

Kaskitamasowin miýw-āyāwin

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Abstract

The following is a poetic re-presentation of Madeline Dion Stout's (2012) editorial: Ascribed Health and Wellness, Atikowisi Miýw-āyāwin, to Achieved Health and Wellness, Kaskitamasowin Miýw-āyāwin: Shifting the Paradigm.

Key Words: mipahi kayás, wahkohtowin, nahi, ōsihickēwin, kaskitamasowin miýw-āyāwin

I'm still here, I'm still practicing
beyond the border, beyond the scope
on a iskonkana (reserve) not of my choosing
in a place where others have lost hope

I am writing our story
beyond the margins and beyond the pale
disrupting the structures of colonization (mipahi kayás)
transforming tāpisōc (grief) and piercing the veil

But there is memory in this blood
historical pain tattooed in our souls (kayás óma kanóhcikweyā)
while we battle with ourselves (kitimahitowin)
the colonizer's story gets retold

It is through the balm of tipahikēwin (traditional practices)
through the rhythm of the drum
through the smell of the smoke
that the rulers will become undone

Nahi (fairness) won't emerge
while we yearn for happier times (wāskāmsiwin)
our creativity (ōsihickēwin) must lead the way
along with our kinship ties (wāhkōhtowin)

kaskitamasowin miýw-āyāwin-
her praises past sung as but a whisper
but this paradigm of creative genius, of collective courage
must echo loudly into the future

Discussion

The use of the arts in nursing inquiry is a relatively new phenomenon. However, Indigenous people have long lived and learned in artistic ways. The arts can evoke, illuminate and inspire in ways that traditional nursing scholarship cannot. The arts can also serve to honour all our relations. This poem is an affirmation of article 11 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007) asserting that Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural practices including arts and literature.

This poem is inspired by Madeleine Dion Stout's powerful editorial where she puts forward a vision for a new Indigenous health paradigm that shifts the perspective from tipi (equal) to nahi (fairness). This new paradigm is based upon ancient ideas as well as new interventions. Through this poem, I pay homage to my own Métis upbringing on the banks of the Red River and to my family, teachers and Elders that nurtured and nurtured a paradigm of creativity, collectivity and courage.

The use of the arts, and in this case poetry, doesn't attempt to imply nor reveal a universal truth or a prescriptive theory. Rather, through deep immersive engagement, the reader is encouraged to reflect and find personal meaning within.

References

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