WARRIORS

By Hannah Battiste

You have walked for years
Proud of your choices
Proud of your language
Proud of the God you worship

You took a group of people
Not just any people
First Nations people
And you broke them down
Sent One here and Twenty Two there

You didn't take the time to understand
You took away their identity
You took away everything
And buried it in the ground

You watched them suffer
To this day they suffer
And all you do is laugh

You punished the child out of them
You punished the language out of them
You killed the person inside of them

You made something sacred to them vanish
Vanish like the happiness
Vanish like the families
Vanish like the love
They had in their hearts

They call First Nations warriors
Because we are strong

We are infinity
We are special
Some of us are still angry
Some have found forgiveness
Some have found faith
And some still hurt

We all know the stories that lay
Beneath their eyes
We feel the hurt
That you have caused

We do not understand
We do not forget
And it still hurts

But we have each other
Side by side
United as a team
of WARRIORS

* Hannah Battiste is a 19 year old poet from Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. This poem is reprinted with permission from First Peoples Child & Family Review, vol. 10, no. 2, 2015, <http://journals.sfu.ca/fpcfr/index.php/FPCFR>