

Building My Longhouse **by Nancy Arthur Best**

Leaving behind resentment, anger, and painful memories
of scooped up children, residential schools, beatings and
murders...

Children robbed of their families,
their culture, their mother-tongue

Forced into uncomfortable Colonial clothes
instead of worn leather garments softened by chewing,
and beaded by grandmothers and aunties,
a pictorial history of heritage,
passed on in ways unfathomable to settlers.

It's time to build anew,
a home of sharing traditions and stories,
seeking reconciliation, passing the pipe of peace.

Creator wishes for all beloved children to live in harmony,
with respect and open hearts, and eyes,
hands breaking arrows and disarming weapons,
clean water and abundant foraging for medicines.

Working towards reconciliation,
a sharing instead of supremacy.

Respecting each other's stories and traditions,
ceremonies and spirituality.

Seeking a time of walking in another's moccasins
to find how that feels, connecting with dreams,
aspirations and longings.

We are more alike than not alike,
all my relations longing for a place in my longhouse
where there are no labels, unneeded because we are all
relations.

May all our ancestors dance with joy in the rippling aurora
borealis, unceded territory and a place for all.

Meegwetch Creator.