

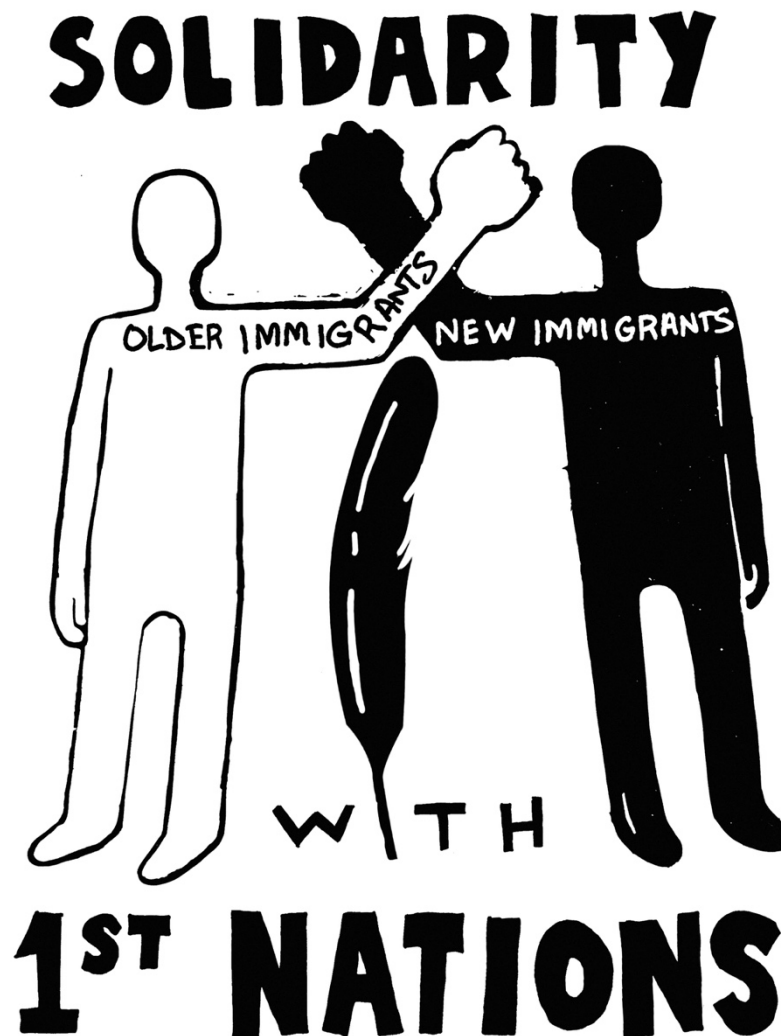
RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Poetry

"No Words for Sinners" and "Jeriah"

by Rebecca Bridges



SOLIDARITY WITH 1ST NATIONS, JOSH MACPHEE (2018) VIA JUST SEEDS

No Words for Sinners

I have no words for sinners.
No songs for them to sing.
I walk in trenches with them.
Our boots sink in the muck.
Make a drive to Luska Road,
past one-story houses.
See a rose in a garden grow
where a woman waters flowers.
Silver slippers slide from
side to side before a
sandstone bungalow.
Go past the mill homes,
or Victorian style houses.
Time tells its stories
in the peeling paint.

Drive on Luska Road
past the chicken shack
down the street from
a nineteen fifties house.
It had changed ownership
long before my drive.
A black car cover hides
a bright green Cadillac.
The saints left here long ago,
but I can hear them sing
of the God, in whose protection,
they find solace in their sleep.

I have time for the sinners,
but none for the saints.
No holy water,
whispered words
wrapped in golden foil
for the fried chicken
after service ends.

I have no words for sinners
for nightmares wait beneath
the shattered silence after
the midnight hour meets

my kids on Luska Road
where they cast off
Cinderella dreams.
"Fuck, you think you know me?"
one of them might question.
I discard the question like a
spade in a game.
I love them
anyways.
They call me a "fool"
for jumping
'tween the fights,
the meltdowns,
and the knife.

The saints weren't there
on the day
when Nia's eyes
had sparkled
as she asked me
to "Please rewind
Cinderella
where she enters
on the staircase."
I see fourteen
transform into a dream
beyond the world
of Luska Road.

Jeriah

Has anyone seen Jeriah
or wonder where he's gone?
Some say he wanders
by the tracks or
in daylight down
Luska Road. Did he
fight with his mom
again? No one really
knows. The boys laugh
and call him "fag,"
but they watch out
if they say it
to his face because
he fights like a
lightweight boxer
who has some spurs
attached to his wrists.
He finds no boy-
-friend on Luska Road
between the green cad-
-illac behind the
chicken shack, or
basketball
hoop at the auto
shop, or the barbershop
with its red, white
and blue candy stripe
barbershop
pole, or the funeral
monument
store that looks like
it's made from the same
brick as the coffee shop
where bankers and
independent artists
with daddy's money
go for a latte. He draws
his maps with
precision of a
pharmacist
organizing pills.

On his good days,
he lines the color pencils
up, and when he picks one,
he colors up
and down. June is
here, and Jeriah's
gone somewhere
down Luska Road.



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