



Listen. Create. Read. Act.

Indigenous Peoples Day 2021

826
BOSTON

Watch.

"As mayor of Boston, I hereby declare the second Monday of each October Indigenous Peoples Day in the city of Boston."

When Acting Mayor Kim Janey spoke these words on October 6, 2021, it marked a watershed moment of long overdue recognition of Native people in our community. It also gave us a powerful example of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) solidarity, as the city's first Black mayor lifted up Indigenous traditions and called for us to reckon with our shared history of "genocide, displacement, and oppression of Indigenous peoples."

Click the image at right to WATCH the signing of the executive order.

Image: Chali'Naru Dones of the United Confederation of Taino People and co-leader of Indigenous Peoples Day of Newton

Photo by Claire Gosselin, Massachusetts Peace Action



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Listen.

The execution of the Dakota 38 remains the largest legal mass execution in US history. The execution was ordered by President Abraham Lincoln on December 26, 1862, in Minnesota.

Click the image to LISTEN to Layli Long Soldier's haunting retelling of this history in the poem "38:"

The word Minnesota comes from mni, which means water; and sota, which means turbid.

Synonyms for turbid include muddy, unclear, cloudy, confused, and smoky.

Everything is in the language we use.

Image: Two Harbors, Minnesota.

Photo by Jan Bolz/Unsplash, Public Domain Dedication (CCO)



Create.

Indigenous peoples' connection to place is sacred. Many tribes recognize seven directions in relationship to place: north, south, east, west, above, center, and below.

"Obligations 2" invites us to create poems by reading the words in different directions: down the left, right, center, and again in those directions from the bottom to the top of the page. In this way, Long Soldier challenges us to reckon with history on her own spiritual terms.

CREATE your own poem by connecting Long Soldier's words in your own direction (example below):

*As we struggle to accept,
to unbraid the past across our faces*

We shift the grief, bury the grief, resist the grief

Obligations 2

BY LAYLI LONG SOLDIER

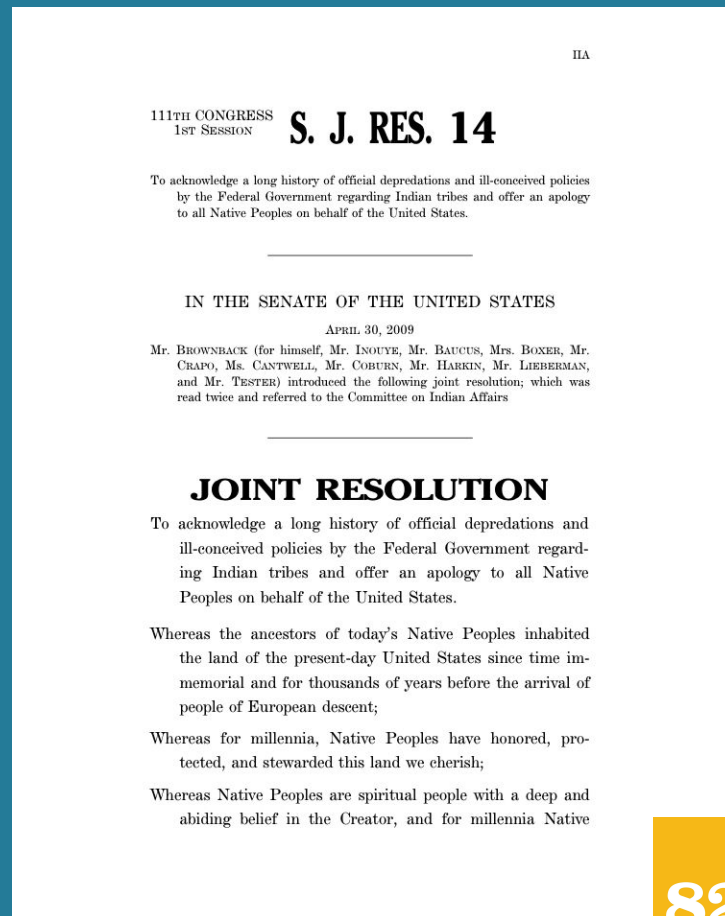
As we
embrace resist
the future the present the past
we work we struggle we begin we fail
to understand to find to unbraid to accept to question
the grief the grief the grief the grief
we shift we wield we bury
into light as ash
across our faces

Imagine.

“To acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United States.”

So begins Senate Resolution 14, the US government’s apology to Indigenous people, signed by President Barack Obama in 2010.

Click the image at right to hear an interview with Long Soldier responding to the apology. **Then IMAGINE what kind of apology you might write.** What would you need to know to write it? What words would you choose? When we do harm, can words alone repair the harm we have done?



Get inspired.

William Nu'utupu Giles (right) is an afakasi Samoan writer from Honolulu, Hawai'i. They were featured in the HBO documentary series *Russell Simmons Presents Brave New Voices*, where they helped the Hawai'i team win its first International Poetry Slam Championship.

Travis T. (left) is the cofounder of Youth Speaks Hawai'i, which promotes teen literacy and civic engagement through slam poetry.

GET (majorly) INSPIRED by their 2015 National Poetry Slam team poem, "Oral Traditions."



Act.

The work of honoring and seeking justice for Indigenous peoples is ongoing.

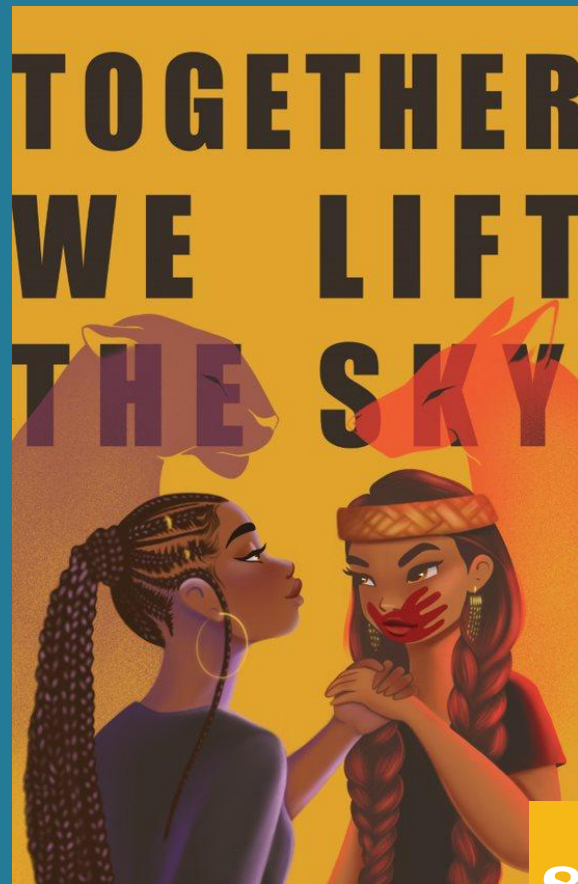
Fourteen states now recognize Indigenous Peoples Day. Massachusetts is not one of them. **To join the campaign** to change this, click [HERE](#).

To find a list of events celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day locally, click [HERE](#).

To join Black and Indigenous youth in a virtual conversation at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, click [HERE](#).

To read about Aquinnah Wampanoag artist Elizabeth James-Perry's recent collaboration with Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, click [HERE](#).

To learn about justice movements for Indigenous peoples worldwide, click [HERE](#).



#ReadNative

This year, the American Indian Library Association launched its inaugural Read Native challenge to support and recognize Indigenous authors, scientists, legislators, storytellers, and creators.

Click the image to learn how your family, classroom, or community can participate!

Click [HERE](#) to access a reading list from the 826 Boston John D. O'Bryant Writers' Room Team from Indigenous Peoples Heritage Month 2020.

Click [HERE](#) to find Spanish-language picture books on Indigenous identity.

Click [HERE](#) to follow the hashtag #IAMGENI on Twitter.

Click [HERE](#) to read about Owamni, billed as America's first decolonized restaurant, where no colonial ingredients-like wheat, sugar, or pork- are on the menu.

