

INDIGENOUS POETRY CONTEST WINNERS 2025



Volume 9

A collection of our Indigenous Poetry Contest Winning Poems for 2025

The Indigenous Education Department of School District No. 27 first started our Aboriginal Poetry Contest in 2009 in celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day. We proudly introduce our winners and share their poems.

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A total of 771 Poems were received in our 2025 contest.

Poems were sorted into categories depending on numbers received.

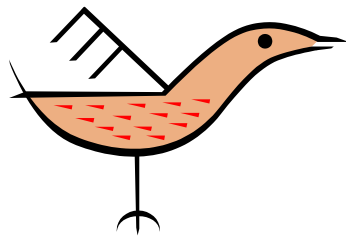
These are the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Place winners and those with Hon. Mention in each Category.

Winners from 2025

- Chapter 1: Winners from Kindergarten Category**
- Chapter 2: Winners from the Grade 1-3 Category**
- Chapter 3: Winners from the Grade 4 Category**
- Chapter 4: Winners from the Grade 5 Category**
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- Chapter 6: Winners from the Grade 7-9 Category**
- Chapter 7: Winners from the Grade 10-12 Category**
- Chapter 8: Winners from the French Category**
- Chapter 9: Winners from the Chilcotin Language Category**
- Chapter 10: Shuswap Category (there were no entries this year)**

Chapter One
2025

Kindergarten Category



1st Place Winner Kindergarten Category 2025
Nika Guichon, Nagwuntl'oo Band School
Teacher: Elizabeth Cushnie

BANNOCK

Mom makes Bannock well.

Indian Taco dinner.

I want more Bannock



2nd Place Winner, Kindergarten Category 2025
Linden Fast, 100 Mile Elementary School
Submitted by: Penny Reid

INDIGENOUS DAY

You wear orange shirts
for Indigenous people to be thanked.

At the Pow Wow there is drumming.

They let us dance with them.

We thank the Indigenous people to be on the Earth



3rd Place Winner, Kindergarten Category 2025
Cash Gregg, Tatla Lake Elementary/Jr Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. Ikebuchi

Sometimes I feel like an eagle,
flying and eating.

I fly to the mountains and see bird friends.

Sometimes I feel like a deer,
quiet and scared.

I pounce through long grass.

Sometimes I feel like a bunny,
hopping and free.

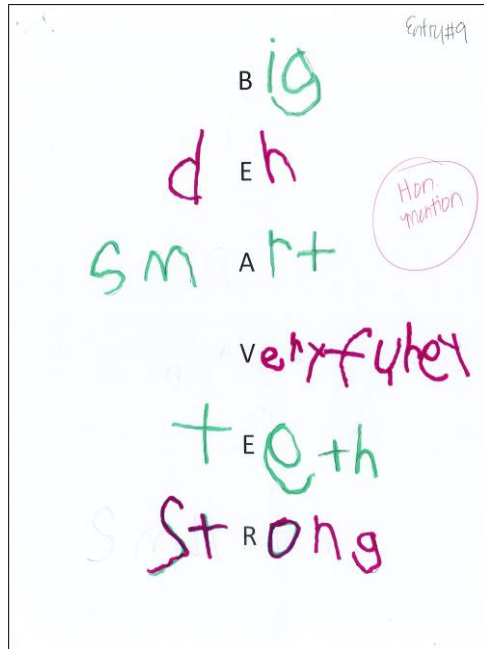
I run, hop, and eat in the grass.



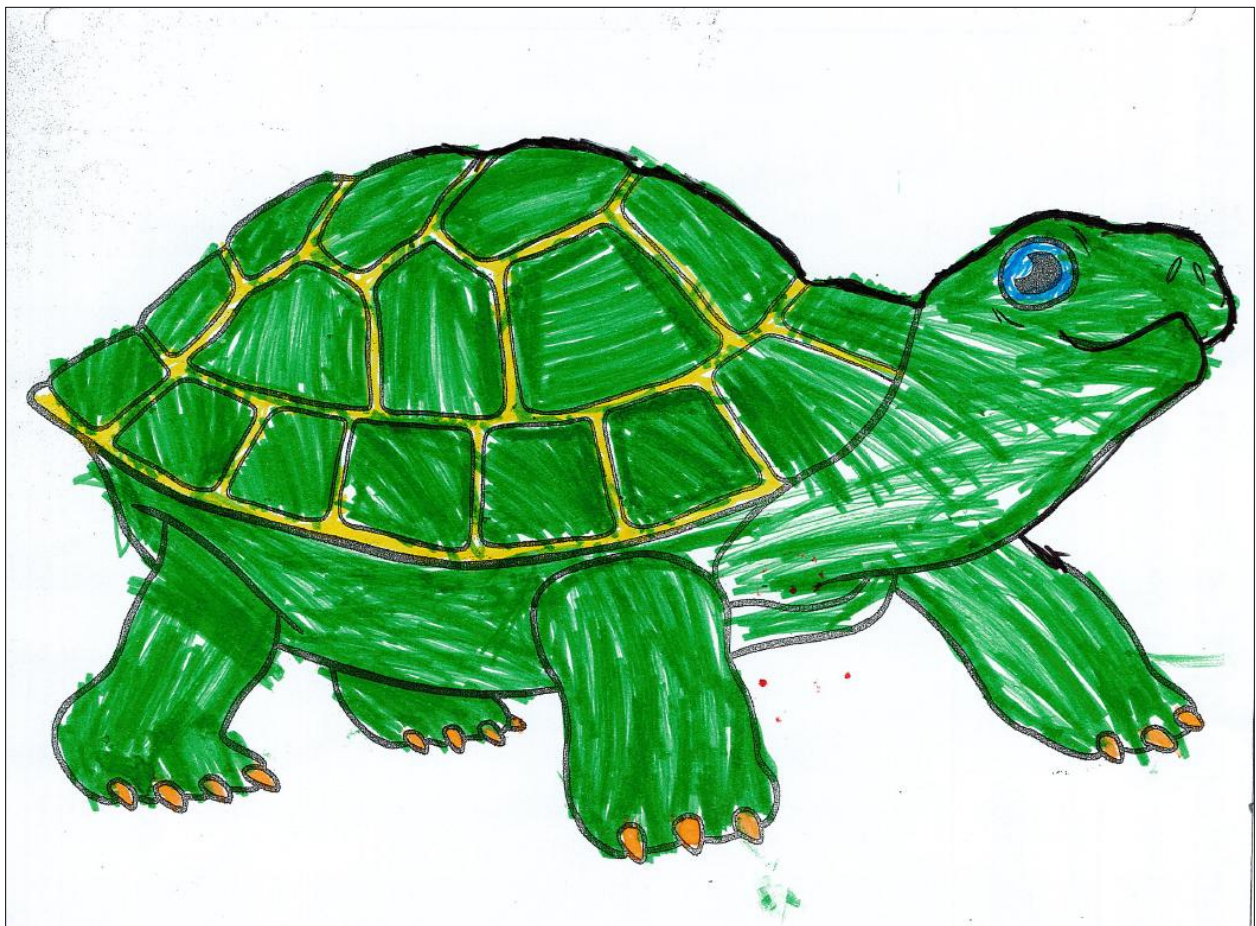
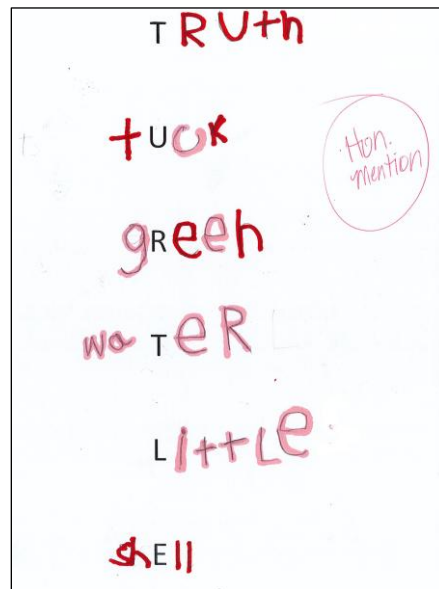
4th Place Winner, Kindergarten Category 2025
School
Submitted by:

Turns out our 4th Place winner in K Category is a Grade 1 student! You will see two 4th place winners in the Grade 1-3 Category ahead.

Honorable Mention, Kindergarten Category 2025
Elodie Lozier, 150 Mile Elementary School
Teacher: Mrs. Coulombe



Honorable Mention, Kindergarten Category 2025
Isla Rolston, 150 Mile Elementary School
Teacher: Mrs. Coulombe



Honorable Mention, Kindergarten Category 2025
Lindsay Jorgenson, 150 Mile Elementary School
Teacher: Mrs. Fofonoff

Name: Lindsay Jorgenson Entry #23

K
150 Mile
Mrs Fofonoff



Sometimes I Feel Like A
Fox



Sometimes I feel like a

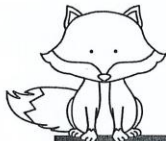
BU

butterfly cause I can
run free!

Hon.
Mention

Honorable Mention, Kindergarten Category 2025
Clayton Bartlett, 150 Mile Elementary School
Teacher: Mrs. Fofonoff

Name: Clayton Clayton Bartlett
K
150 Mile
Mrs. Fofonoff



Sometimes I Feel Like A
Fox

Entry #36



Hon.
Mention

Sometimes I feel like a

beaver

Cause I'm busy like a beaver.

Chapter Two

Grade 1-3 Category 2025



1st Place Winner, Grade 1-3 Category 2025
Ayla Racine, 100 Mile Elementary School
Submitted by: Penny Reid

Turtle

Beautiful water creatures

They can get so old

They have seen so many babies

Heard so many songs and drums

Seen so many dances

Seen so much long hair

How many times have you been a Gramma?



Nemiah Valley

I saw a sunami for the first time.

I love going swimming with my brother and my dad in Chilko Lake.

If I fly over this mountain then I could go to the Pacific Ocean.

I love looking at the mountains when I am swimming in Chilko Lake.

Don't point at T'silos Mountain. At the top of the mountain, it is the side of T'silos' face. If you point at it and then you go walking in the woods, a rainstorm might happen. So that is why I don't point at T'silos mountain.



**3rd Place Winner, Grade 1-3 Category 2025
Ruth Cheung, Chilcotin Road Elementary School
Classroom Teacher: Mrs. Sayenchuk**

Houses of Hide and Earth

Woods

In the woods we will find river valleys and recognize trees.

Tipi

My tipi cover is buffalo skin, oh how soft!

Children

Children played on roof tops while Elders greeted the morning sun.

Festival

Our festival is a revival

We sun dance to the beat

It makes my heart feel good



4th Place Winner (#1), Grade 1-3 Category 2025
Kalaya Bowe, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Testawich

First Nations

We smudge for others, for the community, for people who passed away.

I smudge myself and then I am happy.



4th Place Winner (#2), Grade 1-3 Category 2025
Wren Saunders, Tatla Lake Elementary/Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: Ms. Testawich

**This student was entered as a 'K' student and won 4th place; but turns out is grade 1. This gives us two winners for 4th Place in the Grade 1-3 Category.*

Sometimes I feel Like

Sometimes I feel like a lynx

Sly and fast.

I hide away from my brother while playing hide and go seek.

I hide away in my den when I am sleeping.

Sometimes I feel like a fox,

Stealth and sneaky.

I enjoy eating every meal.



Friendship

Be kind like feathers coming together.

Helping, drums, I am a drummer.

I feel excited when I hear the songs.

When I sing with them, I feel good.

The elders talk first; I listen to what they say.

Being with friends makes me joyful.

How they feel when they're down or sad.

Cheer them up and make them laugh.

Friendship



Honorable Mention, Grade 1-3 Category 2025
Ayla Morey, 100 Mile Elementary School
Submitted by: Penny Reid

My Jingle Dress

My first Jingle dress
Got too small
My cousin shares hers with me
There are lots of jingles on it.
It is purple
It makes me feel calm
I feel beautiful in it.
I danced in a Pow Wow
My Mom made my fan.
My Mom was proud.



Honorable Mention, Grade 1-3 Category 2025
Eliza Andrews, Cataline Elementary School
Classroom Teacher: Ms. Testawich

Orange Shirt Day

Back in the day when life was good.
But when I turned six it all changed.
They took me away; they cut my hair.
When I came back, I told my parents.
Next year they hid me.
Now I tell my story.
So now we celebrate Orange Shirt Day.



Honorable Mention, Grade 1-3 Category 2025
Ximena Paul, Sxoxomic Community School
Teacher: Zena Chelsea

The Pow Wow

The pow wow is good
Because if you forget your grandma or grandpa
You will remember them
You might remember your grandma and grandpa
If they died.



Chapter Three

Grade 4 Category

2025



1st Place Winner, Grade 4 Category 2025
Shepard Murphy-Lulua, Nesika Elementary School
Teacher: H. McKinnon

Walking Together

With my family, I walk
All we do is talk on our way
We do our prayers
To keep us safe from surprising wild animals
Running into fawns
Please, Creator, don't do spares
I like my life
I love my brother and my sister
Love my mom
As we continue this journey
Keep us safe



2nd Place Winner, Grade 4 Category 2025
Harper Pickles, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Mader

Pow Wow

**In the moment at the pow wow
The deep sound of the drums
The rhythm of the singing
The footwork of the dancing
The jingle on the ribbon shirts and skirts
The uniqueness in every regalia
In the moment at the pow wow**



3rd Place Winner, Grade 4 Category 2025
Juniper Deyo, Naghtaneqed Elementary/Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: June Williams

Bannock

Bannock, Bannock,

Bannock is yummy!

Bannock feels good in my tummy!

Flour, water, baking powder too,

I'll cook a bunch to share with you!

O, Bannock, Bannock,

Bannock is divine!

I wish I could make Bannock all the time.



4th Place Winner, Grade 4 Category 2025
Jasleen Garcha, Marie Sharpe Elementary School
Teacher: Natalie Craig

The Seven Teachings

Learn, learn, learn
For the seven grandfathers
Love, honesty, courage, wisdom, respect, humility, truth

Learn, learn, learn
That love people, be honest, face your fears
Be wise, respect your elders, be humble, tell the truth
For the seven grandfathers

Learn, learn, Learn
The great seven teachings
For the seven grandfathers



Nature

Nature is our life and fishing is our food.
They are both so great that we are thankful for everything.

Bark is fire and sage is medicine.
They both help when someone is in need.

Moose, deer, fish, bears, wolves.
They all saved us once or twice in our life.



Honorable Mention Grade 4 Category 2025
April Von Bieker, Marie Sharpe Elementary School
Teacher: Natalie Craig

Catching Dreams

Dream Catcher

Pretty, cool.

Web, stringy, feathery.

It's so cool it catches dreams.

Dream catcher.

Handmade, traditional, family heirloom.

Past down for generations and generations.

Dream catcher.



Winter Weather

In winter weather I will wear my
Moccasins.

In winter weather I will wear my
Animal hide.

In winter weather I will wear my snow boots.

In winter weather I will be warm.



Esk'et

Esk'et is a place of drumming
Dancing and drummers do more than humming
Hunting is a part of our culture and no bumming
And pow wows are cool
We learned how to dance in school.
Rodeos are fun to watch and going to the creek
But the sweat house is what we seek



Chapter Four

Grade 5 Category

2025



1st Place Winner, Grade 5 Category 2025
Sivkan Kaur, Marie Sharpe Elementary School
Teacher: Mrs. Uppal

What I Hold

What I hold

I hold my culture

What I hold

I hold the way the future turns out

What I hold

I hold the power to preserve the past

What I hold

I hold my culture



Drumming

They are loud as thunder.

They are as beautiful as flowers.

They are big like trees and small like twigs.

They are strong like stone.

They are as sacred earth.

They vibrate like earthquakes.

Drumming is a part of their culture.



3rd Place Winner, Grade 5 Category 2025
Sage Mason, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Mrs. Grant

This is my Home

Bears are growling
Wolves are howling
Hear the wind blowing through the trees
The moon is glimmering in the night
Feel the beat of the drum
My heart is beating along
I hear the elder's telling stories
The leaves are dancing around me
Salmon are spawning in the river
Children playing around the fire
The fire is crackling in the wind
I feel the shaking of the rattle
The stars are gazing upon us



4th Place Winner, Grade 5 Category 2025
Kai Bedford, Marie Sharpe Elementary School
Teacher: Natalie Craig

Pow Wow

Tasty as fried bread

Fun as singing

Beautiful as regalia

Fast as dancing

A circle gathering



Only the Beginning is True

There was an island
And an orphanage
And a boy.

There was a train and a country to cross.

There was just a boy.
They took his words from him.

There was just a boy and they took from him his words
So, he could not speak with others
So, he could not know there were others
So, he was just a boy.

We know there was a boy alone.
Can I say these things if I am not that boy?

I don't know that boy.



Honorable Mention Grade 5 Category 2025:
Sawyer Hutchinson, Nesika Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Nasuszny

Drumming

Drumstick

Rumbling noise

United in song

Make a drum

Music floats in the air

Indigenous

Nature gives the materials

Grateful



Honorable Mention Grade 5 Category 2025:
Peyton Dan, Nesika Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Nasuszny

POW WOW

People wear

Orange shirts for those who died.

Who got taken from their family

We were sad when the

Other people were taken and not returned.

When we dance, we remember them.



Pow Wow Dancing

Pow Wow Dancing

I like dancing on the concrete.

When I look up at the sky I see the birds.

I hear the birds chirping. I listen to the chirping birds while I
dance.

I like the grass dance and the jingle dress.

I smell the burning sage in the air.

I like the cold and hot air breezing on my body, like a river of
rushing water.

I feel my braids nice and soft with a flower in my hair.

I hear the drum beating in my body now and forever.



Chapter Five

Grade 6 Category

2025



Do you Believe

Do you believe in the ghosts of aunties and uncles that drive old single-bench pickup trucks spotted with bullet-hole rust, sweetgrass and beaded necklaces dangling from the rear-view mirror?

Those who dream forever of empty stretches of prairie trail turned concrete road passed over by generations of everyone who held the memory of you close.

Those who believed in you even when you didn't believe that the future could be infinite for all of us who live under and within endless sky, endless prairie wool, endless bison and endless coveys of sharpe-tail grouse.



2nd Place Winner, Grade 6 Category 2025
Emmy Shortreed, Mountview Elementary School
Teacher: Mrs. Grant

This is a Pow Wow

Boom, Boom, Boom

I hear the drum beat in my chest

I hear the Elders telling stories

Boom, Boom, Boom

The moon and stars as far as I can see

Are shining in the night Sky

Boom, Boom, Boom

The fire sparks with

Light and warmth

Keeping me from the cold breeze

Boom, Boom, Boom

Hot embers float through the air

As I see the light slowly fade away

Boom, Boom, Boom

There are people

Dancing their culture

This is a Pow Wow

3rd Place Winner, Grade 6 Category 2025
Dominik Wycotte, Nesika Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Campsall

On the Water

At a lake
I fish
I am with my ancestors.
I like to be on water.
It feels freeing and calm.
I like to be alone with the fish.
The morning is best.
I am closest to my culture here.
Thank you, Creator



4th Place Winner, Grade 6 Category 2025
Mackenzie Thibeault, Horse Lake Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Rehbein



Every Child Matters

The color of the world faded to grey,
when a vibrant orange shirt was taken away.

A grandmother's love, a symbol so bright,
meant to bring warmth, meant to bring light.

But shadows crept in on that very first day
when a special orange shirt was lost in shades of grey.

She wasn't alone in the sadness so deep,
in the loss of fun, in the nights with no sleep.

Those halls were cruel; their pain was deep.

Innocent children were lost,

Left wounds that still haunt.

Their voices were silenced, their stories untold,
about the tears and sadness felt in a Residential school.

For every child silenced, we now raise our voice,
wearing orange, our choice, we gather to let everyone know that

Every Child Matters



Eagle Feather

Encouragement I have

A Residential School survivor in my family, he is sweet

Gentle, kind, and loving. In this poem I want to show people that you're here,
you survived and people

Love you. If you're a survivor, I am so sorry about what happened. I want you
to know you need to talk about it, share your story. I am

Encouraging you to do this as people will hear it. My Grand

Father Charlie Stewart is a survivor and the stories I hear are horrible, worse
than others.

Encouragement is what I am giving you. I feel so bad for my papa. He didn't
do anything to deserve that. I am so sorry for what has happened. I

Am hurting inside when I hear the stories, the pain,

The hurt, everything you and all your friends and family. I feel like you guys
don't

Have the encouragement you need and you need a life not having your past
with your present.

Everyone deserves a happy life and not having the past in front of your future
and realizing your

Read life here is you. You have a warm place. You have clothes, you can feel
what you want to. I just want you to share what your story is and how you're
feeling inside. I am just saying this just to encourage you. Try it, share it,
people will hear your story and voice.



WOLF

Wolf.

Protector, kind and loyal to your companions around you.

Wolf.

You guide your pack around the prey's back. Bold, brave and strong, when you work as one.

The hunt has begun!

Under the moon's rays of light, it fills your heart with the sense of fight. Winding around twisted and woven brushes and branches, above and below.

You and the others don't care how far you go. Your prey does not stand a chance. When you move and twist, it is so hard to even catch a glimpse. When you run so fast it is like a quick dance. All your prey can do, is prance. Move quick as a mouse, escaping the pounce.

Leap through the air and stare down at your prey. When the time is right, land on its back and sink your moon white fangs into the neck.

As it is struck down. The stars will look below them to see the lifeless body. They will take it's soul for the heavens above.

Wolf.

Heart of gold, stay strong and bold.

Wolf.

Never let a shadow hide you! So, look up at the sky tonight and make the moon come out, big and bright. Ask it to shine its divine light.

To split the dark in two, so you can tell the world it still needs you.



Honorable Mention, Grade 6 Category 2025:
Alicia Turner, Tatla Lake Elementary/Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: Ms. Peterson

FOX

A flash of fire,
A pad of sooty paws.
Blazing through the star filled sky,
A creature of golden eyes.
A jaw of moon fangs,
Fos, a little spark of flame.
Running on all four socks of black,
Swift as an owl.
As small as an infant child,
Not as big as a coyote.
Fox, abandit of the night,
One, two, three, four pad alongside her.
Fox, mother and kit,
Love to run alone or not.
Fox lives on,
Yowl to the one that attacks from the back.
Nips, scrapes, and bites,
Trying to stay alive.
A running flame of fear,
They are as kind.
As the giver of life,
We need fox and fox needs us.



SECWEPEMC

S Summer times bring back memories
E Eagles following me around.
C Canoes stopping at the shore.
W Water going splish-splash all-around the shore
E Everyday we celebrate a Remembrance Day
P Plip-plip as I throw rocks in the water
E Everyone is respected and deserves to be respected
M My land, my pride and my territory
C Caretakers of our land are respected



Chapter Six

Grade 7-9 Category

2025



1ST Place Winner, Grade 7-9 Category 2025:
Kylie Sedford, PSO Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. Glen

Ancestors in the Flames

Around the fire, they gather near,
A circle strong, without a fear.
The flames dance high, their stories rise,
Beneath the vast, unbroken skies.
Elders speak in voices deep,
Of ancestors who woke from sleep.
Their words like rivers, ancient, true,
Flowing through hearts that always knew.
The crackle of the burning wood,
A rhythm old, a pulse of good.
The fire's glow paints faces bright,
In this sacred, quiet night
Children listen with wide eyes,
As sparks ascend to star-filled skies.
Their laughter mingles with the breeze,
A song of past and future's ease.
The earth beneath, the stars above,
The spirits watch, they whisper love.
Around this fire, a bond is made,
A promise kept, a memory laid.
For in this flame, they see the past,
In every ember, wisdom cast.
The fire burns with truth and grace,
A sacred gift, a timeless place.
The fire's warmth, a guiding light,
A beacon through the endless night.
Around it, strength and peace are found,
The heartbeat of the sacred ground.



2nd Place Winner, Grade 7-9 Category 2025:
Rylee Poole, Columneetza Secondary School
Teacher: Ms. McCartney

WHISPERS OF OUR EARTH

Beneath the sky where eagles soar, the rivers sign, the oceans roar, in the currents, ancient tales, whispers of time on the winds that sail.

The First Nations' hearts beat with the flow, a rhythm of waters, gentle and slow. From sacred streams to the great sea's call, they've known the waters, felt them all with paddles carved from hands of old, their stories are in every ripple told.

The canoes glide in dance so pure, with wisdom of the land, they endure. The waters are teachers, the lakes are wise, reflected in their eyes, the endless skies.

Their culture is like the tide's embrace, ever-changing, yet holding grace. Through the currents, we hear their song, a melody of where they belong.

In the First Nations' culture, we find our way, to honor the water, each passing day. Their legacy flows in every stream, a bond unbroken, like a dream.

To the water, they return with trust, for in their depths, all things are just.



3rd Place Winner, Grade 7-9 Category 2025:
Mia Azak, Columneetza Secondary School
Teacher: Ms. Billyboy

Medicine

Ancient wisdom in every leaf,
Healing roots that bring relief.
A pot of cedar, sage, or pine,
Brews the stories of times design.
Medicine trees of sacred ground,
Where nature's place is found.
The better bark, the sweetened root,
Blended to make the body reboot.
Elderberry, mint, or yarrow flower,
Infuse the drink with healing power.
Each sip I tale,
Will make the bad spirits take a break.
A taste culture, earth and sky,
Where traditions and wisdom will never die.
So brew the leaves and sip the tea,
Let the medicine set you free.
For in each cup, the elders speak,
Guiding us to the healing we seek.



4th Place Winner, Grade 7-9 Category 2025:
Jackson Lipsett, PSO Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. Glen

Pride

The drum that beats within,
The fire in our eyes.
We stand next to our kin,
Our brothers in the sky.
We are wise, tall, and proud,
Together we rise.
Our voices sing loud,
Our ancestors wise.
The pride we hold,
The resilience we share
is centuries old,
Showing we care.



Honorable Mention, Grade 7-9 Category 2025:
Samantha Kerman, Columneetza Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: Ms. Billyboy

Bring me back home

They took me from my home,
in a place I was not able to roam.
They beat me till I was about to bleed,
I asked them to set me free.
They threw me on a chair and cut off all my hair.
The food made me vomit,
I didn't want to admit,
I didn't think I was going to make it out alive.
I've been coming to this "school" since I was five.
I pray every night,
That I just might,
Not get out alone.
I hope I can make it home.



Honorable Mention, Grade 7-9 Category 2025:
Khya Swanson, Columneetza Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: Ms. McCartney

We Dance with the Earth

When we dance the Earth dances too
 Sunlight swirls with our skirts
 Wind sings with us in harmony
 Grass sways with our bodies
Water flows with the blood in our veins
Thunder rolls with the pound of our feet on the ground
When drumbeats resonate down to our bones
 When our hearts beat together as one
 When we dance
 The Earth dances too



Honorable Mention, Grade 7-9 Category 2025:
Anna Burkey, Columneetza Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: Ms. Billyboy

Remember

Some ran through the rain, past the bay, through the hay,
but could not escape the pain for which the schools were made.
Trying to shame their name, they were punished with pain,
Those who complain would be left to fade.

Fear was forever sprayed across their frame,
Fear for the men who would soon take them away.

Without aid, some were lost to the graves where they lay,
Some suffered worse than blades, in silence they stayed.

Now we honor the names that were taken away,
Who were left in the shade, who were lost without a trace.

Found after decades, many years too late.
Too late to stop the lives that were broken by hate.

Too late to end the pain that ran deep in their hearts,
But not too late to remember, to honor their parts.
To stand for the lost and for those still here,
To gather together and to banish the fear.



Honorable Mention, Grade 7-9 Category 2025:
Kylie Sedford, Peter Skene Ogden Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. Glen

Sing-Song Cries

In shadows long and voices hushed,
They sent the children, dreams all crushed.
Far from the warmth of home and kin,
To places cold, where sorrow begins.

The bells would toll, the doors would close,
And with them, innocence arose.
Through quiet halls and sterile rooms,
Were whispered fears and growing gloom.

The teachings spoke in foreign tones,
Of ways that stripped them to their bones.
Their language lost, their culture torn,
A history broken, hearts reborn.

Yet still, beneath the weight of grief,
A flicker of defiance, brief –
The spirit of the ones they'd wronged,
Lives on in hearts, forever strong.

For though the years may numb the pain,
The memory will still remain.
A story told, a tale retold,
Of children's courage, fierce and bold.

And in their silence, loud they cry,
A truth that cannot, will not die.
The past, a shadow they must face,
But hope survives and finds its place.

Chapter Seven

GRADE 10-12 CATEGORY



1ST Place Winner, Grade 10-12 Category 2025:
Sasha Fofonoff, Lake City Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. Davis

The Sky is the Same for Everyone

The warm blue sky so big and free
So beautiful every child should see
A warm bed, a safe feeling
A home where love fills from floor to ceiling
Not for everyone
Some feel like a no one
Their world was changed
A home so far and strange
They look up at the sky so wide
Wishing they felt safe inside
Their beds feel cold, their heads stay down,
Wishing their mother and father were around
The schools are quiet, children cry
Their voices silenced, the spirits die
They got told the culture was wrong
And that they didn't belong
Being indigenous wasn't the same
But every child deserves a name
Every child should get a bed
A place to sleep, and to be well fed
Beneath the same blue sky
There should be no more pain and no last goodbye



2nd Place Winner, Grade 10-12 Category 2025:
Ryder McLennan, Lake City Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. Davis

White Man

Oh, white man you took everything from us
Our land, our language our very identity
Oh, white man why are you never satisfied with what you already
have?
Oh, white man you take, and you take
The only thing you have ever given us is pain
Oh, white man you call us savages yet who slaughtered millions?
Who, white man?
Oh, white man, we welcomed you with open arms
And how did you repay us?
With death with destruction
With hate



3rd Place Winner, Grade 10-12 Category 2025:
Autumn Clark, Lake City Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

Lost But never forgotten

In the whispering winds of ancient trees,
Echoes of stories ride the gentle breeze.
In the shadow of the mountains where the rivers weep,
Echoes of the past in the silence run deep.
Lost but never forgotten their spirits linger softly.
Beneath the vast skies,
A fire still glows.
In the heart of the people,
Is a strength that flows.
Colors of the land so vibrant and true,
The spirits painted in every hue,
A dance with the stars,
To break free from the bars.
Where the spirits will follow,
With nothing but sorrow.
Connecting past and present,
With land and home,
No one will ever feel quite alone.

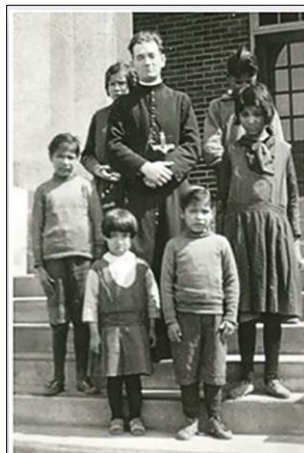


4th Place Winner, Grade 10-12 Category 2025:
Dawson Nohr-Stangoe, Lake City Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

Two Voice Poem

We were taken from our home	They tried to make us forget
Our language stolen with the	But we continued to fight
Forest quiet without our songs	We held on to our memories
They tried to break us	As we grew to endure pain
Erase us	we continued to fight
But we still had hope	To remember our voice
Now we sing and dance	The past may be hard
Speak our land	Yet we still stand
And celebrate ourselves	To carry our stories

We carry a past, but it won't break us
We are stronger now
What was taken is found in us



Honorable Mention, Grade 10-12 Category 2025:
Yashmeet Bansal, Lake City Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

“Voices in the Silence”

You take my name and hush my voice.

But we are still here, we are still alive.

Still breathing the air and living our lives.

Still carrying the scars of those awful years which do not dare to leave
our minds.

But we are strong, we will not fade.

Our voices will live, it is not too late.



Honorable Mention, Grade 10-12 Category 2025:
Lila-Dawn McAlpine, Lake City Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

May 5th

A sea of red glistens in the morning sun,
A sea of little red dresses and red-clad people, standing one by one,
United in heartbreak and loss, they bore pictures of the passed and gone,
They all had stories to share, they were all there for a cause.
A wife, a sister, a daughter, a mother,
A woman lost, taken, disappearing forever into the night,
A victim in this tragic war,
Where no one wins, they only mourn.
And so, resplendent in red, those left behind remember fondly the lost,
They recall those whose hearts beat with the drums, whose souls soar above with the
eagles,
Their stories will be shared on May 5th, but also every day before and thereafter.
Speak their names into the wind and let it carry them home,
Speak their stories to the world and let them be known,
Speak the truth of this violence loudly, do not let it go.
Remember their beauty in their lives and their souls,
Make sure they are never forgotten nor their memory abandoned alone,
Remember the lost women, and fight for those living.
This is a plague on our humanity.
A sickness spreading steadily throughout,
That we would remain silent while these women are lost.
Speak their names, speak their truths, speak their beauty and souls,
And fight until every Missing and Murdered Indigenous Woman and Girl is at last home.



RED DRESS DAY

Honorable Mention, Grade 10-12 Category 2025:
Nadia Wallin, Lake City Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

In the Grip of the River

Patiently we wait, repeating the same motion
One scoop at a time, the net swoops up and down
The water flows quickly through the mesh, and I feel like I am lifting the who ocean
Fooled by a glimpse of light that catches my eye, I pull the net and frown
Nowhere in the net is there a fish to be found!
I dip the net back in the river, the waiting game starts again
BOOM! I use all my wight and yank the net out of the river
Behind me I hear dad yell "Tyee be careful, we do not want you to drown"
Now I have the fish out of the river and finally my hands are relieved from the pain
I sit next to my fish smiling, I cannot wait to show dad what I have to deliver!



Honorable Mention, Grade 10-12 Category 2025:
Che Carson, Lake City Secondary School
Teacher: Mrs. MacKinnon

The Nun

Walk with a straight back. And no

looking up

Is here now.
Under our protection
And our possession.
Forget your

Home

Language

Family

You cannot touch.
You cannot see.
What you had once is
No longer your

Life

A few more months

Until Christmas when
These 'Indians can go
Back to their bloody

Land

Away

From god's mercy and grace
When they go back to their reserves.
Thankfully they shall

Return



The Aboriginal Girl

At the big blue sky I
Remember. The drumming
That was passed down from
My ancestors. I want to go.

Is gone now.
Away into wind
That carries through
These secluded valleys
I used to cherish like my

Beyond these walls is
Where I belong.
I only have

Of my home is calling
Me as I watch from my
Window, the prison
Starts to fade

To my family of origin.
Back to the beginning
Where I felt loved
For whom I am, and my culture



Chapter Eight

French Poems

Français



Parfois je me sens comme un tigre

Parfois je me sens comme un tigre,

Rapide and grand.

Je court vite pour le foot.

Parfois je me sens comme un chien,

Content and gentil.

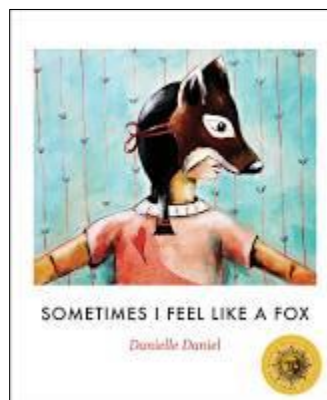
Je suis content quand je gagne un match de foot.

Parfois je me sens comme un Christmas tree,

Lumeneu and colore.

Je suis colore avec mes vêtements de tout les couleurs.

Inspired by:



2nd Place Winner, French Category 2025
Caprice Hoelzler, Columneetza Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: Miss Schiller

Une Petite Fille

Ses yeux Rempli avec le frayeur

Qu'elle ne sortira pas jamais

Son coeur avec les memoires de

Son famille dans son coeur

Pour toujours



3rd Place Winner, French Category 2025
Caprice Hoelzler, Columneetza Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: Miss Schiller

La Coeur

Je entend re le rivière,
Les ours qui attraper les
Poisson la aigle dans la ciel
Je vois cela dans ma coeur
à la frapper de la tambour



4th Place Winner, French Category 2025
Caprice Hoelzler, Columneetza Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: Miss Schiller

La vie des animaux

Les ours et les aigle qui

Vivre à le rythme de le tambour

Qui marcher avec le passion et voler

Avec le bonheur



Chapter Nine

T̓silhqot'in Poems (Chilcotin Poems)

The T̓silhqot'in (Chilcotin) are an Indigenous people who live between the Fraser River and the Coast Mountains in west-central British Columbia. Traditionally Dene (Athabaskan) speaking, their name means "people of the red river" and refers to the Chilcotin Plateau region in British Columbia.



1st Place Winner, Chilcotin Category 2025
Juniper Deyo, Naghtaneqed Elementary/Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: June Williams

Lhiz Sechaz ?Anatseli

Making Bannock By Juniper

Lhiz sechaz, lhiz sechaz
Bannock, Bannock,
lhiz sechaz hutih!
Bannock is yummy!
Lhiz, tu ninq'ez, belh lhiz nilzilh
Flour, water, baking powder too,
Lhan ?awesdlax gantil nawes?alh.
I'll cook a bunch to share with you!
Lhiz schaz, lhiz sechaz, lhiz sechaz nezun!
Oh, Bannock, Bannock, Bannock is divine!
Gagulhan lhiz sechaz ?anasdli ?eguh
Gunzun hagwetat'ilh.
I wish I could make Bannock all the time.



2nd Place Winner, Chilcotin Category 2025
Zayden Wiliams, Naghtaneqed Elementary/Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: June Williams

Gu?anwh Ts'elhben **Camping**

?Ets'estelhjinsh
Fishing

Nats'el?ilh, Nats'ededilh
Swimming, Hunting

Ben, Qwen
Tent, Fire

?Ets'iyan, Hutih
Eating, Dessert

Nats'eqwelyax, Sedesniqi, Tintowh
Fun, Family, Forest

Gu?anwh
Outside

Nulh
Animals



3rd Place Winner, Chilcotin Category 2025
Sawyer Fuller, Chilcotin Road Elementary School
Teacher: Stacey Bergen

Seghusio

Nist'l qitel bid 3anat'ino

The Doe wore the socks



4th Place Winner, Chilcotin Category 2025
Shazzarae Haines-Lebrun, Naghtaneqed Elementary/Jr. Secondary School
Teacher: June Williams

Dadaben ʔAtselax
Medicine Harvesting

Nexwenen dadaben ʔanatśeli
Harvesting medicine from the land

Nendad huteghant'in ʔeyi dzanh teghalhcholh
Only take what you need

Nzt'an ʔelhghayowh, dastan Kachilh, nuwish, dig
Berries of all kinds, Juniper, Soap Berries, saskatoon

Nendid dadaben nexwenen xanaghilhya
The medicine is a gift from the land

Tl'esdzi, Bedzish Tśediyan, Tśutsen
Sage, Labrador Tea, Balsam Bark

Honorable Mention: Chilcotin Category 2025
Hannah Duff, Chilcotin Road Elementary School
Teacher: Stacey Bergen

ʔežež terelh betlchys

I put my hide in the birch basket



Honorable Mention: Chilcotin Category 2025
Casen Boyd, Chilcotin Road Elementary School
Teacher: Stacey Bergen

Seghuzi

Nanjez nažlhiny hinlhghaz

The Fox bit the horse



Honorable Mention: Chilcotin Category 2025
Peyton McKeeman, Chilcotin Road Elementary School
Teacher: Stacey Bergen

Hejen nuwtsh



Nuwtsh qajerhejen

The singer is singing about soapberries

Tl'estsen 7ekw'enz

Tl'estsen Ina hust'in

I hate ontons, my kidney hurt.



Se 7ekwjenz cleni (clean)

Chapter Ten

Secwépemc Poems (Shuswap Poems)

The Secwépemc also known as the **Shuswap** are a First Nations **people** residing in the interior of the province of British Columbia. It is comprised of 17 Bands.

Secwepemc means “the people”



One of the largest Pow Wows in Western Canada is proudly hosted by the Kamloopa (Kamloops) Indian Band.

Unfortunately, there were no Shuswap poetry entries this year.

Thank you to all the teachers and support staff who encouraged their students to participate in our annual poetry contest in 2025.

This book can be found on the SD27 Website under the Department tab, Indigenous Education, then click on contests. There you will find all the Poetry Books we have put together.