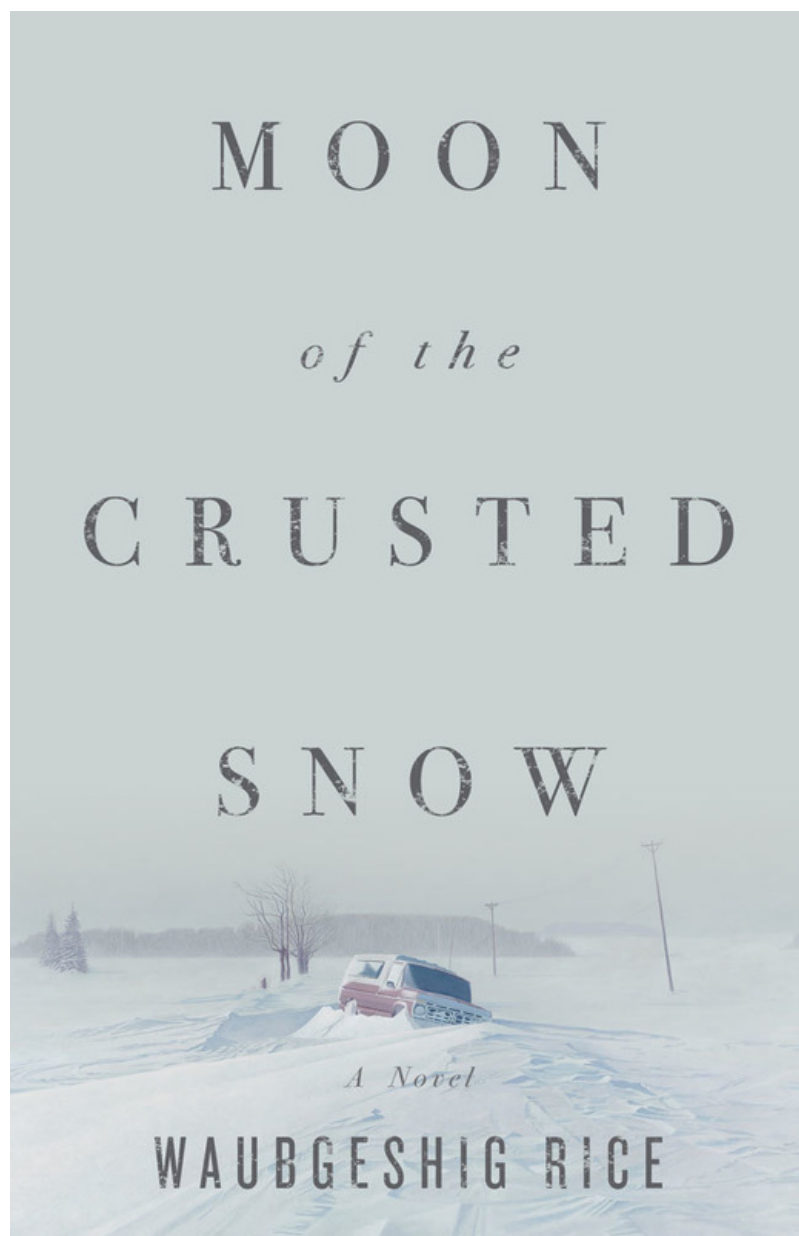


RAVEN's

Summer Reading List

[Moon of the Crusted Snow by Waubgeshig Rice](#)



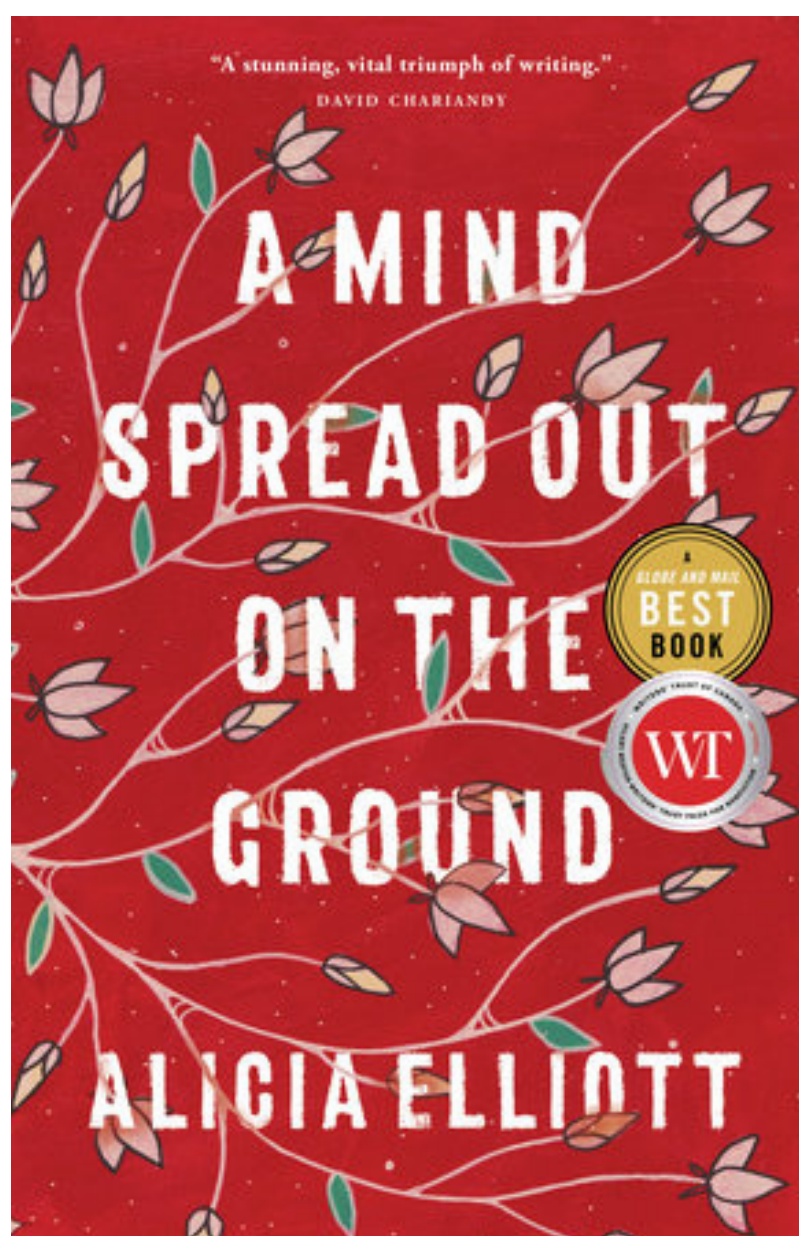
With winter looming, a small northern Anishinaabe community goes dark. Cut off, people become passive and confused. Panic builds as the food supply dwindles. While the band council and a pocket of community members struggle to maintain order, an unexpected visitor arrives, escaping the crumbling society to the south. Soon after, others follow.

The community leadership loses its grip on power as the visitors manipulate the tired and hungry to take control of the reserve. Tensions rise and, as the months pass, so does the death toll due to sickness and despair.

Frustrated by the building chaos, a group of young friends and their families turn to the land and Anishinaabe tradition in hopes of helping their community thrive again. Guided through the chaos by an unlikely leader named Evan Whitesky, they endeavor to restore order while grappling with a grave decision.

Blending action and allegory, *Moon of the Crusted Snow* upends our expectations. Out of catastrophe comes resilience. And as one society collapses, another is reborn.

[A Mind Spread Out on the Ground by Alicia Elliott](#)



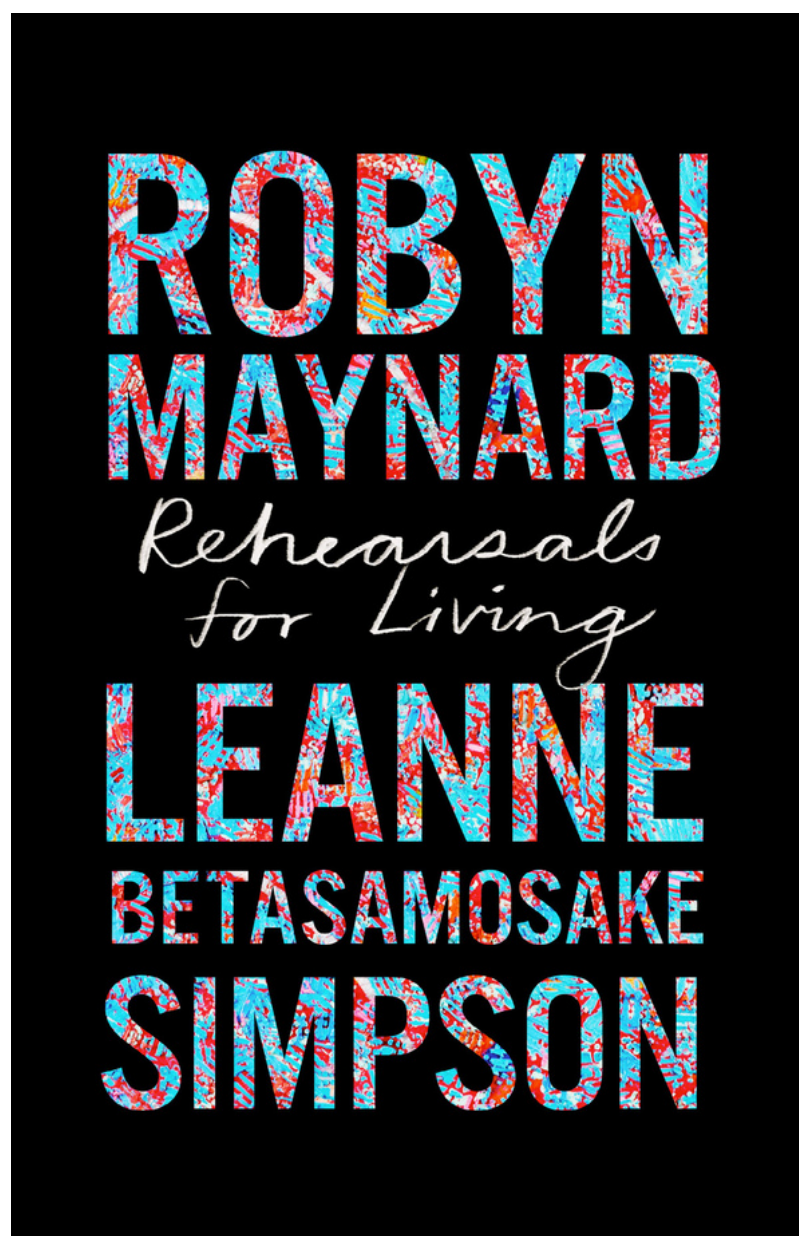
A bold and profound meditation on trauma, legacy, oppression, and racism in North America from award-winning Haudenosaunee writer Alicia Elliott.

In an urgent and visceral work that asks essential questions about the treatment of Native people in North America while drawing on intimate details of her own life and experience with intergenerational trauma, Alicia Elliott offers indispensable insight into the ongoing legacy of colonialism. She engages with such wide-ranging topics as race, parenthood, love, mental illness, poverty, sexual assault, gentrification, writing, and representation, and in the process makes connections both large and small.

between the past and present, the personal and political — from overcoming a years-long battle with head lice to the way Native writers are treated within the Canadian literary industry; her unplanned teenage pregnancy to the history of dark matter and how it relates to racism in the court system; her childhood diet of Kraft Dinner to how systemic oppression is directly linked to health problems in Native communities.

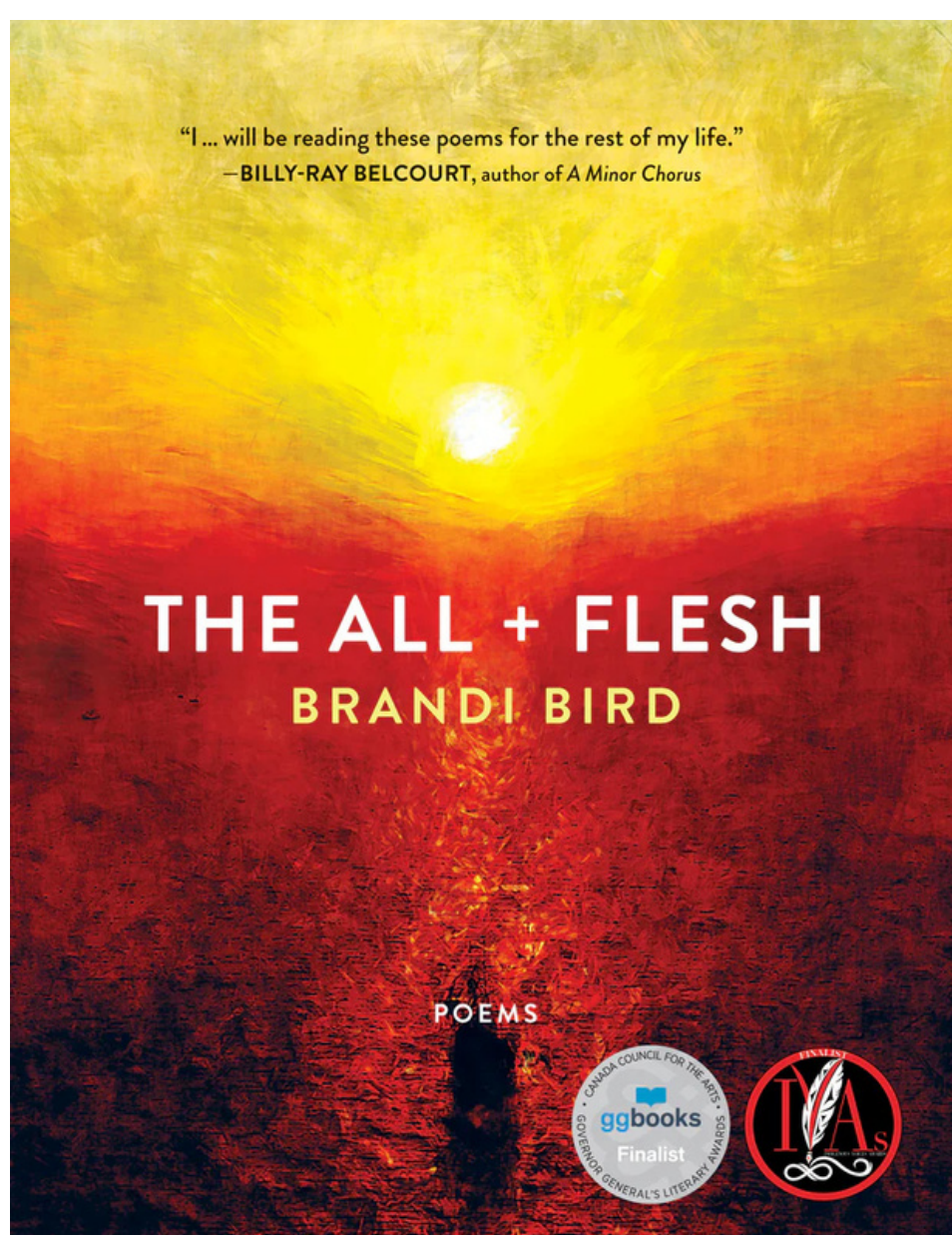
With deep consideration and searing prose, Elliott provides a candid look at our past, an illuminating portrait of our present, and a powerful tool for a better future.

[Rehearsals for Living by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Robyn Maynard](#)



Amid the overlapping crises of a pandemic, ecological disaster, and global capitalism, two leading Black and Indigenous feminist theorists ask one another: What do liberated lands, minds, and bodies look like? These letters are part debate, part dialogue, and part lively and detailed familial correspondence between two razor-sharp thinkers, sending notes to each other during a stormy present. Featuring a foreword by Ruth Wilson Gilmore and an afterword by Robin D.G. Kelley.

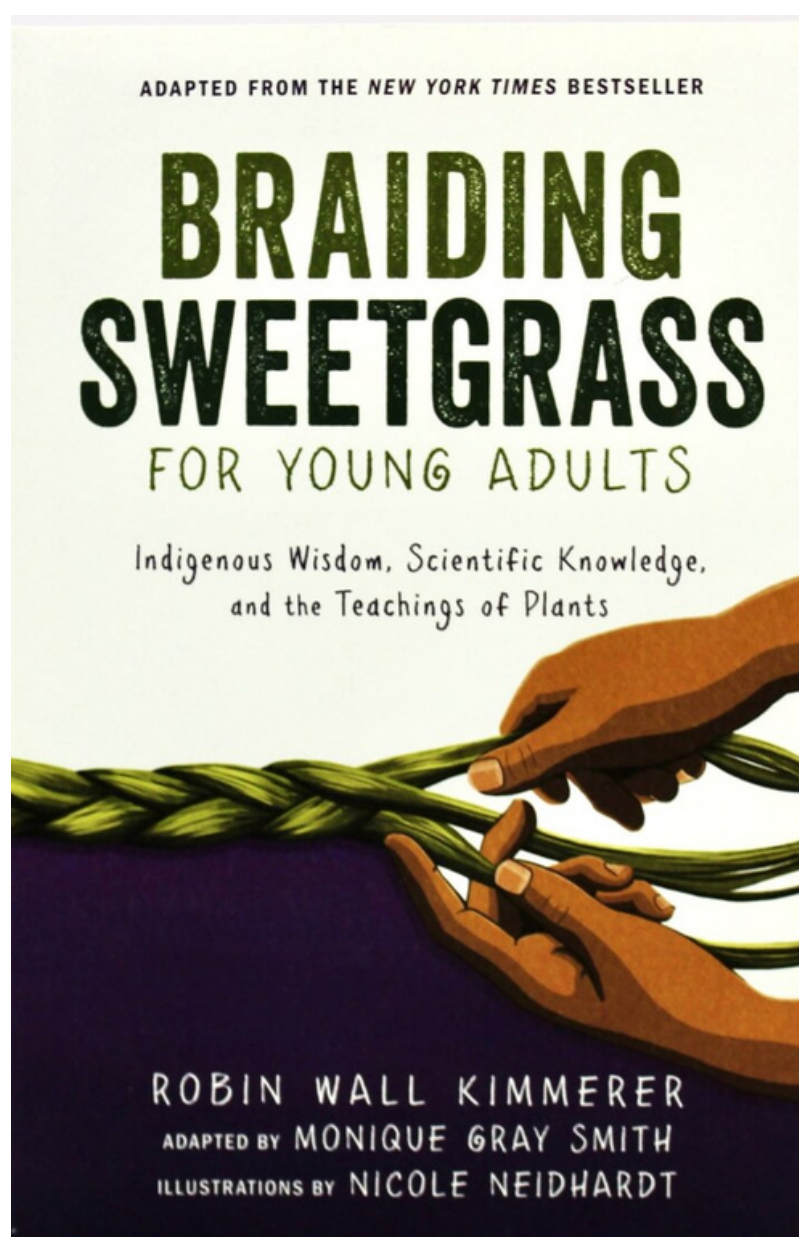
[The All and the Flesh by Brandi Bird](#)



Brandi Bird's long-anticipated debut poetry collection, *The All + Flesh*, explores the concepts of health, language, place, and memory that connect its author to their chosen kin, blood relatives, and ancestral lands. By examining kinship in broader contexts, these frank, transcendent poems expose binaries that exist inside those relationships, then inspect and tease them apart in the hope of moving toward decolonial future(s). Bird's work is highly concerned with how outer and inner landscapes move and change within the confines of the English language, particularly the "I" of the self, a tradition of movement that has been lost for many who don't

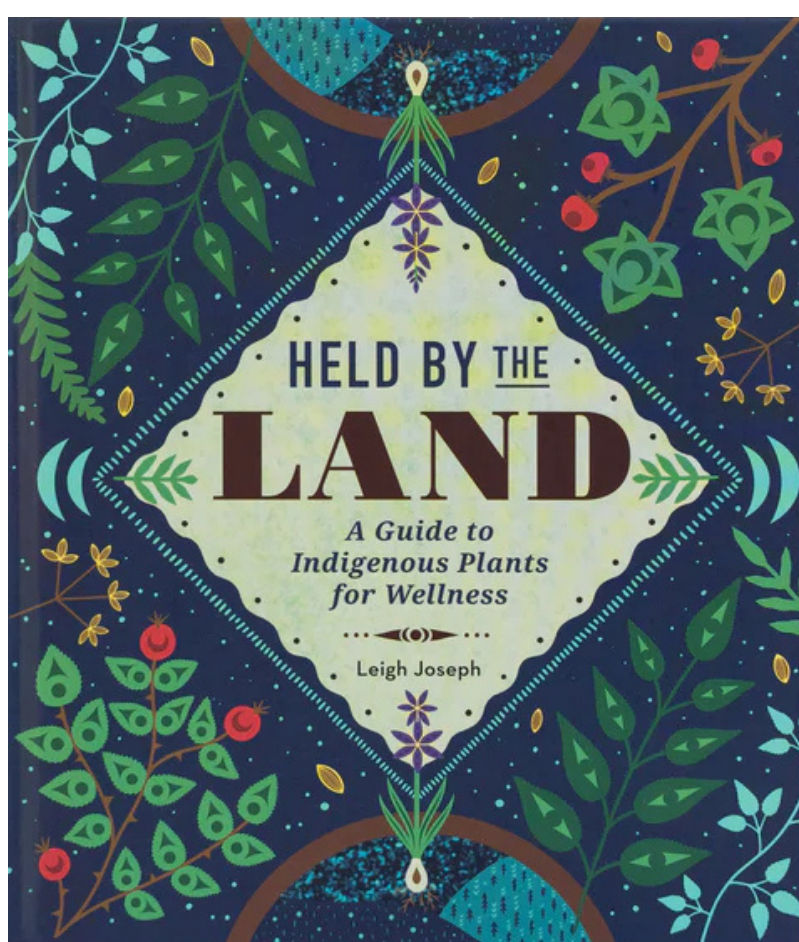
speak their Indigenous languages or live on their homelands. By exploring the landscapes the poet does inhabit, both internally and externally, Bird's poems seek to delve into and reflect their cultural lineages—specifically Saulteaux, Cree, and Métis—and how these transformative identities shape the person they are today.

Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants – Robin Wall Kimmerer



Robin Wall Kimmerer's beloved bestselling book has been adapted for young adults by Monique Gray Smith. Monique is Cree, Lakota and Scottish, and is well known for her storytelling, spirit of generosity and focus on resilience. This new edition reinforces how wider ecological understanding stems from listening to the earth's oldest teachers: the plants around us.

Held by the Land: A Guide to Indigenous Plants and Wellness – Leigh Joseph

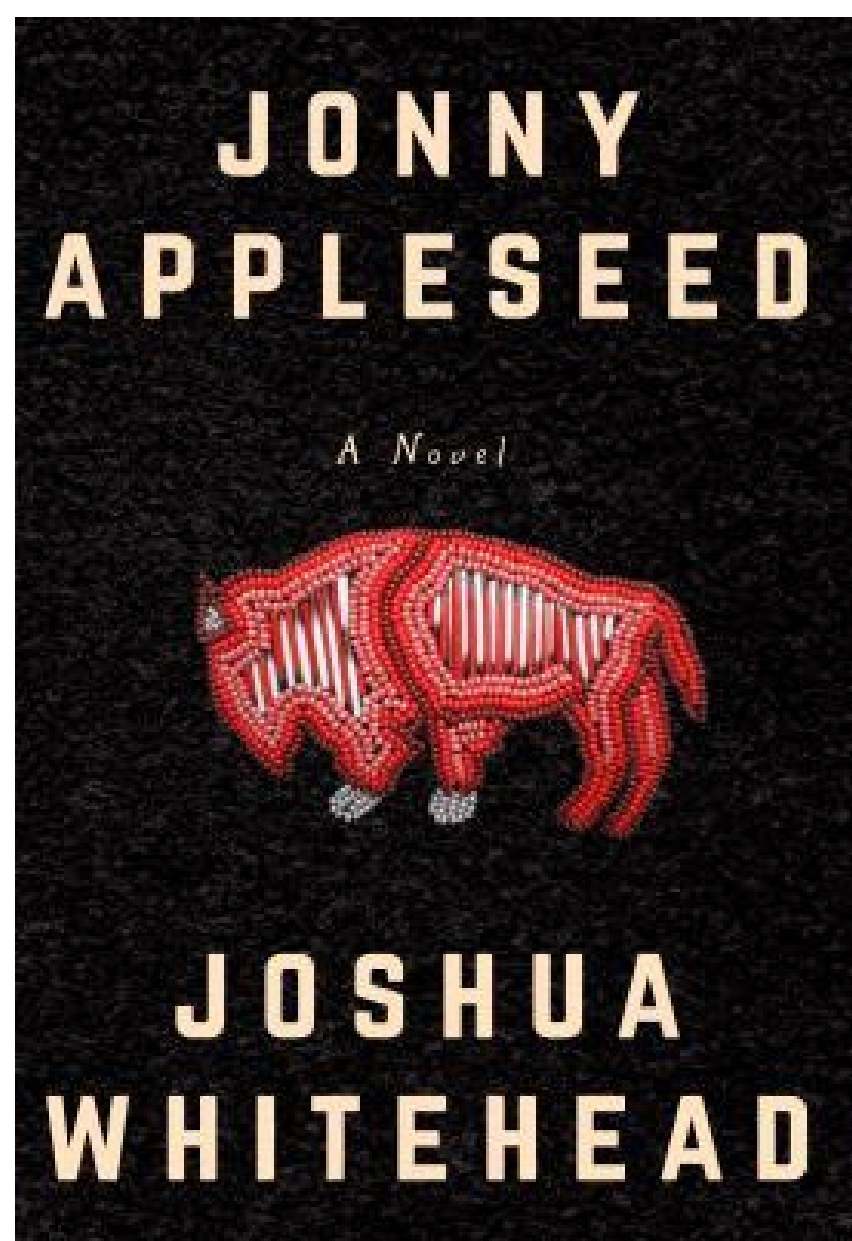


Plants can be a great source of healing as well as nourishment, and the practice of growing and harvesting from trees, flowering herbs, and other plants is a powerful way to become more connected to the land. The Indigenous Peoples of North America have long traditions of using native plants as medicine as well as for food. *Held by the Land* honors and shares some of these traditions, offering a guide to:

- Harvesting herbs and other plants and using them topically
- North American plants that can treat common ailments, add nutrition to your diet, become part of your beauty regime, and more
- Stories and traditions about native plants from the author's Squamish culture
- Using plant knowledge to strengthen your connection to the land you live on

Early chapters will introduce you to responsible ways to identify and harvest plants in your area and teach you how to grow a deeper connection with the land you live on through plants. In the plant profiles section, common plants are introduced with illustrations and information on their characteristics, range, how to grow and/or harvest them, and how to use them topically and as food. Special features offer recipes for food and beauty products along with stories and traditions around the plants.

[Jonny Appleseed – Joshua Whitehead](#)

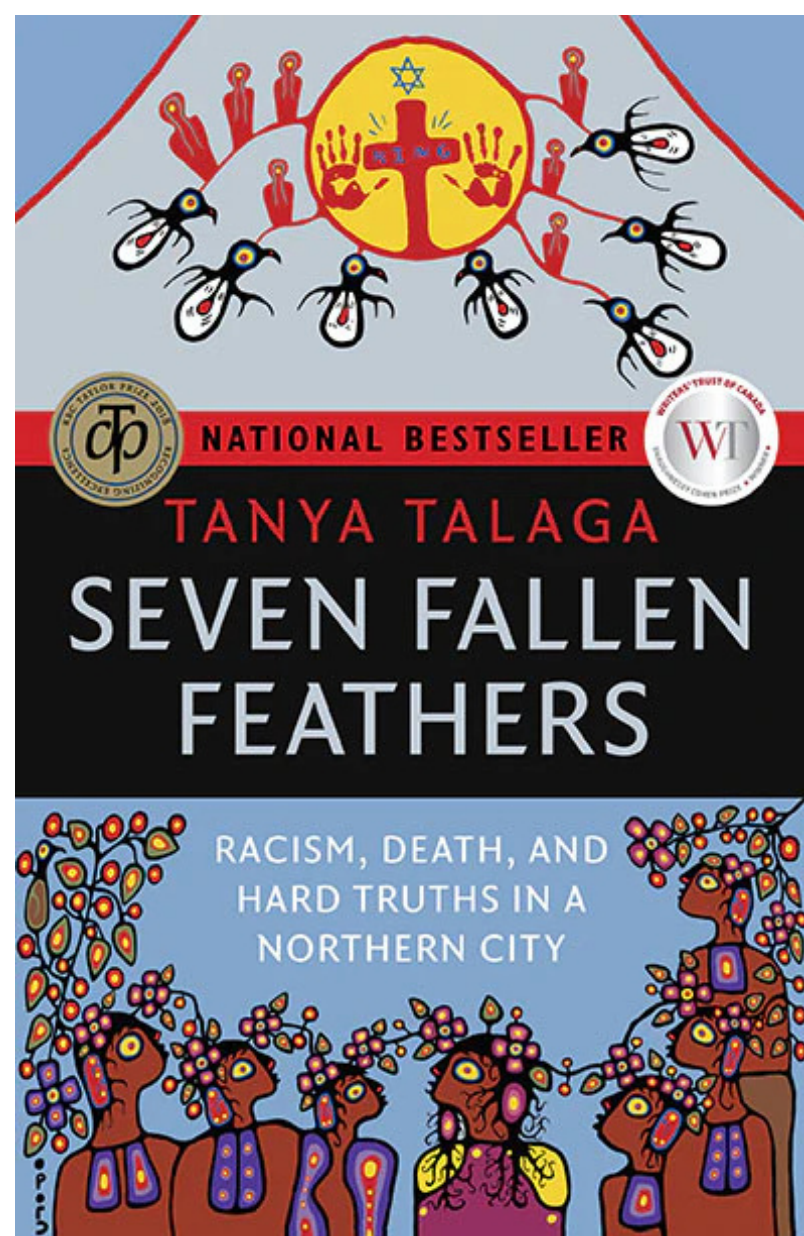


"You're gonna need a rock and a whole lotta medicine" is a mantra that Jonny Appleseed, a young Two-Spirit/Indigiqueer, repeats to himself in this vivid and utterly compelling novel.

Off the reserve and trying to find ways to live and love in the big city, Jonny becomes a cybersex worker who fetishizes himself in order to make a living. Self-ordained as an NDN glitter princess, Jonny has one week before he must return to the "rez," and his former life, to attend the funeral of his stepfather. The next seven days are like a fevered dream: stories of love, trauma, sex, kinship, ambition, and the heartbreaking recollection of his beloved kokum (grandmother). Jonny's world is a series of breakages, appendages, and linkages – and as he goes through the motions of preparing to return home, he learns how to put together the pieces of his life.

Jonny Appleseed is a unique, shattering vision of Indigenous life, full of grit, glitter, and dreams.

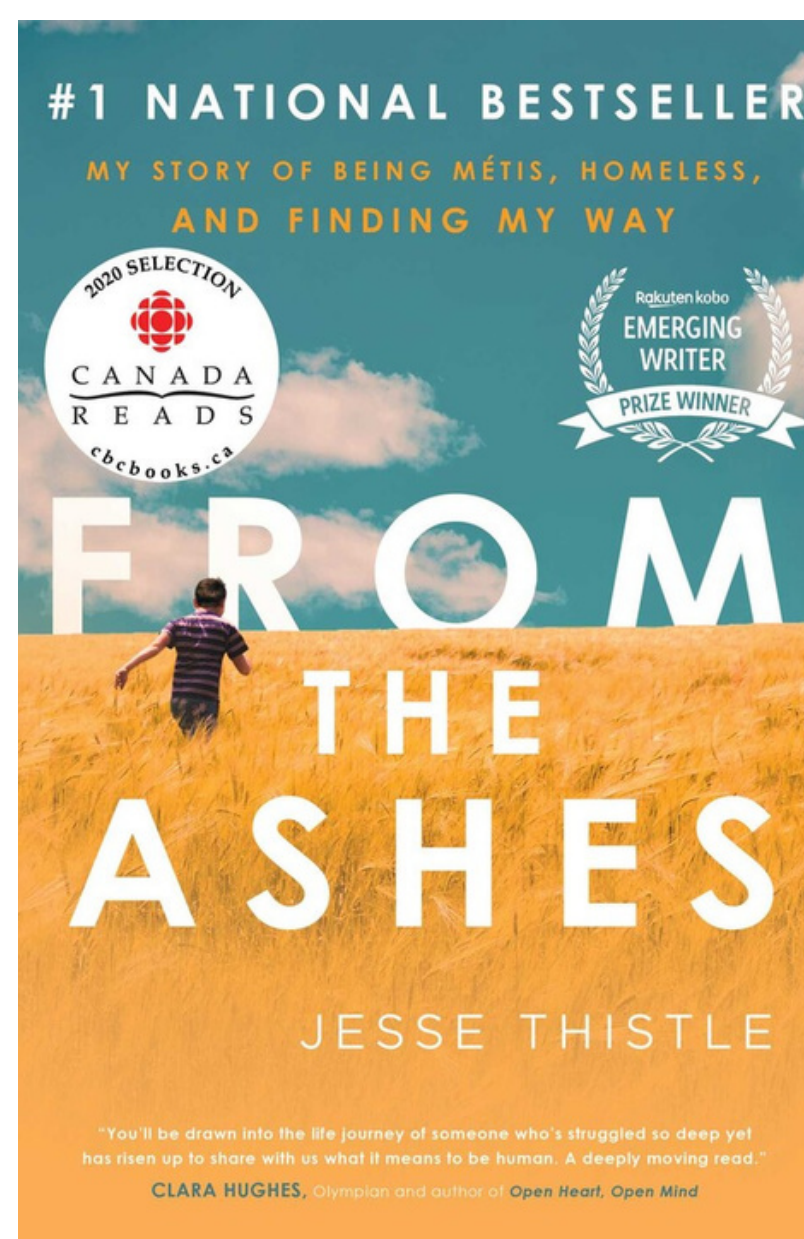
[Seven Fallen Feathers by Tanya Talaga](#)



The groundbreaking and multiple award-winning national bestseller work about systemic racism, education, the failure of the policing and justice systems, and Indigenous rights by Tanya Talaga.

Over the span of eleven years, seven Indigenous high school students died in Thunder Bay, Ontario. They were hundreds of kilometres away from their families, forced to leave home because there was no adequate high school on their reserves. Five were found dead in the rivers surrounding Lake Superior, below a sacred Indigenous site. Using a sweeping narrative focusing on the lives of the students, award-winning author Tanya Talaga delves into the history of this northern city that has come to manifest Canada's long struggle with human rights violations against Indigenous communities.

[From the Ashes by Jesse Thistle](#)



From the Ashes is a remarkable memoir about hope and resilience, and a revelatory look into the life of a Métis-Cree man who refused to give up.

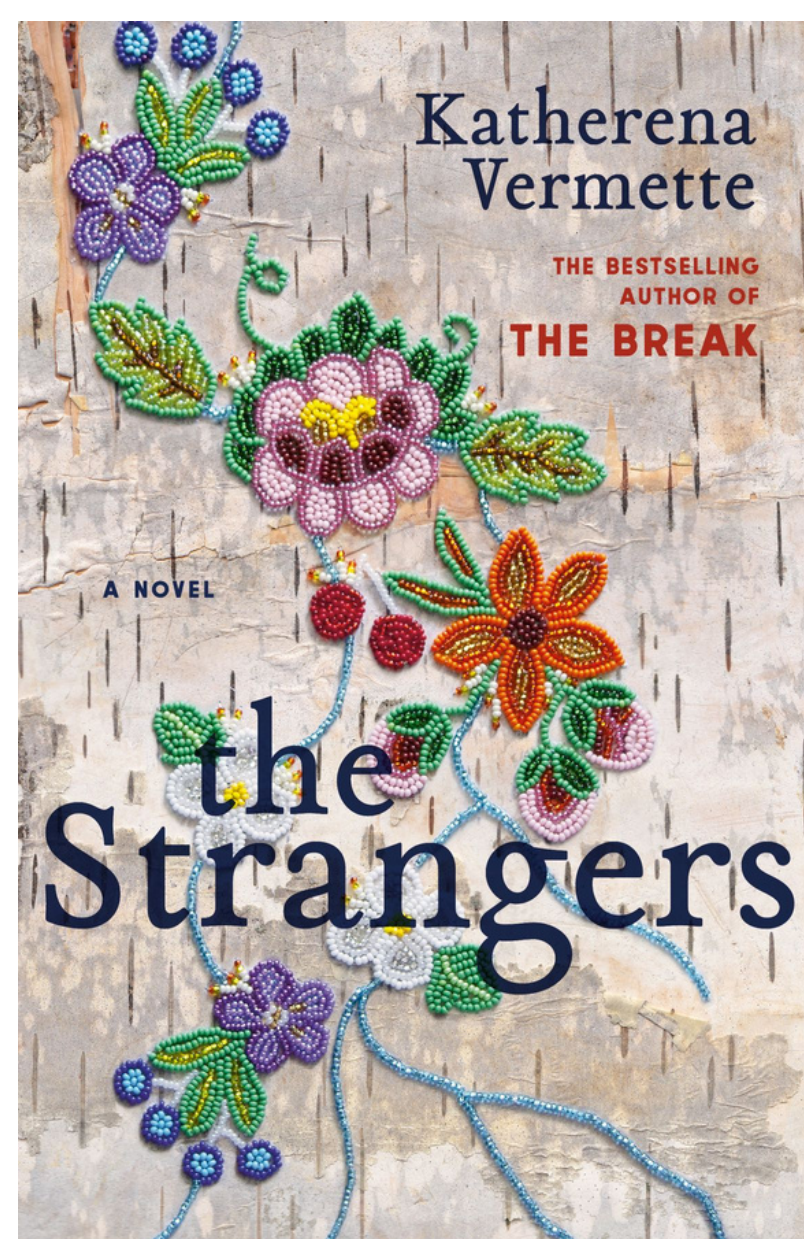
Abandoned by his parents as a toddler, Jesse Thistle briefly found himself in the foster-care system with his two brothers, cut off from all they had known. Eventually, the children landed in the home of their paternal grandparents, whose tough-love attitudes quickly resulted in conflicts. Throughout it all, the ghost of Jesse's drug-addicted father haunted the halls of the house and the memories of every family member. Struggling with all that had happened, Jesse succumbed to a self-destructive

cycle of drug and alcohol addiction and petty crime, spending more than a decade on and off the streets, often homeless. Finally, he realized he would die unless he turned his life around.

In this heartwarming and heart-wrenching memoir, Jesse Thistle writes honestly and fearlessly about his painful past, the abuse he endured, and how he uncovered the truth about his parents. Through sheer perseverance and education—and newfound love—he found his way back into the circle of his Indigenous culture and family.

An eloquent exploration of the impact of prejudice and racism, *From the Ashes* is, in the end, about how love and support can help us find happiness despite the odds.

[The Strangers by Katherena Vermette](#)



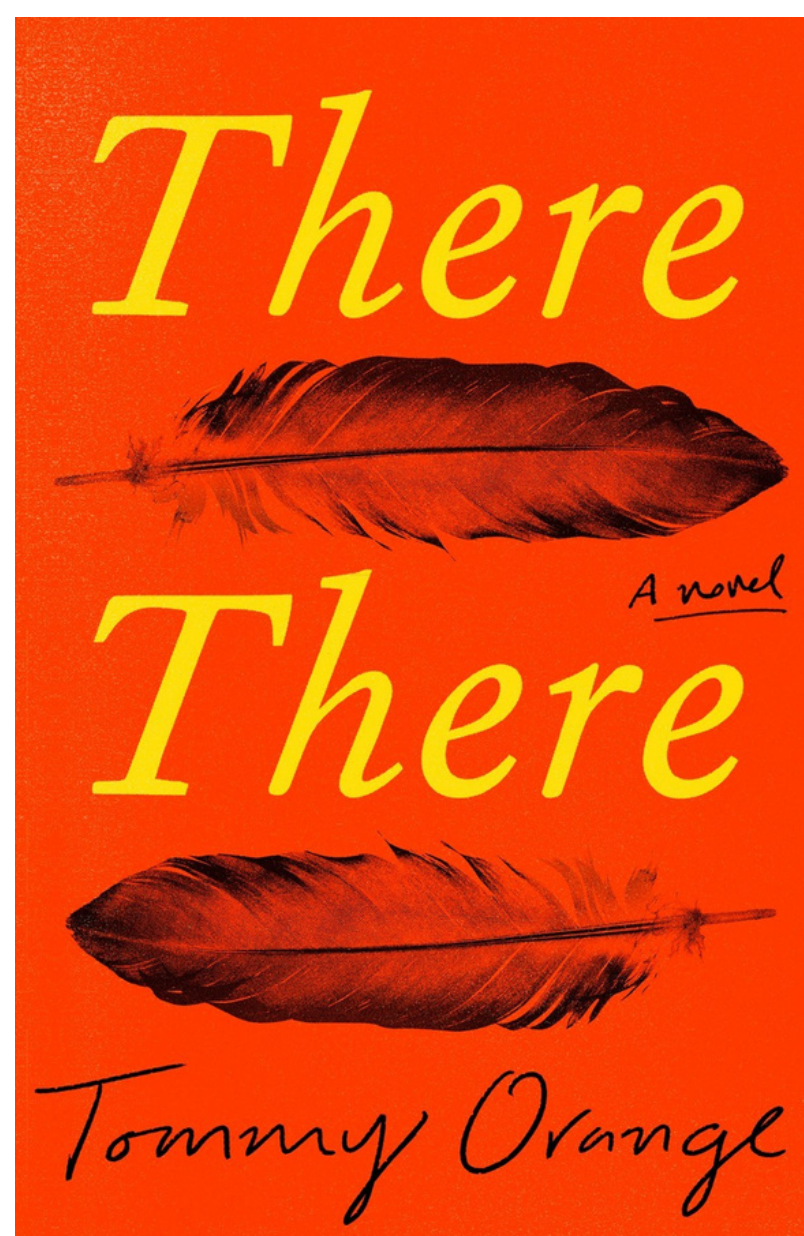
Cedar has nearly forgotten what her family looks like. Phoenix has nearly forgotten what freedom feels like. And Elsie has nearly given up hope. Nearly.

After time spent in foster homes, Cedar goes to live with her estranged father. Although she grapples with the pain of being separated from her mother, Elsie, and sister, Phoenix, she's hoping for a new chapter in her life, only to find herself once again in a strange house surrounded by strangers. From a youth detention centre, Phoenix gives birth to a baby she'll never get to raise and tries to forgive herself for all the harm she's caused (while wondering if she even should).

Elsie, struggling with addiction and determined to turn her life around, is buoyed by the idea of being reunited with her daughters and strives to be someone they can depend on, unlike her own distant mother. These are the Strangers, each haunted in her own way. Between flickering moments of warmth and support, the women diverge and reconnect, fighting to survive in a fractured system that pretends to offer success but expects them to fail. Facing the distinct blade of racism from those they trusted most, they urge one another to move through the darkness, all the while wondering if they'll ever emerge safely on the other side.

A breathtaking companion to her bestselling debut *The Break*, Vermette's *The Strangers* brings readers into the dynamic world of the Stranger family, the strength of their bond, the shared pain in their past, and the light that beckons from the horizon. This is a searing exploration of race, class, inherited trauma, and matrilineal bonds that – despite everything – refuse to be broken.

[There There by Tommy Orange](#)

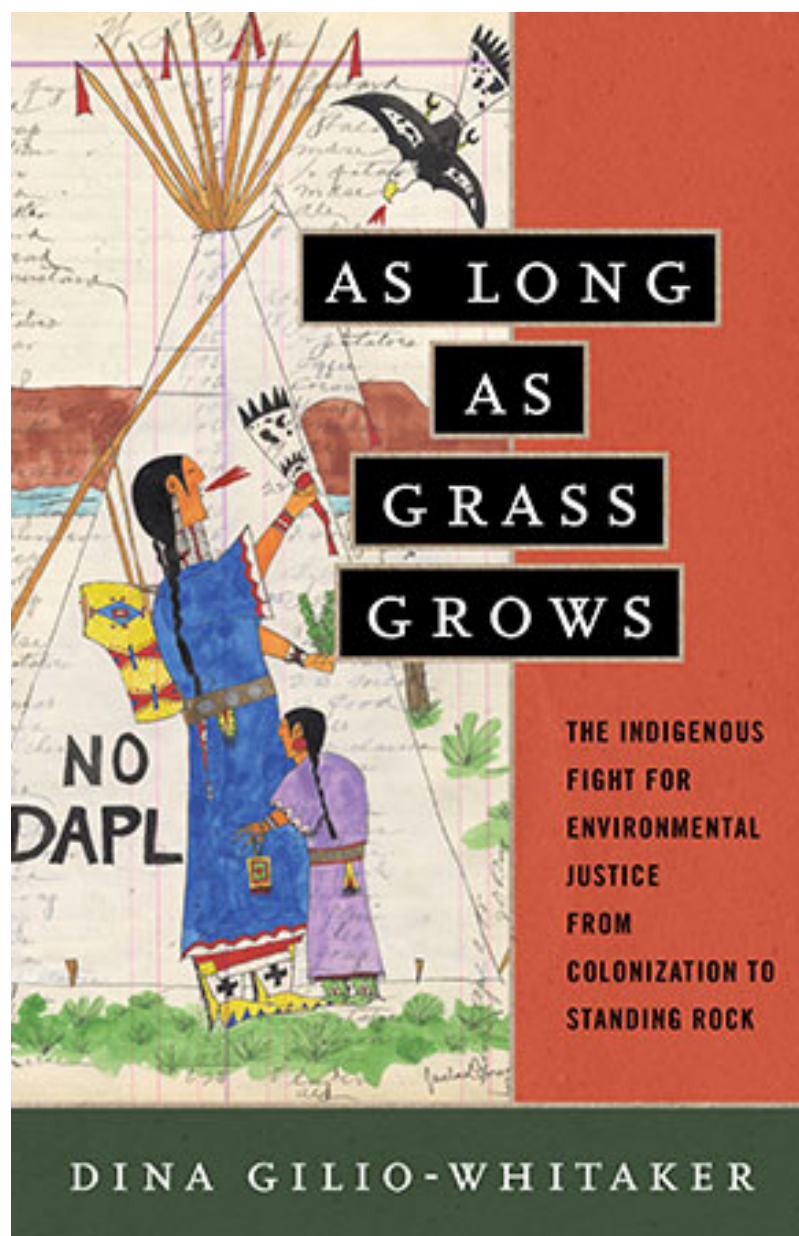


Tommy Orange's wondrous and shattering novel follows twelve characters from Native communities: all traveling to the Big Oakland Powwow, all connected to one another in ways they may not yet realize.

Among them is Jacquie Red Feather, newly sober and trying to make it back to the family she left behind. Dene Oxendene, pulling his life together after his uncle's death and working at the powwow to honor his memory. Fourteen-year-old Orvil, coming to perform traditional dance for the very first time. Together, this chorus of voices tells of the plight of the urban Native American--grappling with a complex and painful history, with an inheritance of beauty and spirituality, with communion and sacrifice and heroism.

Hailed as an instant classic, *There There* is at once poignant and unflinching, utterly contemporary and truly unforgettable.

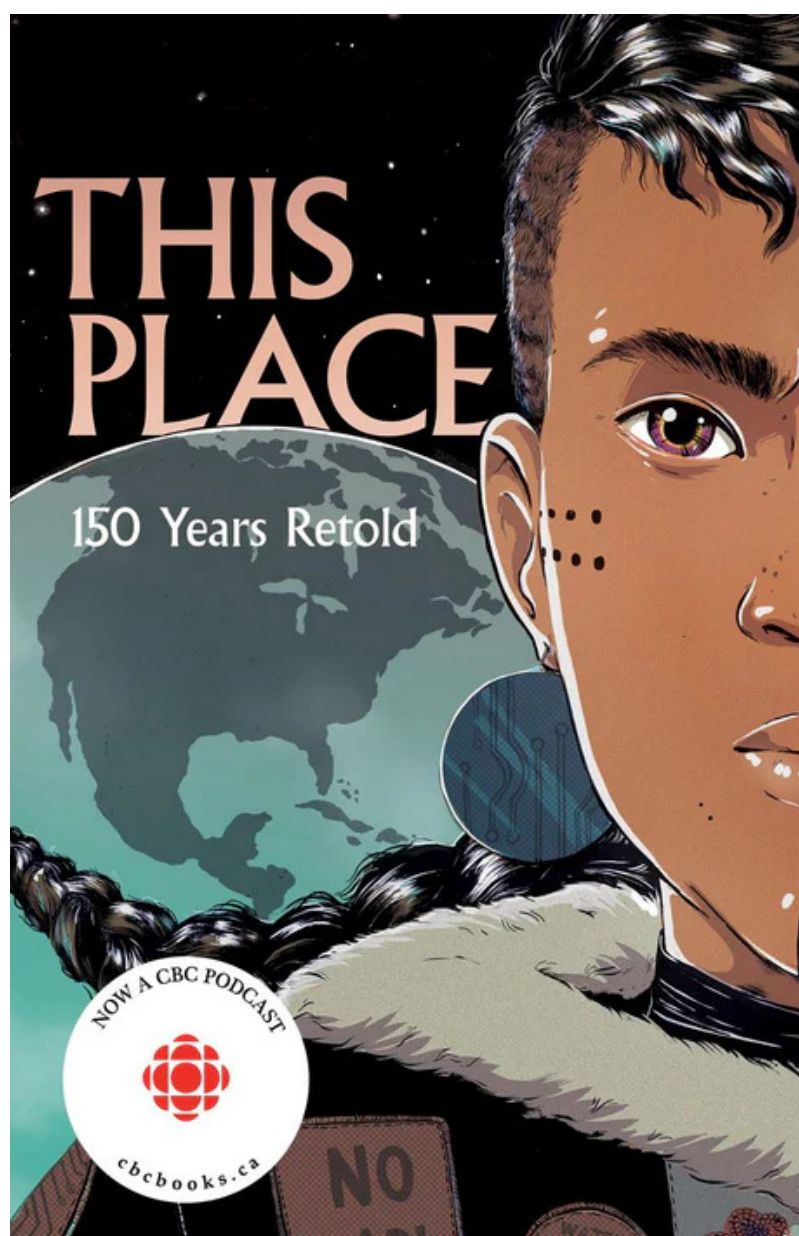
[As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock by Dina Gilio-Whitaker](#)



Through the unique lens of “Indigenized environmental justice,” Indigenous researcher and activist Dina Gilio-Whitaker explores the fraught history of treaty violations, struggles for food and water security, and protection of sacred sites, while highlighting the important leadership of Indigenous women in this centuries-long struggle. *As Long As Grass Grows* gives readers an accessible history of Indigenous resistance to government and corporate incursions on their lands and offers new approaches to environmental justice activism and policy.

Throughout 2016, the Standing Rock protest put a national spotlight on Indigenous activists, but it also underscored how little Americans know about the longtime historical tensions between Native peoples and the mainstream environmental movement. Ultimately, she argues, modern environmentalists must look to the history of Indigenous resistance for wisdom and inspiration in our common fight for a just and sustainable future.

[This Place: 150 Years Retold](#)



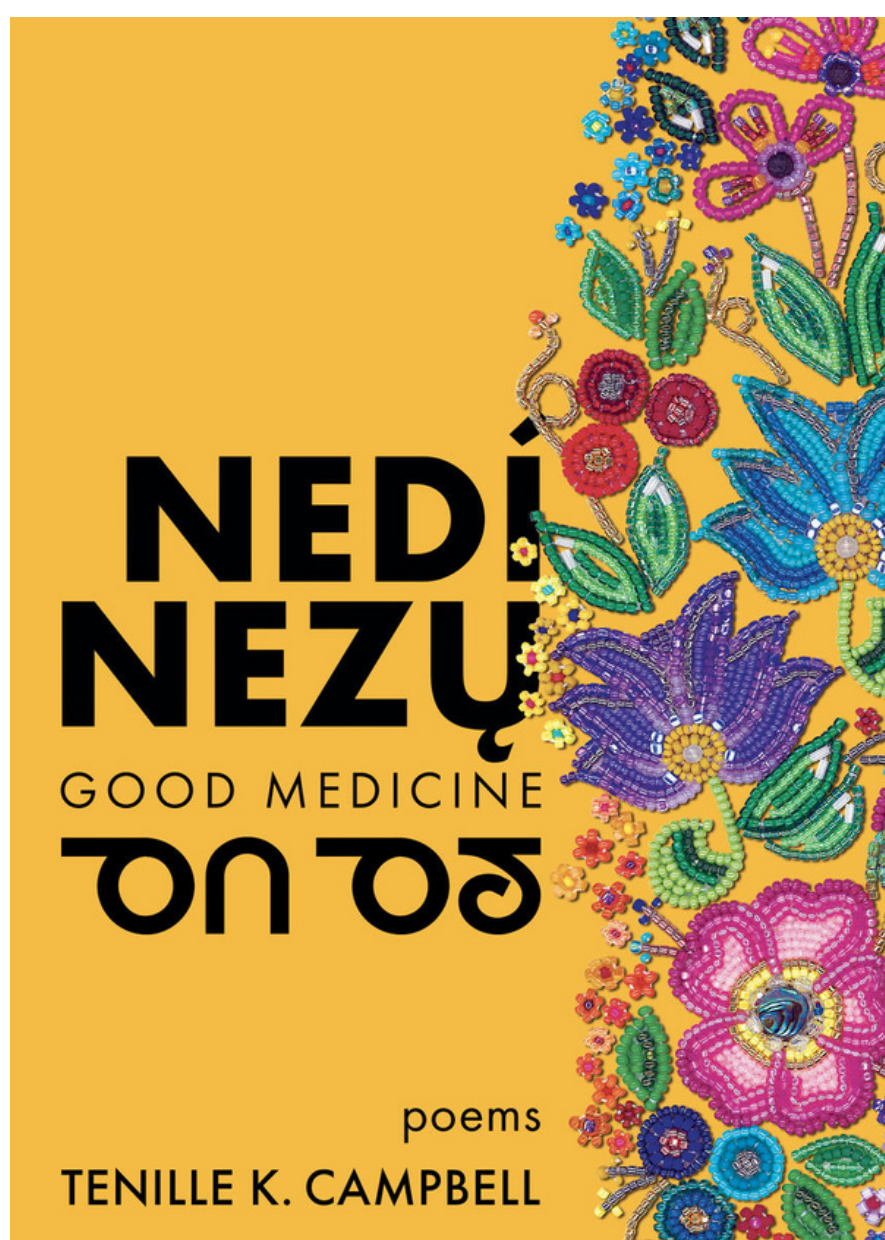
This Place: 150 Years Retold is a 296-page graphic novel anthology just released in April 2019 by Highwater Press. A graphic anthology with a foreword by Alicia Elliott that showcases 11 Indigenous writers, eight illustrators, and two colour artists. It presents Canadian history over the last 150 years from multiple viewpoints, including Métis, Inuit, Dene, Cree, Anishinaabe, and Mi'kmaq.

Each story is prefaced with a brief background explanation by its author, along with a timeline listing important events within the book's 150-year time frame. These, along with a selected bibliography for further reference, make *This Place* valuable as a learning tool. But

first and foremost, it's a collection of exciting, entertaining, beautifully drawn stories such as the one about Annie Bannatyne, a Métis entrepreneur who, in 1868, reacted to a newspaper article disparaging Métis women; the Oka Crisis; Mackenzie Valley

Pipeline; a wendigo killer charged as a serial killer; the life of legendary World War I sniper-and later chief of the Wasauksing Nation-Francis “Peggy” Pegahmagabow; Louis Riel; banning of the potlatch; and foster children and the 60s Scoop. Speculative fiction topics include time travel as a character from the future is sent back to the 21st century for an explanation of climate change. This book is highly recommended for secondary level First Nations courses involving history and literature.

[Nedí Nezu \(Good Medicine\) — Tenille Campbell](#)



nedi nezu (Good Medicine) explores the beautiful space that being a sensual Indigenous woman creates - not only as a partner, a fantasy, a heartbreak waiting to happen, but also as an auntie, a role model, a voice that connects to others walking the same path. From the online hookup world of DMs, double taps, and secret texts to earth-shakingly erotic encounters under the northern stars to the ever-complicated relationship Indigenous women have with mainstream society, this poetry collection doesn't shy away from depicting the gorgeous diversity in decolonized desire. Instead, Campbell creates the most intimate of spaces, where the tea is hot and a seat is waiting, surrounded by the tantalizing laughter of aunties telling stories.

These wise, jubilant poems chronicle many failed attempts at romance, with the wry humour needed to not take these heartbreaks personally, and the growth that comes from sitting in the silence of living a solo life in a world that insists everyone should be partnered up. With a knowing smile, this book side-eyes the political existence and celebrates the lived experience of an Indigenous woman falling in love and lust with those around her -but, most importantly, with herself.

nedi nezu is a smart, sensual, and scandalous collection dripping in Indigenous culture yet irresistible to anyone in thrall to the magnificent disaster that is dating, sex, and relationships.

Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition — Glen Coulthard



Over the past forty years, recognition has become the dominant mode of negotiation and decolonization between the nation-state and Indigenous nations in North America. The term “recognition” shapes debates over Indigenous cultural distinctiveness, Indigenous rights to land and self-government, and Indigenous peoples’ right to benefit from the development of their lands and resources.

In a work of critically engaged political theory, Glen Sean Coulthard challenges recognition as a method of organizing difference and identity in liberal politics, questioning the assumption that contemporary difference and past histories of destructive colonialism between the state and Indigenous peoples can be reconciled through a process of acknowledgment. Beyond this, Coulthard examines an alternative politics—one that seeks to revalue, reconstruct, and redeploy Indigenous cultural practices based on self-recognition rather than on seeking appreciation from the very agents of colonialism.

Coulthard demonstrates how a “place-based” modification of Karl Marx’s theory of “primitive accumulation” throws light on Indigenous–state relations in settler-colonial contexts and how Frantz Fanon’s critique of colonial recognition shows that this relationship reproduces itself over time. This framework strengthens his exploration of the ways that the politics of recognition has come to serve the interests of settler-colonial power.

In addressing the core tenets of Indigenous resistance movements, like Red Power and Idle No More, Coulthard offers fresh insights into the politics of active decolonization.

Happy reading!