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WARRIORS

Hannah Battiste

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An Interdisciplinary Journal

*Honouring the Voices, Perspectives and Knowledges
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Stories, Standpoints and Media Reviews*

WARRIORS

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You have walked for years
Proud of your choices
Proud of your language
Proud of the God you worship

You took a group of people
Not just any people
First Nations people
And you broke them down
Sent One here and Twenty Two there

You didn't take the time to understand
You took away their identity
You took away everything
And buried it in the ground

You watched them suffer
To this day they suffer
And all you do is laugh

You punished the child out of them
You punished the language out of them
You killed the person inside of them

You made something sacred to them vanish
Vanish like the happiness
Vanish like the families
Vanish like the love
They had in their hearts

They call First Nations warriors
Because we are strong

We are infinity
 We are special
 Some of us are still angry
 Some have found forgiveness
 Some have found faith
 And some still hurt

We all know the stories that lay
 Beneath their eyes
 We feel the hurt
 That you have caused

We do not understand
 We do not forget
 And it still hurts

But we have each other
 Side by side
 United as a team
 of WARRIORS

Why I became a writer

Growing up, most of my life, I didn't have a father or many friends. I was bullied badly, and I had many mental health issues by the time I was seven years old. I lost a lot of people in my life. I gained new friends, and lost friends. My new friends betrayed me and family. I lost what seemed to feel like everything. When I was nine, my father died. My father didn't take care of himself, and he also abused drugs. After my father died, my family was falling, but we were still standing tall. At the age of 12, my brother committed suicide.

My family suffered a great loss; they broke, and it is still taking them a long time to cope. I was going through a lot, and I was suffering every single day. During the suffering, I was being bullied, I did not have any friends and I was in a deep depression. Everything started building up, so on October 21st, 2012, I committed suicide and survived. For two years, I quit school and stayed in my room because of how ashamed I was. I didn't let anybody see me. I would wait until my family was asleep and then I would sneak out of my room to eat. It was a difficult time. One day I was sitting around, and I wrote a story. And then a story turned in to a poem, and a poem turned into more and more poems.

I didn't have any idea that I was smart, beautiful, talented, and IMPORTANT. Life became so meaningful to me, and I shared my stories. My stories became inspirations. My poetry was being published, I was being asked to do performances. I am now a public speaker, poet and student. Sometimes I lose my ways. Sometimes I still need to get help. But I am not afraid to seek help. When I

know my mental health is getting in the way, I run and find help. It takes time for me to get what I need, but struggling only makes us stronger. I struggled so much in my life, and it hurts to think about the things that I've been through.

The bad times are going to make good times. The experience is unreal, and I try not to think about it, but that's how I make myself—through my writings, through my mental health, through my experiences and my life lessons. Writing saved my life and I am completely grateful.