

A different view of education

(Editor's note: the following poem was submitted by Charlie Mattioli in response to a poem by Sharon Moore titled 'A View of Education..')

A Different View of Education

*Survival, our people cry.
Survival, our culture screams.
Survival, our future depends.
Survival – but what is it?
A return to the past . . .
A withdrawal to within
The best of two worlds . . .
or maybe . . . the Right of Choice.*

*We go to school to be educated,
And much of it is the White way.
We are taught a language and
it is not our own.*

*It unlocks another world,
A bigger one
Of other times,
Of other places,
Of other cultures,
Of other wonders.*

*From ages past, our culture
Has taught us to love the land
And its Ways . . .
The piling clouds that bring the snows;
The plants that are the source of life;
The animals that make new their own kind.
The sun and stars that light the sky;
The seasons and cycles.
Are these not worthy of new insights?
Can we not learn new Truths?
Can old Truths be known in a new way?
Does it matter it comes from the white culture?
Cannot Truth and Beauty be shared by all men?
Cannot two languages make us richer?*

*Our people have frustration and despair.
And drugs and drink and death
Steal our todays and tomorrows.
Our living history dies in the villages;
We long for the Ways of the Past . . .
A clock of cycle and season,
A people who were One,
A simple, uncluttered Life,
A Belonging made by blood and culture.
We long, but our dreams seem fading.*

*In troubled times and great uncertainty
We seek an enemy to cast our stones.
The White man is an easy target,
For with his coming came the end of our Ways.
But a thousand stones thrown will bring us little
But weary arms.
The enemy of our Past is not the Whites –
It is Change.
Even the Whites are endangered by it.*

*The world itself is shaken by it.
And so our hope must be with Education.
Learning the ways of our world
Has been our secret of our survival.
Our world is new and bigger now –
We must learn its ways,
While preserving our heritage.
We must hunt new truths
With the same skill and daring
We have hunted the seal and whale.
And like always in hard times,
We must stay strong in hope and spirit
And brotherhood.*

Charlie Mattioli