

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
{l-skutshe'am}

Host: I appreciate it

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