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Life as a clock

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Article abstract

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An Interdisciplinary Journal

*Honoring the Voices, Perspectives and Knowledges
of First Peoples through Research, Critical Analyses,
Stories, Standpoints and Media Reviews*

Life as a clock

Hayley Harder

Abstract

This slam poem is a reflection on 150-plus years of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada and how this has affected Indigenous and non-Indigenous children, youth, and families.

Tick-tock, tick-tock, I'm a constant, cruising, clicking clock.

Hands are forever moving, never stopping;

moving even as a twelve-year-old girl is abducted from the sidewalk beside her school.

Taken for her skin colour and her ethnicity;

taken for being Aboriginal.

Her smile was a package or pure joy tied with a bright ribbon.

At school she was good at math, praised for her ability to subtract.

No one ever thought that her life would be subtracted from theirs.

Tick-tock, tick-tock, still a moving clock.

I keep going forever and ever,

even when a thirty-three-year-old Aboriginal woman is found dead on the side of the road.

She'd been missing for two weeks, my hands kept moving.

Her family wept every night, my hands kept moving.

Her child didn't understand where Mommy went, my hands kept moving.

And now she is proven gone, and my hands still keep moving.

Time heals they say,

but I can see they are wrong.

Tick-tock, tick-tock, I am a relentless clock.
Twenty-seven when she was last seen, forty-three she should have been.
My baby girl, her mother still wails,
was born into a wretched world.
If only my ancestors had the plain-paper complexion of those who took our home,
then my baby girl would be here with me.
Time heals nothing.
Time can't bring anybody back to life,
Time can't find a little girl who disappeared walking back from school.
Time heals nothing, it keeps moving forward like a disease.
Tick-tock, tick-tock, why can't I just stop?
I've seen too many go,
for all the wrong reasons.
Humankind is a beast, that sneers, that leers, that wipes the blood off its hand in a smear.
Be different is a motto they are told,
but as soon as you aren't different in the same way as everyone else,
you are slaughtered.
Simply for the beliefs you hold, and the ancestors that created you,
you are slaughtered.
Humankind is a beast.
Tick-tock, tick-tock, I keep ticking on.

Forever moving, never stopping, I keep ticking on.
No matter how many women go missing,
no matter how many meet their death too soon based off of their identity,
I keep moving.
Aboriginal women,
missing and murdered;
gone forever, no matter the efforts any government makes.
They are gone.
Tick-tock, tick-tock, my circular body never tires.
Time keeps moving, shown on my dull face,
and still there is no change.
Make it stop, just make it stop.
Missing and murdered Aboriginal girls
is still a problem, and yet humankind is a beast
and the problem just won't stop.
It keeps growing, like a flower in direct sunlight,
But it is ugly and gnarled with thorns sticking out of every surface.
Tick-tock, tick-tock, I am a forever moving clock.
Time is moving always,
And yet for these women,
Time stands still, time has stopped,
Tick-tock, tick-tock.