

# Strong Hands Stop Violence

POETRY BOOK  
VOLUME IV



Ontario Native Women's Association

# Chi Mügwitch

Thank you to all the writers who generously shared such beautiful and honest words about an issue that has touched your lives or the lives of someone you know. Your expressions not only help us to continue raising awareness about violence against Indigenous women, but they also give us hope - as for many, the healing journey has begun.



## #orangetheworld

The [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence](#) is an international campaign which takes place each year and runs from November 25, *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*, to December 10, *International Human Rights Day*. It was originated by activists at the first *Women's Global Leadership Institute* in 1991 and is coordinated each year by the *Center for Women's Global Leadership*. It is used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

In support of this civil society initiative, each year, the United Nations Secretary-General's campaign [UNiTE to End Violence against Women \(UNiTE\)](#) calls for global action to increase worldwide awareness and create opportunities for discussion about challenges and solutions. The UNiTE campaign utilizes the colour orange as a unifying theme running through all of its global activities. Orange is one of the official colours of the UNiTE campaign and in the context of its global advocacy, is used as a symbol of a brighter future, free from violence against women and girls.

[endviolence.un.org](http://endviolence.un.org)

# Strong Hands

# Stop Violence

## #StrongHandsStopViolence

The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA)'s *Strong Hands Stop Violence* project raises awareness of violence against women and girls. It includes an annual [Poetry Night](#), an annual [Poetry Book](#), and an ongoing collective [Art Project](#).

Every *United Nations International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women* (November 25), ONWA hosts Poetry Nights across Ontario in support of the #orangetheworld campaign. This event features readings from both emerging and established poets, and live musical performances. It provides an opportunity to create a space where Indigenous women and families can gather and celebrate their shared strength and resiliency.

Submissions from Poetry Night and a community call out are considered for ONWA's annual Poetry Book, which highlights poetry written by Indigenous women. Poems submitted this year, will be published in a Poetry Book released at next year's Poetry Night.

The name *Strong Hands Stop Violence* comes from the Art Project. Participants of Poetry Night are invited to dip their hands in orange and blue paint and press on a canvas to signify standing together to eliminate violence against women and girls.

Art as healing trauma is a strong foundation of the work ONWA does, addressing violence from perspectives rooted in cultural teachings. ONWA is committed to supporting communities and providing hope to those on their healing journey.

[onwa.ca/strong-hands-stop-violence](http://onwa.ca/strong-hands-stop-violence)

(Photos: ONWA Strong Hands Stop Violence Poetry Nights 2016-2019)



# MY PRAYER

by Desiree Mathews

Musko Gabo Chigashtao Eskwao

Strong Standing in Bright Light Woman

Thank you Great Spirit

**Mee kwaych keeshay maaneeto**

I thank you for this life you give me

**Neen naa s komon ohma pimatisowin**

Protect my children

**Gahnowaymik joshomishuk agah waysh chishtitik**

Protect me

**Gahnowaynimin nesta nena agah waysh chitian**

I pray for all the people who are sick

**Nahmahastamowuk misiway Guyacgoschik**

Help me to walk in a good way

**Wee cha hin gwa yesk che bi mo ta yan omah mes ka now**

I pray for Mother Earth, Water Spirit, the Flyers, the

Swimmers, Crawlers and the 4 legged animals

**Nah ma hes ta mow Negowi Aski**

**Neepée Manitou**

**Gah mi na jic**

**Gah pah ma ti gan jic**

**Gah pi mo ta chi mo chic**

**Gah na ow ga tah chic**

**Meegwetch!**

# A SIMPLE NO

by Jamie Labrador

A thousand pieces of one bottle

Scattered along the street

Keeping a safe distance

From everyone I meet

Afraid that my shirt

Will show just enough skin,

That the man slowing down his car

Will think I want to come in

It shouldn't have to be this way -

Telling men that I'm sick, married, or gay

Because a simple no never does the trick,

Even if it's my thousandth time saying it.

# HEALING

by Anonymous

Healing  
on a winter night  
in a dream  
an orange sun  
beams its warmth  
bathing a small girl in  
love as she dreams  
a doll with long hair  
and one eye  
that peers like an owl  
from behind  
a tree of lights, the owl  
looks over her, a fairy in green  
a string of stars over  
the girl  
  
the girls voice sings  
across he healing blue  
at 3 a.m.

# *Native Women*

by Cecile Hardy

We are daughters  
We are mothers  
We are grandmothers  
We are proud  
We are true  
We are good  
We are strong  
We are independent  
We are equal  
We share our love  
We share our life  
We share our wisdom  
We share our beauty  
We share our joy  
We share our teachings  
We love in many forms  
We heal ourselves and others  
We pray beyond measures  
We see what others can't  
We are great leaders  
Because we are Indian women

# *Untitled*

by Anonymous

Made from the flesh of mtigook  
Stripped, still and naked  
Lined upon them are faces.  
Faces strangers  
Faces of masters  
Masters of the house.  
White empty eyes staring back at her  
A stranger in her own home  
Tolerated, appeased.  
An outsider  
She never agreed to this.

The animals have been thrown out the door  
They don't belong in the house  
They are no longer family  
They can stay outside  
For now.  
Until he decides he wants that space.  
A white fence would look nice there  
Why not a suburban garden? Perhaps a garage?  
Silly nintigok why would you grow there?  
Crazy bineshin why would you build your nest there?  
Clear the way  
Clear the land  
Stamp his dirty boots across Mother Earth.  
Dragging his foot  
Tearing up the earth, our mothers' floor  
Ripping our homes apart, forcing our families to flee  
Washing his boots in niibi  
Poisoning our waters with the stench

She never agreed to this  
It is not his land  
It is not his home  
It has never been his  
It will never be.  
He was a guest  
The time is up.

Take those boots  
Retrace your steps  
If you do not know the way  
The follow the destruction, the pain  
Follow the scars in the earth.  
The ripples of sadness in the water,  
The refugee camps of the animals  
Follow the tears, The anger  
Follow the loss  
They will lead the way

Pick up those boots  
Take this pain  
Tear down these walls  
Rip up the marble floor  
Let Mother Earth breathe again.  
Open the gates  
There is no space for him here  
She never agreed to this.  
Zhaaganaash, you have been a bad tenant  
It is time to evict.



# Violence to me

by Tina Hibbs

Violence to me was something unseen. It was a secret in silence of something so mean.

It was to be hidden and forgotten and tucked in my mind. It was a feeling of hopelessness, confusion and loss of time.

A memory to be blocked from the now, to resurface later with bad choices and wondering how?

How one can forget things so traumatic, things that forever affect who we are and become so automatic.

Violence to me has changed my life and it touches everyone in all walks of life.

Although it has changed me and who I am, now that I am older, I do understand.

Although it is negative and a part of the world, it is an unfortunate reality that needs to be heard.

With love and guidance and being self-aware, people can heal from violence everywhere.

It starts from using our voices and stopping the silence, to empower to make positive changes and say no to violence.

# HEARTBREAK

by Tina Hibbs

A heavy heart is what I feel, a place of sadness that feels unreal.

The numbness in fact is hard to take, the pain so bad when you have a heartache.

The loss of love just seems so unfair, no other feeling so hard to bare.

Although I have been here many times before, does not make it easier, in fact it hurts more.

A place I chose not to be in again, is a choice that I make to help my heart mend.

I will love myself and will not permit, another great loss to my heart to begin.

I will set boundaries and not let anyone in, unless they come with love, true love from within.

A lesson to learn, a story to share.

Cause heartache hurts too much, too much to bare.

# UNTITLED

by Faith Turner

It was all my fault  
she's met with a quick halt  
As you slam her to the wall  
Her crumpled body sliding down to fall

Always my fault, you remind me again  
That reoccurring look insane  
As she tries to run  
I wonder when will this all be done?

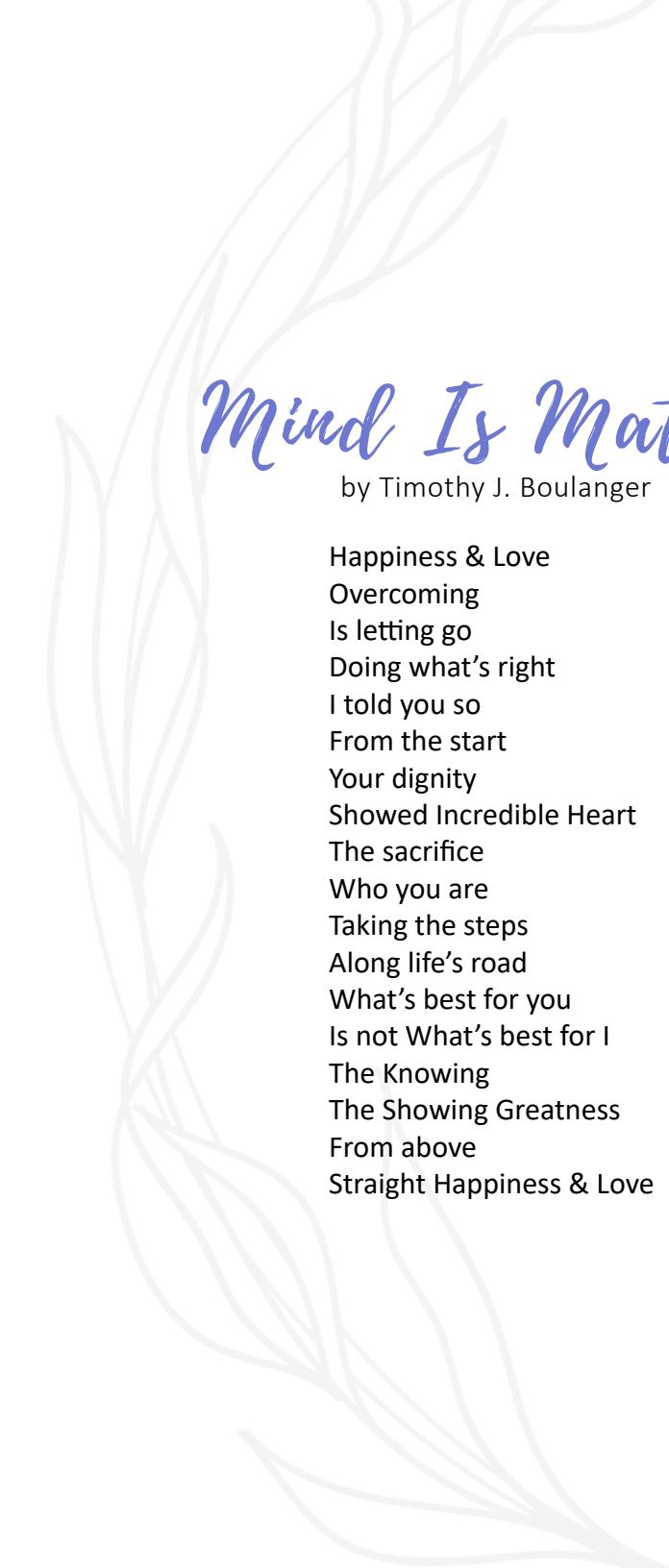
I am the reason yet, I did nothing wrong  
I hold on to my mothers love and song  
Just a little girl in this chaotic world stuck  
As she holds on to a man who doesnt give a fk

I am the reason you argue?  
If I go away, will it stop what you do?  
A child burdened with the blame  
My mother hangs her head in shame

But no. You become the reason.  
I am now a woman of season  
Knowing the fault in your fists  
Hanging on to her wrists

I let you all go  
You didn't win you know  
I walked away  
Into my own story and hope of a brighter day

Just a shadow of each memory  
Pains my heart but helps me to see  
The cycle coming full circle around  
As a shadow of a hand on my face is found



# *Mind Is Matter*

by Timothy J. Boulanger

Happiness & Love  
Overcoming  
Is letting go  
Doing what's right  
I told you so  
From the start  
Your dignity  
Showed Incredible Heart  
The sacrifice  
Who you are  
Taking the steps  
Along life's road  
What's best for you  
Is not What's best for I  
The Knowing  
The Showing Greatness  
From above  
Straight Happiness & Love

# PERSEVERANCE

by Timothy J. Boulanger

Where's that  
Get up & go  
Attitude

The world is  
Not going to wait  
For you

Decisions  
Come From  
The Heart

Knowing what's right  
Knowing what's wrong

I will do this  
I am strong

Why are these  
Feelings & Emotions  
Inside of I  
Always right

Just doing right  
Takes me to  
The next flight

My meaning  
My purpose

My Heavenly Delight



# Sisters

by Anonymous

I still wait for you sometimes at the Cronos Cafe  
Or at least my heart does

When the snow is coming down ever so softly and it's chilly out  
I still remember our laughs

That evening you got to put your knife down  
in a safe place, for one night

We talked about the fat dog - cool cat theory  
Sipping our large hot chocolates, smiling

You told me I was still your number one baby, your first child  
Your sister

So much love, despite it all

What I want you to know is this

Standing on your corner  
Never defined your beauty or worth

You were better than all those men  
Who took advantage of you, hurt you

They never deserved you

You are an Anishnawbe kwe  
Clothed in spirit colours and love from your ancestors

It's never too late to remember who you are

*"An older sister helps one remain half child, half woman."*

# YOU SAID YOU LOVE ME

by T C Martin

You said you love me  
I guess you show it by keeping me from my family

You said you love me  
I guess you show it with a criticizing remark

You said you love me  
I guess you show it by denying me dignity

You said you love me  
I guess you show it with a slap in the face

You said you love me  
I guess you show it with a black eye

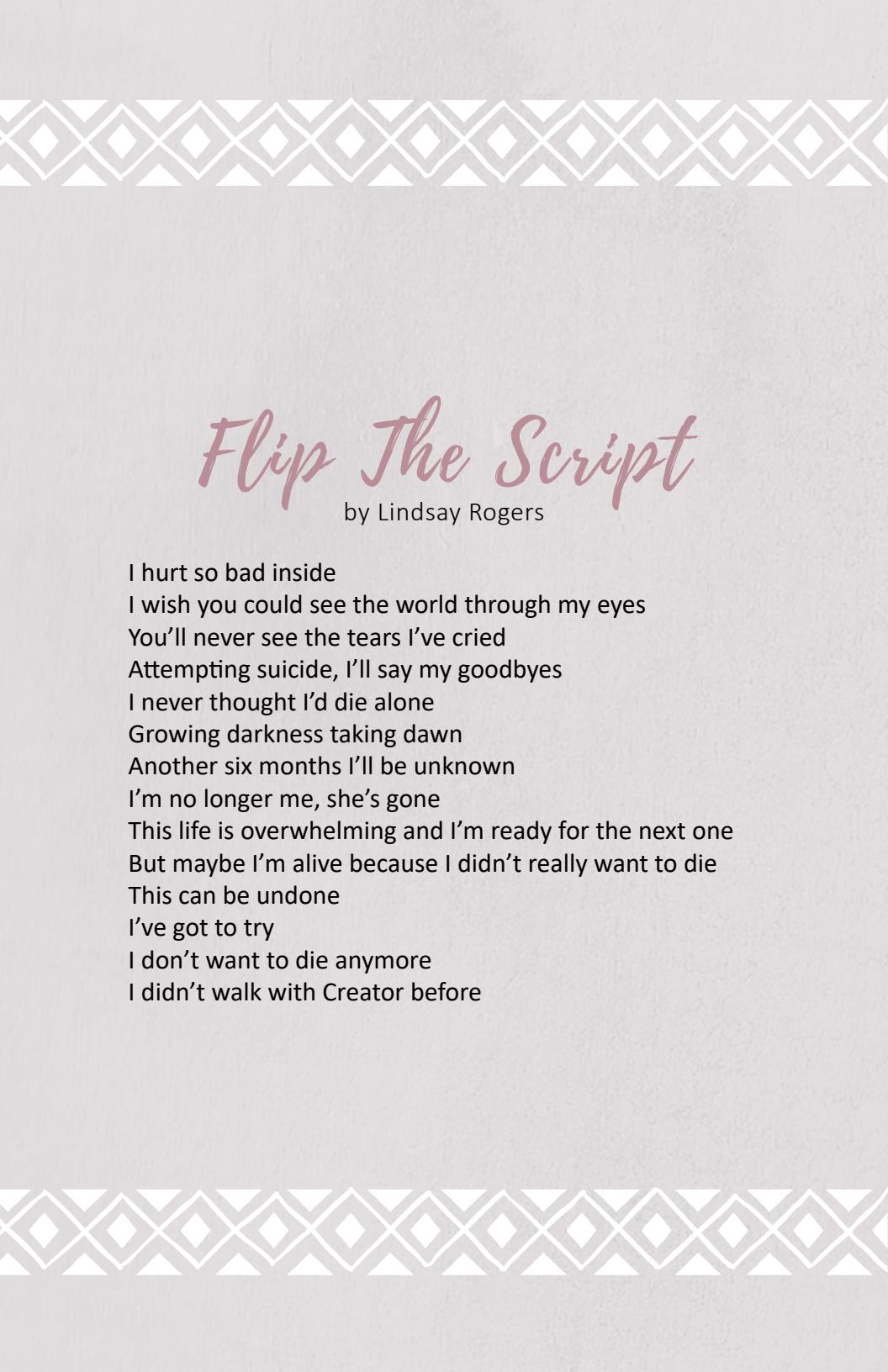
You said you love me  
I guess you show it with a shove down the stairs

You said you love me  
I guess you show it by strangling me to death

# Untitled

by Sheila Santa

I am but a drop of rain  
in a small unnoticed puddle,  
But I made that puddle  
ripple and added to its depth.



# *Flip The Script*

by Lindsay Rogers

I hurt so bad inside  
I wish you could see the world through my eyes  
You'll never see the tears I've cried  
Attempting suicide, I'll say my goodbyes  
I never thought I'd die alone  
Growing darkness taking dawn  
Another six months I'll be unknown  
I'm no longer me, she's gone  
This life is overwhelming and I'm ready for the next one  
But maybe I'm alive because I didn't really want to die  
This can be undone  
I've got to try  
I don't want to die anymore  
I didn't walk with Creator before

# UNTITLED

by Joceline Noblis

Our eyes sees so much  
Our dreams says so much  
Our hearts feels so much  
Our souls know so much  
Miigwetch for these messages



A compilation of poems from the  
Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA)'s

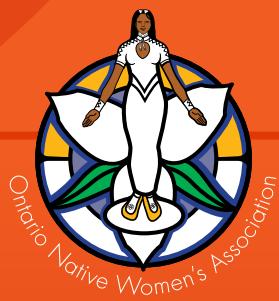
# Strong Hands Stop Violence Poetry Night

(November 25th, 2019)

to raise awareness of violence against women in  
support of the United Nation International Day of  
Elimination of Violence Against Women



#orangetheworld



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