



ALL AMERICANS

"Anyone who encounters insult and hatred because of her or his differences from a powerful group is bound, sooner or later, to echo a we through the use of I and to draw the line between us and them, we and they."

(Nicole Brossard, "Poetic Politics")

Acknowledgements:

All Americans is a text that was serialized for an installation called "Storybook Story" curated by Luanne Martineau for the Art Gallery of Calgary 14 September - 11 November, 2001. The text is meant to resonate with the weekly installments of three other writers involved in the same project (Skawennati Tricia Fragnito, Ahasiw Maskegon-Iskwew, and Rosemary Nixon). All of our texts were written in response to two panorama renderings of the Minnesota Massacre of 1862 from the Glenbow Museum's permanent collection. The first installment of our texts was due on Tuesday, September 11, 2001. I've used parts of their texts in my own, as well as some text from *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephanson.

We are all americans.

We met on the prairie. We hunt.

The point is, we must send a clear and unambiguous message to the world.

Almost every day, three or four weeks previous to the outbreak, we could see squaws wandering over the prairie in search of the pomme de terre.

We have shut the doors after letting the horses out. Then we all walked out by the back door, leaving everything behind.

Now we watch from the tops of hills, between the grass and trees.

Philander heard some sort of explosion and saw white smoke and then we lost contact with him.

Most of all we were hungry. "That makes us a big stumbling block to Rife's plan."

First we said to everybody to remain calm.

Afterwards, these are acts that we as a species have always been capable of and we as a species have carried out.

Little did we think how soon we should pass through the terrible ordeal that awaited us, this calling card of a global culture.

After all, we had settled in our new home when those who lived near us began to be uneasy.

And so we hunt. We should not be second-guessing.

Someone shouted "We are being hijacked, we are being hijacked!"

How pleased we were that so far we had been spared not only from death, but, worse than that, the lust in which fame and infamy are closely coupled. We were shocked.

We never thought of ourselves as the enemy.

We had had no breakfast, not even a cup of tea before starting.

Despite the crooked deal, we decided to make no mistakes. We would show the world that we could pass this test.

We reached Shakopee about sunset and drove to a hotel.

Long ago we decided to hunt down the folks a) who committed this act, b) who owe us money, and c) who are hoodwinked on difference.

So that is why we were compelled to make our way as best we could through grape vines, prickly ash, gooseberry bushes, and trees.

We have always done this.

I don't think that I can overstate it.

I am terrified.

I have not participated in the plunder

I have no confidence they will stand by any agreement

"I'm at Da5id's house. Where are you?"

I am dead or alive.

I think it was on Tuesday. I remember my mother said they would get together and cover up all the windows with blankets, so no light could go out.

I is one word, and the next.

I have been saddened by thought.

I am not going to change my lifestyle because of these things.

I'm actually more heartened by the support than frightened by the threats.

I am for continuing the war.

I can truthfully say the experience photographed on my youthful mind can never be defaced by time.

I am the name at the top of the list, the ire in prairie.

<http://www.briansbreweriana.com/standardmassacretray.jpg>.

It is my purpose utterly to exterminate ... if I have the power to do so and even if it requires a campaign.

I am a dusky warrior.

I have to say that the stories are in my version.

I could pick all the flowers I wanted.

I had no appetite, yet wanted and was.

All at once the horrible scene of the day before came back to me.

I called in their language, I said "I'm Raven."

I find it amazing that it was this sophisticated and coordinated an attack.

As I am slow in my movements, it will probably take me a long time to reach the end of the journey.

"In an airplane - so I may break up."

I will wait until the dance is over.

But who was guilty?

One who Walks Clothed in Owl Feathers.

Who lost part of his family in a massacre at Lake Shetek.

Who cut the rope. One who Stands Cloaked in Stone.

Who are interested in the facts and who will have nuclear weapons.

One Who Walks by His Grandfather.

Who were guilty of murder or rape, who had been convicted for just being involved in the conflict.

Who's Chaska?

Who is the enemy? Who are themselves victims.

Who smoked (sic) the cigarettes at Radical Radiator?

Who was frozen on TV?

Who was a favored friend and ally of the US and Britain right through his worst atrocities, including the gassing of the Kurds, as people of the region also remember well, even if Westerners prefer to forget the facts.

Who was given his choice and chose One Who Stands on a Cloud, also known as Cut Nose.

One who Shoots As He Walks.

Who is Dmitri Raven?

Who pulled this job?

Who have not the remotest connection to terrorism will die.

"Who's we, dude?"

One who Jealousy Guards His Home.

Who has intimate knowledge of the entire region and direct experience over decades.

One who Stands on Earth.

Who can say?

One who sails.

She says her body is her own business.

She has the pheromones and she has a black hole in front of her eyes.

She doesn't have to spend a penny on the household.

She doesn't have to give a thing to her father or anyone else.

She'll gather up the ones she wants...the others she'll crunch underfoot.

Unless she was famous she would check out.

She continued to eat her cornflakes.

She doesn't follow this simply because her father or husband tells her.

She has a tattoo of the dancing princess Fortunata over her left shoulder blade.

She made her escape. She spit on the powder. Is she crazy?

She refused to obey orders. She was an "army of one."

She decided on the birthday breakfast.

She discovered that she had been walking in a circle for more than two days. She was now four miles from home. She was almost suicidal and the only reason she went on was because of her two children. She could only carry one child at a time so she had to cover each area twice.

She walks a story. She is the length of her opaque skirt.

She drops her purse while she is running. She loses her slip-on shoes.

"My sister is in there! My sister!" she cries.

She will be OK. God will make sure she is OK.

She can no longer put it off. She sheds a tear.

"Why? Was she a programmer?"

And if she chooses to work as miss Universal she's entitled to equal pay, not for equal work, but for work of equal worth.

She has the right to say yes or no.

She slings it over her shoulder like a stiffened corpse.

She waits for no one. She's abandoned for dead.

She is the witness of fighting back.

She is always already with the children.

How old is she? What was she wearing?

She has taken another name.

They flew themselves and if they can do that successfully they can do whatever they want perhaps they're playing hide and seek had they behaved themselves and remained in possession of this immense tract of land, they would have been worth twice as much per capita "How do you know they are maintenance workers and not Rife soldiers in costume? Did you check their ID's?" they chanted "God is Great" and handed out candy they said it would be a huge and unprecedented attack but they did not specify to destroy everything belonging to them and force them out to the plains, unless you can capture them they are to be treated as maniacs or wild beasts, and by no means as people with whom deals, coalitions or compromises can be made a mile down the road they were followed they were preparing defense, yet persuaded by a 'friendly' american named Pawn or Old Cross River they left their refuge they stopped at the inn of Mr. Brown they all checked in a few minutes ago their lives were spared and they were ordered to move they were tables pushed against the walls they imagined stories that never happened they were red foxes and Pontiac fireflies every beer bottle and cigarette butt and they the half-empty cups falling in slow motion like liquid dust before they splashed and shattered all over.

He can't even bloody see you. He could squash you like a bug. "Only one must look," he said to them. He has the right. He's big. His littleness is relative. He thinks he owns the place. He does. He's Santee Dakota. He stuffs you into a huge tire, your butt and elbows wedged in tight, and rolls you round the shop. Because he can. His father is a welder. He swam the cottonwood river and was nailed to the side of the house. He instituted new procedures to check all incoming mail "for potentially harmful agents." He doesn't listen, you're nothing but a girl. "I wouldn't put it past him but we don't have any hard evidence," he said of the man suspected as the leader. He was all passed out but I was watching him out the side of my eye just eating cornflakes when he jerked his head up looking straight at me but his eyes still half closed and his beer still straight up in his hand. He was shot by Indians in disguise. He was yelling at me and snarling so close I thought he was trying to bite me. He was, is, will be frightened. He kept shaking me and yanking me all over. He, also, was taken to Mankato. But then he started to get up on his hind legs to go and see them. He kept yelling stuff right into my face...and didn't make any sense either - but this was weird like he was demanding something or begging me and screaming he'd punch my head in. He is already camouflaged. He said about 40 people were in his office when the letter was opened. He was fetching water from the well. He claims in his lecture that Mrs. Cook witnessed a squaw cutting up a little child but the incident is not recorded elsewhere so this might be an example of him joining the hysteria of his informants and including a non-truth. Even so, he always came back to the story of the medicine man in the joint who told the 'skins' - the Indian brothers - the story of the Great Curse that would never go away because of all the buffalo that had been killed. Four days later he caught up with them by the house of Mr. Brown, on the way to New Ulm. He was flying into Reagan National Airport and couldn't stand or leave his seat during the last 30 minutes of the flight. He was convinced. He led the first and the second attack. He returned to Minnesota in 1863 and was killed by a farmer on July 3rd. He has a digital metavirus. He has many other names and he will look for them. He was nailed to the table. He was nailed to the door. Later, he was acting as scout for Gen. Sibley and his troops and took part in the battle at Wood Lake on September 23rd, 1862, fighting against his own people. He did not prove brilliant leadership and following Little Crow he fled to Canada. "The key thing for the American people is to be cautious," he said. He was living at the Lower Agency, and in spite of his long standing and excellent relationship with the Indians he became one of the first victims of the Massacre. His name is JJ. He is all of Arizona and more than memory will curve this line buried by meaning beyond

You, too.

You see yourself rocking, boat/cradle, cave to swim into.

You've never thought about it.

You and your disaster.

You arrived in America when?

Did you check their ID's?

You as the lubricant of your own architecture.

You grass.

You were asking about that pizza car?

You and your panorama.

You'd better watch where you're going.

You will not stutter for lack of stories.

You represent the day before.

You mean well.

You, here, look at this, just look at this, will you see me, to see you.

You hold the blankets that hold you.

You are here.

You disguise yourself too readily.

You turn the story to the smell of kerosene.

You burn for friendship.

You can be a cruel word.

"Nobody will fuck with you," Raven says.

You take it from anyone on the hill don't be pushed say it first.

You can be between children.

You hear explosions.

You might never remember enough.

You have decided to be a cowboy or an Indian, not a farmer..

You could be a witness.

You still haven't found the needle, let alone the haystack.

You, too, can be collected.

Your name is my name and my name is bones.

You here means I here.

You got a couple ways in there and a face, me no face.

You have to be the hole in the picture.

"You guys are dead," she says.

You are on the last untouched prairie berm.

You may never have to fight a war.

You should report for duty.

You, too.

Your heart will always want the last notation.

You are all americans.

