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**Dearest Canada: A Letter from your Daughter**  
*In Response to an excerpt from Lee Maracle's "My Conversation with Canadians"*

I can hear you, Canada; do you hear me? I am a lost daughter of “your” Indigenous peoples. There was a time when I was proud to be of you; no longer. I have become aware, despite your attempts to silence the darkness in your past, of what you have done. Your actions and inactions have broken me and I am struggling to rebuild my self-worth and reclaim my identity as an Indigenous woman. There was a time when I diligently abided by your narrative: that I was lucky to be out of my primitive culture, with its promiscuous women and violent men, its rampant substance abuse and perpetual poverty. I was *blessed*; I was *lucky*; Those words burn in my brain like a cold flame, inciting both fury and despair.

I did grow up *blessed*. I had a room of my own, with boy band posters and a bunk bed; dinner was always at five o’clock and lunch was always *from Mom, with love*; soccer was on Sundays, no time for church, but always time for a coffee run with Dad. The perfect Canadian family. I was *lucky* to have parents who encouraged and instilled pride in my ancestral heritage. Mom made sure I was enrolled in “Aboriginal Program” in elementary school, so I would have somewhere to escape to and ask all the questions she could not answer. But even then, I did not belong. You see, Canada, I was adopted and the other children were not; I did not know where I was from, the other children did. Once again, O Canada, the divisions placed upon us by your outsider law transferred to my peers; No status, not “Indian”. White Family, not “Indian”. Just alone.

Are you listening now, Canada? I am not the only one. There are thousands of lost children from “your” Indigenous Nations scattered across the provinces. Many of us are trapped in homes that cannot begin to fathom the depths of our confusion or the tears in our hearts. I have been studying you, Canada, and I am disappointed to say that even those whom I hold nearest to my soul cannot begin comprehend the magnitude of what has been done. I feel like you have won, for if my closest friends and family refuse to see the truth in our shared history, then why should anyone else? My curse evolved, not only am I an Indigenous woman without “indigeneity” as outlined in your stereotypes, I am an educated Indigenous woman with no clear path back to culture, land, and identity.

You can see, Canada, many in my life celebrate my assimilation while simultaneously cursing your residential school policy, while crying foul against the sixties scoop. It is the perfect case of innocent ignorance, of being unable to see where the experiences overlap. Instead of seeing an individual robbed of cultural identity, they choose to see someone who has avoided a life of hardship and poverty through being thoroughly exposed to Euro-Canadian society and values. How is that fair, sweet Canada? Our nations were to be partners, walking side-by-side, sharing in our triumphs and failures. Lee Maracle laments,

*...nor do the treaties say we do not get to be ourselves. Most of the treaties attest to our right to hunt and fish. And they accord us education rights. Some promise us homes, others say 'the canoe will never be empty', and at least one says treaty payments will go up as income from the land secessions rise. There could be no hunting or fishing guarantees unless the treaty makers had recognized our original freedom of access to our ancestral lands. They show that we had the absolute right to continue to provide for our lineages. (pg 5)*

Dearest Canada, you are all I have ever known. I wish you were who you made yourself out to be on the world stage; I believed for so long that you were just and kind. Now, I just see a wolf in sheep's clothing, who made fools of a good-natured people, and attempted to steal the future from their next generations. While I may be the perfect example of "taking the Indian out of the child", perhaps your creators could not comprehend that, maybe, the child would try to "take the Indian back".