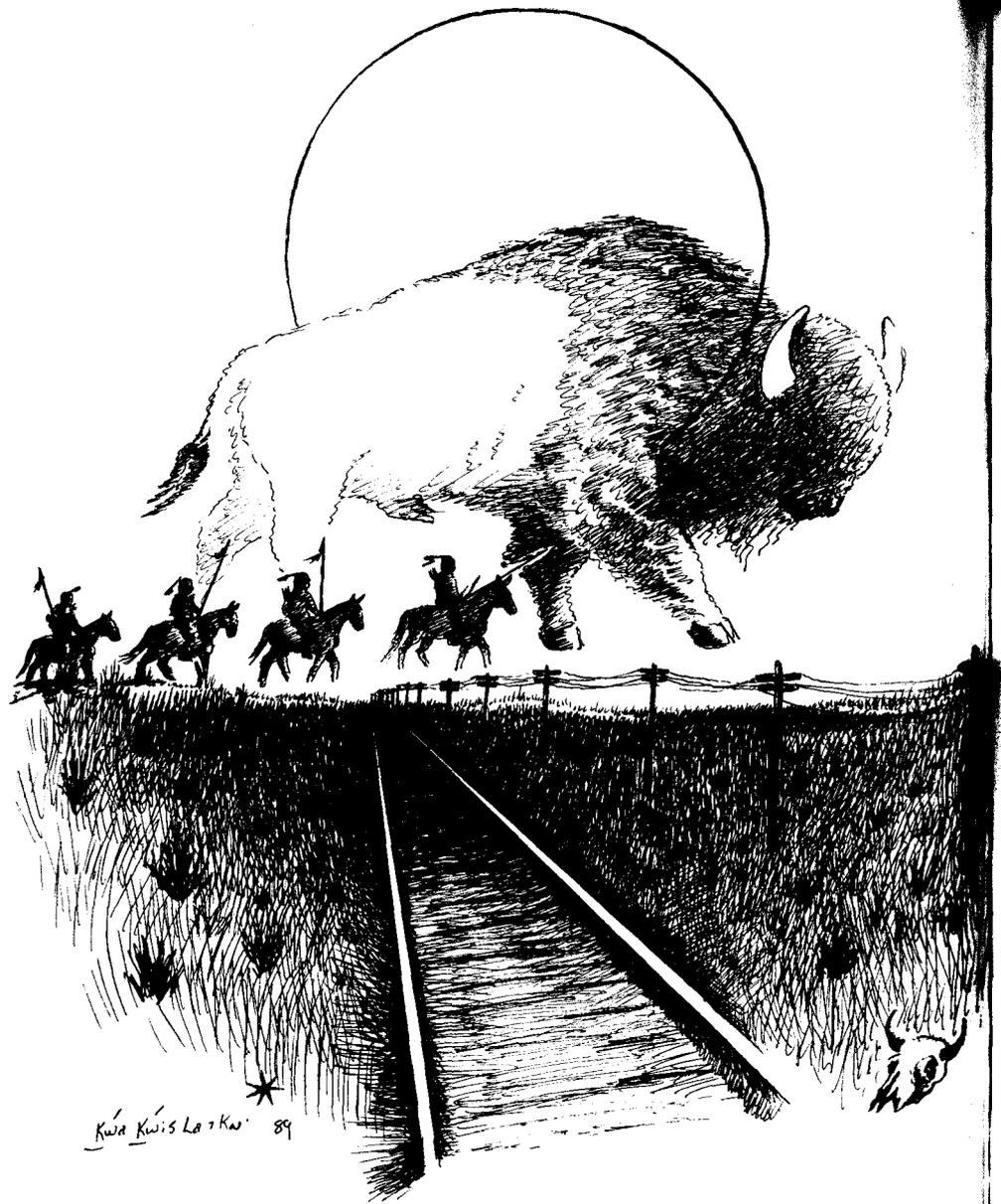
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ELDERS

Drawing by Gus Baptiste

ELDER'S MESSAGE

We must try to encourage today's children. It's like they have two separated worlds that are stretched apart. But if we all work together maybe we could encourage them, and it could be brought together. We are all here for a purpose. We know life is hard for people who live in the modern world. We have to think about that for the children.

A long time ago life was not like it is now. People didn't go to school. They learned from parents and relatives. But now some people didn't learn from their parents and they didn't go to school. Those people don't know how to live off the land and they don't know how to live the whiteman ways. Some adults are like they have no ears now because of those things that happened in the community.

Then there were a lot of unimportant things in the community that the children got into, like T.V. They watched everything on the T.V. They get so caught up in that, they don't do what their parents tell them. Even our children today, they wait to get payment for things. And here they are gathering with pencil and paper. They are all getting educated. They should appreciate being with their people, and know that we are here for a purpose.

We should tell the young education has not always done good for us. But it can do good in the future maybe. We could make a big change. Especially with the Elders. We should be teaching the young people too.

Life was hard a long time ago. But I don't know why some say it's better now, because when the Elders and the relatives talked people used to listen. But now we are not listened to. And the way our people used to live and listen and learn was good. Now the young people don't think for themselves. We should help them. As Elders, we need to talk to young people with strong words, but not with anger in our tone. When we talk to them maybe they will be good people in the future.

Author
Biographies

GATHERINGS II: Author Biographies

1. **Armstrong, Jeannette**
A well known and gifted writer, Jeannette continues to involve herself in writing about her traditions and culture through contemporary events. Jeannette is author of "Slash", "Breathtracks", "Enwhistekwa", "Neekna and Chemai" and "Native Creative Process".
2. **Baker, Marie Annharte**
Annharte is of Saulteaux and Irish heritage. Currently living in Regina, Saskatchewan, she writes and reads throughout the Native community. Book in print: "Being On The Moon".
3. **Bell, Maria**
Maria is a seven year old Tsimshian of the Eagle Clan. She enjoys dancing and gymnastics.
4. **Belmore, Rebecca**
Rebecca Belmore is an Anishnawbe visual artist, performing artist and now song-writer. Rebecca has had a number of art shows across Canada.
5. **Bennett, Patricia**
A Saulteaux from Manitoba, Patricia has completed her first year at the En'owkin International School of Writing. She plans to return for year two. This is her first published works.
6. **Blood, Cheryl L.**
Cheryl L. Blood is of the Blood Tribe of Southern Alberta, who is currently attending the En'owkin International School of Writing. This is her second published works.
7. **Bobb, Columpa**
Sto:Lo/Cree playwright and actress, who is also a new student at the En'owkin International School of Writing.
8. **Bonneau, Tracey**
Tracey Bonneau is an Okanagan Native currently residing in Penticton and attending the En'owkin International School of Writing. Her life's ambition is to become a national television news reporter.
9. **Charnley, Kerrie**
Of Katzie, Jewish and English ancestry, Kerrie writes to heal herself and to find redemption for past struggles her grandma and mom have experienced.
10. **Chester, Bruce**
Bruce Chester is a 37 year old Metis currently in prison at Matsqui Institution. He has written a book of poetry, "Paper Radio" and is co-writing a play, "The Mirror", with Tom Elton and Carmen Rodrigez.
11. **Cohen, Bill**
Bill Cohen is an Okanagan Native student, who is starting school at the University of Regina, Saskatchewan in September, 1991.
12. **Cuthand, Beth**
Beth Cuthand is a Cree Native and has taught at Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. She has had numerous short stories and poems published, including "Voices in the Waterfall", and is currently doing graduate work at the University of Tuscon, Arizona.
13. **Damm, Kateri**
An established Ojibway writer from Cape Croker, Ontario. A former Vice-president of the Aboriginal Youth Council of Canada, her works have been previously published in "Seventh Generation" and "Gatherings - Volume I".
14. **Dandurand, Joseph A.**
From the Sto:Lo Nation in British Columbia, he is currently attending University at Ottawa, for Theatre. He holds a General Arts degree from Algonquin College and has worked as a professional stage hand at the National Arts Centre and Museum of Civilization in Ottawa.
15. **Daychief, Candice**
Candice Daychief is a tenth grade high school student. The essay contained in this issue of Gatherings won first prize in a local contest.
16. **DeBassige, Mary Lou Cecile**
Odawa Ojibwe and Scottish descent from West Bay First Nations on Manitoulin Island, Ontario. This is her most recent published works.
17. **DeClue, Charlotte**
An Osage Native from Oklahoma who has been writing for thirteen years. She has been published in numerous anthologies and journals, including those published by Pueblo University Press and Oklahoma Press.
18. **Dunn, Martin**
Martin Dunn is Metis and is an independent Aboriginal consultant living in Ottawa. He has previously published several books including "Red & White" and "Access to Survival", as well as a series of magazines of Aboriginal themes.
19. **Duranger, Sue**
A Metis Native, Sue is co-founder of the "Aboriginal Writers Group" and is a member of the "Aboriginal Women's Council". She is currently taking her Master of Fine Arts at the University of Regina in Saskatchewan.
20. **Eagle Tail-Feathers, Shirley**
Shirley Eagle Tail-Feathers is a combination of Blackfoot/Sioux/Saulteaux currently studying Anthropology at the University of Regina, Saskatchewan.
21. **Favel, Floyd**
Floyd Favel is a Plains Cree from Saskatchewan, and is a writer/director for theatre, presently working on a new play called, "Lady of Silences."
22. **Fife, Connie**
Connie Fife is a writer and the author of "Beneath the Naked Sun", a collection of poetry, short story and essay, to be released in the Fall of '91.

23. **Funmaker, Forest A.**
A Honchunk Native from Wisconsin, and graduate of En'owkin International School of Writing, Forest is now attending University of Victoria, in British Columbia.
24. **Flying Hawk d'Maine, Shirley**
A mixed Micmac and French Native from Maine, U.S.A., Shirley now lives in San Pablo, California and is playing and singing with a band for the past seven years, writing music, poetry and various articles.
25. **Garnet, Ruffo**
An Ojibway from Northern Ontario, and graduate of Writing Program at the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts, he holds an Honors Degree in English Literature from the University of Ottawa. His poetry also appeared in "Seventh Generation".
26. **Gottfriedson, Garry**
Of Shuswap ancestry, this is a third publication of Garry's writings. He attends the En'owkin International School of Writing.
27. **Harjo, Joy**
From the Creek Tribe in Oklahoma, she received her B.A. from the University of New Mexico and her M.F.A. from Iowa Writer's Workshop. She is a well published author. Her books include "She Had Some Horses", and "Mad in Love and War".
28. **Ipellie, Alootook**
A freelance writer, Alootook was born near Frobisher Bay on the Baffin Islands of the North Coast. A graphic artist, writer, cartoonist, photographer and translator.
29. **James, Darrell, Billy, Jimmy and Richard**
The James brothers, ages 8 through 12, are from the Salish tribe of the Bridge River Band, Lillooet, British Columbia, and are currently attending school in Winfield, British Columbia.
30. **Joe, Joyce B.**
Radio, film, stage playwright and poet, Joyce Joe, of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nation obtained her B.F.A. at the University of Victoria, and her M.F. A. at the University of British Columbia.
31. **Johnie, "Shingoose" Curtis**
Singer, songwriter Curtis "Shingoose" Johnie is of the Cree Nation and has turned his talents to writing articles of late. His new album release, "Natural Tan", is now available.
32. **Kakegamick, Mitchell**
A Cree-Ojibway Native belonging to the North Spirit Lake Band in Northern Ontario. Mitchell has written over 250 poems and is published in various newspapers and magazines.

33. **Keon, Wayne**
A member of the Ojibway Nation, Wayne is a well known author of Native literature and poetry. A business administration graduate, Wayne is also a painter and financial analyst.
34. **Kewaquado, Samuel**
Samuel Kewaquado is a traditional Ojibway from the Shawanaga First Nation. In 1989, he published an Ojibway/English colouring book.
35. **Louie, Arnold**
An Okanagan Native, currently enrolled in the En'owkin International School of Writing, this is Arnold's second published works, the first being in "Gatherings - Volume I".
36. **Lyons, Sarah**
A Native of the Pueblo Nation, Isleta, New Mexico, Sarah was born in Oregon and currently lives and works in Portland, Oregon as a paste-up artist.
37. **Lysons, Leona**
A member of the Shuswap Nation, Leona currently lives in Penticton, British Columbia. After attending the En'owkin International School of Writing, she is now working towards her B.A. through the University of Victoria, British Columbia.
38. **Manossa, Geraldine M.**
Geraldine Manossa is a Cree Native of Bigstone Band in Northern Alberta. She is a graduate of the native Theatre School, of Toronto, Ontario. She is currently exploring her second year of writing at the En'owkin International School of Writing.
39. **McMaster, Gerald**
Curator for the Native Display at the National Museum of Man in Ottawa, Ontario, Gerald is a Cree Native who is also a visual artist and writer.
40. **Maracle, Lee**
Lee is of Cree and West Coast Native ancestry. She has published several books and is writer-in-residence for En'owkin International School of Writing.
41. **Marchand, Duane**
Duane is of Okanagan Native ancestry from the Okanagan Indian Band, near Vernon, British Columbia. He is a student at the En'owkin International School of Writing and has published works in "Gatherings - Volume I".
42. **Mercredi, Duncan**
Duncan Mercredi is from Manitoba and will be soon releasing his first book of poetry, from Fifth House publishers.
43. **Olsen-Dunn, Eutonnah**
A Tsalagi (Cherokee) Native, Eutonnah's name means "Serpent Women", following in the footsteps of Beloved Women who went before her, she journeys to the Earth Worlds and enters Dreamtime.

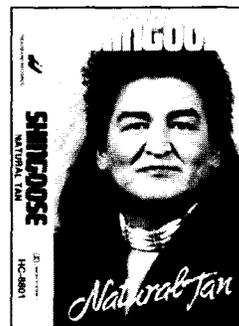
44. O'Sullivan, Gunargie
A Kwagwiltz Native, Gunargie's most recent training includes a Yiem Writers Society course and a voice intensive workshop at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia. She currently resides in Vancouver, British Columbia.
45. Phillip, Nelson
A twelve year old Okanagan Native, Nelson will be entering high school this fall in Penticton, British Columbia.
46. Sanderson, Sheila
A Cree from Manitoba, Sheila is a student in the After Degree Program at the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba. She is presently a free-lance researcher with the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature.
47. Shackelly, Kowainco
Of the Nooaitch First Nation, Kowainco writes through her Native heritage beliefs. She has written poetry since age twelve.
48. Taylor, Drew
A successful T.V. scriptwriter, stage playwright and short story writer, Drew is from Cape Croker, Ontario out of the Anishnawbe Nation.
49. Volbroth, Judith Mountain-Leaf
Born in the Moon of Changing Leaves in New York City, Judith is a member of the Commanche Nation. Author of "Thunder Root: Traditional and Contemporary Native American Verse."
50. Welburn, Ron
Of Conoy, Cherokee and Black descent, Ron currently teaches American Literature at Western Connecticut State University, Ron is a well published poet.

In Memoriam: Theytus Books Ltd. and the En'owkin International School of Writing are honoured and grieved to posthumously publish Colleen Fielder's works, 'Metis Woman,' 'Mountains I Remember,' and 'Eagle.' These pieces of work indicate that the Native community has lost a fine writer. Our condolences go out to her family and friends.

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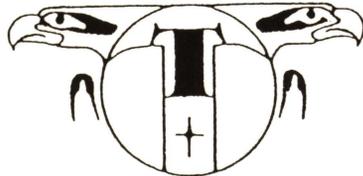
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