



Dakota Reflections on the River

Writings from Dakota people in the Dakota language and in English.
Presented by the Dakota Language Society and Allies: media/art

Each of the following writings is presented in two languages; first in the Dakota language and then in the English language.

The Dakota language is in the Dakota font developed by the University of Minnesota, which also sponsors the Dakota Dictionary Online <http://fmdb.cla.umn.edu/dakota/>. The font can be downloaded for your use at the same link.

These writings were collected from Dakota community members for a public reading event in the exhibit Cloudy Waters; Dakota Reflections on the River, held at Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN in the fall of 2004. The Dakota Language Society and Allies: media/art produced this event and the collection of writings.

Translations to Dakota were provided by Glenn Wasicuna, if not provided by the writer. Sisokaduta (Joe Bendickson) provided final edit of Dakota language. Writers are identified as they identified themselves on their writing. All are Dakota, unless otherwise identified. The writers range in age from 10 years to elder and reside from the east coast of the U.S. to western Canada.

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Each piece is presented in two languages, first in Dakota and then on the next page in English. Each is shown in the Table of Contents with the Dakota title and then the English language title.

Please feel free to print copies of this collection. **Please send a message letting us know how you are using the writing.** Info@alliesmediaart.com or

Allies: media/art
4720 32nd Avenue South,
Minneapolis, MN 55406

Writers in order that their work appears;

Christine Rooney
Glenn Wasicuna/ Wambdi Wapaha
Gaby Tateyuskanskan
Terri Yellowhammer
Sandra Turpin
Sampson Bendickson/ Matoska
Paula Kostman
Neil McKay/ Canjemaza

Naomi Keeble
Naida Medicine Crow
Marci Alegria Hawpetoss
Lindsay Peterson
John Peacock
Jennifer Bendickson
Heather Rachel Johnson
Gianna Strong

Wopida Tanka.

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Wakpa Awaçinpi

River Thoughts

Christine Romney

Wakpa kin sdodic'ie k'a tokitkiya ye kin sdodye. Waçi. Odowaŋ káge. Waŋbdi nahuŋ.
Zitakada oman hena škatapi. Okiçiçuwapi. Wakantakiya k'a hokutukiya. Kiçiçidowaŋpi.
Wayakapi wašte. Wakpa kin ilahiyake. Wówiçak'u. Sdodye secece. He típi. Secece.
Tateyaŋpa kinhan wakpa iza nína ilahia. Mni waçi secece. Nína kaduze k'a insin iyaye.
Wabduškada kin mni akan waçipi. Tuhimağada k'a susbdecada. Mağazu kte ed
etuŋwaŋpi. Anpetu kin amalipilpiye. Mağazu mni wakpada ed iyaye kte. Wakpada kin
yuwašake. Okpas áye, hoğa waŋ kinyan hiyu wótektahda. Wamannica okpaze ed omanipi
cée iza upi. Hupahu wakihdakeda wótektehdapi. Okpaze ed wakpada wayaka okihi. Hnali
ilahia. Hnali sdodye.

River Thoughts

Wakpa Awacinpi

Christine Rooney

The river is itself. It knows where it is going. It flows to the music. It is music. The eagle flies in. He hears the music. The rest of the birds play. Chase one another. Up and down. They sing for one another. It's nice to see the fun. The river keeps flowing. Nurturing and ambivalent. It seems to be aware. That it is a home. A possibility. When the wind sounds, the river hastens. A dance forms on top of the water. Moves swiftly and disappears. The surface becomes a ballroom for the insects. Bees and dragonflies. Watch out for the rain. The day is cloudy. Even if it rains, the river will catch the tears. It will make the river stronger. As the evening approaches, a heron sweeps above the water, looking for his evening meal. The night creatures are looking for their chance. The bats are hungry. Even though it is dark, the river can still see. And it still flows. Still knows.

Wihambdapi Kin de Henah Hécetu Kte

A Dream To Come True

Wambdi Wapaha Miye / Glenn Wasicuna

“... šúnkwaḡan šake kin inyan akan kpekpeya ihan upi henah nawah’uḡ. H’anhya hoḡudkiya upi, ṭanhdaḡinyan upi. Paha uḡnapteya ḡan nina óta he, paha kin nakun etuda hce, wiḡašta nupin iḡṭokcapi ṭḡa šúnkwaḡan ṭemnipi ówamna, nakun ṭaha ówamna, nakun wanṣi akiḡita mnihoḡa akanunpi nina tke wan uḡ he ówamna. Táku nina iḡowape he táku owas ininah he. Paha hoḡudkiya okaḡbog upi seḡece...”

De iwahambde ahanḡa homakšida héehanḡ. Máni bde hed atannam paha. Dena wazuya hoḡutkiya úpi wawicabdake he hehanḡ nakun ḡḡizapi kte he sdodwaye. Ite etkiya ohna ṭanḡinpi. Nupin awiḡawabdeze k’a henah hecahnana upi. Déḡiyatanhanḡ he Daḡota. Wíyaka wan uḡ. Pa kin atanhḡab nupin paḡin num ṭanḡinḡinyan kisunḡ. Nakun aḡe uḡḡe ob úpi ṭḡa wawicabdake šni. Tákuḡa imayutitanḡ šni. ṭḡa táku wánṣi sdodwaye: he de nupin ḡḡizapi kte. ḡanṭe nina mašice “... Ḳḡizapi šni po...” ḡḡizapi kte wainḡ šni .

Héḡta Ištawiḡayazan Wi wikcemna num sam napciwanḡa hehanḡ Leonard Wabasha ḡḡi haḡanḡa eḡiyatanhanḡ ḡanḡu iyawapi wikcemna šakpe sam wanṣi ohna bde. He Winuna héḡitkiya unyanḡpi. Nina ṭehanṭu. Maḡa iyuṭapi nina óta. Toška kaḡape. Miš omanḡ eḡiyatanhanḡ manḡke. Paha héḡiyatanhanḡ EDHCE, INYAN óta k’a CAN ṡa. Wanḡa oḡokiya ke s’e unyanḡpi seḡece únḡan epe: “taku awakita sdodwaye šni ṭḡa táku etunwanḡ manḡke. Táku wabdake kte seḡece.” Úḡḡan iṣ eye: “Hau, he táku yaḡe kin sdodwaye do.” He omniciye wan unyanḡpi Winuna iṭanḡan yanḡapi héḡiya. Waḡipi wan kaḡapi kte wétu kin de. Daḡota oyate kin icipaš kúpi kta ḡinpi. Ahanḡa ded wótakuye hena tipi. Hehan naka táku awaḡanmi he sdodwaye: he mitakuye éepi. Wamayakapi kin he iyokpipi. Waḡi. Akiḡita wanice iḡinš mni héḡiyatanhanḡ he...mni he wiḡoni...táku ni owas mni he waḡinṡyapi...

A Dream To Come True

Wihambdapi Kin de Hnah Hecitu Kte

Wambdi Wapaha Miye / Glenn Wasicuna

“...the sound of the horses hooves on rock, moving slowly, sideways down the heavily wooded steep hill is still sharp, each side making a different sound, the smell of the perspiring horses against the leather leggings, and the heavy wool cloth of the warriors pungent. What was so eerie about this scene was the stillness, like they were floating down the side of the hill toward each other...”

This is part of a dream I had as a young man when walking through a valley these two factions ascending toward each other and I remember very vividly that these two groups of warriors were going to fight. There was determination on the faces of these men. I looked to both sides as they slowly advanced down the steep incline. On my right was a warrior with an eagle feather fastened straight up between two huge braids of thick black hair. There were others but I couldn't see them. On my left was a soldier dressed in blue with a sword sheath hanging diagonally across himself and his horse. There were also others with him but I couldn't see them. Throughout all of this I remembered being detached completely. I felt no connection between the two groups. Just that these two groups were intent on fighting each other. My overwhelming feeling was “...NO...” I don't want them to fight.

On the morning of March 29, 2004 Leonard Wabasha and I were driving on Highway 61 heading east for Winona from Red Wing. The river bluffs continued for miles and being on the passenger side I almost had to look straight up to see the STEEP HILL, the ROCKS, and the TREES. Around the halfway point I commented to Hegan (Dakota for 2nd male in the family): “I don't know what I'm looking out for and I keep expecting to see something”. To which he replied: “I know what you mean”. We were on our way for a scheduled meeting at the Winona city council building with others to further plan this summer's homecoming celebration that will bring Dakota people back to the land of their ancestors. What I was feeling that morning during the drive were my ancestors to my right slowly inching their way down the bluffs not to fight but to greet a fellow Dakota who has come back to the homelands. The soldiers to my left weren't there because the water was there... mni wiconi...the water of life...

Wicaŋpi Wakpa

River of Stars

Gaby Tateyuskanskan

Maŋpiya k'a uŋçaŋtepi k'a wiçaŋłpi hena içikoyakapi
Wiçaŋłpi oyate nina waniyetu ótapi k'a nakun ksapapi
Haŋyetu kiŋhaŋ omanipi
Peta s'e yapi
Ikce wiçašta çaŋte wókiksuye ikoyake
Wakpa Iłahia he wówaçin iža yecece
Isaŋti wóabdakeda táku waçaŋ he ishana
Wiçak'u okihi he çinpi
Wiçaŋłpi taŋin kiŋhaŋ wóabdeza ahi
Uŋktomi waŋna ake nahmanna tak tokun
Wanağiye
Wayuşıce
Tełike
Haŋwi hi k'a dowan nakun wašagwiçaye
Mni ed uŋ
Wówašake he mni ed ižaŋžaŋ
Wóihanke wanice

Wiçaŋłpi: Star
Isaŋti: Eastern Dakota
Haŋwi: Moon
Mağa Ina: Mother Earth

River of Stars

Wicahpi Wakpa

Gaby Tateyuskanskan

The prairie night sky ties the heart to a river of stars
Wicanhpi the oldest of many wise ancestors
moves in the night sky
resembling so many flickering fires to light the way

Human hearts are drawn to ancient ancestors
like a river's current
A river of dreams carries hope
The Isanti long for the night's gift of a deep sense of peace

The rising of a star brings the dawn to the river's edge
Unkown to the human heart Trickster's spirit child
has been placed in a cradleboard
A child larger than life grows more grotesque
It's mouth devouring whole Isanti villages
At the end of the weary day the brusied heart cannot bear such a child

Hanwi rises in the night dancing with devotion through the seasons
Singing the power of nature and encouraging the youngest of creation
The beauty of her spirit moves in ancient waters
Fortitude is made visible by a river's mirrored surface
reflecting into eternity
Where we live on Maka Ina is never in one place

Wicanhpi: Star
Isanti: Eastern Dakota
Hanwi: Moon
Maka Ina: Mother Earth

Iapi Odowaŋ

Poem

Terri Yellowhammer

Ikce wíŋyaŋ ni uŋ kiŋ táku kiyapi he? Ktepi
Wóyaŋaŋpi ed heyata ʔaŋiŋ šni owapi
Nakuŋ pazopi šni
Ikce wíŋyaŋ yámnipi kiŋhaŋ wašicu wíŋyaŋ wáŋʒi
Héced waunyakapi secece
Waŋna waniyetu nuŋpa kte iyeyapi hetanhan
Wakpa mahed
Inyaŋ špan ayuskitapi
Tuwe kçi un tʔa he icuŋ secece
Tehike ʔaŋte héçi
Waniyetu wi ʔehan lice secece
Tókíya iyaye (he nína ʔehan)
Aŋpetu kiŋ hena iyayeyanke
Wanukta šni eyapi (uŋkiyepi šni)
ʔaŋcaŋ iyeyapi
Mni mahed naŋmapi
Wíhambde bduhe k'a
Wóikope k'a wókiksuye
Hena iwecicu
Haŋyetu ktepi hehan
Maŋpiya wáŋʒi akan éwahnake
K'a tókanya yewaye kte
Tuwe táku ikicic'u he
Waŋna kaška yaŋke
Tʔa hena waŋna táku owas sam iyaye
Tʔa nakun wóinape k'a wóabdakeda waŋ yuʔe
De wówaunspe waŋ bduhe:
Wakpa kiŋ he naŋi waŋ yuhe. Iza ni
Wówašake yuhe
He awaŋyaŋke k'a uŋšida he sdodwaye
Iyeyapi hehan ya awaŋyaŋke

Poem

Odowan

Terri Yellowhammer

what worth is the life of
an Indian woman
her murder
relegated to the back pages of the newspaper
and local cable stations
it really takes three Indian women
to equal a single white woman

soon it will be two years since her body was found
in the river
weighted down with bricks
an ex-lover's attempts to hide
what he did
such suffering, our hearts
long winter months
the silence of her absence
her son another year older (a long time in the life of a tiny boy)
each day becoming the next
then
a fluke, they called it (not us)
her poor sweet body
found,
hidden in the river

I dream that I
could take her fear and pain
the night she was killed
turn it into a cloud
and lift her
up
away from the
rage, him.
caged now, by prison bars and cement
too little, too late
but there is refuge, and calm
and I remember this teaching
from our ancestors:

the river has a spirit
a life of its own,
a power.
and I know
it held her
took care of her
until it was time for her to be found

Wakpa ɥawaɕin

The Rivers Reflections

Sandra Turpin

Maɥipiya piic'ie k'a hoɕutkiya ahinɥuwe k'a waic'ihdake.
Caɥ kahunɥunze k'a akta etunwe.
Zitkapida kinɥanpi k'a opta etuwanpi.
Wamaninca oiyanɥkapi k'a owas wayakapi.

Wakpada kinɥ Iɥaɥa k'a waic'ihdakapi wicaye.

Sanɥpa hunka wanɥ mání ye k'a pískid yuze.
Wiɥa wanɥ mání ye k'a awiyukcaɥ.
Wínɥanɥ wanɥ inɥanɥke k'a wókiksuye wanɥ yuhe
Siceca wanɥ waadi k'a wóiwangɥ óta yuhe

Wakpada Iɥaɥa k'a waic'ihdakapi káɥe

Waniyetu hena ye k'a waɥtedake
Wóíɥaɥe iɥaɥe k'a ayatkanpi
Wósdodye iyukcaɥ k'a ozikiye
Wiɥoni ye k'a paɥinɥte

Wakpa Iɥaɥa k'a táku owas sdodye

The Rivers Reflections

Wakpa Tawaciñ

Sandra Turpin

The sky moves, sits still and looks down at its reflection.
The trees wave, sits still and looks over the reflection.
The birds soar, sits still and look onto the reflection.
The animals scurry, sit still and look upon their reflection.

The river flows, sits still and mirrors reflection.

A grandparent strolls, sits still and embraces the reflection.
A man walks, sits still and contemplates his reflection.
A woman jogs, sits still and remembers in her reflection.
A child climbs, sits still and wonders about the reflection.

The river flows, sits still and provides reflection.

Time travels, sits still and admires from reflection.
Nature grows, sits still and drinks with reflection.
Knowledge evaluates, sits still and rests upon reflection.
Life continues, sits still and cleanses through reflection.

The river flows, sits still and knows what's in the reflection.

Wíyukpi k'a nakun owaštecake

A Fun Day In The Sun

Mašoska / Sampson Bendickson

Anpetu wan nína owaštecake k'a hokšida yámni tanjad škatapi, Mississippi iŋiyeda. Witkotkokapi. Wi kate tka sniyaked wanjed mni kahdaya. Núm sunka kciyapi k'a wanzi tašanši yapi. Wítaya škatapi iyokpi. Aohanze ed škatapi únkan zitkada cístina wan iyeyapi. Išnana aliheyapi héca zitkada ti wánzi kicaŋapi kte kecinpi. Zitkada kin nína iyokšice k'a tákuda yúte šni. Héca ozikiya ŋiyapi k'a ake škatapi.

Hehan, canmahed ípi. Mání unpi. Unzoŋe pteptecada unpi héca mni iŋiyeda kahdayeda mánipi. Tákušnišni iwohdag yápi. Táku waštedakapi k'a tanjapi kinhan táktokunpi kte hena iwohdakapi. Anpetu wan nína wašte k'a can k'a pezi hánškaska k'a tóna ape akiktunžapi. ŋiyata hunkake wagna cantešicapi k'a wagna owiçadebi kte. Únkan wawiçayakapi. Canku ohna kupi. Wóhdag, iyokpiya.

Can k'a waŋto wayag yápi. Unge hena táku kin sdodyapi šni. Watuŋa áyapi wi etanhan. Mni icupi héçitanhan owoŋan iyayapi k'a mni icupi. Hehan wagna hdapi kte Iyeçinkopte okipapi k'a Twin Cities etkiya hdicupi. Nína watuŋapi. Iština iyayapi. Ųipi hehan oŋunŋapi. Ųipi k'a kiktapi seca un tančan átaya yašpuyapi. Unzoŋe pteptecada un mání unpi naka hašbe opta mání iyayapi. Hetanhan anpetu hdušicapi. Canmahed mání unpi naka táku tóked mni kahdaya içaŋe hena sdodyapi. Wagna hecali mání kte kinhan unzoŋe hánška unpi kte. Táku wánzi sdodyapi he hašbe ée.

A Fun Day In The Sun

Wíyukpi k'a Nakun Owaštecake

Matoska / Sampson Bendickson

It was a warm sunny day and the three young boys were out playing near the Mississippi. They were running around getting into all sorts of mischief. The Sun was hot and that day but the air was cool near the river. Two of them were brothers and the other was one of their cousins. Hanging out together with each other was all that they needed. Having a good time in the shades they came across a small bird that was left all by itself so they thought that they could care for it by building it a bird house. The bird was very lonely and did not have anything to eat. They left that bird with a place to rest and they went on with their playing.

Next, they went on to exploring the woods near the river walking around not paying attention to what they were walking through. Since they only had shorts on they were trying to stay cool closer to the river. Walking and talking about things that interested them and what they wanted to be when they grew up. It was such a beautiful day out that they were wandering through the woods and the tall grass that they lost track of time. Their folks were starting to worry, and they were about to start looking for them. When they saw them walking along the road just talking and having fun.

The three of them had been looking at different plants and trees and were wondering what they were. They were tired from all of the walking around and were definitely getting exhausted from the sun. They headed right to the well pump and got themselves a quick drink of water. Then it was time to go, getting in the car and sitting down for the trip back to the Twin Cities was a nice break for them since they were really tired. Falling asleep on the way home and not waking up until they got home. When they got home and woke up they had discovered that they were all very itchy. Walking along the river with just their shorts on, they had walked right through some poison ivy. That ruined the rest of their day and a couple more.

Having explored the wooded area along the river did teach them about all of the growth along the river. They learned that they shouldn't just walk through the woods with their shorts on and that they should wear long pants. But they will always remember what poison ivy looks like since they walked right through a big patch of it.

Mni Ikciyapa

Headwaters

Paula Kostman

Macistiŋna hehaŋ wakpada hed waniwe
Šúnka ikceka uŋkiŋawapi ihakab u cée
Ahiŋpeya uŋkiyayepi kiŋhaŋ
Waniyetu kiŋhaŋ iŋ hed máza okaze uŋkicuŋpi

Wakpa he nína tehike
Indigo Girls odowaŋ waŋ “Mni sota etaŋhaŋ hiyu...
K’a zaptan iyahe kiŋhaŋ opta idade kte.” eya dowaŋpi

Wakpa he ed waŋi iyecece
Maŋuyake haŋ hed waŋu
Woambdekeda waŋiŋ kiŋhaŋ hed bde
Mat’e kiŋhaŋ hed waŋu kte

Mni ikciyapa hed bde kte
Hed tá ku owas etaŋhaŋ
Taku owas hetanhan
Hektakiya tohanhan kaŋ wówaŋake ŋawa he miŋa hetanhan iwacu

Headwaters

Mni Ikciyapa

Paula Kostman

The river where I swam as a child
Where our mongrel dog would follow our boat out
When we left him behind on the beach
Where I ice skated on frozen rivulets along one of its channels in winter

That river is what they call might
An Indigo Girls song says, "It starts in Minnesota...
At a place where you could walk across
With five steps down"

That river is what I call home
It's where I came back to when I wearied
It's where I go to be at peace
We will become one when I leave this body for good

I am going to the headwaters
I am going to the source
I am going to the very beginning
As far back as it goes to find out where it gets its strength

And where I get my own

Mnisota kaiš Mnišota

Mnisota or Mnishota

Çan̄temaza / Neil McKay

Hau mitakuyepi! Çan̄temaza miye. Bdewaḡan̄tuḡwan̄ Oyate hematan̄han̄. Mniwaḡan̄ Oyate heḡiya omawapi do. Mnisota maḡoce ded imaḡaḡe.

Hékta waniyetu yámni héehan̄, Mniwaḡan̄ Oyate heḡiya wai. Daḡota winulicada k’a nakun̄ Daḡota wiḡalıcada ob wówahdake. Táku óta iwouḡhdakapi uḡḡan̄ winulicada wan̄ imawaḡḡe, “Tukted wowaši eḡanun̄ he?” “Mnisota Wóuḡspe Wakantuya hed litawani do,” abdupte. Uḡḡan̄na hena Daḡota iapi wayupikapi kin̄ he wiḡoie “Mnisota” iwohdakapi. Wiḡalıcada wan̄ kéye, “Mni sota, tóḡedḡed yuieskapi ḡée he?” “Clear water,” eyapi, wá ḡzi ayupte. “Ehan̄na, Daḡota Oyate uḡḡiyepi Mnisota maḡoce heḡiya uḡḡipi. Mnisota maḡoce uḡḡiksuyapi ḡa uḡḡiyuḡkin̄ ḡée. Haḡan̄na ca šota kin̄ mni iwaḡkam héun̄ ehan̄na “Mnišota” eyap ḡée keḡan̄mi.”

Mnisota or Mnishota

Mnisota kaiš Mnišota

Captemaza / Neil McKay

Hello my relatives! I am Ironheart. I come from the Holy Lake Nation of Dakota people. I am an enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Nation of Dakota. I was born here in Minnesota.

I went to Spirit Lake three years ago. I spoke with Dakota woman and men elders. We talked about many things and then one elder woman asked me, "Where do you work?" "I work at the University of Minnesota," I answered and then those that know the Dakota language, the old ones, talked about the word "Minnesota." One male elder said, "What does Minnesota translate to (in English)?" "Clear water," one answered. "We the Dakota people lived in Minnesota in the past. When we think fondly of Minnesota. In the mornings, there is mist above the water. And that's why I think in the past, they called the land "smoke on the water or smoky water."

Wakpa Kiksuyapi

Remembering The River

Naomi Keeble
Sisítunwan Wahpetunwan Dakota

Minnesota he Mni óta eyapi. Oyakapi eçeyatanhan Mississippi River he mnisota. Missouri River oihaha k'a yuśoše. Enanakiya mnisota k'a nakun mniśoše. ʔi wan éhdepi Mississippi River kahdaya. ʔi mahed ahan na wičičanya mnayapi k'a pazo éhna kapi. He Minneapolis k'a Saint Paul içokaya. Hnali hed he sdodwaye śni. Śiceca kin hena hed awičunyanpi čée.

Miřankapi Effie k'a Verna ʔipi ed ʔiřokan wai čée řa Minneapolis ed. Hřanipi kta ihdaka ʔipi. Relocation eyapi. BIA wičoh'an wičak'upi k'a ořunwe řanka ekta éwičahnakapi čée. Owíčakiyapi hehan hetanhan iye ihduhapi kte héčed činpi. Heči ihdaka ʔipi hehan nína ʔiřokan wai čée. Tohanřuca Sisítunwan řipi čée. Řa ohin ĩni śni. Community Health Worker hemača řa k'a tohanřuca heči yemayapi čée. Hehan miřankapi ob wan čée. Ořunwe unřomanipi čée. Tákuśniśni wayag. Tohanřuca watob unyanpi čée. Barge akan Mississippi k'a *Minnesota* River unyanpi čée. Tukřekted inařin k'a waunřapi čée. Nakun mazopiya takuśniśni wíyořeyapi ed unřipi čée.

Hehan mni hnal wašte. Mni skayeda ečece. Mni mahed hořan, čapa k'a řan niwanpi k'a ađa iyayapi k'a řkatapi čée. Wáta kahdaya hípi k'a ahitunwanpi čée. Enanakiya mni mahed psa uyé. Anřpetu átaya wáta ohna unř'unpi. Miřanka hed ʔi héča tóřiya unřayapi kte sdodye. Tohanřuca wáta kin Fort Snelling ed inařin čée. Hed akičita wapazo kágapi čée. Mánipi k'a mazařan yuřopapi. Wáta ohna anřpetu wánři kinhan Kansas City heči unřipi čée. Hed Řezutasapa unřatřanpi k'a enana eunřunwanpi hehan aře icipaś unřdiyakupi čée. He anřpetu wánři čée.

Remembering The River

Wakpa Kiksuyapi

Naomi Keeble
Sisitunwan Wahpetunwan Dakota

Minnesota is really Mni Ota. Many waters. They used to say the Mississippi river was clear, Mni Sota. And the Missouri river ran into it and muddied it up. Mni Shota. The Missouri was always muddy and cloudy. Where they met there would be patches of clear water and patches of muddy water. There was a historical site along the Mississippi, a building with artifacts, kind of a museum, between Minneapolis and St. Paul. I don't know if it's still there or not. We used to take our kids there.

I used to go visit my sisters Effie and Verna in Minneapolis. They moved there to get jobs. They call that Relocation. The BIA gets you a job and moves you to the big city, orientates you, and then you're on your own. After they moved there I'd go visit them a lot. Sometimes they would come back to visit Sisseton, but not often. I was a community health worker and sometimes they'd send me there for a workshop. So I'd stay with my sisters for the weekend and they would take me around town, sightseeing. Sometimes we would go on a boat on the river. We'd visit the Minnesota and Mississippi river, go on rides on a barge. Along the way it would stop for us to eat lunch, and look at gift shops.

The river wasn't as polluted then, with nice clear waters. I could look down and see fish, and beavers, and otters swimming and diving up and playing in the water, and they'd come up alongside the riverboat and look at you. Some places there were rushes growing in the river. We always went on the boat for a whole days ride. My sister lived there so she always knew where to take us. Sometimes on a ride the boat would stop at Fort Snelling, where they would have soldiers parade and shoot for us, like a show. The boat ride would take the whole day and we would go all the way to Kansas City. There we'd get coffee and look around, and turn around and head back where we came from. That would take the whole day, going down the river to Kansas City and back.

Wówašake Duhe

You Have Strength

Naida Medicine Crow

Tohaŋtu kiŋhaŋ yačeya yačiŋ čée
Otehike
Tókeca uŋ táku owas tehiika he?
Wičoicađe iyayayałapi
Otaŋkapi nakun
Takomni waš'agya uŋk'uŋpte

Oyate istamnipi ɬawapi s'e mağažu
Wakpa étkiya
Wótakuye we s'e
ɬawačiŋ sutaya uŋk'uŋpte
Małoče de uŋkitaŋhaŋpi
Mni nađi táku óta wanyake
Tóhni tákuda akiktunže šni

Ołodakičiye, asniic'iya po
He wówašake mni ihałia s'e
óhiŋni sutaya naunziŋpi kte

You Have Strength

Wowasake Duhe

Naida Medicine Crow

SOMETIMES YOU WANT TO CRY....
LIFE CAN BE A STRUGGLE AND YOU ASK YOURSELF
WHY? MUST I
DEAL WITH ALL THIS PAIN AND HARDSHIP?
AS GENERATIONS PASS US BY.
AND OUR ELDERS CONTINUE TO DIE.
WE MUST REMAIN STRONG.

RAIN FALLS LIKE THE TEARS OF OUR NATIONS-
RUNS STEADY INTO THE RIVERS,
LIKE THE BLOOD OF OUR RELATIONS.
OUR SPIRITS MUST REMAIN STRONG AND FREE.
FOR WE WILL ALWAYS BE A PART OF THIS EARTH.
THE SPIRIT OF THE RIVERS HAS SEEN MANY THINGS,
AND NEVER FORGETS THE ARTOCITIES WE HAVE ENDURED.

AS DAKOTAH RELATIVES THE TIME TO HEAL COMES WITHIN
OURSELVES.
AND IN OUR STRENGTH, LIKE THE RIVERS STEADY AND FLOWING....
WE WILL ALWAYS PREVAIL.

Psiŋ Oyate

Wild Rice People

Marci Alegria Hawpetoss
Menominee Nation

ṭiyata waḱi
Menominee Indian Reservation héçiya
Mni wiçoni Psiŋ Oyate
ṭa wiŋnipi, wahmuŋkapi, hoḱuwapi, wayuṣpipi
Wiçoni k'a wiçakakize šni
Oiyokpi
Táku owas uŋ wíziŋcapi kte yuhapi
Waniyetu haŋyetu osni ṭḱa wóskate eçuŋpi
ṭiwahe, ḱodapi, wabdenicapi
Wíyuškiŋ yuhapi
óhiŋni waḱi
Mni sota
Mázaska tókca šni
K'a ṭiwahe, ḱodapi wabdenica
Wíyuškiŋ yuhapi
Ikce wiçašta wašakapi
U.S. Indian Policy
Menominee Reservation
Termination/Restoration
Sovereignty Erosion
Land Corrosion
Saŋpa
Oape tób wiyoliŋpeyatakiya
Mni sota ed ikce wíŋyaŋ
ṭaŋçaŋ wiçayupota wóyazaŋ ktéda, eye
“...ikce wíŋyaŋ hemaça k'a maḱoçe ded oyate makte waçinpi...”
De ibdukçaŋ: uŋkiye ded ṭokaheya uŋhipi ṭḱa de maḱoçe ed oyate uŋkte
waçinpi
Yuškiŋya uŋpi kta kecinpi

Wild Rice People

Psin Oyate

Marci Alegria Hawpetoss
Menominee Nation

I return to the place of my childhood,
To the Menominee Indian Reservation
To the Clear water sustenance of my Wild Rice people
To the deer hunts, trapping, fishing & harvesting:
Life & Liberty
Where
Happiness was no Pursuit
To real wealth, accumulated
And stored for cold winter nights and warm celebrations
For families, friends, and those without
No one was without
Happiness
I continuously return to the place of my childhood
Where I find clear waters clouding
Perhaps
Real wealth is no longer important
&
Many families, friends and those without
Are Without
Happiness
Our original sustenance is depleting
U.S. Indian Policy
Menominee Reservation
Termination/Restoration
Sovereignty Erosion
&
Land Corrosion
4 hours west
In "Mini Shota" an Indian Woman,
Cancer Survivor says:
"I am an Indian, and this world is killing me"
As I reflect, I think:
We are the first people, and this world is killing us
In pursuit of Happiness-

Ĥtayetu Wakpa

The Evening River

Lindsay Peterson

Inyan wáŋŋi ihnunah akta nihi kte

Uŋŋi yakikičidapi kte

Ahanzi u iwanŋkapi k'a hanwi iyakipapi

Mnišota ničinca dowaŋ

Čanŋpanna máni hiyaye k'a hoŋaŋ aŋa iyaye ičan ništimbe

Wakpa kiŋ de ite niławapi kiŋ hena owas waniyakapi k'a sdodye

Nakuŋ táku owas nah'uw k'a mičinŋcapi uŋšikapi eye

Mni wičoni he táku owas yuŋeca

Mississippi inaunŋnapi maŋa puze kaiš mniŋaŋ

Woakilian nakun waunŋpipi kaš

Mni wičoni wačin unyanpi

Maŋoce kiŋ wačin niye inyan oyate

Kiŋ hena nína pinidapi

The Evening River

Htayetuwakpa

Lindsay Peterson

A lonely stone caught in your motion may travel your shores-
and with each toss and turn,
it will be softened by the reach of your arms.
As twilight approaches, the stone turns in, and the old moon awaits.
Minnesota, the womb of your creation, first whispers a lullaby
and orchestrates a symphony of new life and old.
A motion that rocks you to sleep with the muskie's wavering tail
and the loon's paddling webbed feet.
These funny, friendly faces of yours
create for the river a world within a world,
where the noises of the shoreline
are muffled in the echoes of your underworld.
They create tiny ripples that reach your shore
and send life that cuts through the land-
like a snake in disguise.
Renewing.
The Mississippi, our backbone and our strength
through drought and flood,
famine and time of plenty.
Your unchanging waves have taught hope and renewal and commitment to this
land.
The Earth will remember your perseverance
to the wandering stone, and to the people,
and you will be thanked for your kindness.

Mni Šota

Minnesota

John Peacock

Paha héçiyatahan

Mni šota iwan kam

Mnidote ed

Małosmaka ʔanka wan yanke

Wašicuŋ ikceka k'a Šagdašin hed wahmuŋkapi

Úŋkan Isanʔanka kin opeʔuŋ čée

Dałota Čápa sin te cažeyatapi kin he

Čuŋwinʔku ʔawapi yuze

Čiŋhiŋʔku wiwazica ieska ʔuŋkanšida miʔawa sam yuze

ʔakožakpaku ʔawa uŋci miʔawa Zitkatatanʔka (*Ziʔaʔanʔka*),

wamdenica héča itewiçayulidolidokapi wóyazan etanhan awan yanke kta icu,

Hin opeʔuŋ čée Fred yuze. Detanhan we sanpa šota.

Cloudy Waters

Mni Šota

John Peacock

From high bluffs
Over cloudy waters
Where 2 rivers forked
Ran a wide prairie valley
Trapped by French, British,
& an American Fur Company Trader
the Dakota called Cha-pah-sin-tay (Beaver Tail)
after his country marriage to one of their daughters.
His son's mixed-blood widow remarried my great grandpa.
His grandson adopted my Blackbird grandma, a smallpox orphan
Who married Fred the furrier, my grandpa. Cloudier than water is blood.

Mnišota Wakpa Wókiksuyapi

Reflections Of The Minnesota River

Jennifer Bendickson
Sisiṭuṇwan Waḥpeṭuṇwan Dakota

Little Minnesota River weksuye kiṇhaṇ ahaṇa ṭokaheya omakiyakapi he weksuye. Waniyetu šakowiṇ kaiš šahdoḡaṇ hemaça. Mihunkake ob mitakuyapi heçi ṭitokaṇ uṇkipi cée. Mitakuyapi kaṇpi hena Sisiṭuṇwan hetanṇaṇ *wiyohiyaṇpatakiya* ṭípi. Mihunka iš Sisiṭuṇwan ed típ. Tukted ṭitokaṇ uṇkipi çoyaḥ weksuye šni. Tḡa táku weksuye he ṭípi ṭáwapi iḥeyata wakpada waṇ iliaḥa. Uṇkipi hecahnana misunḡa k'a miçuṇwe mni akta uṇkiyayapi. Hed iḡiyeda uṇškatapi k'a inṇaṇ k'a peži kaḥu yeuṇyaṇpi mni etkiya hehan okaḥibog iyeye wayag naunṇiṇpi. Hehaṇ ṭípi heçi ecipas uṇkipi hed ina uṇkaṇ ṭawa wánṇi waunṇyakapi. Paḥiṇ fiote, ista maza uṇ, k'a sagye waṇ uṇ. ṭamahece k'a hoḡutuku seeçece. Ina uṇkaṇ he Henry Red Star eciyapi kéye. Uṇkištecapi k'a kçi wóuṇhdakapi šni. Tḡa he ohinṇi weksuya cée. Nakun wakpada ṭípi iḥeyata he kiṇ he. Wakpada he iwouṇhdakapi uṇkaṇ ina eye he Little Minnesota River ee. Héehaṇ tákuda eçamni šni, eçada çaže waṇ yuhe. Tḡa ohakab Minneapolis uṇkipi ṭuṇwiṇ ṭi hed. Little Minnesota River he átaya isakib uṇyaṇpi. Wakpada kiṇ de nína ṭánka iyaye tóḡed uṇ heçece owakaḥniḡe šni. Wašake kiṇ sdodwaye k'a Damaḡota kiṇ nína iyumaškiṇ ičiṇeš isakib euṇṭípi waniyetu óta.

Reflections Of The Minnesota River

Mnisota Wahpa Wokiksuyapi

Jennifer Bendickson
Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota

I guess when I think back about the Little Minnesota River I can recall when I first heard about the river. It was when I was just a young girl maybe 7 or 8 years old. My parents took me with them when they went to visit some of their older relatives. The older relatives lived east of Sisseton. Sisseton was where my parents lived. I do not recall exactly where we went to visit. But I remember that in the back of their house was a small stream. Which is where both my brother, sister and I immediately went. We played near the stream occasionally throwing rocks and grass in the water to watch them float down stream.

Eventually we went back to the house and it was then that my mother introduced us to what she said was one of her grandpas. He was gray haired, wore glasses and had a cane. He was thin and seemed fragile. She said his name was Henry Red Star. Of course we were shy and didn't say much to him. But he left his impression on me because I still remember him and the house with the stream in back to this day.

When we talked about the stream in back of their house my mother said, "That's the Little Minnesota River". At the time it really didn't mean anything except that it was a name. But later, we went on a trip to Minneapolis to visit my mother's sister. The trip followed the Little Minnesota River all the way to the Twin Cities. When I saw the little stream turn into this huge flowing river. I marveled at how something like this could happen. I felt the strength of river and was proud that the Dakota had lived along this river and had camped by it for centuries.

Wóyakapi ʔokaheya

The Beginning Story: Maḡazuwakpa

Heather Rachel Johnson
Metis/Blackfoot

Twilight Zone wapazopi waŋ ed waun secece. ʔka tóhni aŋpetu waŋ kinhdemayapi. 1974
VW ohna waku. Taku owas ic'itokca. Iyeçinkopte wanice. Oyate omani hiyeye. Táku
owas ihduʔokcapi k'a taku owas cístiŋnapi.

“Baudette yahipi kin wašte” eya owa he. ʔokada waŋ tuwe mahed dowan úŋkaŋ
híhíhiya iyaye. Tokiyatanhan niye ʔata ipoḡe. Ocib nína. Hanhiya waniye.
Owanzida maŋka owakihi šni. Mniohdasaŋ ohna ewatunwaŋ iʔo tuwe ahituŋwepi
kinhan. Wíŋyaŋ waŋ. Buhinhdé! Huhí hinhdé! Anam ibdabde. ʕaŋku ʔaŋiŋ secece.
Iyewakiye secece. Macistiŋna hehanthanhan hed ohna ibdabde ʕée. He waŋna
waniyetu wikcemna num sam iyaye. Henali táku owas akta ecamuŋ. Maḡazu Wakpa,
Maḡazu Wakpa, Maḡazu Wakpa nahimana epe. Iyeçinkopte etanhan inawažin eçaŋ.
Waiŋmnanke. Maḡazu Wakpa waŋna telika ila. Wakpa ihanke ed inawažin mahed
ewatuŋwaŋ k'a wiçoni wabdake. Héka kin awaŋuŋyakapi k'a ouŋkiciyapi. Wótakuya
iyayapi ʔka Maḡazu Wakpa niunyapi. Ku unšipi. Héça wahdi. ʔokaheya miʔaçoce hçi.
Maḡazu Wakpa hematanhan.

The Beginning Story: Maḡazuwakpa

Woyakapi Tokaheya

Heather Rachel Johnson
Metis/Blackfoot

My life is a continuous episode of the Twilight Zone. One day the director yelled ‘cut!’ And I was sent back to alternative universe in which I came. My 1974 VW bug was transporting me back into that world. A place where tall concrete skyscrapers morph into small ornate buildings. Streams of cars give way to casual citizens strolling about. Elements rearrange themselves creating a town where progress had come in limited form.

“The town of Baudette welcomes you,” the sign read. The clear sound of FM radio becomes static. Hum of steady steam of heat pushing through the vent intensified. The soft inhale and exhale of my breath. Uncomfortably I shift. Glancing at the review mirror to see if the universe was watching. She was. THUD! CRASH! My spaceship made its grand re-entry into the ditch. Looking out I notice the faint signs of a trail, a road I had gone down many times as a child and teen. Now, twenty year later, I find myself repeating the past. Maḡazuwakpa, maḡazuwakpa, maḡazuwakpa I whisper as I climb out of the car. I run. The whispers are soon drown out by sound of Maḡazuwakpa’s laughing bubbles. I stop at the river’s edge looking out at the majestic landscape of her watery veins, the life force behind all things. Many generations ago Waḡazuwakpa brought my family here. Through the years the river breathed life in to our blood and we took care of her. My relatives have journeyed away forcibly or by choice, but Maḡazuwakpa stays in our veins. Calling us home. And I now have returned to the beginning, to my world, to the place where I am from, Maḡazuwakpa.

Hahawakpa

Laughing River

Gianna Strong
Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota Oyate

Hékta ahaŋna ikce wiçašta oyate Harriet Island héçiya ai. Ihahia Wakpa Dağota ia ilia eyapi. Daunğotapi hena Mississippi River he ilahia Wakpa unkeyapi. Henali dehan héçeli unkeyapi. Bde kahdaya ikce wiçašta tipi. Nina wiyukpi. Táku óta uye waŋoto k'a waŋo. Mağa puze šni. Peži hena iš zi šni. Táku owas teça içağe k'a toŋo. Kap'ozá oyate nakun hed tipi. taoyateduta hed iŋaŋaŋ. Wótakuye ŋawa kin hed owas tipi. White Bluffs Dağota ia Imnizaska eyapi. Hena bde kahdaya içağe. tokaheya wakpa de cistinna tğa. Waziyata héçiya tanhan Ihahia. Itokağatakiya Ihahia ça ocib ŋanka áye. Táktokitu kaš ohin ni unkiš wakpa kin de Ihahia wakpa unkeyapi kte. De wakpa kin Harriet Island isakib Ihahia. Dağota wiciyan na hemaca k'a de wakpa kin nina ohowada ecines wotakuye mitawa kin hed ahaŋna tipi. Heciya hokuya tipi. Wotakuye owas heci tipi: tiwahe, wotakuye, ecesipi, toskapi, tozanpi nakun hena sampa tibdoku k'a sunkaku hed owas iyokpiya tipi.

Laughing River

Hahawakpa

Gianna Strong
Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota Oyate

Long ago the Dakota elders and the young ones use to meet down at Harriet Island for gatherings. Hahawakpa means laughing river. Us Dakota people called the Mississippi River Hahawakpa. After all these years we still call the Mississippi River Hahawakpa. Along the side of Hahawakpa were little villages where the Dakota people lived. It wasn't at all dull. Mother nature grew green and blue. It wasn't dry. And the grass wasn't brown. It grew fresh and green. Kapoza was another village. Little Crow was the Chief of Kapoza. His Dakota family also lived there with him. Imnizaska means White Bluffs. That's what grew along the side of the Hahawakpa River. Hahawakpa started out as a very small creek. It started up North. Then it got bigger and bigger as it went South. No matter what happens to the Mississippi River we will always call it Hahawakpa River. Hahawakpa still flows beside Harriet Island. As a young Dakota girl Hahawakpa is a very sacred place to me because my Dakota family grew up there. Their village and their home was down there. And their family and relatives, cousins, nephews, nieces, and their brother and sisters all lived down there as a big happy family.

