

She Said There Was No Word for Love

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As an adult, she is learning her native language.

Curiously, there is no word for 'love'.

How could that be?

She was told: Love is an action. Love is what you do. Love isn't what you say.

Does that mean they didn't need to talk about it, I wonder...

Does it mean that before Contact, her ancestors' lives were so filled with the reality of love they didn't need to speak of it... because love was never missing?

Does it mean that before colonization, before our gifts of firewater and blankets blessed with smallpox, her ancestors lived with love in their being?

Before we stole their children and incarcerated them in residential schools, in the time when her people lived in harmony with the seasons, with honour and respect for the earth and all forms of life...

which they regarded as relations – even the rocks, the trees, the fish, the bears, the whales...

Before we cut down the sacred trees where their loved ones were buried, the trees that witnessed their lives and provided their clothing, tools, transport, their art and their offerings....

Before we drew invisible lines and told them where they could live,

Before we built our cities, our dams, our mines, and paved our many roads and highways...

Over land where her ancestors' DNA goes back six thousand years.

Before we decided to teach her people they were less than us, and should aspire to become us (but of course, never *really* could)... before we treated them as invisible at best, and dirty, lazy, stupid, suspicious, untrustworthy, worth less –

Oh... imagine what we might have learned from people who were so rich they needed no word for love.

To live in harmony with the earth ... Is that love?

To live within the embrace of the region that gave birth to your lineage, to all your mothers' mothers... Is that to know love?

Forgive me... I don't know so I must ask.

