

Resilience. Marcie Rendon



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Marcie Rendon is an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation, author, playwright, poet, and freelance writer. As a community arts activist, Rendon supports other native artists / writers / creators to pursue their art. She is a speaker for colleges and community groups on Native issues, leadership, and writing. Rendon is an award-winning author of a fresh new murder mystery series, and has an extensive body of fiction and nonfiction works. The creative mind behind *Raving Native Theater*, Rendon has also curated community performances such as *Art Is... Creative Native Resilience*, featuring three Anishinaabe performance artists, premiered on TPT (Twin Cities Public Television) in June 2019. Rendon was recognized as a 50 over 50 Change-maker by MN AARP and POLLEN in 2018. Rendon and Diego Vazquez received a 2017 Loft Spoken Word Immersion Fellowship for their work with women incarcerated in county jails.

“Resilience”. *Living Nations, Living Words – online map and recordings from 47 contemporary poets Anthology*, edited by poet laureate Joy Harjo, WW Norton, 2020 © Marcie Rendon

Resilience

My mother, in 7th grade, ran from a South Dakota boarding school back home to White Earth in an age before Interstate highways, cell phones or google maps. That determination and love of life is resilience.

A Native father sitting in Perkins, after working a late shift, with a two-year-old toddler in a high-chair, explains that the baby’s mother showed up at his door with a child he didn’t know existed and said, “Here, I’ve done this for two years, I’m done. He’s yours.” He didn’t hesitate to do the right thing. That is resilience.

The woman who lost her child to child protection because she was caught in the cycle of addiction and street life. Sent to prison. Who spent five years getting clean, going to meetings, petitioning the court against all odds to regain custody of her child. That is resilience.

The poet, who grew up with a not-so-easy life in Oklahoma. Resilience gave her words to write, now US poet laureate. Resilience also gave her music in her heart that pours out of her saxophone, healing hearts of listeners.

A Native Artist living on the street collected discarded lipstick and eyeshadow to create gallery-worthy paintings. Creating beauty out of beauty-discards. That is resilience.

My father, along with thousands of other fathers, for more generations than we want to remember, sat alone, not changing residence, waiting, waiting, waiting for children to return. That is resilience. Men who went to prison – who somehow came out and started businesses, who raised families and took jobs way below their skill level; who became sweat lodge runners, sun dancers and pipe carriers. That is resilience.

The children, raised in families outside the culture, who followed their heart’s spirit back home – facing rejection, ridicule, identity-questioning – but staying, becoming one with the community, one with their tribe. That is resilience.

Mothers - who, with or without shame, have stood in line at Salvation Army for cheap toy giveaways, food shelf lines, who sit in welfare offices again and again because it is one way to keep the family going. That is resilience.

Our relatives who never hesitate to go to war, wars that are never ours. Code talkers, tunnel rats, snipers, those who walk point, medics. They die fighting because that is what we do. Or they come home and hide the pain as best they can and carry flags at Grand Entry. Or not. That is resilience.

People who give more than they get. Mothers who love their children, fathers who stay.

Grandparents who babysit, even in a wheelchair.

We create beauty out of scraps. Hold cars together with duct tape. Work jobs and sell beadwork for cash to 'have a little extra'. Make frybread even though we know it isn't good for the diabetes but because it's good for the spirit.

Resilience is making decisions that benefit the whole instead of just the individual. It is getting up and putting one foot in front of the other, even when you don't want to. This is our resilience.

→ Marcie Rendon Explores the Resilience of Native People.

TPT Originals

[HERE](#)

what if I never said....

what if i never said another thing
but sat silently
smoking filterless cigarettes
drinking colombian coffee
holding grandchild after grandchild
on a lap ever leaner, ever bonier with age

what if i never wrote another word
but filled my heart with beauty
sat silently wrapped in fog
while thunderstorms shook me to the bones
and lightning currents
connected brainwave/thought waves
to spirits dancing on the shoreline

would my silence drive you crazy

More about Marcie Rendon

- Author website: <https://www.marciarendon.com/>
- "[A conversation with Marcie Rendon](#)", with Jeff Berglund. Waxwing Magazine.