



INDIGENIZING THE ACADEMY READING LIST

FICTION/POETRY/ DRAMA



Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, *The Stone Collection*

In these 14 unique stories, Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm takes on complex and dangerous emotions, exploring the gamut of modern Anishinaabe experience. Through unforgettable characters, these stories — about love and lust, suicide and survival, illness and wholeness — illuminate the strange workings of the human heart. (From Portage and Main Press)

<https://www.cbc.ca/books/the-stone-collection-1.4128254>

Lesley Belleau, *Indianland* (2017) (poetry)

Indianland is a rich and varied poetry collection. The poems are written from a female and Indigenous point of view and incorporate Anishinaabemowin throughout. Time is cyclical, moving from present day back to first contact and forward again. Themes of sexuality, birth, memory, and longing are explored, images of blood, plants (milkweed, yarrow, cattails), and petroglyphs reoccur, and touchstone issues in Indigenous politics are addressed = (Elijah Harper, Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, forced sterilizations, Oka). Anishinaabemowin throughout. Time is cyclical, moving from present day back to first contact and forward again. Themes of sexuality, birth, memory, and longing are explored, images of blood, plants (milkweed, yarrow, cattails), and petroglyphs reoccur, and touchstone issues in Indigenous politics are addressed (Elijah Harper, Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, forced sterilizations, Oka). (ARP Books)

Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* (1990)

Rarely accessible beyond the limits of its people, Ojibway mythology is as rich in meaning and mystery, as broad, as deep, and as innately appealing as the mythologies of Greece, Rome, Egypt, and other civilizations. In *Ojibway Heritage*, Basil Johnston sets forth the broad spectrum of his people's life, legends, and beliefs. Stories to be read, enjoyed, dwelt on, and freely interpreted, their authorship is perhaps most properly attributed to the tribal storytellers who have carried on the oral tradition which Basil Johnston records and preserves in this book. (McClelland and; Stewart)

Stacey Laforme (Poet-Chief of the Mississaugas of New Credit), *Living in the Tall Grass: Poems of Reconciliation* (2017)

"We should not have to change to fit into society the world should adapt to embrace our uniqueness." -- Chief Stacey Laforme. In *Living in the Tall Grass: Poems of Reconciliation*, Chief Stacey Laforme gives a history of his people through stories and poetry to let Canadians see through the eyes of Indigenous people. *Living in the Tall Grass* is written in a way that makes the reader feel he or she might be sitting down with Chief Laforme, sharing experiences from their lives. Some poems share humour, while others express pain, though each comes from the heart. (Durvil)

Tracey Lindberg, *Birdie* (2016)

A big, beautiful Cree woman with a dark secret in her past, Bernice ("Birdie") has left her home in northern Alberta to travel to Gibsons, B.C. She is on something of a vision quest, looking for family, for home, for understanding. She is also driven by the leftover teenaged desire to meet Pat Johns-Jesse from *The Beachcombers*--because he is, as she says, a working, healthy Indian man. Birdie heads for Molly's Reach to find answers, but they are not the ones she expected.

With the arrival in Gibsons of her Auntie Val and her cousin Skinny Freda, Birdie begins to draw from her dreams the lessons she was never fully taught in life. Informed by the lore and knowledge of Cree traditions, *Birdie* is a darkly comic and moving first novel about the universal experience of recovering from tragedy. At heart, it is the story of an extraordinary woman who travels to the deepest part of herself to find the strength to face the past and to build a new life. (Harper Collins)

Wab Kinew, *The Reason You Walk* (2015)

When his father was given a diagnosis of terminal cancer, Winnipeg broadcaster and musician Wab Kinew decided to spend a year reconnecting with the accomplished but distant aboriginal man who'd raised him. Born to an Anishinaabe father and a non-native mother, he has a foot in both cultures. He is a Sundancer, an academic, a former rapper, a hereditary chief, and an urban activist. Kinew writes affectingly of his own struggles in his twenties to find the right path, eventually giving up a self-destructive lifestyle to passionately pursue music and martial arts. From his unique vantage point, he offers an inside view of what it means to be an educated aboriginal living in a country that is just beginning to wake up to its aboriginal history and living presence.

<https://ottawa.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1692470021>

Waubgeshig Rice, *Moon of the Crusted Snow: A Novel*

With winter looming, a small northern Anishinaabe community goes dark. Cut off, people become passive and confused. Panic builds as the food supply dwindles. While the band council and a pocket of community members struggle to maintain order, an unexpected visitor arrives, escaping the crumbling society to the south. Soon after, others follow.

The community leadership loses its grip on power as the visitors manipulate the tired and hungry to take control of the reserve. Tensions rise and, as the months pass, so does the death toll due to sickness and despair. Frustrated by the building chaos, a group of young friends and their families turn to the land and Anishinaabe tradition in hopes of helping their community thrive again. Guided through the chaos by an unlikely leader named Evan Whitesky, they endeavor to restore order while grappling with a grave decision.

Blending action and allegory, *Moon of the Crusted Snow* upends our expectations. Out of catastrophe comes resilience. And as one society collapses, another is reborn. (ECW Press)

BIOGRAPHY/ PERSONAL ESSAYS



Alicia Elliott, *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground* (2019)

In an urgent and visceral work that asks essential questions about the treatment of Native people in North America while drawing on intimate details of her own life and experience with intergenerational trauma, Alicia Elliott offers indispensable insight and understanding to the ongoing legacy of colonialism. What are the links between depression, colonialism and loss of language — both figurative and literal? How does white privilege operate in different contexts? How do we navigate the painful contours of mental illness in loved ones without turning them into their sickness?

How does colonialism operate on the level of literary criticism? *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground* is Alicia Elliott's attempt to answer these questions and more. In the process, she engages with such wide-ranging topics as race, parenthood, love, mental illness, poverty, sexual assault, gentrification, writing and representation. Elliott makes connections both large and small between the past and present, the personal and political — from overcoming a years-long history with head lice to the way Native writers are treated within the Canadian literary industry; her unplanned teenage pregnancy to the history of dark matter and how it relates to racism in the court system; her childhood diet of Kraft dinner to how systematic oppression is linked to depression in Native communities. With deep consideration and searing prose, Elliott extends far beyond her own experiences to provide a candid look at our past, an illuminating portrait of our present and a powerful tool for a better future. (Doubleday Canada)

Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and The Teachings of Plants* (2013)

Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, a mother, and a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings — asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass — offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices.

In a rich braid of reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten our existence today, she circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. (Milkweed)

Rita Joe, *Song of Rita Joe: Autobiography of a Mi'kmaq poet* (1996)

Rita Joe is a Mi'kmaq woman, the first Mi'kmaq to be honoured for her poetry by the Nova Scotia Writers' Federation (in 1978) and the first Mi'kmaq woman to be entered into the Order of Canada (in 1990). Rita Joe tells of her harsh life: orphaned at age five, passed from one bleak foster home to another, spending four years at the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, living through a difficult and abusive marriage, giving birth to eight children, and living to see her great grandchildren. Poetry from her three published books: *Poems of Rita Joe* (1978); *Song of Eskasoni: More Poems of Rita Joe* (1988); and *Inu and Indians We're Called* (1991) are interspersed throughout the text. (Quill & Quire review)

Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian* (2013)

Neither a traditional nor all-encompassing history of First Nations people in North America, *The Inconvenient Indian* is a personal meditation on what it means to be "Indian"; Thomas King explores the relationship between Natives and non-Natives since the fifteenth century and examines the way that popular culture has shaped our notion of Indigenous identity, while also reflecting on his own complicated relationship with activism.

<https://www.cbc.ca/books/the-inconvenient-indian-1.3972080>

Lee Maracle, *My Conversations with Canadians* (2017)

In prose essays that are both conversational and direct, Maracle seeks not to provide any answers to these questions she has lived with for so long. Rather, she thinks through each one using a multitude of experiences she's had as a Canadian, a First Nations leader, a woman and mother and grandmother over the course of her life. Lee Maracle's *My Conversations with Canadians* presents a tour de force exploration into the writer's own history and a re-imagining of the future of our nation.

<https://www.cbc.ca/books/my-conversations-with-canadians-1.4232724>

Lee Maracle, *I Am Woman: A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism* (1996)

"I Am Woman represents my personal struggle with womanhood, culture, traditional spiritual beliefs and political sovereignty, written during a time when that struggle was not over. My original intention was to empower Native women to take to heart their own personal struggle for Native feminist being. The changes made in this second edition of the text do not alter my original intention. It remains my attempt to present a Native woman's sociological perspective on the impacts of colonialism on us, as women, and on myself personally." - from the Preface

Richard Wagamese, *Embers: One Ojibway's Meditation* (2016)

In this carefully curated selection of everyday reflections, Richard Wagamese finds lessons in both the mundane and sublime as he muses on the universe, drawing inspiration from working in the bush--sawing and cutting and stacking wood for winter as well as the smudge ceremony to bring him closer to the Creator. *Embers* is perhaps Richard Wagamese's most personal volume to date. Honest, evocative and articulate, he explores the various manifestations of grief, joy, recovery, beauty, gratitude, physicality and spirituality--concepts many find hard to express. But for Wagamese, spirituality is multifaceted. Within these pages, readers will find hard-won and concrete wisdom on how to feel the joy in the everyday things. Wagamese does not seek to be a teacher or guru, but these observations made along his own journey to become, as he says, "a spiritual bad-ass" make inspiring reading.

<https://www.grandecachelibrary.ab.ca/Book-Lists/Indigenous-Voices>

Sheila Watt-Cloutier, *The Right To Be Cold: One Woman's Fight To Protect The Arctic And Save The Planet From Climate Change* (2015)

The Right to Be Cold is Sheila Watt-Cloutier's memoir of growing up in the Arctic reaches of Quebec. It is the human story of life on the front lines of climate change, told by a woman who rose from humble beginnings to become one of the most influential Indigenous environmental, cultural, and human rights advocates in the world. (U Minnesota P)

NONFICTION BOOKS



Kim Anderson and Robert Alexander Innes, eds, *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration* (2015)

Many activists, writers, and communities are addressing the nexus of race, sexuality, and gender, and the ways these things combine to form a person's identity. *Indigenous Men and Masculinities* accomplishes this by discussing aboriginal masculinity from various points of view. Arguably, the book takes a similar approach to that of an intersectional feminist: countering the popular opinion that gender equality is a movement inherently of or for women, and acknowledging that people of all genders benefit from taking a critical look at the patriarchy.

The timely text examines the ways colonization attempted to diminish aboriginal beliefs about gender, and as a result, aboriginal traditions and values from around the world. In the midst of our imperative nation-wide discussion about missing and murdered aboriginal women, the book urges us to address how colonization has affected aboriginal men and people of other genders by creating and enforcing a patriarchal society. The book cannot provide a clear-cut solution capable of abolishing or reversing these effects – we must first collectively face and recognize the atrocities committed by white colonizers.

Indigenous Men and Masculinities, which serves as a potential companion to Sam McKegney's *Masculindians: Conversations About Indigenous Manhood*, comprises 16 essays authored by international scholars and activists. Most of the chapters address the ways white colonizers attempted to enforce patriarchy on a non-patriarchal society. The book argues that these Europeans introduced a harmful binary recognizing only two distinct genders – men and women. [...]

<https://quillandquire.com/review/indigenous-men-and-masculinities-legacies-identities-regeneration/>

Marie Battiste, *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit* (2013)

Drawing on treaties, international law, the work of other Indigenous scholars, and especially personal experiences, Marie Battiste documents the nature of Eurocentric models of education, and their devastating impacts on Indigenous knowledge. Chronicling the negative consequences of forced assimilation and the failure of current educational policies to bolster the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal populations, Battiste proposes a new model of education. She argues that the preservation of Aboriginal knowledge is an Aboriginal right and a right preserved by the many treaties with First Nations.

Current educational policies must undergo substantive reform. Central to this process is the rejection of the racism inherent to colonial systems of education, and the repositioning of Indigenous humanities, sciences, and languages as vital fields of knowledge. Battiste suggests the urgency for this reform lies in the social, technological, and economic challenges facing society today, and the need for a revitalized knowledge system which incorporates both Indigenous and Eurocentric thinking. The new model she advocates is based on her experiences growing up in a Mi'kmaw community, and the decades she has spent as a teacher, activist, and university scholar.

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Edward Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway* (1988/2010)

In *The Mishomis Book*, Edward Benton-Banai documents the history, traditions, and culture of the Ojibway people through stories passed down through generations. For readers from all cultures—but especially for Ojibway and Native youth—*The Mishomis Book* provides an introduction to Ojibway culture and the sacred Midewiwin teachings, aiming to protect this knowledge by instilling its importance in a new generation. (U Minnesota P)

Cajete, G, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (2000)

Greg Cajete's new book, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*, is a giant first step in redefining science from the perspective of Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and other indigenous peoples in this hemisphere. Western scientists and philosophers have, for the most part, ignored the knowledge and practices of earth-based people, or, in cases like the pharmaceutical industry, have exploited the medicinal and herbal remedies of indigenous peoples. But, since the Red Power Movement of the late sixties, Native Americans have been rebuilding their communities; reclaiming their languages, traditions, and ceremonies; and redefining the world around them through the eyes of their ancestors.

Native Science demonstrates a totally new, yet ancient, worldview of earth and nature. It explores the spiritual connections between humans and all living things. In the book, Cajete defines "science" as a living philosophy, not just a mathematical search for truth. Ecology is based upon relationship, not empirical formulas. Conservation is based upon respect and responsibility, not resource-based economics. Sustainability is based upon reciprocity, not risk assessment analysis.

At Leech Lake Tribal College in Minnesota, we use *Native Science* in a class entitled "Anishinaabe Understanding of Ecology." Although this book doesn't focus particularly on the Anishinaabe tribal perspective of nature, it does provide a framework of understanding and allows us to analyze our own cultural traditions and beliefs relative to the natural world. It is my hope that this book will inspire Native scientists, academics, and tribal community members to redefine science and the use of technology according to their own tribal traditions. From astronomy to planting seasons, from ceremony to health and nutrition, from creation stories to a sense of place, *Native Science* covers

the holistic and complex perspective of indigenous knowledge and practice. At a time of deforestation, atmospheric deterioration, overpopulation, and exorbitant human consumption, we need a new environmental philosophy and ethic.

<https://tribalcollegejournal.org/native-science-natural-laws-interdependence/>

Drew Hayden Taylor, *Me Funny* (2005)

An irreverent, insightful take on our First Nations' great gift to Canada, delivered by a stellar cast of contributors.

Humour has always been an essential part of North American Aboriginal culture. This fact remained unnoticed by most settlers, however, since non-Aboriginals just didn't get the joke. Indians, it was believed, never laughed. But Indians themselves always knew better.

As an award-winning playwright, columnist and comedy-sketch creator, Drew Hayden Taylor has spent fifteen years writing and researching Aboriginal humour. For this book, he asked a leading group of writers from a variety of fields--among them such celebrated wordsmiths as Thomas King, Lee Maracle and Tomson Highway--to take a look at what makes Aboriginal humour tick. Their challenging, informative and hilarious contributions examine the use of humour in areas as diverse as stand-up comedy, fiction, visual art, drama, performance, poetry, traditional storytelling and education. As *Me Funny* makes clear, there is no single definition of Aboriginal humour. But the contributors do agree on some common ground: Native humour pushes the envelope. With this collection, readers will have the unforgettable opportunity to appreciate that for themselves.

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Rice, B. *Seeing the World with Aboriginal Eyes: A Four Dimensional Perspective on Human and Non-human Values, Cultures and Relationships on Turtle Island* (2005)

Seeing the World with Aboriginal Eyes - this four directional perspective on human and non-human values, cultures and relationships on Turtle Island provides a comprehensive presentation of various North American Aboriginal world views and spiritual understandings. (Aboriginal Issues Press)

Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Eve Tuck, K. Wayne Yang, ed. *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View* (2019)

Indigenous and decolonizing perspectives on education have long persisted alongside colonial models of education, yet too often have been subsumed within the fields of multiculturalism, critical race theory, and progressive education. Timely and compelling, *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education* features research, theory, and dynamic foundational readings for educators and educational researchers who are looking for possibilities beyond the limits of liberal democratic schooling. Featuring original chapters by authors at the forefront of theorizing, practice, research, and activism, this volume helps define and imagine the exciting interstices between Indigenous and decolonizing studies and education. Each chapter forwards Indigenous principles - such as Land as literacy and water as life - that are grounded in place-specific efforts of creating Indigenous universities and schools, community organizing and social movements, trans and Two Spirit practices, refusals of state policies, and land- based and water-based pedagogies. (Routledge)

Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2nd ed. 2012)

This essential volume explores intersections of imperialism and research - specifically, the ways in which imperialism is embedded in disciplines of knowledge and tradition as 'regimes of truth' Concepts such as 'discovery' and 'claiming' are discussed and an argument presented that the decolonization of research methods will help to reclaim control over indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Vowel, Chelsea. *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada*. Highwater Press, 2016.

In *Indigenous Writes*, Chelsea Vowel, legal scholar, teacher, and intellectual, opens an important dialogue about the wider social beliefs associated with the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada. In 31 essays, Chelsea explores the Indigenous experience from the time of contact to the present, 10 through five categories--Terminology of Relationships; Culture and Identity; Myth- Busting; State Violence; and Land, Learning, Law, and Treaties. She answers the questions that many people have on these topics to spark further conversations at home, in the classroom, and in the larger community.

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