

Through difficulties with a strong mind

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Poésie / Poetry

Through difficulties with a strong mind¹

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My name is Robert Dokis. I am a First Nations from an Ojibway community in the Dokis Reserve, Ontario.

J'écris depuis plusieurs années maintenant. J'ai développé un intérêt marqué pour la création de poèmes rythmés, que l'on peut chanter. J'ai beaucoup souffert dans la vie et, dès l'enfance, la création de chansons avec ma guitare m'aidait à traverser les moments difficiles. Déjà à cet âge, je tentais de trouver ma voix. J'ai initialement écrit beaucoup de poèmes pour des femmes de mon entourage, afin de les charmer et leur montrer mon amour.

Plus tard, les poèmes sont devenus une source de courage et de force pour traverser les difficultés, pour rester fort dans l'adversité, pour m'accrocher.

Dans mon processus de création, je chante chacun de mes textes dans ma tête. Ces textes sont une façon pour moi de regarder la vie de manière positive et de garder espoir en l'avenir.

Mes racines autochtones et la culture qui s'y rattache sont de grandes sources d'inspiration pour moi. Je reprends régulièrement certains thèmes, entre autres les valeurs sacrées, les animaux représentant la force et les herbes médicinales. Les prochains poèmes sont tous liés de près ou de loin à ces thématiques.

Miigwech,



¹ Les poèmes que je présente ici font partie de mon projet de recueil à paraître : « Through difficulties with a strong mind ».

Cedar and Sage est un texte qui met de l'avant les bienfaits du cèdre et de la sauge. Le cèdre est un arbre qui aide à clarifier la direction que nous prendrons dans la vie, tandis que la sauge nous aide à nous libérer des mauvaises énergies grâce à sa fumée. Ce poème parle du fait de partager ces enseignements.

Cedar and Sage

Cedar and sage
Keeps my spirit
Safe each day
There is my way
And there is your way
And there is nothing
That can divide me away
Do you know what we say
There is another day
And I say what I say
But each one of us
Has our own way
And there is nothing
Wrong today
And I love you that way
What can I say
What can we do

Cedar and sage
Keeps my spirit
Safe each day
There is my way
And there is your way
Let us be in peace
Each day

Cedar and sage
Keeps my spirit
Safe each day
You know what they say?
Just believe in your
Own way
There is nothing wrong with your way

Cedar and sage
Keeps my spirit
Safe each day
There is my way
And there is your way
And there is nothing
That can divide me away
I stand tall today
And I believe in your way
And nothing can stop us today

Cedar and sage
Keeps my spirit
Safe each day
I believe what you say
Because I got respect that way

Cedar and sage
Keeps my spirit
Safe each day
If there is something today
Let the children play
You got your way
I got my way
Let there be peace each day
Share the love today
Steers the anger away

Cedar and sage
Keeps my spirit
Safe each day
And we all have our own way
That is OK today

Ayant grandi loin de ma famille, j'ai acquis la plupart de mes connaissances auprès des aînés autochtones en établissement. J'ai beaucoup apprécié leurs enseignements et je souhaitais leur rendre hommage dans l'un de mes textes.

Spirit Man raconte donc le quotidien d'un aîné autochtone en tant que leader spirituel. Il enseigne son savoir aux autres chaque jour, la terre, le sable, le sol sur lequel on marche. Il transmet paix et amour comme moyen pour traverser chaque journée.

Cette paix et cet amour se transmettent entre autres par la prière. Il existe différents moyens de faire parvenir nos prières.

Spirit Man

Spirit Man understands
He stands on this land
He holds our hands
And make us understand
The sand on this land
Is where our Ancestors
Last stand

My spirit soars
On top of this land
There is something to understand
If you take your time
To understand
You will get to know that this is also your land
In peace together we stand
Our Creator understands

I don't ever want to lose my land!
This is sacred
Please understand
Spirit Man understands
Sacred lands
Together we stand

I have walked all my life on this land
It is where I understand
I dance to sacred drums

All my life on these lands
The water flows through my hands
There are so many things to understand
Spirit Man understands
He stands tall on this land
Helping us to understand

We are the veins
Of these lands
Respect and understand
This is also your land
I lay a prayer on this land
Now you also know how
I give you an eagle feather now
Now give out your hand
To someone who does not understand
The sand
And the trees that stand

Trying to understand
Whatever happens to my land
Our past is too painful to understand
But maybe one day
When there will be peace
We might give out our hand
May there be peace on my land

*Je puise beaucoup de mon inspiration dans les épreuves traversées, que l'on parle de mon déracinement de ma famille à l'âge de 7 ans (**Het Up**), de mon éloignement de mes proches (**Mountains Away**; ici-bas) ou encore de mon parcours vers l'abstinence (**Getting Through This Smoke**; inclus dans le recueil à paraître).*

Aucun sujet n'est tabou pour moi.

Het Up

You see, this couldn't be!
As a child, I was lost for a while.
I didn't know better,
I lost the letter of life forever.
And now we'll never be together.
Lost in this weather, stormy forever.
Could someone please help me find my letter?
I will be better if my doctor stops this weather!
Het up, it was shut up!
I never knew what to do.
I just wanted to jump around to any sound,
I never knew that I was out of bounds.
Talking about sounds, I just bound around!
What is going down, people keep on shipping me around!
Het up, what's up, they keep telling me to shut up!
They never knew how to show me what they knew
I never learned, my brain was burned,
Could someone take me and really teach me to learn?
I was burned, no one ever learned, and gave me my turn in life to learn!
And now life has gone by, and I lost my turn!
I will stay strong, and sing a song because life is not long!
Het up, get up, I can really be fed-up
So, I try to get out, and I only want to be all about fun
They keep on telling me to het up, shut up
Now I am getting fed-up
Will someone come and help me get out of this life of
Het up, shut up, now I need you to get up
Look out and give me some push-ups
I am really fed up, het up, no needs to be put up
With this het up, het up

***Mountains Away** porte sur mon trajet dans les Laurentides pour me rendre au pénitencier. Je me rappelle avoir observé des montagnes à perte de vue par la fenêtre du fourgon, chaque montagne m'éloignant davantage des gens que j'aimais, de mon chez-moi. J'y décris ma souffrance et ma douleur d'être séparé de ceux-ci. C'est pour moi une image des obstacles que j'aurais à surmonter pour revenir auprès des miens.*

Mountains Away

Where am I anyways?
I can't weigh how long to stay?
I am so many mountains away,
Tumbling, rolling, and losing way.
Where will it stop?

I am so many mountains away.

I have one thing to say,
But it doesn't matter anyway.
Things that I say,
Words this way,
I am not running that way,
Or even saying to stay.
I just listen I say.

I am so many mountains away.

Show me the way?
But hear me.
But no one listens anyway!
What could I say?
Look my way!
Listen to my way?
Show me right away,
Teach me, preach me,
and all that I could say.

I am so many mountains away.

I worry and all the fears my way.
I got to fight every day that way.
I look away, and where to stay?

I am so many mountains away.

Say what you say.
Stay anyway, but don't you say anymore lost words
going and going!
Where do I get listened to anyways?

I am so many mountains away.

I turn, turn, rolling mountains in my way.
I am losing it every day.
Where did I say?
Learn every day.
Reach out my way?
Hear, feel and see my way.

I am so many mountains away.

I've been taken away!
Around the world, I say.
What time of the day did I say?
Could you say okay?
You know I got no time!
My world has been taken away.
I am so many mountains away.

When will it all come together?
I worry about the weather,
in a way to say.
I will pray today as it will turn away.
On me, all around me, oh can't you see? It is blind to me!
I want to say, but I don't know how to say it!
I will give a start, coming straight from my heart.
I am so many mountains away.

*J'ai toujours évolué dans des institutions : à l'hôpital, de mes 7 à 12 ans, en détention juvénile, de mes 13 à 18 ans et en prison ensuite, depuis ce jour, me laissant seul et isolé avec ma souffrance. Le poème **Can You Hear My Call?** parle de ma souffrance vécue seul, sans la présence de mes proches et de la force intérieure que je développe par mes écrits et ma spiritualité pour ne jamais abandonner.*

Can You Hear My Call?

Where can I start from it all?
Is there anybody out there at all?
Can you hear my call?

I stand here tall!
I think someone is going to lose it all!
Stand tall,
Keep on fighting it all!
Can you hear my call?

Can you see it at all?
I am like a tree that's going to fall.
And no one is going to hear at all.
Stand tall,
We are going to break that fall.
One day, can you hear my call?

I see it all,
I even can hear it all.
Is that you?
Hold on, and stand tall.
I know it all,
I feel it all.
It hurts that I can't stop this all!

Hold your head up,
Do your push-ups,
You got to be tough.
That's enough,
I'll never give up!
I won't shut up,
I never give up!

Can you hear my call?
Do you see it all?

What's been going on,
I can hear you in every song.
I stand tall
I won't put my tail between my legs like a broken dog!
I'll keep fighting it all!
Can anyone hear my call?

I stand tall!
I'll make it through this all,
I got it all,
And I will just break the fall!
Can you hear my call?

Where is everybody?
Time passes too fast,
And now I come in last!
Can you hear my call?

And now I see it all,
I think I hear the call coming back to me.
I am glad that I found you,
My hope is coming true.
I guess I made it through.
But harm can't be undone!
Now I will play my drum,
And pray to kingdom come,
To what has been done to me!

*Les femmes de ma vie et l'amour sont également des sources d'inspiration importantes pour moi. La première femme à avoir marqué ma vie est évidemment ma mère. J'ai écrit en son hommage le texte **Mother of Life**. Je souhaitais mettre de l'avant sa personnalité et toutes les belles choses qu'elle nous a apportées à nous, ses enfants.*

Il faut dire qu'ayant été retiré de ma famille à l'âge de 7 ans, j'ai souvent pleuré pour être avec ma mère. Mes poèmes sont une façon d'être près d'elle et de l'aimer. Ce poème porte également une partie de mon deuil, puisque ma mère est décédée trop tôt. Je fais le deuil de ma mère, mais également des moments que je n'ai pas pu vivre avec elle dû à mon éloignement de ma famille. Ma mère se retrouve dans mes prières tous les jours.

Mother of Life

Mother of life was my father's wife.
Brought seven children to life.
She was so tragedy bright.
She brought us love that fit us like a glove.
She was always right and taught us all about what
was wrong and right.
Mother of life
She had the way to a light that was bright.
But she closes to sit tight,
And give us sunshine day or night because she knew
how to love her children and help us in our fight
Mother of life
For life can sometimes be not right
Mother of life went into a tunnel,
And saw that light
So many times, her heart shone and needed to be
rewound.
And all we saw was mother coming along,
Singing a song, and getting along

Mother of life gave her children everything
That was love from her heart.
So many times, she almost lost the fight
But miraculously, she came back,
Again, and again.

Mother of life
Standing tall,
And helping us all.

Her life came to a wall
She knew that she might fall
No, listen, "Mom" is a miracle,
Mother of life,
She does not need to roll the dice.
She has what we want.

Love straight from the heart.
Caring straight from the start,
She cares like a masterpiece,
Her life is like art.

Mother of life,
Brought seven children to life.
Tears roll down,
I can't hear a sound,
Of when you were around.

I take my drum and sing you some sounds.
I got so much to say when you were around, but now
you're gone, I guess now I will just pray.

*Le poème **Something I Can Do** aborde mon profond désir d'aider mon prochain. J'y parle d'aider quelqu'un, d'aider les autres, d'aider des gens que j'aime. J'aimerais beaucoup par mes écrits ou encore par mes actions soutenir des gens qui en ont besoin.*

Something I Can Do

Is there something
I can do
Is there something
I can say
And if you look
At me and you
And all the way
We love to do
My heart is up
To me and you
If there is one
The way I know to
Say
Today I am going
To have a good day
Is there something
I can do
Is there something
I can say
My heart is up
To me and you
Is there something
I can do

Just look at me
And you
Is there something
I can do
This love is really
True
My heart is up
To me and You
Catch this prayer too
I only got love for you
Can you see this?
Love that is true
Catch this kiss
Of love of blues
If it can help you
My heart is red
And my arms are open
All the way
For you too
Is there something
I can do
I will always be there
For you too

*L'inspiration à l'origine de **Criminal in Rhymes** est en lien avec mon parcours de vie et mon intérêt pour les mots. Parfois j'écris simplement pour le plaisir lorsque je suis de bonne humeur, afin de transmettre de la joie.*

Criminal in Rhymes

Criminal in rhymes
Criminal in times
I will make you
A rhyme
Give me your dimes
I won't deceive you
This time
Criminal in rhymes
Criminal in times
Another day
Another time
Another day
Another dime
But this time
I will make mine
Each other day
Each other time
All I ever want
Is you by my side
Criminal in rhymes
Criminal in times
I will make you
All, all, mine
Sometimes, sometimes
This time, I don't want
To miss you out of
Rhymes
Criminal in rhymes
Criminal in times
Each time you reach
Out to me
Each time I look you
In the eyes
I realize each time
I got you in a
Rhyme
Criminal in rhymes
Criminal in times
Each time I got
You one in time

*Le poème **Look All Around** aborde mon positivisme. Par mes textes, je cherche à avoir du plaisir et à le transmettre aux autres. Mes écrits se veulent porteurs d'une certaine musicalité, car la musique a pour moi une fonction rassembleuse et porteuse de bonheur. C'est ainsi que j'arrive à tolérer les épreuves de la vie, en m'accrochant à la musique et à la danse et en reflétant ces passions dans mes textes.*

Look All Around

I think I saw everything,
The people following
Each other around
Looking for the sound
Look all around
People are going all
Around
Some are getting down
Some are just walking
Around
Look all around
Beating with sound
Me, I am dancing
To the sound
Look all around
Love is going around
Now I am getting down
Can you hear this sound?
Look all around
People are getting down
Following the sound
I am dancing, I am romancing
I like being fancy
Being like a pansy
Look all around
People are following
The sound
There is nothing that
Is wrong
I love romance
In time I get what is going around
I like to follow,
the poetry rhymes and sounds
That I spread around
To follow you around