

# Blind Justice (poem)

Lee Maracle reads one of her poems in-studio on Context with Lorna Dueck

[Youtube.com/watch?v=tv3HVOSr90c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tv3HVOSr90c) (Posted Apr 11, 2014)

**Host:** From award winning author and poet ... Lee you have a poem you would love to share; I can't wait to hear it. ...

**Lee Maracle:** This was actually written for a truth and reconciliation book called "Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry" and it was performed in [the play] "The Moving Gallery."

## **Blind justice**

Lee Maracle

Ts'leil Waututh, Chaytoose, Snauq'w  
The mountains rise behind my ancestors  
And retreat from our care in the sale of them  
Orchestrated by a department that sought our vanquishment  
\$25.00 became millions in the blink of an eye  
\$25.00 became hunger, cold in the next blink  
Food became inadequate  
The murder of cedar, sea vegetables, Ouske, whale and sockeye  
Crippled our ability to eat  
We struggled to mature without food  
Mr. Harper is sorry - me too

We could have recovered from smallpox  
We could have recovered from other epidemics  
We had Xway-Xway  
We had medicine  
We had songs and dances  
But we were banned from singing and dancing and using medicine  
We could have recovered  
We had friends  
Christian friends  
But they were banned from helping us  
We could've said something  
But we were banned from speaking about land rights, fishing rights  
And the right to educate our children

Blind justice

This is a call song

Settlers did not come here as blind men

They witnessed murder

Some of them killed us

Some of them still kill us

They witnessed the murder of cedar, of vegetables, of sockeye

The poisoning of our lands

Everyone is sorry now - me too

We could have included you in ceremony

Of facing ourselves

Recovering ourselves

Transforming ourselves

But our ceremonies were banned

Harper is sorry - me too

Still, I am not tragic

Not even in my addicted moments

A needle hanging from the vein of my creased arm

I was not tragic

Even as I jump from a skiff in a vain attempt to join my ancestors

I was not tragic

Even in my disconnection from song, from dance

I am not tragic

Even in seeing you as privileged,

I found songs of justice to sing

Oh freedom

Even while you occupied my homeland, I in a homeless state

Did not begrudge you your privilege

Even as men abduct us as we hitchhike along highways

To disappear along this long colonial road

I found a way to stand up

And subvert colonial injustice

My body has always understood justice

Everyone eats, is our law

We included you

There is no word for exclusion in our language

So your whiteness was never a threat

This is not the first massive death we endured

As we died we girded up our loins,

Recovered and re-built

We are builders,

We are singers,

We are dancers  
 We are speakers  
 We are still singing  
 We are dancing again  
 We are speaking poetry on paper  
 On metal and on plastic film

In the many millennia of life we have learned there are constants  
 The tide surges, retreats faithfully  
 Threatened fishes struggle to return  
 The epidemic dead always come back  
 Plants, trees, animals always fight to recover  
 We endured {hie'luk}, tsunami, of the sort that nearly killed everyone  
 We endured earthquakes and storms  
 But the plants, the people and the animals, fought to return

I am your witness  
 Inspired by earth's response to desecration  
 The waters will cleanse the earth  
 Hurricanes will rearrange rivers  
 Earthquakes will object  
 But the earth will do her duty and we will too  
 We will all have to face ourselves, our sense of justice  
 We will need to nourish our imagination  
 Summon our souls, our hearts and minds to a justice which includes all life, together

So I call you  
 Come, Hear this song, sing with me  
 I'm not the only vulnerable one here  
 Our sharing is not our weakness but our strength  
 I've been waiting for all these years  
 Waiting for you to see me, to hear this song  
 I'm not the only one that needs help here  
 The sharing of my country, with us, with you,  
 Defines your humanity  
 You need us  
 As much as I need you  
 {-skutshe'am}

**Host:** I appreciate it

**Lorna Duecker:** Thank you so much, I appreciate it.