

This is my Love Letter to this Land.

What do I bring to You?

How do I show gratitude to You?

What do I carry with me, of my Ancestors, to You?

How do I know you? Whose Names do I use to speak to You?

*I don't know the Original Names of the Plants, the Animals, the Shapes and Textures. I don't know the Original Names that carry Teachings, Knowledge, and Care. I don't know the Names that Grew on You, that grew in Relationship with all of these Beings.*

How do You know me? How do I speak to You? How do You speak to me?

This entangled cluster of Plant Beings exists Independently and Interdependently.

*I speak to this Habitation, this Neighbourhood, this Collective, this Family, this Nation almost every day, in all weathers. I witness Leaves, Buds, Branches, Fruits, Grasses, Blossoms, Rocks, Birds, Bees, Flies - in Sun, Rain, Snow, Heat, Cold, Cool.*

*I learn Who my presence displaces. I learn What my presence displaces. I am an Invasive Species to You. I will never be Indigenous to You. I am an Uninvited guest.*

I bring my Heart and my Mind to You. I try to hear You directing my Words, my Actions, my Work.

I try to show my Gratitude to You by Listening to You and thinking about You and learning from You. I am Grateful to You and the People who Belong to You for being Patient. We don't deserve it. We would not be.

My people see You by Lines, Numbers and Dollars. This Place is 44.247491, -76.505336.

This Place is Nowhere to my people, left alone at the edge of 'Useful' Land. These Plants Grow as they Always Will.

I try to find my Ancestor's ways, to bring with me, to You. I try to re-learn what we thought about the Land we belong to, far across the Sea.

I un-learn Names that are not Your Truth. I open myself to Learning. I wait. I feel gratitude for Being and All Beings.

*You know me. You felt my first steps. You know my Tears and my Touch. You know You are more Powerful than we will ever be.*

I speak to You, the Plants, the Animals, the Stones – I introduce myself and I ask You All to teach me. I tell You I am Sorry for how things are and the pain that we cause here. I won't be forgiven in my life time.

*You speak to me but I don't know what the words mean because You speak the Original Languages of this Land and I don't know the words. Even without understanding the words I know You love me, and I love You.*

I tell You I am trying to do better. I want things to be better. I'm deeply Sorry for everything that came before and everything that is not right.

One Day I might return to the Land of my Ancestors, to the Land that held our Bones since we first walked on that Land, far across the Sea. You, this Land here, You hold some of my Family. I'm Grateful You will always care for the Bones and Ashes of my Mother, My Aunties, my Uncles, my Grand Parents, my Great Grand Parents.

This is more than an Acknowledgement. I need to Un-Learn and Re-Learn. I always need to remember I am an uninvited guest. I am Grateful to my Hosts, All Nations, on this Land.

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*One Day I will learn this in Anishinaabemowin and Kanien'kéha. I won't ask someone to translate it for me. I need to learn the Languages of this Land so I can whisper my Love Letter to You myself.*

Love, Laura xxxooo