

CRICKETS



Lydia Locklear*

We're fighting among ourselves
Like crickets pulling one another down as my grandmother says.
Everything we are, use to be,
Holding on to the past they say,
Don't let the old ways clash they say-Be who we were in the old days
So Who Belongs?
The days we women held our eyes up and our mouths open.
These days have long fled,
But Canada calls for our women to be acknowledged again.
For these "struggles" to be documented, eradicated.
The days we could taste the hunt of the living,
The smell of the sweet grass and pine,
The breeze of the ones who walked before us,
Guiding us towards the right path.
Now, how can we get back to the right path?
Our eyes are burning with oil,
Our voices choked with soot.
We can't leave.
Like a slave we go back to the slaughter. . .
All for a dollar.
We can't get enough.
But why?
We all gather and recognize the importance of Mother Earth.
We stand in opposition against energy mining and fracking,
But it's easy to stand when you're out of work.
Sit down,
You're not dark enough to be welcomed here.

* My name is Lydia Locklear and I am an enrolled member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. I am a second year student at Michigan State University College of Law where I am pursuing a certificate in Indigenous Law. *Crickets* was inspired by my Tribe's struggle for federal recognition and by Russel Barsh's, *The Inner Struggle of Indigenous Peoples*, published in *INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW: EMERGENCE AND APPLICATION* (Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz et al. 2015).

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Don't speak,
 You're not light enough to be welcomed here.
 When will Tribal representatives stop acting as child gods?
 In this world of diverse egos,

Who Rules?

We're talking something bigger than sovereignty.
 We're talking communality.
 Individual human rights is a concept of the European.
 In our world, collective Indigenous rights are the only rights.
 Our communities are everything.
 And if one suffers, we all do.
 We are created by our ancestors and sustained by the relatives around
 us.

So Who Wins?

Anti-apartheid organizations advise us to take what we can get,
 Don't let your pride get in the way.
 Our own people,
 Divided on what journey to take to reach the destination we all desire.
 Instead of using our diverse histories and cultures to collaborate,
 We use them to keep us alienated.
 When will we have back what's ours!
 Our grandmas and grandpas want what's theirs.
 Self-determination, Autonomy, Territorial Integrity.
 What we want resolved has evolved and we must unite to see it in play,
 In place of what's killing us.
 We are our own worst enemy and our nemesis loves to watch us quarrel.
 But we owe it to our babies to liberate our people.
 Because liberation is not an opportunity for power.
 No.
 The liberation of our people is a responsibility.
 A burden yet an honor.
 So we carry this load,
 Even though we're among crickets,
 We keep climbing,
 Jumping,
 Just to keep up.
 And one day,
 We will reach the top.
 Through our struggles,
 We will be liberated.