

# NO POEMS ON STOLEN NATIVE LAND

*for Teresa*

>> CLINT BURNHAM

I'd like to acknowledge that we are on stolen land.  
I'd like to acknowledge that we are on borrowed land.  
I'd like to acknowledge that we are on overdue land.  
I'd like to acknowledge that we are on pickpocketed land.  
I'd like to acknowledge that we are on empty land.  
I'd like to acknowledge that we are on full land.  
I'd like to acknowledge the knowledge of like to acknowledge you like me  
acknowledging.  
I'd like to acknowledge that we are trespassing on someone else's property if  
that someone else had property and if we are who we think we are and not,  
in fact, perhaps also someone else's acknowledgement.  
I'd like to acknowledge I meant that.  
I'd like to acknowledge I meant to say we are on land that was empty when  
my grandfather moved here in what was it 1948?  
I'd like to acknowledge that my grandfather moved here in what was it  
1948 and then went back to Winnipeg and then came out again with my  
grandmother and my dad and I'd like to acknowledge I always hate it when  
I see the little items on maps saying *I.R. #30* but I also like seeing *I.R. #30*  
– and it's usually in italics for some reason – because they acknowledge  
how they're little spaces marked *I.R. #30* both part of the cities, of human  
habitation, which are on the maps, and the landscape, the time immemorial  
blah blah.  
I'd like to acknowledge my Dene sister.  
I'd like to acknowledge my Gitksan brother.  
I'd like to acknowledge my Tsleil-Watuth cousin.  
I'd like to acknowledge my Nuuchaanulth mother-in-law.  
I'd like to acknowledge my Skwxwú7mesh daughter.  
I'd like to acknowledge my Okanagan boyfriend.  
I'd like to acknowledge we are getting into dangerous territory here.  
I'd like to acknowledge 5 minutes of colonialism.  
I'd like to acknowledge fifty pages of postcolonial bibliography.  
I'd like to acknowledge the virtual rez.  
I'd like to acknowledge the suburban rez.  
I'd like to acknowledge the low-res rez.  
I'd like to acknowledge the talking memory stick.  
I'd like to acknowledge acknowledging.  
I'd like to acknowledge the brass mask my uncle made at reform school in  
the 1960s on Vancouver Island.  
I'd like to acknowledge the hot chocolate I had on army manoeuvres on  
Skowkale land in July 1980.

I'd like to acknowledge ... both I can't acknowledge and I'd like to acknowledge Oka.

I'd like to acknowledge 518 years, four months, twelve days, seven hours, etc., of resistance.

I'd like to acknowledge 10,000 years of resistance.

I'd like to acknowledge the Freudian notion of resistance.

I'd like to acknowledge British colonialism.

I'd like to acknowledge Canadian colonialism.

I'd like to acknowledge Musqueam colonialism.

I'd like to acknowledge Roman colonialism.

I'd like to acknowledge Norman colonialism.

I'd like to acknowledge Persian colonialism.

I'd like to acknowledge Franco-Prussian-Sino-Nippo-Indo-Afro-Turko-Islamo-Togo-Pogo-Hawai'ian-Espresso-anyone who thought they could grab something imperialism.

I'd like to acknowledge cultural relativist imperialism.

I'd like to acknowledge academic colonialism.

I'd like to acknowledge activist colonialism.

I'd like to acknowledge that we are on bureaucratic land.

I'd like to acknowledge poetic colonialism.

I'd like to acknowledge drinking a glass of water ten minutes ago and not having to boil the water first.

I'd like to acknowledge the ice on the inside of the walls when I lived in Labrador in the 1970s as part of the military occupation of Innu/Inuit/Indian land.

I'd like to acknowledge not having mould in my son's room.

I'd like to acknowledge hearing Elizabeth Goudie talk about her autobiography and working traplines in the 40s in Labrador in 1974.

I'd like to acknowledge we are on stolen Stó:lō land.

I'd like to acknowledge we are on messed-up Musqueam land.

I'd like to acknowledge we are on crappy Comox land.

I'd like to acknowledge we are on sexually harassed Six Nations land.

I'd like to acknowledge we are on fucked-up Beothuk land.

I'd like to acknowledge we are on incestuous Inuit land.

I'd like to acknowledge the triangles in the script and the toboggans in the script in the phone book in Goose Bay.

I'd like to acknowledge the Ookpik figure skating club.

I'd like to acknowledge.

I'd like to point out that we are the ones doing the acknowledging so you should give us a break.

I'd like to acknowledge we're doing a lot more besides and could be doing a

lot more besides.

I'd like to acknowledge corruption in the hereditary chiefs and band councils.

I'd like to acknowledge corruption in the department of Indian affairs.

I'd like to acknowledge my word processing program just capitalized the "i" in Indian just now and it did it again.

I'd like to acknowledge corruption in the university.

I'd like to acknowledge corruption in the art world.

I'd like to acknowledge I was paid to say that. To write that.

I'd like to acknowledge the \$750 I got from VANOC and the cheque for which is in my wallet, right now, about twelve inches from the words "about twelve inches" that I just wrote in my notebook.

I'd like to acknowledge I didn't measure that it's just an estimate.

I'd like to acknowledge that what I like about what I'd like to acknowledge is that it's about me, a sensitive liberal, a tough but sensitive radical, looking good, new t-shirt, do you like these jeans, they were on sale, are they too tight, they were when I bought them but now I need a belt, am I too old to wear this shit now, and what I'd like to acknowledge is that I don't like it if I drink too much.

I'd like to acknowledge I was sober for four years and I'm not now, I mean I'm not drunk right now but I have the occasional drink or maybe more than the occasional drink but I'd like to acknowledge I don't like it when someone reads a poem about being drunk or getting cleaned up and they've got the details about puking on their tits or that blinding feeling in their head when they're suffering the morning after and I'd like to acknowledge this is getting way too personal, even for me, so I'd like to get back to acknowledging we are on stolen, native, indigenous, Indian, injun, skimo, chug, métis, first nation, halfbreed land, we are on native land, on native carpet, on native subflooring, on native foundation, on native weeping tiles, on native tarmac, on native sidewalk, on native dirt, on native leaf mould, the good mould, on native mud in our backyard, on native holes in the ground where our fence was ripped up by the landlord not the landlord guys working for a guy working for the landlord maybe they were native I don't know I didn't ask them we're on native highway of tears on native land on home and native land and I'd like to acknowledge the acknowledging that we are on stolen, ripped off, colonized, unceded, conquered, begged, borrowed, stolen native land doesn't make a damn bit of motherfucking difference and I'd just like to acknowledge that.