

The Power of the Land

In every Nation, in every Clan
the Elders to a person
whether woman or a man
shared a common truth
one truth to understand,
the Spirit of the people
is equal
to the Power of the land.

The mother of us all
the sacred Mother Earth
is constant in her giving
and perpetual in her birth
in meadows and in fields
where weeds and flowers grow
she conceives the summer showers
and spawns the winter snows.

In forests and in mountains
she gives the birds that fly
every type of wing
then coaxes the wind to join
in harmony when they begin to sing.

In brooks and streams and rivers as they flow
she generates the dreams
and makes the fires glow
and in every creature
whether large or small
she buries gems of wisdom in them all
and in every grain of sand
she plants the knowledge
of the Power of the Land.

And those that honour her creations
and acknowledge her grand design
she gives the temples of the sacred
and the patterns of the divine
and then with certain knowledge
this to understand
that the spirit of the people
is equal
to the Power of the Land

*Duke Redbird
Dedicated to the Awen' Gathering Circle

Dr. Duke Redbird

(born 1939) is an Aboriginal Canadian poet, journalist, activist, businessman, actor and administrator, best known as a key figure in the development of First Nations literature in Canada.

An Ojibwe from the Saugeen First Nation in Southwestern Ontario, he became a ward of the Children's Aid Society at nine months of age after his mother died in a house fire. Raised predominantly by Caucasian foster families, he began writing as a way to deal with the anti-aboriginal racism he faced in schools.

His published poetry collections include *I Am Canadian* (1978) and *Loveshine and Red Wine* (1981). He has also written commissioned work for various public events in Canada, including Expo 67 and the official opening of the Canadian Museum of Civilization. A musical theatre project based on his poetry was performed for Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh during the Silver Jubilee of Elizabeth II in 1977, and Redbird represented Canada at the Valmiki World Poetry Festival in Delhi, India in 1985.

Dr. Redbird read *The Power of the Land* at the official opening of the Awen' Gathering Circle in Collingwood.

