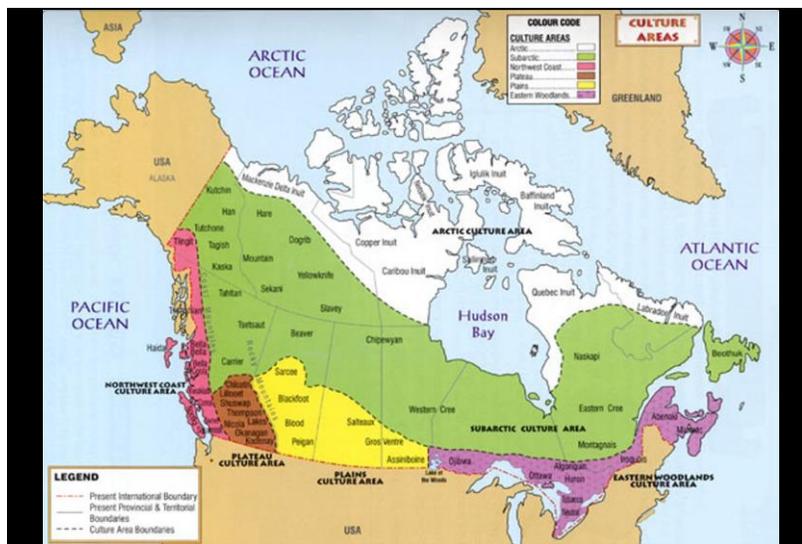


Rita Letendre (1928-) was born in Drummondville, Quebec, to a father of Abenaki (Algonquian) origin and a Quebecois mother. She was one of the *Automatistes* – a group of abstract painters led by Paul-Émile Borduas in the 1950s. She used two different abstract styles. This painting is in her early “hard-edged” style.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/visualarts/2017/07/08/rita-letendre-against-the-dying-of-the-light.html>

The painting serves to introduce us to Canada’s indigenous peoples. Every bit as talented as the Europeans who colonized their land.



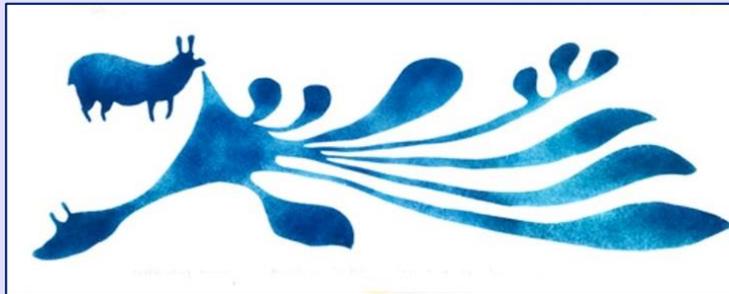
Canada is home to many different indigenous cultures.

Aboriginal peoples in Canada total 1.7 million people, or 5% of the national population 35 million. Of these about 1 million are First Nations, 600 thousand are Métis and 65 thousand are Inuit. Of the First Nations the most populous group is the Cree (600 thousand), whose territory extends from the Northern Quebec and Ontario into the plains.



This shows a Shaman's Charm from the Tsimshian culture in British Columbia). Made from bone and abalone shell it shows elements of raven and of man.

Indigenous religions are varied in their detail, but share some common features. Most important is the consciousness of being one with all the world. Many indigenous people have the idea of a Transformer or Trickster who causes things to happen. Among the Ojibwe the trickster was the shapeshifter Nanabush or Nanabozho who often showed up as a rabbit; on the west coast the trickster often took the form of a raven. Shamans are common – they mediate between the real world and the spirit world.



Uvavnuuk's Dream

The great sea frees me, moves me,
as a strong river carries a weed.
Earth and her strong winds move me,
take me away,
and my soul is swept up in joy.

Rabbit Eating Seaweed
Kenojuak Ashevak, 1959

Uvavnuuk's Dream
Aaron Jensen
Elmer Eisler Singers



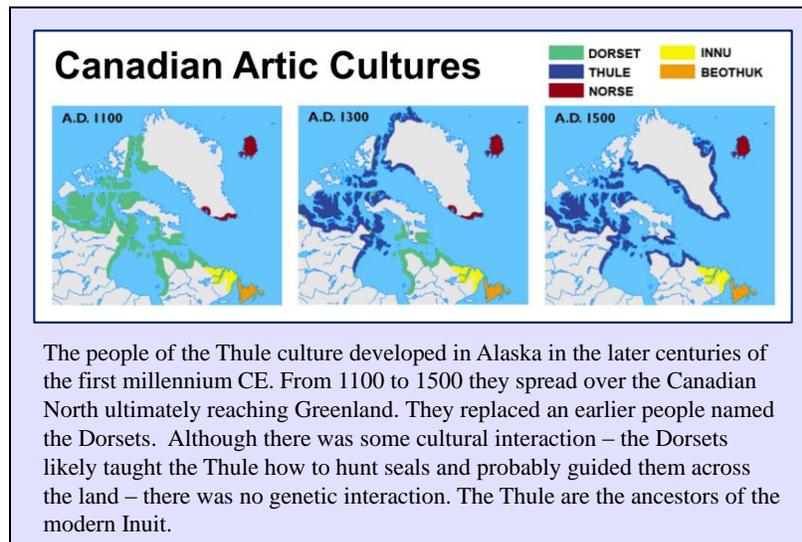
The print by Kenojuak was part of the first collection of Cape Dorset prints.

The words of Uvavnuuk were translated by Jane Hirshfield in her 1994 book *Women in praise of the sacred: 43 centuries of spiritual poetry by women*.

The following are the notes from that book:

Uvavnuuk was an Iglulik Eskimo woman. The story of her transformation into a shaman is contained in Knud Rasmussen (1929) *Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-1924, Volume 7* (translated from the Danish by W. Worster) Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghande:

Uvavnuuk had gone outside the hut one winter evening to make water. It was particularly dark that evening, as the moon was not visible. Then suddenly there appeared a glowing ball of fire in the sky, and it came rushing down to earth straight towards her. She would have got up and fled, but before she could pull up her breeches, the ball of fire struck her and entered into her. At the same moment she perceived that all within her grew light, and she lost consciousness. But from that moment also she became a great shaman . . . The spirit of the meteor had entered into her and made her a shaman . . . She got up again, and without knowing what she was doing, came running into the house singing [the song below] . . . Shortly before her death she held a grand séance, and declared it was her wish that mankind should not suffer want, and she brought forth from the interior of the earth all manner of game which she had obtained . . . After her death, the people of her village had a year of greater abundance in whale, walrus, seal, and caribou than any had ever experienced before. Among the Iglulik, women shamans were believed to be especially powerful.



Why the Thule replaced the Dorsets is not known. Perhaps the Thule had an advantage since they had developed better hunting skills (with kayaks and metal harpoon heads) and had learned to use dogs for transportation. Disease may also have played a part.

He selects a sharp stone tool
to gouge a parallel pattern of lines
on both sides of the swan
holding it with his left hand
bearing down and transmitting
his body's weight
from brain to arm and right hand
and one of his thoughts
turns to ivory

**Lament for
the Dorsets**



This information about the early arctic cultures helps us to understand Purdy's poem about the Dorsets

The carving is from the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa.

The swans depicted by the Dorsets were Tundra Swans which breed in the Arctic and winter in coastal regions of North America.



This clip is from *Nanook of the North*, a silent documentary film made by Robert Flaherty in 1922. It shows Nanook harpooning a seal at a breathing hole. The harpooned seal is very strong and Nanook ultimately has to call to his colleagues for help in landing it.

Full HD version of the movie is available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uoUafjAH0cg&lc=Ugi7ExvzFBBq2ngCoAEC>

The film was made in Port Harrison on the East coast of Hudson’s Bay. This settlement, which later became known as Inukjuak, is also famous for another reason.

High Arctic Relocation



The map shows the territory of Nunavut with numerous settlements marked. Key locations include Resolute, Grise Fiord, Inukjuak, and many others across the region.

In 1953 the Canadian Government relocated eight families of Inuit from Inukjuak to settlements in Resolute and Grise Fiord. The ostensible reason was to improve their hunting, but the ulterior motive was to assert Canada’s sovereignty in the North. Although the Inuit were promised that they could return if they wished, the government reneged on its promise until 1989, when they allowed some of the settlers to return. The Inuit had to learn to hunt beluga whales, something that was foreign to their way of life. It was not until 2010 that the government formally apologized to the relocated Inuit.



Ellesmereland I (1952)

Explorers say that harebells rise
 from the cracks of Ellesmereland
 and cod swim fat beneath the ice
 that grinds its meagre sands
 No man is settled on that coast
 The harebells are alone
 Nor is there talk of making man
 from ice cod bell or stone



Campanula
uniflora

Earle Birney wrote two poems about Ellesmereland. The first was before anyone lived there. Earle Birney was intrigued by reports of someone who had visited the deserted island.

Ellesmereland II (1965)

And now in Ellesmereland there sits
 a town of twenty men
 They guard the floes that reach to the Pole
 a hundred leagues and ten
 The warders watch the sky watch them
 the stricken hills eye both
 A Mountie visits twice a year
 And there is talk of growth

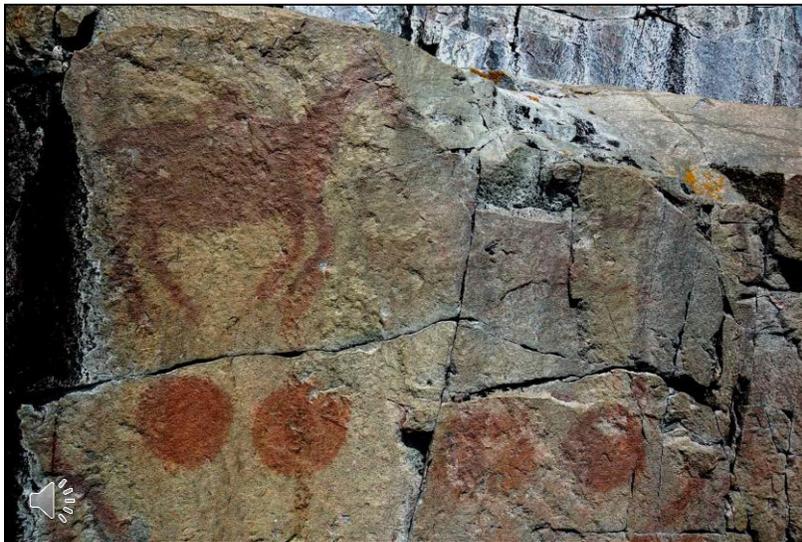


Memorial to the Relocated Inuit
 Looty Pijamini, 2010, Grise Ford



Birney's second poem is after the Canadian government had settled some Inuit families in Ellesmereland.

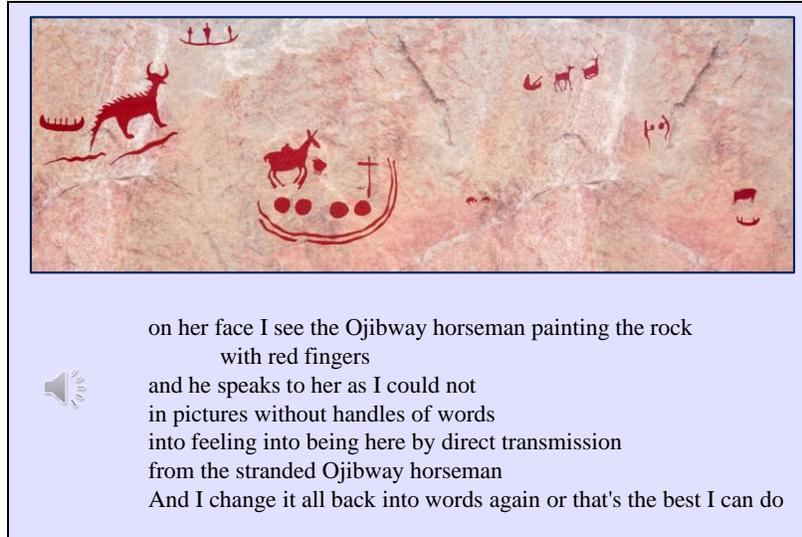
This was the time of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line – a series of radar installations to detect a possible Russian air attack. This was constructed between Alaska and Greenland in the mid 1950s between latitudes 60 and 70 degrees (arctic circle is 66 degrees). Birney's statement that the “warders watch the sky” is about this.



This is the pictograph of the *Horseman at Agawa Bay* in Lake Superior Provincial Park about 100 km north of Sault-Ste-Marie.

Photos come from

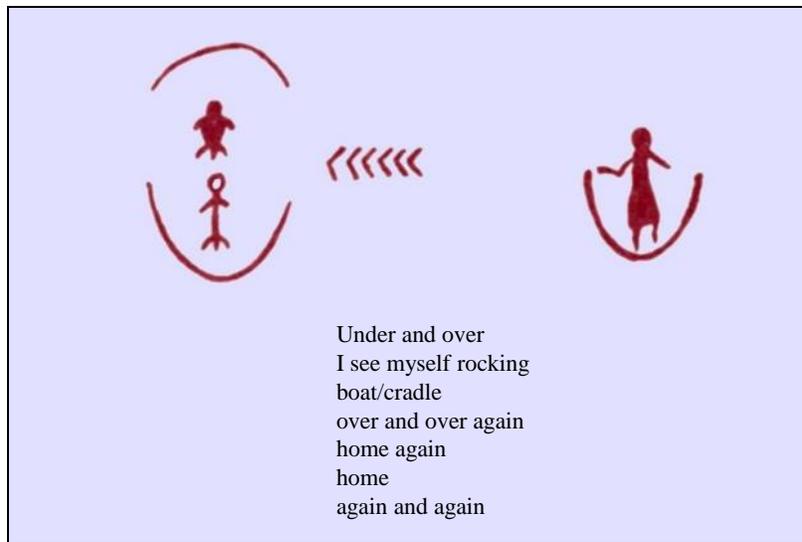
<https://albinger.me/2014/08/02/the-anishinaabe-rock-paintings-of-agawa-rock-a-quick-guide/>



The diagram shows the main pictograms from the site. The actual pictograms have deteriorated since they were first carefully studied in the 1980s. The diagram shows what was visible then. On the left a canoe with paddlers follow Mishipeshu, a fantastic dragon-like animal who lives in the great lakes. Snakes are also in the water
The other large group – to the left of centre – shows the horse and rider. The four discs may represent the passage of time (four suns) taken by the rider, or they may represent the high level of spiritual power achieved by the rider.
In the upper right a canoe follows two caribou



This photograph shows the canoe following the caribou.



Pictograms are everywhere in North America. What they mean is usually not known.

This pictogram is from the Okanagan valley in BC.

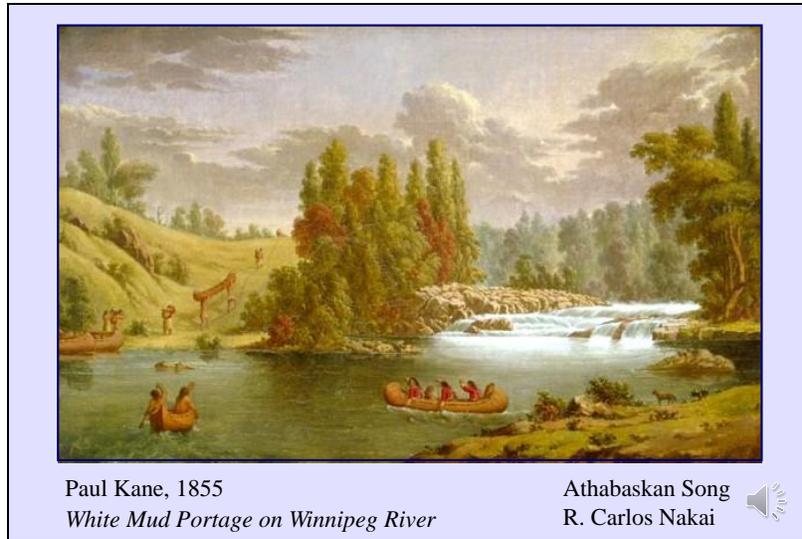
The poem is by Fred Wah (1939-), who put together a book of poems about *Pictograms from the Interior of B.C.* (1975). These were based on pictograms collected by John Corner.



**E(mily) Pauline Johnson
(1861-1913)**

Born on the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario, she was the daughter of the Mohawk chief and an English mother. She wrote poems based on the life of Native Indians. With a talent for the dramatic, she gave recitals of her poetry to enthusiastic audiences in both North America and England. As Tekahionwake (“double life”), she became one of the most popular performers of her age. She retired in 1909 to Vancouver, becoming friends with Chief Joe Capilano, and writing the *Legends of Vancouver*. She is the only person buried in Stanley Park.

At her recitals Johnson often performed the first half in buckskin, and then changed to silk for the second half.



The canoe was the main mode of travel in the Canadian North. This idyllic picture by Paul Kane shows the beginning of a portage on the Winnipeg River. There was an important trading route (for both the Ojibwe and the fur trade) starting at Grand Portage on Lake Superior (at the present border between Ontario and Minnesota), going to the Lake of the Woods and thence via the Winnipeg River to Lake Winnipeg.

<http://parkscanadahistory.com/publications/fur-trade-canoe-routes.pdf>

The Song My Paddle Sings

West wind, blow from your prairie nest
Blow from the mountains, blow from the west.
The sail is idle, the sailor too;
O! wind of the west, we wait for you.
Blow, blow!
I have wooed you so,
But never a favour you bestow.
You rock your cradle the hills between,
But scorn to notice my white lateen.

I stow the sail, unship the mast:
I wooed you long but my wooing's past;
My paddle will lull you into rest.
O! drowsy wind of the drowsy west,
Sleep, sleep

Ruth Watson Henderson
Elmer Iseler Singers

The Song My Paddle Sings is probably Pauline Johnson's most famous poem. Here it is presented in a musical setting by Ruth Watson Henderson (1932-).

Problems of paternalism, racism, cultural appropriation, etc.

A Toronto music teacher was accused of racism after teaching her students to sing the song *Land of the Silver Birch*

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/12/07/toronto-music-teacher-sues-for-defamation-after-principal-vp-call-folk-song-land-of-the-silver-birch-racist.html>

Although *Land of the Silver Birch* is often attributed to Pauline Johnson, and is similar to *The Song My Paddle Sings*, the song is actually a traditional folksong of uncertain origin. It is often sung at campfires or to help keep the paddles in time while canoeing

And oh, the river runs swifter now;
The eddies circle about my bow.
Swirl, swirl!
How the ripples curl
In many a dangerous pool awhirl!

And forward far the rapids roar,
Fretting their margin for evermore.
Dash, dash,
With a mighty crash,
They seethe, and boil, and bound, and splash.

Be strong, O paddle! be brave, canoe!
The reckless waves you must plunge into.
Reel, reel.
On your trembling keel,
But never a fear my craft will feel.

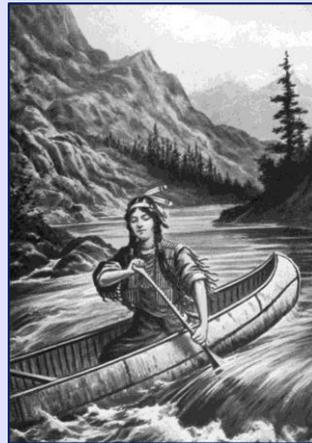
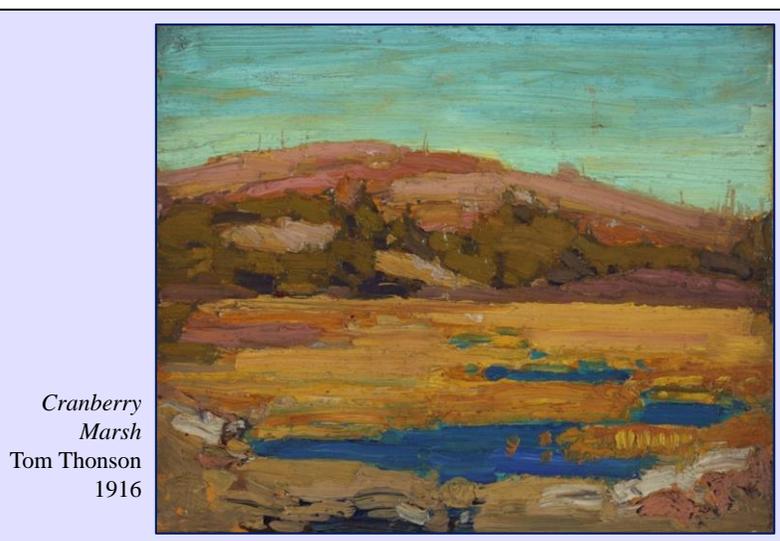


Illustration for *Flint and Feather*
J. R. Seavey, 1912



*Cranberry
Marsh*
Tom Thomson
1916

Thomson's picture was painted at about the same time as Johnson's poem *Marshland*.

The large color fields of Thomson's painting shows how he might have been moving toward abstraction.

Johnson's poem *Marshland* shows how she was a good poet independently of her aboriginal persona.

A thin wet sky, that yellows at the rim,
And meets with sun-lost lip the marsh's brim.

The pools low lying, dank with moss and mould,
Glint through their mildews like large cups of gold

Among the wild rice in the still lagoon,
In monotone the lizard shrills his tune.

The wild goose, homing, seeks sheltering,
Where rushes grow, and oozing lichens cling.

Late cranes with heavy wing, and lazy flight,
Sail up the silence with the nearing night.

And like a spirit, swathed in some soft veil,
Steals twilight and its shadows o'er the swale.

Hushed lie the sedges, and the vapours creep,
Thick, grey and humid, while the marshes sleep.

Pale as Real Ladies

See this necklace? It is made from the claws
of a cinnamon bear that went mad
when her young were slaughtered.
These are my poems.
The words have been scraped clean
of death and anger,
and will shine in your mouth
like a string of white pearls.

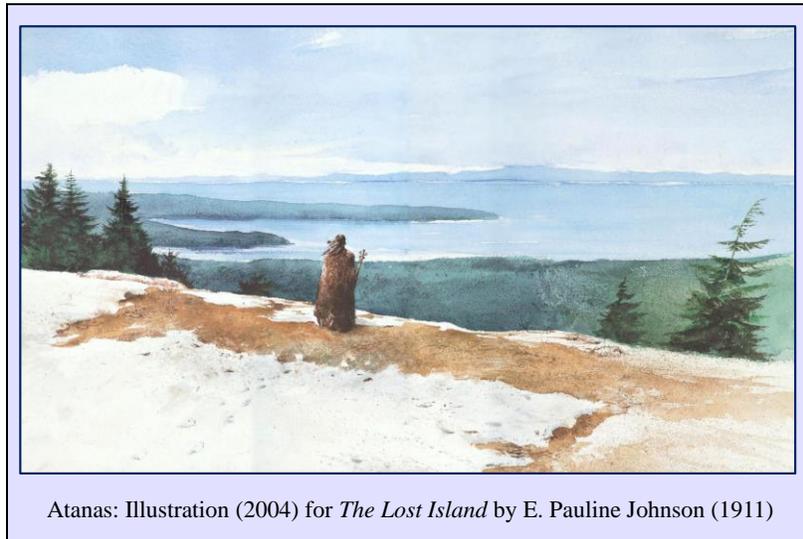
Joan Crate, 1991



Joan Crate was born in Yellowknife of indigenous heritage and has taught at Red Deer College in Alberta. Her book *Pale as Real Ladies* (1991) is a set of poems about Pauline Johnson. The book

takes its title from a line in a poem that sees young Pauline and her sister Eva playing dress-up: “In a closet under the stairwell: We curl our hair and dust talcum powder / over cheeks and eyelids, / turn pale as real ladies.”

Crate has also published a novel *Black Apple* (2016) about the Indian Residential Schools.

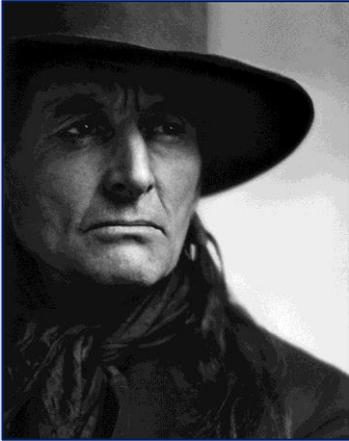


Pauline Johnson spent time with Chief Joe Capilano of the Squamish people in North Vancouver. She transcribed the ancient stories that he retold – these were published in *Legends of Vancouver*. One story told how a man transformed himself into Siwash Rock. Another described a lost island that only the Indians can see.

Story Teller

Your voice
 scrapes the bones of time.
 At night by the fire, it is only you,
 Chief Joe, who feels
 a lost spring flood thirsty cells.
 In the dark heat you find legends
 once buried, now
 damp on your dry lips.
 Whisper to me and I will write you down.
 I will run ink through your long wounds,
 make your past flash like fish scales
 under a sharp knife.
 I will give names to the tricks of seasons,
 tie your stories of beginnings to weighted ends
 with my careful fisher's fingers,

lock your chants, spirits,
dances, your paint, your potlatches
into a language you can't speak.
I will frame your history
on a white page.



**Grey Owl / Archibald
Belaney (1888-1938)**

In the end there
is no escape.
 (Did I say there was?)
It is always me.
No matter what I do
to change
the way I look.
What is inside is inside looking out.

Armand Ruffo

Portrait by Yousuf Karsh, 1936

Belaney was born in Sheffield, England. As a child he became fascinated by stories of the American Indians. He emigrated to Canada in 1906, and after a brief time in Toronto moved to Lake Temagami, where he worked as a fur trapper and guide. He started to sign his name as Grey Owl and soon began to claim native ancestry, saying that he had an Apache mother and a Scottish father. He married an Ojibwe woman and learned the Ojibwe language. He served in the Canadian army in World War I and married an English woman while in England (without noting that he was already married). He left her and returned to Canada.

On his return he began to write about the indigenous life-style and about the need to preserve animals such as the beaver which were being hunted to extinction. In 1931 he began to work with Parks Canada at Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba, and later at Prince Albert National Park in Saskatchewan, where he maintained a beaver sanctuary.

In the mid 1930s he toured Canada and Britain to promote his books and his conservationist ideas. While there he was recognized by his wife's family. He began to drink excessively. Weakened by alcohol, he contracted and died of pneumonia in 1938. He was exposed as a fraud just after his death.

Armand Ruffo wrote a series of poems about Grey Owl in 1996. This poem describes his troubled sense of identity.

In the end there
is no escape.
 (Did I say there was?)
It is always me.

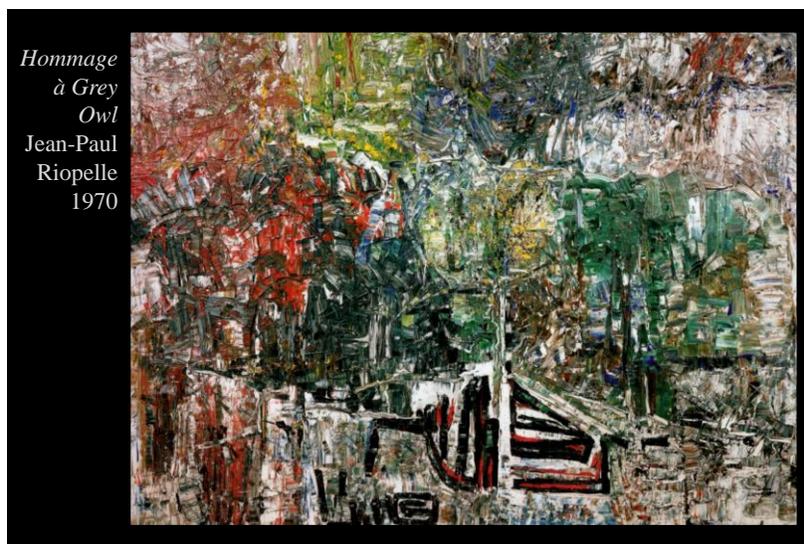
No matter what I do
to change
the way I look.
What is inside is inside looking out.

I see it all (home, family, friends, wives...).

Is this the reason
I'm happiest
making miles
in my canoe —
going to beat hell
over the surface of some lake?

I dip my paddle,
pull hard,
the water ripples
and swirls,
for a moment
the mirror
I'm riding
smashed to a million pieces.

The life of Grey Owl highlights the uneasy sense of identity of the inhabitants of North America who derive from European settlers. We have considered this before – for example in the poem *The Pride* by John Newlove. How do we create an identity when we are not native here.



This is Riopelle's homage to Grey Owl. Out of the complex abstraction some lines are created – cabin or canoe? Out of the foreign continent Grey Owl invented his indigenous self.

Armand Garnet Ruffo (1955-)

Born in Chapleau, Ontario, a member of the Ojibwe Nation, Ruffo studied at York University. He has published several volumes of poetry, written several plays, and edited (with Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie) *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*. He currently teaches at Queen's University.



As well as writing about Grey Owl, Ruffo has also written extensively about Norval Morrisseau, whom shall consider this later in this session.

But first we should go back in time and consider the residential schools and the poet who administered them.



Portrait by Yousuf Karsh, 1933

Duncan Campbell Scott, 1862-1947

Scott entered the Department of Indian Affairs in the Canadian civil service in 1879. From 1913 to 1932 he was the departmental head. He was responsible for the negotiation of treaties and the residential schools. As well as his government activities, Scott published poetry and edited a collection of Archibald Lampman's poems.

The Canadian Indian Residential School System was begun in 1884 when an amendment to the Indian Act made it compulsory for First Nation children to attend school. Because of the remote and isolated location of many native settlements, this meant that the children had to be taken to residential schools.

Duncan Campbell Scott was considered one of the Confederation Poets. Of these poets, he was the one who wrote most about the life of the American Indians and about their stories.

Scott inherited the residential school system but found no reason to change it. He stated in 1920 about legislation to amend the Indian Act so that Indigenous people could become citizens:

I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone ... Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill.

[https://tc2.ca/sourcedocs/uploads/images/HD%20Sources%20\(text%20thumbs\)/Aboriginal%20History/Residential%20Schools/Residential-Schools%2010.pdf](https://tc2.ca/sourcedocs/uploads/images/HD%20Sources%20(text%20thumbs)/Aboriginal%20History/Residential%20Schools/Residential-Schools%2010.pdf)

The Forsaken

Once in the winter
Out on a lake
In the heart of the north-land,
Far from the Fort
And far from the hunters,
A Chippewa woman
With her sick baby,
Crouched in the last hours
Of a great storm.
Frozen and hungry,
She fished through the ice
With a line of the twisted
Bark of the cedar,
And a rabbit-bone hook
Polished and barbed;





recitation by Fredric Wertham is from

<https://vimeo.com/100426839>

tikinagan – cradleboard (Algonquin), papoose-carrier (papoose – young child – is another Algonquin word)



On the Way to the Mission tells the story of how an Indian trapper pulling a sled covered in furs was murdered by two white men who wished to rob him. However, they found the toboggan contained not the trapper's dead wife, whom he was taking to be buried at the mission:

There in the tender moonlight,
As sweet as they were in life,
Glimmered the ivory features,
Of the Indian's wife.

In the manner of Montagnais women
Her hair was rolled with braid;
Under her waxen fingers
A crucifix was laid.

He was drawing her down to the Mission,
To bury her there in spring,
When the bloodroot comes and the windflower
To silver everything

But as a gift of plunder
Side by side were they laid,
The moon went on to her setting
And covered them with shade.

The illustration shows the windflower (*Anemone Canadensis*), also known as crowfoot. This comes out in spring before the forest canopy becomes full. The bloodroot (*Sanguinaria Canadensis*) has similar white flowers (with more petals). Its roots are red; the juice is poisonous.



This is a clip from the film *Duncan Campbell Scott - The Poet and the Indians* (1995) by James Cullingham

<https://vimeo.com/100426839>

<https://www.cinemapolitica.org/film/duncan-campbell-scott-poet-and-Indians>

The race has waned and left but tales of ghosts,
That hover in the world like fading smoke
About the lodges: gone are the dusky folk
That once were cunning with the thong and snare
And mighty with the paddle and the bow;

They lured the silver salmon from his lair,
They drove the buffalo in trampling hosts,
And gambled in the tepees until dawn,
But now their vaunted prowess all is gone,
Gone like a moose-track in the April snow.

Mark Abley in his 2013 book *Conversations with a Dead Man* comments

All that remains, Scott concludes, are the “wild names” the Indians left behind. This is a forcefully romantic elegy, but its subject matter is living people who had not accepted their own extinction. Call it a case of premature nostalgia. Or of vast presumption.



The map shows the “Numbered Treaties” between the First Nations and the government of Canada. These treaties were created to allow the Canadian Government to provide land for settlers and to extract natural resources. Treaties with the indigenous people in other parts of Canada had been negotiated locally before Confederation. In British Columbia very little of the land was covered by legal treaty.

Many indigenous people feel the treaties were coerced and unfair. Furthermore, many of the promises in the treaties (such as the right of the First Nations to self-government) were not fulfilled.

Ruffo's poem tells of how Duncan Campbell Scott would visit with the indigenous people to negotiate and sign the treaties.

Who is this black coat and tie?
Christian severity etched in the lines
he draws from his mouth. Clearly a noble man
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 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.

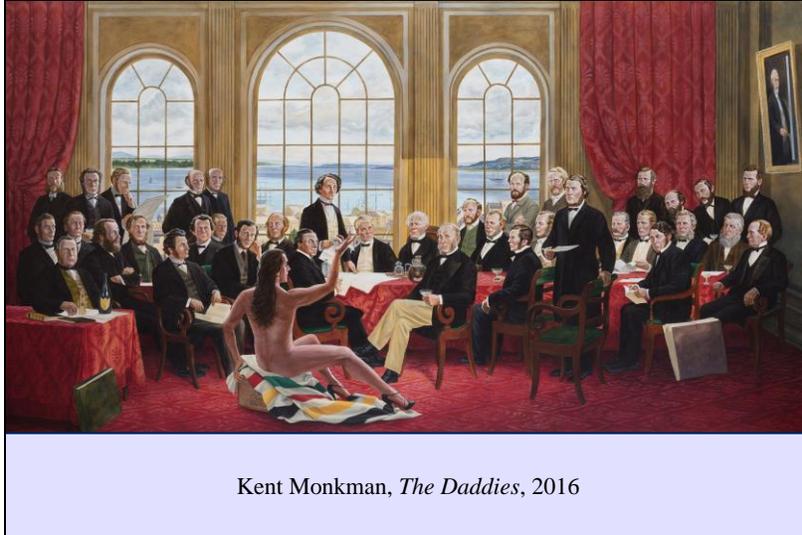
Some don't care, they don't like the look of him.

They say he asks 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.



Kent Monkman, *The Daddies*, 2016

Kent Monkman (1965-) is of Cree ancestry. He considers himself “two-spirit” – a third gender recognized in indigenous cultures. His paintings reconsider the history of North America from an indigenous perspective. Many are re-paintings of iconic historical works by white artists.

His paintings can be seen on his website
<http://www.kentmonkman.com/painting/>

This painting derives from the 1884 painting of Robert Harris *The Fathers of Confederation*. This is loosely based on the 1864 Charlottetown conference.

The indigenous peoples had no say in the process of confederation. To rectify this, Monkman places his alter-ego the transgender *Miss Chief Share Eagle Testickle* at the conference and forces them to pay attention.

The name alludes to mischief, Cher (a gay icon) and egotistical.

Indian Reservation: Caughnawaga

Their past is sold in a shop; the beaded shoes,
 the sweetgrass basket, the curio Indian,
 burnt wood, and gaudy cloth, and inch-canoes—
 trophies and scalplings for a traveler's den.
 Sometimes, it's true, they dance, but for a bribe;
 after a deal don the bedraggled feather
 and welcome a white mayor to the tribe.

A. M. Klein



Chief Poking Fire
1937 Photograph

One of the main features of the treaties with the native people of Canada was the delineation of reservations where they might govern themselves. Unfortunately these were too small to provide a living for their people, who then became dependent on government subsidies. Many of the reservations ran trading posts where trinkets were sold to visitors and for a price photographs allowed.

The reservation on the south shore of the St Lawrence at Montreal is now named Kahnawake.



Photograph by Richard Susanto, 2013, shows a mature and a juvenile bald eagle.

Klein's poem told how the Kahnawake reservation looked to a visitor. The following poem gives the feeling from inside the reservation.

Peter Blue Cloud (1935 - 2011) was a Mohawk Indian. He spent much of his life in the United States

Searching for Eagles

A pair of great blue herons should
be feast enough for anyone's sunset.
Still, I chant an inner prayer
to glimpse but once, a circling,
soaring eagle close to
this river at my doorstep.

This bit of Mohawk territory, encircled
by cities, towns, freeway and seaway,
cannot be what my ancestors dreamed.

They, who intimately knew eagles,
how would they reconcile today
without the loon's evening cry?

I pretend this river at my doorstep,
for it is a backwash of the seaway,
not flowing, but pulled back and forth
by passing ships. No more the taste
of fresh fish, what swim here are
sickly, polluted, and dying creatures.



The other result of the treaties was the Residential school system. Indigenous children were taken away from their families and sent to residential schools that were little different from prisons.

These are four pictures from Robert Houle's 2009 *Sandy Bay Residential School* series. The pictures were made with oil stick. Upper pictures show *Schoolhouse* and *Pretending to Pray*. Lower pictures show *Noodin is my Friend* and *Night Predator*. Note the relations between “pray” and “prey.”

As well as painting, Robert Houle (1947-) taught at the Ontario College of Art and Design, and was curator of Indian art at the National Museum of Man in Ottawa.



This is Kent Monkman's take on the residential school seizures: *The Scream*, 2017

Chanie Wenjack (1954-1966)

On October 16, 1966, this 12-year old Ojibwe boy ran away from the Indian Residential School in Kenora. He began following the railway line toward his home in Ogoki Post some 600 km away. Clad only in a light windbreaker, and with no supplies other than a few matches, he died of exposure a few days later. Gord Downie's last recording *Secret Path* was dedicated to his memory.



The story of Chanie Wenjack was first told to the world through an article in Macleans magazine written by Ian Adams:

<http://www.macleans.ca/society/the-lonely-death-of-chanie-wenjack/>

At the end of the article he describes the inquest and the questioning of the boys at the school who had run away from the Kenora school.

Before the boys were questioned, the constable in charge of the investigation, Gerald Lucas, had given the jury a matter-of-fact account of finding Charlie's body. In telling it simply, he had underlined the stark grimness of Charlie's death. But it was now, through

the stumbling testimony of the boys, and in the bewildered silences behind those soft one-word answers, the full horror began to come out. No, they didn't understand why they had to be at the school. No, they didn't understand why they couldn't be with their relatives. Yes, they were lonesome. Would they run away again? Silence. And the jury was obviously moved. When Eddie Cameron began to cry on the stand, the jury foreman, J. R. Robinson, said later, "I wanted to go and put my arms around that little boy and hold him, and tell him not to cry."

There were no Indians on the jury. There were two housewives, a railroad worker, a service-station operator, and Robinson, who is a teacher at the Beaverbrae School in Kenora. In their own way they tried to do their duty. After spending more than two hours deliberating, they produced a written verdict and recommendations that covered one, long, closely written page of the official form. The jury found that "the Indian education system causes tremendous emotional and adjustment problems." They suggested that the school be staffed adequately so that the children could develop personal relationships with the staff, and that more effort be given to boarding children in private homes.

But the most poignant suggestion was the one that reflected their own bewilderment: "A study be made of the present Indian education and philosophy. Is it right?"



This is an illustration by Jeff Lemire of the story of Chanie Wenjack for the book accompanying the 2017 album *Secret Path: for Chanie Wenjack* by Gord Downie. It shows the night before his death. Chanie makes a fire but it does little to stem the cold.



This illustration shows the final day of Chanie Wenjack's life. He suffered through freezing rain wearing only a flimsy windbreaker .

The song is by Gord Downie (1964-2017) and *The Tragically Hip*:

Freezing rain
And Ice pellets
Walking home I'm covered in it
Walking home
Along the tracks
Secret Path
Did you say "Secret Path"?

Pale blue
Doesn't do what they said it'd do
It's just a jacket
It's a windbreaker
It's not a jean jacket
They call it a windbreaker



**Norval Morrisseau
(1932-2007)**

Born near Fort William to Ojibway parents, he was cared for by his grandparents. Morrisseau ran away from the Saint Joseph's Catholic Residential School where he had been abused. He took the name Copper Thunderbird. Using the stories and legends that he learned from his grandfather, he became a prolific artist, founding the Woodlands School, and becoming a member of the *Indian Group of Seven*.

1983 photograph
Helena Wilson

The Indian Group of Seven: Jackson Beardy, Alex Janvier, Daphne Odjig, Norval Morrisseau, Eddy Cobiness, Carl Ray and Joseph Sanchez.



Because for all your education you still tuck fear
under your pillow and rest your head on it every night.

And for a moment its scream lifts you high above your knowing
into the claws of something huge, immense.



Armand
Ruffo

The painting is *Thunderbird*, 1960. The poem is by Armand Garnet Ruffo who spent much time with Morrisseau toward the end of his life, writing his biography as well as multiple “Thunderbird Poems” based on his paintings.

Behind the blink of a dream
the shaman paints himself
into voyage
and travels
with the people



Painted in red ochre on stone
and bound together
transformed
innumerable times
by innumerable artists
so that the people might continue.



Armand Garnet Ruffo

The illustrated work of art is Morrisseau’s homage to the Indian painters who made the pictographs that were the inspiration for his paintings. The rock painting is in the Hamilton Art Gallery.

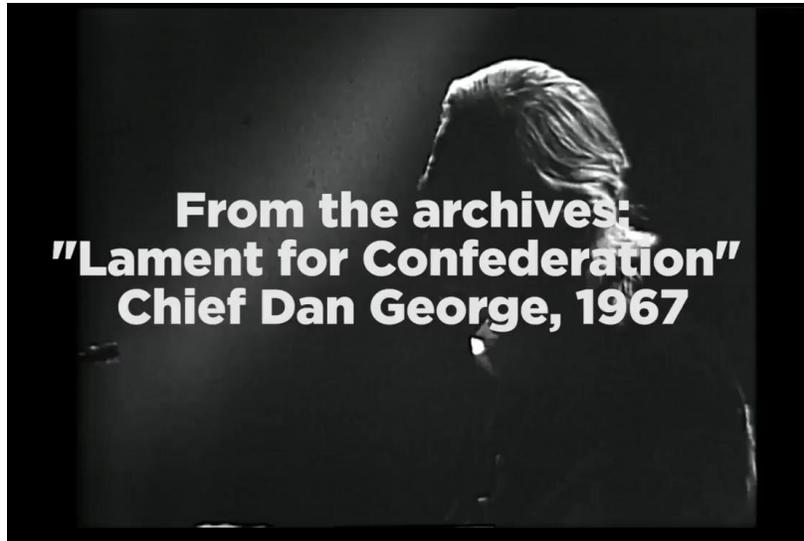


This postcard shows the Indian Pavilion at Expo67 in Montreal.
F. R. Scott made a “found poem” from the texts in the different rooms of the pavilion.

When the White Man came
We welcomed him
With love

We sheltered him
Fed him
Led him throught the forest

The great explorers of Canada
Travelled in Indian canoes
Wore Indian snow-shoes
Ate Indian food
Lived in Indian houses



The Centennial of Confederation was not a celebration for Canada's indigenous people. Chief Dan George (1899-1981) was a member of the Coast Salish native people whose ancestral lands include present day Vancouver. As an actor he is best remembered for his role as Old Lodge Skins in the movie *Little Big Man* (1970). As a poet he wrote and performed the *Lament for Confederation*

How long have I known you, Oh Canada? A hundred years? Yes, a hundred years. And many, many seelanum more. And today, when you celebrate your hundred years, Oh Canada, I am sad for all the Indian people throughout the land.

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/936571971508>

seelanum – lunar month



Buffy Sainte-Marie (1941-)

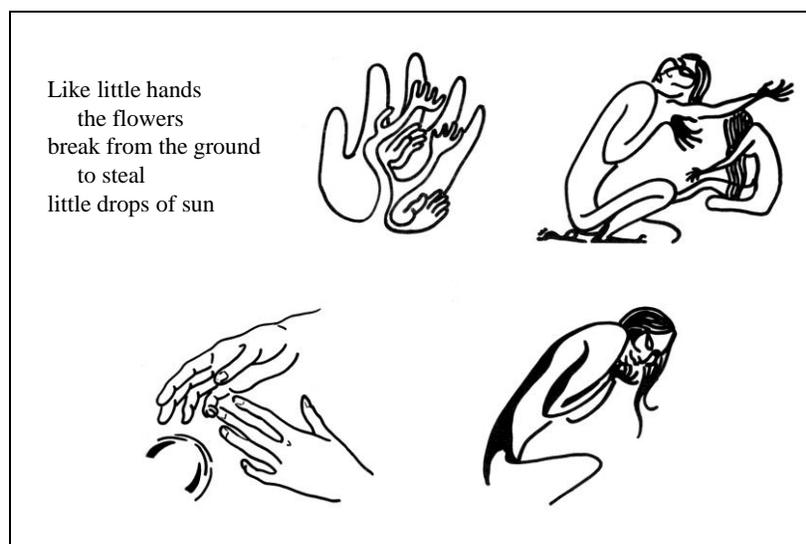
Born in Saskatchewan on a Plains Cree Reserve, Buffy Saint-Maire was adopted at the age of a few months and grew up in New England, with an adoptive mother who was part Mi'kmaq. She graduated from the University of Massachusetts and became a folk singer in Greenwich Village. Her initial album included one of the great songs of the Peace Movement, *The Universal Soldier*.

from 1971 Album Cover



This still from the 2017 PBS program *The Vietnam War* by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick. It shows two soldiers waiting to evacuate the body of their dead comrade. The song is *The Universal Soldier* by Buffy Sainte-Marie. The idea behind the song is that the young must stop going to war on the orders of their elders.

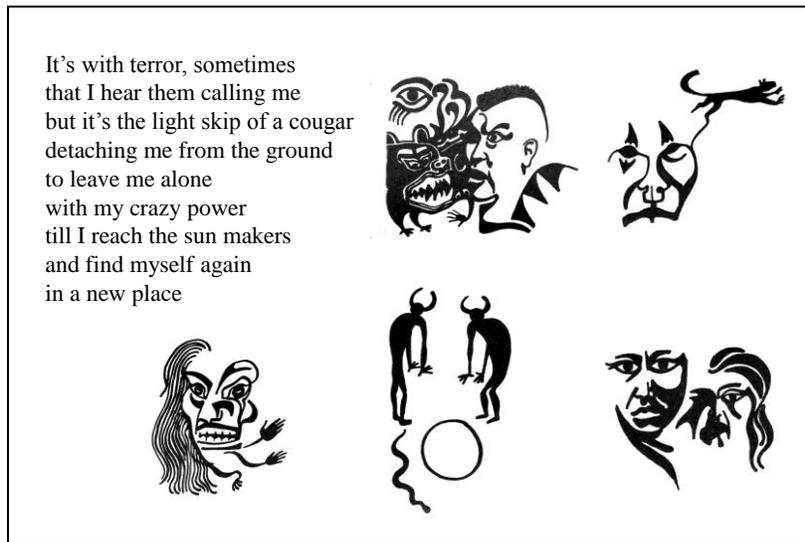
He's the universal soldier and he
 really is to blame
 His orders come from far away no more
 They come from him, and you, and me
 and brothers can't you see
 this is not the way we put an end to war



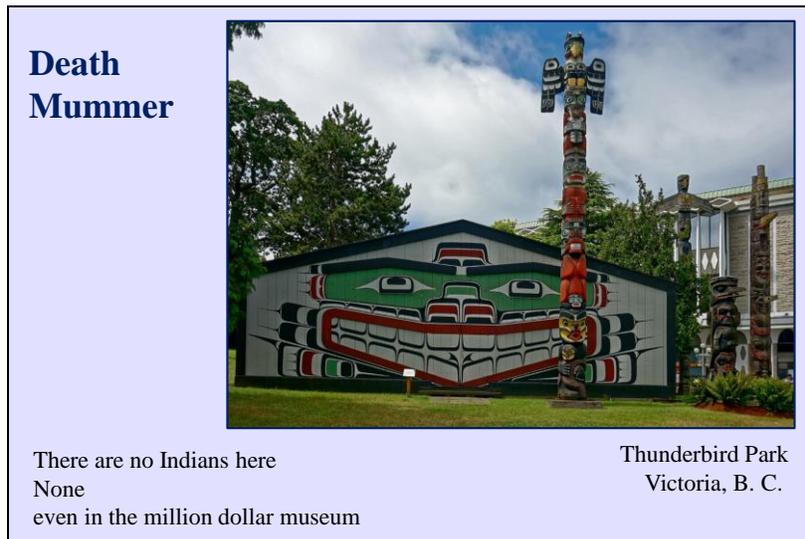
Sarain Stump (1945-1974) was born in Wyoming but moved to Alberta in 1964 where he wrote his book of poems *There is My People Sleeping* in 1969. He later moved to Saskatchewan and taught at the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College. He died by drowning in Mexico.

His book contains short poems illustrated by drawings that derive from the art of the Plains Indians but are totally original.

This sequence describes the flowers of spring.



This sequence tells of the mystical experience of leaving reality and finding the sun makers.



Jeanette Armstrong's poem is a bitter indictment of the country who puts its people into a museum.

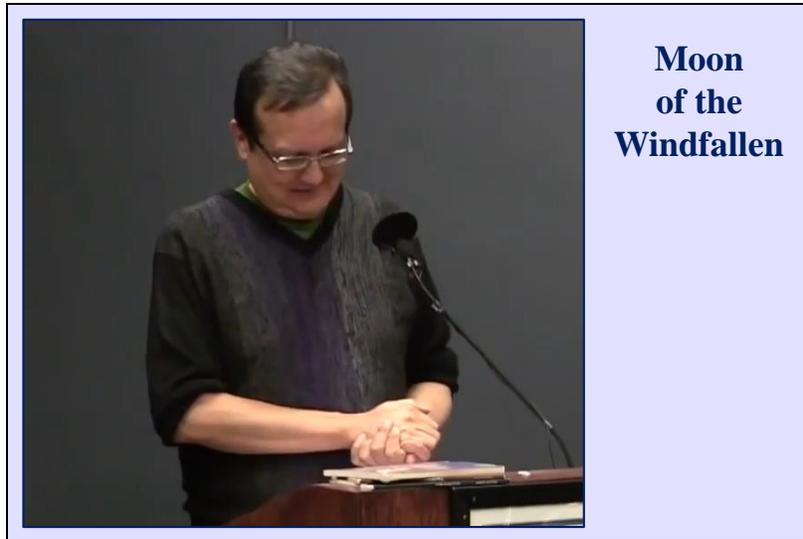
Yesterday I walked
by Thunderbird Park.
Tonight
With blood-stained fingers
I remove my mask
I think
walk past garish totem-painted storefronts
down avenues that echo

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

**Daniel David Moses
(1952-)**

Born and raised in the Six Nations of the Grand River Reservation near Brantford, Ontario, Moses studied at York University and at the University of British Columbia. He has published poetry, but has made his most significant contribution as a playwright: *Coyote City* (1988), *Big Buck City* (1991), and *Kyotopolis* (1992). He is gay and has written about the indigenous idea of "two-spirit people." He presently teaches at Queen's University.





From a 2011 Tree Reading Series

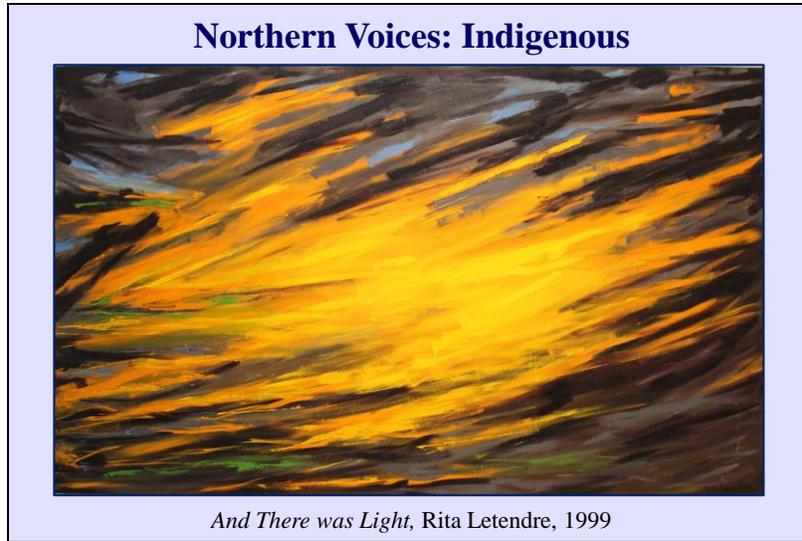
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BnIrtjx9Lo>

The moon, so ripe on its stem,
He wants to be a kid and
Clamber through the branches of

The tree of night again, needs
To look out through the topmost limbs
At the illuminated

Farm, a harvest of many
Moons, as the saying goes, safe
In a six-quart basket hung

From his arm.



This painting by Rita Letendre, from her later more abstract style, complements the hard-edged painting from the beginning of this session. Both show the sheer joy of sunrise, the indigenous sense of comfort in the world and wonder at its beauty.