



This Wound Is a World

Billy-Ray Belcourt

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Part manifesto, part memoir, *This Wound is a World* is an invitation to “cut a hole in the sky to world inside.” Billy-Ray Belcourt issues a call to turn to love and sex to understand how Indigenous peoples shoulder sadness and pain like theirs without giving up on the future. His poems upset genre and play with form, scavenging for a decolonial kind of heaven where “everyone is at least a little gay.”

Billy-Ray Belcourt is the first Indigenous person in Canada to receive a Rhodes Scholarship, and has been named as one of six Indigenous writers to watch by CBC Books. He is from the Driftpile Cree Nation and is a Ph.D. student in the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta.

This Wound Is a World Details

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Author : Billy-Ray Belcourt

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From Reader Review This Wound Is a World for online ebook

Jason says

Uh is this a perfect poetry collection? I kind of think it is.

Liz Mc2 says

The poems I connected with most were the "Oxford Journal" series, unsurprising as they bring Belcourt's academic, theoretical perspective to bear on his experiences of racism. And sex and love. But those poems are not, I think, the heart of this collection. I feel like I need to read it a few more times to begin to get my head around the idea of decolonial love. Heartbreak and sadness that go beyond the personal. Love and sex as ways of remaking the world.

Kye says

I could read this book 100 times and I still wouldn't be sick of it. This hit me in my feelings like a trailer hitch thrown out of a moving car. My new favourite poet!

Amanda says

i chose to read This Wound is a World for several reasons. i'd heard a lot of writers i admire praise the book. the title resonated with me. i kept getting it backwards, "This World is a Wound," which also resonates for me. the poems and the epilogue in this book mix heartbreak with humour, and that combination is also in my bones. i like the frankness about sex and indigeneity. there's such beauty here and such sadness. the two are not mutually exclusive. "grieve is the name i give to myself" in Gay Incantations makes my heart ache. so many of these poems make my heart ache and also fill me with recognition. the speaker of these poems is a kindred.

for years i had read barely any writing by Indigenous writers. some of those reasons were because the work wasn't being published but other reasons are because i didn't specifically seek it out. my first revelation came with the book Without Reservations, an antho of Indigenous writing about the erotic put out by Kegedonce Press in 2003. I went to the Ottawa launch for the book at the Ottawa International Writers Festival and I was overjoyed and rapt by the voices I had never heard before. now thankfully an increasing number of Indigenous writers are being published, so i hope to read and be exposed to as many Indigenous voices as I can, especially kindreds.

in my usual filthy habit of dog-earing pages / poems that i am particularly in love with, i have filled this book with dog ears and marks. #indigenousreads #next150

Brooke says

I started taking photos of my favourite poems in this collection, but I soon realized that it was pointless because I was taking photos of nearly every one. If I had to pick a favourite though, I think I would go with “God’s River”. This is an incredibly powerful collection of poetry, and it’s no wonder it won the 2018 Griffin Poetry Prize.

Heather says

One of the best works of poetry to come out of the country in recent years. A joyful, poignant, painful exploration of indigeneity. Belcourt is a genius at communicating the truths of his own body and its wonderful grace in a broken world.

Lydia says

More people need to read this book.

Belcourt's writing is beautiful and queer and hopeful and just the right shade of melancholy. My favourite poems were Okcupid and The Oxford Journal, which gathered momentum in a stunning way. This collection is tender and there aren't enough adjectives to describe his writing, because it's so layered and complex, but the language used is so pure and unadulterated.

I won't talk about themes, because they need to be felt.

This is a manifesto in the form of a love song.

I want more of his writing already.

Hannah says

honestly stunning. billy-ray belcourt lands in one of my favourite nexusplaces: deep embodiment, queerness, and intertextuality that converses with lineages, both mentor-elders and shadows. these poems are deep, gutwrenching teachings on the impacts of settler colonialism on a body, on love, on future. (the title & many poems in this collection reference ursula k. leguin’s the word for world is forest.)

Jane says

Extraordinary and poignant.

JR says

Absolutely amazing

Vanessa Kay says

Stunningly beautiful

Laura Frey (Reading in Bed) says

The language was a bit academic in places for my liking, made it hard for me to get into. But, I think this would be a great companion to Birdie by Tracey Lindberg. I saw that Belcourt thanked her in the acknowledgements, and it made sense - the whole idea of having a body vs going beyond what's physical is so important in Birdie. I just prefer fiction to poetry in this case.

Neshali says

This was the most beautiful book.

James Murphy says

Billy-Ray Belcourt is a member of the Driftpile Cree First Nations People of Alberta, Canada. So I expected his poetry to contemplate the indigenous world, and it does. When I started the book, though, I didn't expect a volume of love poetry, which it is. Not only that but homosexual love poetry describing lonely connections made in Alberta juke joints while a desolate winter wind blows the spaces between the buildings free of trash, or the kind made through online contact. These poems sing that experience but also the ghost of First Nations lives still close to the earth and still in possession of a domain of words celebrating indigeneity but expressed through the hard bodies of men. These poems are wonderful, breathtaking.

This Wound Is a World won the Canadian Griffin Poetry Prize in June, and it deserves it. I thought this impressive.

Jessica says

This collection of poetry moved and astounded me. I've never seen language and form used so intuitively in a collection of poetry. With every revisit I'm finding something else I hadn't noticed before, another gem to hold onto and unpack. This book, to me, is a piece of home that I can take with me everywhere. This collection is where "history lays itself bare," love answers heartbreak, and a world glimmering with decolonial love and queer, indigenous possibilities is split open. This is poetry at its brightest. It is electric, profound, necessary work. Belcourt bends genre, challenging the cage of colonialism through a poetics of intimacy. It is collection unafraid to ask questions, exploring grief, desire, queer sexuality and indigeneity with tender honesty. Belcourt asks us to consider the ways indigenous bodies can be simultaneously unbound and "rendered again"; how worlds can be made and unmade. These are poems to be returned to again and

again with reverence. A must-read.
