

An Interdisciplinary Journal

Honoring the Voices, Perspectives and Knowledges of First Peoples through Research, Critical Analyses, Stories, Standpoints and Media Reviews

Our Time to Dance

Celeste Pedri-Spade

Celeste Pedri-Spade is Anishinabekwe and a member of Lac Des Mille Lacs First Nation. She is a mother, wife, regalia maker, professor, dancer, writer, and visual artist. She holds a Ph.D. in Visual Anthropology and a tenure-track position at Laurentian University. Celeste is an intergenerational survivor of systemic colonial violence (including Indian Residential Schools and racist child welfare policies). In her art and academic work she focuses reclaiming her family history and carrying forward her people's long legacy of fighting colonialism in creative, caring and respectful ways.

** This piece is dedicated to all the beautiful, strong Anishinabekwewag who were separated from their children and in many cases permanently forced to give up their rights to parent their children and to the vision that they will someday get hold, kiss and dance with their grandbabies and great-grandbabies.*

Nin kokum

You stand there so beautiful
embracing life as a commitment to future
Your vision seen through my eyes

Nin kokum

You stand there so innocent
yet familiar with the agony to follow
The theft of life felt radiates through my bones

Nin kokum

You stand there so strong
grounded in our gifts
Your spirit is my belief

Nin kokum

You stand there so resilient
ancestral wounds are your relational intelligence
Your blood carries code
And your tears interpret

Nin kokum

You stand there prepared

You can see behind and beyond
the veil of violence
the rope the wraps

rapes

rob

my/your
future/past

Nin kokum

I know you can see me
I exist only as a promise
your extension
your prayer

sustained through ceremony
fed by faith

We have always lost lives and lived loss

Nin kokum

I stand here now
carrying our future/past

loving

reclaiming our stolen

tearing at the tight threads of lying order

un binding
un learning
un becoming

Nin kokum

because of your life
because you stood
so beautiful
so strong

Nin kokum

Now is our time to dance