

**nimihtātēn – I grieve (From: *Burning in this Midnight Dream* by Louise Bernice Halfe,
Canada's new Parliamentarian Poet Laureate)**

I stretch the boundaries of my skin
and crucify the edges
so I have something to cling to.
A hunchback inhabits my body.
Sixty winters grip my wrists.
I've carried the turtle's shell;
it protected me far too long.
I peel it off and take a toddler's step
on this red road.

Now others ask me to turn my
skin inside out.
They want to know
how I survived this hot-coal trail.
I prefer to keep silence as my guest.
I want to keep my dead
from spilling. I don't want to deal
with their writhing wounds.
I walk behind them
trying to read their trailing guts.