



Living Nations, Living Words

A Map of First Peoples Poetry

Living Nations, Living Words

A Project of Poet Laureate Joy Harjo



March 24, 2021



National Council of
Teachers of English®



Use the chat box to introduce yourselves. Let us know:

- Your first name**
- What you teach**
- Where you're joining us from. If known, include your land acknowledgement.**

EXAMPLE:

Mark Finchum, Chair of Indigenous Education Community for NCSS
from Jefferson City, TN; traditional homeland of the Cherokee.

Today's Agenda



King's Island [i.e. King Island, or Ukivok], Lomen Bros. (between ca. 1900 and ca. 1930).
Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

- Introductions and Overview
- Message from Joy Harjo
- Teacher toolkit
- Poem by Duane Niatum
- Discussion with teachers Joel Garza and Mark Finchum
- Q &A
- Next Steps

Living Nations, Living Words

Welcome from Joy Harjo



PROGRAM

Poetry & Literature

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Living Nations, Living Words



As the first Native U.S. Poet Laureate, I decided that my signature project should introduce the country to the many Native poets who live in these lands. Our communities innately shared and share poetry from before the founding of the United States to the present.

We understand poetry to be a living language—whether it is in our tribal languages, or in English, or another language. We use poetry to mark transformations, as in love letters, elegies, or epithalamium. Poetry can be useful for praise and even to help deter a storm. Or poetry is a tool to uncover the miraculous in the ordinary.

We are intimately involved in our communities, which may be on our reservations or in the cities and often both. We are like everyone else. Some of us stay rooted. Others travel and even live internationally. This holds true for our individual approaches to the art of poetry.

A historical map of North America, likely from the 18th or 19th century, showing various tribal territories. The map is color-coded with different shades of brown, green, and red. Tribal names such as WAKASHAN, CHIMAKUAN, CHINOOKAN, YAKONAN, KUSAN, ATHAPASCAN, TAKELMAN, WEITSPEKAN, WISHOSKAN, ATRAPASKAN, MENDOCIN, YUKON, MENDOCIN, YUKON, MOQUELUMNAN, COSTANDAN, and TEHOTAN are visible. A central text overlay reads "Living Nations, Living Words" in large white font, with "A Map of First Peoples Poetry" in smaller white font below it. The map is overlaid on a dark background.

Living Nations, Living Words

A Map of First Peoples Poetry

by Joy Harjo
23rd Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry

The very first maps were drawn into the earth with stick or stone implements. They told us where we lived, the location of food, water, and danger. Some were star maps of the heavens, histories notched and painted, or symbols of stories that gave directions on how to live.

Some of the earliest indigenous maps of North America were not drawn. The

COLLECTION

Living Nations, Living Words[About this Collection](#) [Collection Items](#)**Featured Content**

Sherwin Bitsui



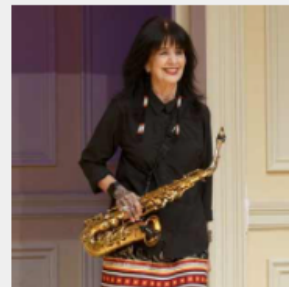
Natalie Diaz



Louise Erdrich



Layli Long Soldier



Joy Harjo

About this Collection[Rights and Access](#)**Expert Resources**[Project: Living Nations, Living Words](#)[Joy Harjo, U.S. Poet Laureate: A Resource Guide](#)[Webcast: National Book Festival Presents Joy Harjo](#)[About the Poet Laureate](#)[American Folklife Center](#)[Ask a Folklife Librarian](#)[Collections with Audio Recordings](#)[Listen to this page](#)

About this Collection

This collection—part of Poet Laureate Joy Harjo’s “Living Nations, Living Words” signature project—contains audio recordings of 47 contemporary Native American poets reading and discussing an original poem. Listen to Joy Harjo, Louise Erdrich, Natalie Diaz, Ray Young Bear, Craig Santos Perez, Sherwin Bitsui, Layli Long Soldier, and other featured voices.

Created in 2020, Harjo’s project gathers a sampling of work by contemporary Native poets from across the nation to show, through poetry, that Native people and poets have vital and unequivocal roots in the United States. The poets included in “Living Nations, Living Words” chose their poem and commentary based on the theme of place and displacement, and with four touchpoints in mind: visibility, persistence, resistance, and acknowledgment.

Harjo notes that the project showcases “poetry [that] emerges from the soul of a community, the heart and lands of the people. In this country, poetry is rooted in the more than 500 living indigenous nations. ‘Living Nations, Living Words’ is a representative offering.”

This digital presentation is a project of the National Library of Medicine, part of the National Library of Medicine’s “Living Nations, Living Words” initiative. This

Living Nations, Living Words

Advisory Committee Educators include members from

- National Council of Teachers of English
- National Council for the Social Studies
- National Indian Education Association



National Council of
Teachers of English®



Teacher Toolkit

- May 2021 - Draft Review by Advisory Committee
- Summer 2021 - Beta Review ** Get involved
- Fall 2021 - Beta Launch

Teacher Toolkit Will Include:

- Instructional approaches for using LNLW with students:
 - possible entry points and activity ideas for classroom use, across the curriculum and grade levels
- Resources for students and teachers to gain further context to enhance understanding of the project, such as:
 - Joy Harjo's own definitions of the project's main themes and touchpoints – place, displacement, visibility, persistence, resistance, and acknowledgement
 - Selected additional resources for further learning




- Visibility
- Persistence
- Resistance
- Acknowledgement
- Place
- Displacement



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AUDIO RECORDING

Duane Niatum reads and discusses Old Humptulips on July 7, 2020.

Old Humptulips


 **Duane Niatum reads and discusses Old Humptulips**
Audio recording of poet reading and discussing poem.

00:00  03:57 

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More Resources




[Photograph of poet.]

Download: [Go](#)



[Text of poem.]

Download: [Go](#)



[Transcript of poet reading and discussing poem.]

Download: [Go](#)

Old Humptulips

For my Grandfather, Francis Patsey

In the spirit of seawater,
you jump from one boulder to another,
and with the quick dip of the hand
you draw from under the next rock
a fifth sculpin, grab it by the gills,
a fish our people say sings to us,
a gift you will clean and roast on the beach fire
for your love and grandchildren.
Your new neighbors that came from the East
stare at you from outside the circle,
behind a blackberry bush, curious
yet guarded and unattached.
They have settled in the ruins of your family's
abandoned village of white fir and cedar.
They surround your crumbling longhouse
plagued with a disease no shaman understood
or could fight with rattle, smoke or song.
These settlers fear your sculpin dance
and refuse to join your family feast.
So you imagine they are grey willows
vanishing on the wind of mountain guardians,
step toward the beach, a whirling
sunspot on the sand print of strangers.

Duane Niatum

Sentence Stem:

I am the grandchild of a wo/man who _____.



Living Nations, Living Words Teacher Toolkit

As defined by U.S. Poet Laureate, Joy Harjo

Embargoed until 09/01/2021

Place:

We all emerge from a place. Everyone does, whether you are a mineral, plant, animal, or winds. Our identity springs from place. Indigenous peoples of a land are deeply rooted. We are taught not to forget where we came from, and to know that we are related to the plants, elements and animals, to the very land itself of that place. Our languages, ideas, and bodies are shaped, fed and given meaning by place.

Displacement:

Native nations peoples have been uprooted by wars, massacres, unjust laws, greed for oil, uranium, gold and other resources, imposition of programs meant to assimilate us, to make us forget who we are and where we come from, usually for acquisition of property, children or our souls.

Thank you!

Questions? Post them in the chat box!



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Next Steps:

- ❑ Take our survey and sign up to review beta review of toolkit
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LOC_LNLW
- ❑ Sign up for next month's webinar on **Audio Recordings of Poetry and Literature from the Library of Congress** at
<https://ncte.org/events/opportunity-library-congress/>