

## VSB - INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

### INDIGENOUS REMEMBRANCE DAY POETRY

**Offered for assembly and classroom use**

**"I Love This Land" by Chief R. Stacey LaForme  
of the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation**

*The poem, presented in full below, is written in the voice of a  
First Nations soldier who is speaking to a fellow soldier, after returning to Canada.*



You were and always shall be my brother  
We were all the same color wrapped in the flag of this nation  
My blood flowed as freely as yours, mixed in the fields one could not be distinguished from the other  
Yet when we came home, when the nation's colours were removed  
Difference became apparent, not between you and me, God willing never  
But in the eyes of those for whom we laid down our lives.

Oh, we still stood shoulder to shoulder in the parades, but the government thought that your life was more  
valuable than mine  
So you were given land, property, while I waited and I waited,  
I know what you were given was not enough for what we endured  
Still it was much more than I.

I am not envious of you brother, I believe you deserve even more than you received  
But it hurt me very badly, I am not ashamed to say I cried and why not  
I bled, I died, I killed, why does my country think I am unworthy  
The enemy I fought could never be as cruel as the people I came back to embrace.

I gave so much, lived through so much and then you,  
you who I would give all for, you pushed me aside as if I was inconsequential  
I feel as if I have been spit upon by one I honored.

Do I feel good, having to ask you for what should have been given long ago, no?  
In fact, I am a little ashamed to ask for justice in this  
For I never went to war for money, for glory, for reward, I went because it was the right thing to do and God forgive  
me, I would go again.

This may seem an old wound to you but it is a wound that never heals  
For it is a wound to my people's heart and soul and insult to our pride  
And we deserve so much better, especially from you.



**"Indian Veterans" by Solomon Ratt,  
associate professor of Indigenous Education  
at First Nations University Canada**

*After talking with his niece – a Regina teacher  
who wanted to add an Indigenous angle to  
talking about Remembrance Day in the  
classroom, Ratt penned a poem to recognize  
Indigenous veterans in Canada.*

We were the forgotten  
of the 'lest we forget.'

We were the invisible  
ghosts from The Rez

We had no obligation to join.

We had to give up our treaty status.  
We fought, we died,

our language was used  
for secret messages.

We stood side by side with  
the other soldiers in our victory.

We were cast aside when  
we came back home;

we didn't get the benefits  
allotted other veterans;

we didn't know where to live  
since we gave up our treaty status.

We were the forgotten  
of the 'lest we forget.

We were the invisible  
ghosts from The Rez.



*Credit: Poppy Image by Andy Everson, K'ómoks First Nation.*

The Drum beat steady and deeply resonant  
reaches into the past, present and future:

Pulsing with medicines the drum is our heartbeat,  
a golden glow that always moves  
beneath the surface of all that takes place.

Everywhere there is war,

But streaming from the four directions,  
the sky is filled with legions of thunderbirds young  
and old sacrificing life to restore peace and love.

By Anonymous Indigenous Author

