

# Mipit

Amanda Buffalo



Her laugh jingles  
As we dance  
In waist high sweet grass  
Moccasins shuffling in the dirt  
Her heart is bigger than her whole territory  
That s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-s  
Coast to coast to coast

She waits  
Patiently  
For me to catch up  
In the bush  
In the teachings  
In the language

She tells me stories  
Of days gone by  
Stories of the old people  
Teaching me to hear  
To l-i-s-t-e-n  
To the wind in the trees  
And the northern lights  
No, she never strains  
To hear the caribou's song  
While she licks  
Shake 'n' bake gopher  
Clean from the bone

She carries



The weight of the world  
The anguish  
Of generations before  
L.....O.....S.....T.....  
To colonialism  
But her blood remembers  
The songs of the old people  
Hands dexterous as they scrape a hide  
Or weave traditions  
Like spruce root  
Through the community  
To strengthen it  
To ground it

She teaches me  
The ways of the people  
Overcoming  
Generations of tragedy and  
Despair  
Bringing the spirits  
Back to our world for a visit  
For a taste  
Of singed, sizzling porcupine  
Burnt in a plate on the fire  
To feed the connection

I see her old soul  
Darting behind eyes  
That glisten with mischief  
And she dances  
In a burst of cold sunlight  
Cedar hat slipping down  
Hair kissed by the wind  
In one drum beat  
Reclaiming  
EVERYTHING  
That was nearly lost

She waves to me  
As she skips off to fourth grade  
Carrying the sovereignty  
Of a Nation  
In her flower-covered backpack  
Her culture sewn like beadwork  
Into the soul of a girl not yet of age  
Heart bursting with passion  
For the teachings that she carries  
On to the next  
And the next  
And the next generation  
Never tiring  
In her journey  
Of a thousand years

And I know  
The ancestors  
Are proud



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AMANDA BUFFALO comes from the Cree and Haudenosaunee nations and is a community activist, an Auntie of many, and a connoisseur of tea, bannock, and dry meat. An advocate at heart, she dedicates her time to supporting both community-based and global approaches to Aboriginal women's equality in the health, economic, and legal fields.

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