

Strong Hands Stop Violence

POETRY BOOK
VOLUME IV



Ontario Native Women's Association

Chi Mügwetch

Thank you to all the writers who generously shared such beautiful and honest words about an issue that has touched your lives or the lives of someone you know. Your expressions not only help us to continue raising awareness about violence against Indigenous women, but they also give us hope - as for many, the healing journey has begun.



**LEAVE NO
ONE BEHIND:
END VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN
AND GIRLS**

**#16days
#orangetheworld**

#orangetheworld

The **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence** is an international campaign which takes place each year and runs from November 25, *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*, to December 10, *International Human Rights Day*. It was originated by activists at the first *Women's Global Leadership Institute* in 1991 and is coordinated each year by the *Center for Women's Global Leadership*. It is used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

In support of this civil society initiative, each year, the United Nations Secretary-General's campaign **UNiTE to End Violence against Women (UNiTE)** calls for global action to increase worldwide awareness and create opportunities for discussion about challenges and solutions. The UNiTE campaign utilizes the colour orange as a unifying theme running through all of its global activities. Orange is one of the official colours of the UNiTE campaign and in the context of its global advocacy, is used as a symbol of a brighter future, free from violence against women and girls.

endviolence.un.org

Strong Hands Stop Violence

#StrongHandsStopViolence

The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA)'s *Strong Hands Stop Violence* project raises awareness of violence against women and girls. It includes an annual [Poetry Night](#), an annual [Poetry Book](#), and an ongoing collective [Art Project](#).

Every *United Nations International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women* (November 25), ONWA hosts Poetry Nights across Ontario in support of the #orangetheworld campaign. This event features readings from both emerging and established poets, and live musical performances. It provides an opportunity to create a space where Indigenous women and families can gather and celebrate their shared strength and resiliency.

Submissions from Poetry Night and a community call out are considered for ONWA's annual Poetry Book, which highlights poetry written by Indigenous women. Poems submitted this year, will be published in a Poetry Book released at next year's Poetry Night.

The name *Strong Hands Stop Violence* comes from the Art Project. Participants of Poetry Night are invited to dip their hands in orange and blue paint and press on a canvas to signify standing together to eliminate violence against women and girls.

Art as healing trauma is a strong foundation of the work ONWA does, addressing violence from perspectives rooted in cultural teachings. ONWA is committed to supporting communities and providing hope to those on their healing journey.

onwa.ca/strong-hands-stop-violence

(Photos: ONWA Strong Hands Stop Violence Poetry Nights 2016-2019)



MY PRAYER

by Desiree Mathews
Musko Gabo Chigashtao Eskwao
Strong Standing in Bright Light Woman

Thank you Great Spirit
Mee kwaych keeshay maaneeto

I thank you for this life you give me
Neen naa s komon ohma pimatisowin

Protect my children
Gahnowaymik joshomishuk agah waysh chishtitik

Protect me
Gahnowaynimin nesta nena agah waysh chitian

I pray for all the people who are sick
Nahmahastamowuk misiway Guyacgoschik

Help me to walk in a good way
Wee cha hin gwa yesk che bi mo ta yan omah mes ka now

I pray for Mother Earth, Water Spirit, the Flyers, the
Swimmers, Crawlers and the 4 legged animals

Nah ma hes ta mow Negowi Aski

Neepee Manitou

Gah mi na jic

Gah pah ma ti gan jic

Gah pi mo ta chi mo chic

Gah na ow ga tah chic

Meegwetch!

A SIMPLE NO

by Jamie Labrador

A thousand pieces of one bottle
Scattered along the street

Keeping a safe distance
From everyone I meet

Afraid that my shirt
Will show just enough skin,
That the man slowing down his car
Will think I want to come in

It shouldn't have to be this way -
Telling men that I'm sick, married, or gay

Because a simple no never does the trick,
Even if it's my thousandth time saying it.



HEALING

by Anonymous

Healing
on a winter night
in a dream
an orange sun
beams its warmth
bathing a small girl in
love as she dreams
a doll with long hair
and one eye
that peers like an owl
from behind
a tree of lights, the owl
looks over her, a fairy in green
a string of stars over
the girl

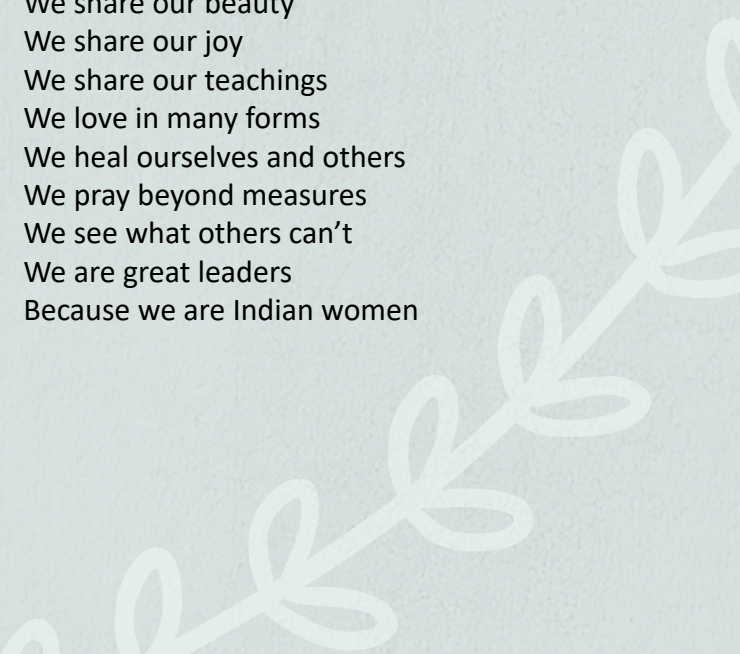
the girls voice sings
across he healing blue
at 3 a.m.



Native Women

by Cecile Hardy

We are daughters
We are mothers
We are grandmothers
We are proud
We are true
We are good
We are strong
We are independent
We are equal
We share our love
We share our life
We share our wisdom
We share our beauty
We share our joy
We share our teachings
We love in many forms
We heal ourselves and others
We pray beyond measures
We see what others can't
We are great leaders
Because we are Indian women



Untitled

by Anonymous

Made from the flesh of mtigook
Stripped, still and naked
Lined upon them are faces.
Faces strangers
Faces of masters
Masters of the house.
White empty eyes staring back at her
A stranger in her own home
Tolerated, appeased.
An outsider
She never agreed to this.

The animals have been thrown out the door
They don't belong in the house
They are no longer family
They can stay outside
For now.
Until he decides he wants that space.
A white fence would look nice there
Why not a surburban garden? Perhaps a garage?
Silly nintiigok why would you grow there?
Crazy bineshin why would you build your nest there?
Clear the way
Clear the land
Stamp his dirty boots across Mother Earth.
Dragging his foot
Tearing up the earth, our mothers' floor
Ripping our homes apart, forcing our families to flee
Washing his boots in niibi
Poisoning our waters with the stench

She never agreed to this
It is not his land
It is not his home
It has never been his
It will never be.
He was a guest
The time is up.

Take those boots
Retrace your steps
If you do not know the way
The follow the destruction, the pain
Follow the scars in the earth.
The ripples of sadness in the water,
The refugee camps of the animals
Follow the tears, The anger
Follow the loss
They will lead the way

Pick up those boots
Take this pain
Tear down these walls
Rip up the marble floor
Let Mother Earth breathe again.
Open the gates
There is no space for him here
She never agreed to this.
Zhaaganaash, you have been a bad tenant
It is time to evict.

Violence to me

by Tina Hibbs

Violence to me was something unseen. It was a
secret in silence of something so mean.

It was to be hidden and forgotten and tucked in my
mind. It was a feeling of hopelessness, confusion
and loss of time.

A memory to be blocked from the now, to resurface
later with bad choices and wondering how?

How one can forget things so traumatic, things
that forever affect who we are and become so
automatic.

Violence to me has changed my life and it touches
everyone in all walks of life.

Although it has changed me and who I am, now that I
am older, I do understand.

Although it is negative and a part of the world, it is an
unfortunate reality that needs to be heard.

With love and guidance and being self-aware, people
can heal from violence everywhere.

It starts from using our voices and stopping the
silence, to empower to make positive changes
and say no to violence.

HEARTBREAK

by Tina Hibbs

A heavy heart is what I feel, a place of sadness that
feels unreal.

The numbness in fact is hard to take, the pain so bad
when you have a heartache.

The loss of love just seems so unfair, no other feeling
so hard to bare.

Although I have been here many times before, does
not make it easier, in fact in hurts more.

A place I chose not to be in again, is a choice that I
make to help my heart mend.

I will love myself and will not permit, another great
loss to my heart to begin.

I will set boundaries and not let anyone in, unless
they come with love, true love from within.

A lesson to learn, a story to share.

Cause heartache hurts too much, too much to bare.

UNTITLED

by Faith Turner

It was all my fault
she's met with a quick halt
As you slam her to the wall
Her crumpled body sliding down to fall

Always my fault, you remind me again
That reoccurring look insane
As she tries to run
I wonder when will this all be done?

I am the reason yet, I did nothing wrong
I hold on to my mothers love and song
Just a little girl in this chaotic world stuck
As she holds on to a man who doesn't give a fk

I am the reason you argue?
If I go away, will it stop what you do?
A child burdened with the blame
My mother hangs her head in shame

But no. You become the reason.
I am now a woman of season
Knowing the fault in your fists
Hanging on to her wrists

I let you all go
You didn't win you know
I walked away
Into my own story and hope of a brighter day

Just a shadow of each memory
Pains my heart but helps me to see
The cycle coming full circle around
As a shadow of a hand on my face is found



Mind Is Matter

by Timothy J. Boulanger

Happiness & Love
Overcoming
Is letting go
Doing what's right
I told you so
From the start
Your dignity
Showed Incredible Heart
The sacrifice
Who you are
Taking the steps
Along life's road
What's best for you
Is not What's best for I
The Knowing
The Showing Greatness
From above
Straight Happiness & Love

PERSEVERANCE

by Timothy J. Boulanger

Where's that
Get up & go
Attitude

The world is
Not going to wait
For you

Decisions
Come From
The Heart

Knowing what's right
Knowing what's wrong

I will do this
I am strong

Why are these
Feelings & Emotions
Inside of I
Always right

Just doing right
Takes me to
The next flight

My meaning
My purpose

My Heavenly Delight



Sisters



by Anonymous

I still wait for you sometimes at the Cronos Cafe
Or at least my heart does

When the snow is coming down ever so softly and it's chilly out
I still remember our laughs

That evening you got to put your knife down
in a safe place, for one night

We talked about the fat dog - cool cat theory
Sipping our large hot chocolates, smiling

You told me I was still your number one baby, your first child
Your sister

So much love, despite it all

What I want you to know is this

Standing on your corner
Never defined your beauty or worth

You were better than all those men
Who took advantage of you, hurt you

They never deserved you

You are an Anishnawbe kwe
Clothed in spirit colours and love from your ancestors

It's never too late to remember who you are

"An older sister helps one remain half child, half woman."

YOU SAID YOU LOVE ME

by T C Martin

You said you love me
I guess you show it by keeping me from my family

You said you love me
I guess you show it with a criticizing remark

You said you love me
I guess you show it by denying me dignity

You said you love me
I guess you show it with a slap in the face

You said you love me
I guess you show it with a black eye

You said you love me
I guess you show it with a shove down the stairs

You said you love me
I guess you show it by strangling me to death

Untitled

by Sheila Santa

I am but a drop of rain
in a small unnoticed puddle,
But I made that puddle
ripple and added to its depth.






Flip The Script

by Lindsay Rogers

I hurt so bad inside
I wish you could see the world through my eyes
You'll never see the tears I've cried
Attempting suicide, I'll say my goodbyes
I never thought I'd die alone
Growing darkness taking dawn
Another six months I'll be unknown
I'm no longer me, she's gone
This life is overwhelming and I'm ready for the next one
But maybe I'm alive because I didn't really want to die
This can be undone
I've got to try
I don't want to die anymore
I didn't walk with Creator before



UNTITLED

by Joceline Noblis

Our eyes sees so much
Our dreams says so much
Our hearts feels so much
Our souls know so much
Miigwetch for these messages

A compilation of poems from the
Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA)'s

Strong Hands Stop Violence Poetry Night

(November 25th, 2019)

to raise awareness of violence against women in
support of the United Nation International Day of
Elimination of Violence Against Women

#orangetheworld



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