

Help me I'm a poor Indian who doesn't have enough books

Annharte

moctalk@yahoo.com

I am building a barricade. You can help me.
Indigenous people all across the country blocked roads
railways dams
held vigils for Kanestake/Kanawake
camped in parks, government buildings, and on bridges

the Indian Act shoved down our throats
no more silence
each day cousins in crowded cell blocks listened for news
FREEDOM FOR FIRST NATIONS
mothers & fathers of mothers who fathered fathers mothered
those relatives who didn't build a barricade in their heads

disbelief in white people is healthy
believe me

I am seriously building a barricade first I watched others
parking their "Indian cars" on highways witnessed the RCMP
pretend help pull them down from cars by pulling feet first
pushed faces to pavement or bashed bodies on car doors with
handfuls of hair they got better grip

they let the Indian rookies practice
putting the screws to another Indian person, client, inmate
isn't as racist it proves loyalty

but we're not done with each other yet
we still have a job to do me and you

help me build another barricade I promise to challenge you

send me your used Kinsellas (even the ones you read & liked)

DANCE ME OUTSIDE

MISS HOBDEMA BEAUTY PAGEANT

SCARS

have any Anne Cameron's to spare?

DAUGHTERS OF COPPER WOMAN

or one by her alias, Cam Hubert?

DREAMSPEAKER

maybe she'll throw in a few copies
herself
hey scrap the I Wuzza Wannabee
confessional anthology idea
before it comes to mind & print
perchance Lynn Andrews may not help out
let's liberate Agnes Whistling Elk
send used

MEDICINE WOMAN CRYSTAL WOMAN
FLIGHT OF THE SEVENTH MOON STAR WOMAN
JAGUAR WOMAN WIND HORSE WOMAN

is there an Out Of Wind Woman in the house?

sometimes stolen is as good as used
try to send the most recent copy
send me BONEBIRD or Rudy Wiebe's
THE TRIAL OF BIG BEAR

the greatest prize is surprise me
this list is too short be creative
use your imagination the way they don't

research libraries (tell' em sorry
gotta take this book for a friend)
like writers in pen international
need liberation so do books from

mental shelves dust collections

you gotta help me build a barricade
wonder how high it will be finished
when me and you stand
from the top of the barricade
we'll better detect
check out what books a neighbor reads

buffalo jump off the page
the predicable end of trail saga
how to save an indigenous group
from the consumer envy
write their history right

don't fall for that one no not no more
after we compare notes that's
how we know how it starts
know the best books for barricade

give me WRITING THE CIRCLE
dizzy from quick read
white messiahs made a snare
groveling is fun expressed the right way
appropriation
with permission
undermine Indigenous writings
rip off talents
rip us apart
rip into us to see what we are

no white guilt table of contents
hidden white privilege footnotes
how much commentary does it take
to build a career on our backs?

better to build a barricade of books
better than a sister or brother
telling lies like the big one

“not many Indians write, edit or
publish their own books in Canada”

enough written enough to
 disgrace disrespect
 displace/replace/deface
 the most obvious lie
 it helps them
 financially to help us poor Indians
 help us out of a grant to publish
 help us out of a teaching position
 help us by editing us out
 or in collusion
 white out our efforts
 by helping us not
 write/publish/edit
 our own words culture history

someone might drown in the pity poor us
 bust a gut when we beat off imitators
 nobody has to be that sorry for us

let's not worry about being mean to them
 we're going to be very busy
 building a barricade
 they won't know we mean business
 they must see the barricade
 they will have to send in the army

to stop us from reading our books
 soon to displace Native interest
 books used to build a barricade

Marie **Annharte** Baker (Anishinaabe) is a grandma of three and a mother of one who lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and is currently a graduate student in the Cultural Studies stream in the Department of English at the University of Winnipeg. She is a personal essay stylist and a poet whose work has been published in *Gatherings* (Theytus), *West Coast Line*, and *Semiotexte*, as well as many other anthologies. Her previous poetry books include: *Being on the Moon*, *Coyote Columbus Cafe*, and *Exercises in Lip Pointing* and she is currently at work on a new poetic manuscript, tentatively entitled *Mirror Woman*.