

Richard Wagamese - Ojibway Author

To wake and walk on ground where people gather for ceremony is to feel the breath of the ancestors on the wind.

It is to feel the heartbeat of the Earth through the soles of my feet. It is to comprehend the word 'calm'.

It is to become a point of communion with all that is, all that was, and all that will be.

It is to be returned to my proper size.

It is to know that we live under the hand of grace always and that gratitude is the action that brings us into the circle of that energy...



STEVE HEINRICHS is a Settler living in Winnipeg – Treaty 1 territory and the homeland of the Métis Nation. A member of Hope Mennonite Church and the director of Indigenous Relations for Mennonite Church Canada, Steve loves to dialogue with communities about decolonization and the good life it can bring.

To Cede and Surrender

In land shaped by mothering Manitou
In place scarred through power and passion
We come before you, our common Creator
And ponder

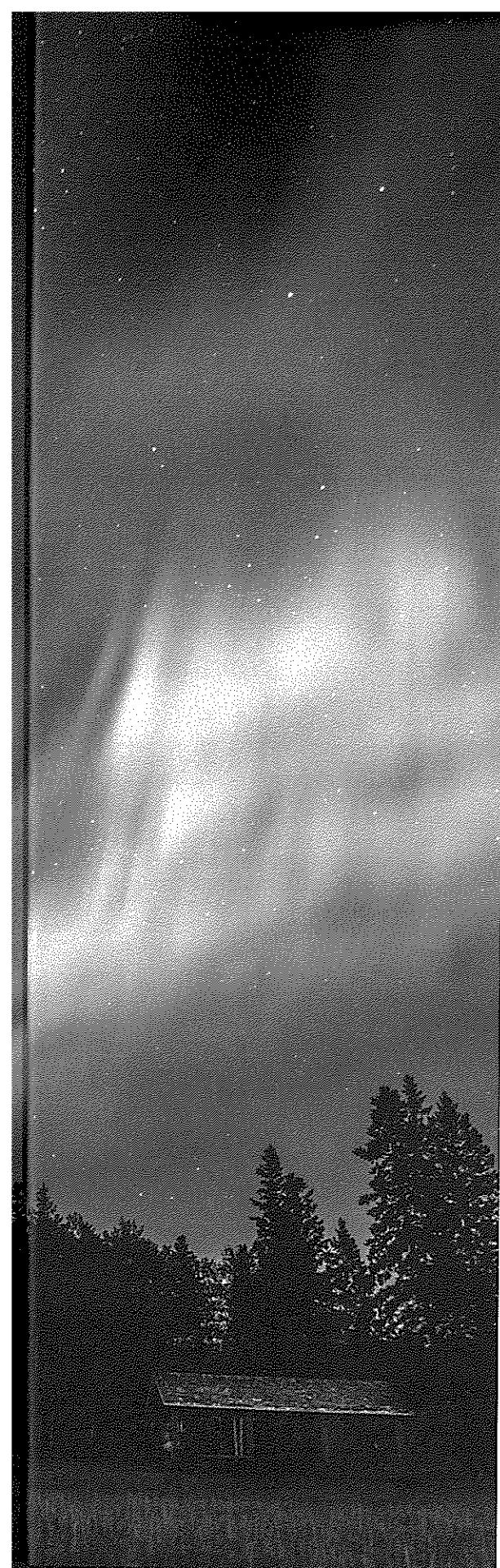
Sacred space,
a millennia's elder, yet new to most
Welcoming nations,
hosting stranger, orphan, and migrant
Resilient peoples,
struck by benevolence, arms, and industrial sin
Long-suffering peoples,
turning cheek to the glutton of greed

Forget, we try, but we know well
It is the circle of respect that will remain alone
It is the gifting of rivers and earth that can sustain

The covenant memories are alive
Even today

So with fragile words
imagined from heart
we Settlers
and covenant peoples
and split relatives
and unwitting bystanders

We all of us
some of us
Express a dream
a small opening
a stumbling
out of iniquitous indifference
cheap talk and hypothetical realities
to friendships of peace; arm-in-arm
to truth with justice; one-bowl-with-spoon
to hope in laughter; braided love



We know well, we are far off
The rejected cry out; the land too
Treaties broken; circle too

Some are committed
To lament and learn
Some have readied
To repair and renew

But o how we need your hand
Come and gift us with your cruciform ways

God of the damned and the despised
Christ of the poor and Christ-against power
Spirit of newness, breathe in this place
— Manitowapow —
You are here!

Give us this day
courage beyond calculation
risk beyond anxiety
generosity beyond extraction
action beyond apologies... all those apologies

That we Settlers
May cede
And release
And surrender ourselves
to you
and to all our relations
The Cree and Ojibway
The Dakota and Métis
The muddy rivers
The concrete prairie

Of what we have
We can share
Pray God, we will
Even now.

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