

French-Michif

Meghan Young

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In a conversation about language with a Métis man from St. Laurent he said
“I speak broken French”

It is not broken
It is rare
A perfect dialect of a language almost forgotten
formed through our ancestors’ resistance
To the colonizer
To the policies
To the pressures

Your language is a collector's item
It has been stolen
It has been studied
And now it is being shared
Back with those in which it belongs
to the children
to the youth
to the Elders

The survival of our mother tongue
Is beautiful
A bud of life after a dark period
the wind has brought our words back
through the prairies it whispers each syllable

To our past
To our present
To our future

It is not broken
I fear you have undervalued your voice
this language holds strength
Stories that were meant
To be shared
To be heard
To be revived

It is not broken French
It is whole
It is geographically distinct
Every vowel, every sound
Is sensational
Is survival
Is French-Michif

Biography

Meghan Young (she/her) is a Red River Métis woman from Winnipeg, Manitoba. She is Métis through her maternal side with ancestral connections to St. Norbert, St. Vital, and St. Boniface, Manitoba. Meghan has an undergraduate degree in Indigenous studies and is currently pursuing her Master of Arts in Indigenous Studies at the University of Manitoba. Her research focuses on urban Métis youth identities and how youth are politically organizing. She currently works for the Community Engaged Learning department at the University of Manitoba, facilitating a land-based education program, and is the co-chair for the Manitoba Métis Federation regional youth advisory council.
