

Teachin' Books Episode 1.1 - Interview with Jade McDougall / Marilyn Dumont's "Letter to Sir John A Macdonald"

[Music "Homer Said" by [Dyalla Swain](#)]

00:10: Hey! This is Teachin' Books, a podcast all about the ways people teach, learn, and work with literature. I'm Jessica McDonald, and on today's episode, I am talking to my dear friend Jade McDougall, PhD candidate in English and instructor in English and Indigenous Studies for the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program at the University of Saskatchewan.

We'll be chatting a little bit about a poem that Jade reads and that she teaches in her undergraduate university classes. It's called "Letter to Sir John A MacDonald" by Marilyn Dumont. If you haven't read the poem before, it is a short one, so I'll pop a link to it in the show notes so you can check it out before listening to our chat. Once you've done that, come back and join me to listen to and learn from Jade. Let's get to it.

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[Music: "Homer Said"]

01:21 JESS: Actually, that is a good segue: so, this is weird, because we have known each other for like a decade, but can you just tell the listeners a little bit about yourself?

JADE: Yeah, absolutely. So, my name's Jade. I was born in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and raised in Saskatoon most of my life. I'm a member of Métis Nation Saskatchewan, and right now I'm at the U of S as a Ph.D. candidate. This is my last year, fingers crossed, one way or the other! Super exciting stuff. And right now I'm just sort of working as a sessional lecturer in English and Indigenous Studies.

JESS: Lovely! It's so nice hearing about you from like a formal kind of introductory perspective. I like it. So yeah, what are we going to talk about today? What is the text that we're talking about?

JADE: So the text that I chose was "Letter to Sir John A McDonald" by Marilyn Dumont. It's a poem. It's pretty short. It's from her collection *A Really Good Brown Girl* from 1996.

JESS: Yeah, so I should note that we'll put the link to the poem -- because I know it's available online -- so we'll put that link in the show notes. If folks want to pause now and go read it or, you know, read it at some point, then the link will be there in the show notes for them. So just really briefly, do you want to give a sense of sort of what the poem addresses? I mean the title is pretty revealing of its content, but...

JADE: Absolutely. So Marilyn Dumont is a Métis and Cree poet. I believe she's from Alberta. So the poem, really, is written and structured as a poetic letter to -- you guessed it! -- Sir John A Macdonald. And she sort of, I guess, is addressing him, and there's this repeated kind of phrase: "I'm still here and halfbreed." And I think that's the real underlying kind of current of this, right? She's sort of addressing all of these waves and waves of Indigenous resistance that have, I guess, taken place in

these territories since and especially around John A Macdonald's interventions, right, with the railroad and whatnot.

JESS: Makes sense. And I think we're going to get into some of the details of those resistances, or just the details of the poem, as we go along. So what, like, kind of class are you teaching this in usually, or what's your teaching context I guess for this poem?

JADE: Yeah, so the sections I've taught this in have been 200-level Indigenous literature classes, that's through Indigenous studies and that was through SUNTEP, which is -- now let me see if I can remember the acronym properly. I believe it's Saskatoon... no, Saskatchewan, sorry, Urban Native Teacher Education Program. So, it's largely Métis students, which is great. And I've also taught it in English 110 through ITEP, which is largely First Nations students.

JESS: Gotcha. Okay, so for folks who don't know the sort of course numbers, these are U of S, I guess? Are these University of Saskatchewan course codes -- like 100-level, 200-level? But they're essentially just recognizing, like, first year and second year. Is that kind of the sorts of students -- first and second year?

JADE: Yeah.

JESS: Okay, so first- and second-year context. So, I guess initially, like, what led you to teach this text?

04:50 JADE: So, for me, the thing that I'm always sort of on the lookout for are poems that I actually enjoy reading. I'm not really a poetry person, actually. I'm pretty uncomfortable teaching poetry. It's not really my jam in general. I mean, I've actually found, now that I've been teaching various poems for a couple of years, that I am enjoying it more than I thought I would, or than I have historically enjoyed poetry when I was studying it as a student. So, that could say something more about the way these poems were taught to me than it does actual engagement with them. So, I was initially pretty uncomfortable with the idea, but of course Marilyn Dumont is fantastic and this poem just really stood out to me, and there's so many ways into it that I think I could make really relevant for my students. So, that's kind of where I was going with that is just... I liked it.

JESS: Oh my god, that's so important. Like, I don't know if you got the same advice that I did, but "growing up" or early on in this sort of academic career, I remember people saying "don't research anything that you like too much" and "don't teach anything that you like too much." And I bet that you can guess the kind of people who said that to me! But it's just like... why? Like, I would love to share things that I find important, share texts that I find, like, enjoyable or powerful, and I don't know.... did you get that advice?

JADE: I feel like I might have gotten that exact same advice. We might have gotten that advice from the same person, for all I know, because we've been in the same department for many years. So that'll have to be OTR. But yeah, I feel like that's such a common thing in academia is to sort of -- you have to hold yourself at such a distance from the work you do, which, to me, is antithetical to the

work that I do and to the teaching I do, as well. I actually really -- if you can get your students to like and be invested in the text they're studying, your job is going to be a hell of a lot easier, right?

JESS: Totally. And it's -- like you said, it's almost... like, you said "antithetical to," but I'm thinking it's almost *unethical* to me. Like, I'm thinking of this idea that "I have to teach things that I can, you know, objectively detach myself from, that I'm not too passionate about." That comes from, like, a weird and old and still very embedded school of thinking about teaching that I don't think is very ethical. Like, this idea that we have to be detached from what we teach. That's actually so not how I teach, I don't think that's how you teach, and it's important in a lot of ways not to detach ourselves from what we teach and try to pretend like we're emotionless when we teach, too, or that things or texts don't affect us emotionally.

JADE: Exactly -- like there's some fictitious place of neutrality that we can teach this from, which is...

JESS: Garbage. Bullshit.

JADE: Bullshit.

JESS: Totally. Okay, so I guess this is where we get into the nitty gritty, if you wish. So what do you usually focus on when you teach this text? And hopefully by now folks will have maybe checked out the poem or paused this to go see. It's a pretty short poem, as Jade said, so it's easy to read while you pause this. But yeah, what do you focus on? Or, if you like, you can just take me through, like, one of your lessons, or...

JADE: Absolutely. So, usually, this often comes a bit later in the term when we've already actually talked about some of the things that crop up. So, we've usually often talked about the Northwest Resistance, for example, because that's clearly going to be underpinning a lot of this text. So, we've already sort of seen texts that have talked about it, addressed it, right? So we're familiar, in that way. And then from there, really, the way in for me is all of these allusions that Dumont is making: that's where I get them to start.

JESS: I was just going to say, it's such a richly filled poem. There's so many references. So yeah, do you want to talk more about that?

JADE: Yeah, absolutely. So I've taught this text twice now. So, it was interesting. The first time was the 200-level class of Métis students. And I feel like we had some good discussions around it, but I don't think I had structured my lecture all that well in the sense that I don't know that it was all that interesting or thoughtful. It was sort of, like, okay well let's talk about all of these references, and it was more of a lecture-style than anything else. So I think we got where we needed to go, but maybe no further. Or I don't know that the students really connected with the text in the way that I did. Which is fine, too, right?

09:45 JESS: That's allowed... I guess so.

JADE: But then when I took it over to my ITEP class, my 100-level with First Nations students, we had such a great time with it. And I totally restructured the lecture, and we had a really, really, really productive discussion on it. So rather than me telling them “here’s what all of these references kind of relate to” -- and it can be a little bit disconnected. It’s hard to structure that kind of discussion. I sort of just sent them off and said, well, “You can see that there’s all these references kicking around. If you don’t have a computer with you, or a smartphone or whatever, sit next to somebody who does, or pair up, or get into whatever groups you want, or do it by yourself if you want, I don’t really care. And just do some Googling. See how many of these you can identify and see how many of these you can unpack or find out a little bit more about. And then we’ll come back in twenty minutes and we’ll talk about it. We’ll do it together.” So I had a few blank slides, just in my PowerPoint, that I opened up and we just literally put it in as a group, all these different references. And if somebody missed something, of course, I had my own notes that we could loop back and fill in the blanks.

JESS: So, that participatory learning experience sounds like a really engaging way to get into this poem. But can you just name or just speak to a couple of the references that they might have been dealing with, or that they did go find and look up in the poem?

JADE: Yeah, absolutely. So we definitely started to unpack the railway, right? And addressing the CPR specifically -- Canadian Pacific -- and the project that was a part of, right? We see this referenced here: “from sea to shining sea.” And there’s a lot we could unpack there, in terms of what that is a reference to, the kinds of ideologies embedded in this idea of Westward Expansion, the fact that it was so crucial -- that railway played such a crucial role in suppressing the Resistance. The idea that that became sort of the political motive for getting this, you know, industrialist, capitalist expansion approved, right? So there was so much to discuss there.

If I kind of go into that little second, I guess, stanza: of course, Meech Lake. Most of my students were not even born when all that went down. So we talked about that. I actually cued up a few news clips because I feel that those can be useful. So we talked about: what does that even refer to? And this reference, “after Meech Lake and / one no-good-for-nothing-Indian / holdin-up-the-train” -- so it’s like, who is that, right? And so we kind of had to go okay, well, who is this kind of central figure around Meech Lake Accord and around halting that? So we talked about Elijah Harper. We talked about this train symbolism kind of recurring, and now the train means something else a little bit, right? So, he’s holding up the train -- was he actually holding up a train? Well, no, but what does the train symbolize, right? That kind of thing. Yeah.

JESS: So you go through, you have them sort of look up these references first, or try to find out what *are* the references being made here, or what are the allusions. And then you said you come together, and on sort of blank PowerPoint slides, you start typing things in. And then, so what's the - I guess what's the.. If not next step, then how do you bring that all together? Or is that kind of where it ends? Like you... yeah, how does it come together at the end?

JADE: So then we kind of... we take a look at all of these kind of references, and usually I’ll kind of ask for a student to throw something out there, right? And then we’ll kind of just start to dig into it with certain questions like, “okay well, how does that relate back to when she keeps saying ‘Riel is

dead / but he just keeps coming back,' well how does that, you know, keep happening? how do we see these patterns recurring time and time again?" And so we look at all these kind of different moments in Indigenous activism and resistance, and then we kind of I guess return to the language at that point. So, we've gotten this big picture, we've filled in all of this context, and then, you know, we've kind of tied it all together thematically. And then we get into the language and say okay, well, she keeps kind of repeating some of these phrases, right? These phrases keep coming back as well. So, why is that? Which ones do you notice? What kind of things do you notice repeating themselves? And hey, why that? Why that specific phrase, right? So then we started getting into this, you know, "I'm still here" and whatever else.

JESS: I was just going to say, like the phrase "we're still here" and "I'm still here" and "we're still here." That's the one that stands out to me, especially in the context of what it sounds like you're sort of anchoring topic is, which is Indigenous activism and resistance, that *still here, still here*. A sort of powerful articulation of ongoing presence, you know.

14:58 JADE: Yeah, absolutely. I was just going to say, too, there's also this strong... She starts with "I'm still here," and then it's "we're still here," "we're still here," right? So there's this sense of that wider community, wider movement, wider solidarities, right? Which I think is also -- we kind of talk about that, a little bit, as well.

JESS: Yeah, like the switch from first-person singular to first-person plural pronouns, which I feel like that's always so useful to get into in literary studies -- like, switches in pronouns and what they mean. So, I don't know, have you discovered or have you found that there were any challenges in teaching this particular text? I know you kind of talked about the difference between the first class and the next class, and maybe that's what it comes down to -- just your different approaches. But other than that, anything you wanted flag in terms of challenges with this text?

JADE: I think that starting with the allusions made it a lot easier for me because I think those are concrete, they're tangible, right? The other thing that we can do, right, is expand that discussion to, "well, how does this remind you of stuff that is happening right now?" That kind of stuff. But the actual getting into that language, I feel then it starts to get really granular, and that's where you could potentially -- if you're not really paying attention to tying it all together each step of the way -- sometimes when you start getting into that really, like, literary analysis-type stuff, students can sometimes check out a little bit, right? So we had to keep kind of really coming back to... And I think this is important in literature generally, as well, like not just with this poem, but keep bringing it back to those high-level concepts. To show that it's... like, the fact that she's using a ton of comma splices. Why would she be doing that, right? Like, let's talk about it. It's like this unending sentence, right? And she makes reference to, like, the "long sentence of its exploitation," this whole... It all ties together thematically, right? So I feel like that was useful, in a lot of ways, but yeah you might find that, I guess, a bit of a challenge. Or if they really don't know to recognize, to even look for certain allusions either, right?

JESS: It sounds to me like the scaffolding -- I don't know if that's really the word that you would use or that we should use in this context -- but you said, you know, you do position this text later on in the semester, so do you think that because of maybe the challenges of looking at "why are there so

many commas?" or "why is the comma splice being used in these particular ways?" or there are so many allusions and it's a really richly filled poem, do you think that having it towards the end of the semester, when students have developed these skills, is important? Is that sort of important to your approach to this poem?

JADE: I thought so, simply because then, like, you have things that you can refer back to like, "hey, so we talked about this in our grammar unit? What is that when we have a sentence that should have a period, maybe, but doesn't?"

JESS: Oh my god, those moments when the grammar units or the grammar teaching and the literary teaching come together, it's like yessss!

JADE: And I had my students sort of looking around, and then one of them was like "I think it's a comma splice?" And it's like yeah, that's awesome! You never thought you'd have to actually remember that, but here we are! I think that could be the true challenge of it, is if you don't really have class engagement, like if they don't really participate all that much, it's going to be really hard to sustain that lecture. Because it's sort of like, okay you guys do some finding out and you come to me, and you're gonna... They're really going to build the lesson themselves through what they find and through being willing to then contribute. So, if we're going to talk about scaffolding, too, this is not the only reason I think it's important to build a really strong rapport with your students, but it's moments like that when they become willing to put in, you know, that extra engagement.

JADE: Right. And actually this is related to the next question I was going to ask you, so maybe we should just go there now, which is, like, how do students respond to the text? But it sounds like, you know, this is a challenging text that you put towards, you know, nearer to the end of your semester, your course. Does that mean that they're often times intimidated at first, but by the end they like it? Or what kind of responses have you gotten about this?

JADE: Yeah, so that's I think... Usually, the first response is confusion: "what's going on here? What's this poem about? I didn't really get it." I did have students tell me that: "hey, did you like that poem?" "I didn't really get it." Okay, well, we'll hopefully get there, right? And then, once again, with that 110 class, you had students saying, "I really, really liked that." And I think that positionality does play into it a lot, right? Because this whole idea of that re-affirming, right? Like, "we're still here," "we're still here." And I always foreground that this is a really, like, defiant statement, right? You can see, when you're looking around the classroom, you can see students in the back, like, "Yeah, we're still fucking here!" Like, that's awesome, right? That this poem is really, actually eliciting an emotional response, you know? This isn't just, like "oh, we're just going to have fun playing around with these comma splice," right? It means something.

20:20 JESS: So, in particular, you're talking about the specific audiences of students you've had, or the specific groups in SUNTEP and in your Indigenous Studies courses?

JADE: Yeah, so these are Indigenous students sections.

JESS: Yeah, so the audience of the sort student group is playing into student responses to this text because it can be so empowering to hear, you know, “we’re still here” or to say “we’re still here” out loud.

JADE: Yeah, and I think there were a few settler students in my SUNTEP section -- they got an exemption or they were an override or something like that -- but that group is really self-selecting, right? So, it might be a bit tougher in like your open 110, like a mass, jumbo section or something like that, right? Where you’ve got... you know, you can’t really establish that same close rapport. Because the sections I teach are pretty small as a rule, right? And a lot of the students, most of the students know each other from their other classes, too. So, having that really tight-knit classroom group, it just emphasizes for me the value of that, because you get much more of an atmosphere of trust and people feel like they’re okay with throwing an idea out there.

JESS: Mmhmm. And that seems like it’d be really useful for your specific activity that you lined up, where they, you know, kind of paired into pairs or into groups and then were kind of on their own in terms of trying to initially figure out the references and the allusions, right? So I feel like that works so much well if the students are already a tightly-knit group, and are familiar and comfortable with each other and that sort of thing.

So, for other educators who might not be teaching in your same context, who might not be teaching in the SUNTEP program, or in Indigenous Studies, for other educators possibly wanting to work with this text, is there anything you’d recommend or any tips you have?

JADE: Yeah, like... for me, one of the main things that you’ve gotta really do is be adaptable if you’re gonna do something similar to this because you don’t really know all the different suggestions that are getting thrown out there. And I did get a few that I had never considered as being potential, like, allusions that were being made. But we managed to work our way back to it, to where... Or maybe kind of misidentified a specific reference, but then it was like, “well, you know, let’s work with that,” right? And to say, “okay well we could kind of keep this, put a pin in this,” and we managed a way to kind of figure out a way back to it. But I think that you need to definitely be super adaptable, try to be at least somewhat comfortable knowing all of those historical contexts because they play so much into each other. You’re going to be moving back and forth, trying to identify those connections, those parallels. You’re gonna wanna probably get really really comfy with that aspect of the material, beyond the literary stuff.

JESS: Mmhmm. Yeah and I find, like... It sounds like you find the same thing that I do, which is there’s such a balance between, like, okay I know what these are references to and allusions, but you also want to be sort of welcoming to students’ thoughts that they might allude to other things. And of course there’s always like fun and creative and really generative possibilities that can come from that, when students suggest, like, “this is actually a reference to this.” But then there are also times when you’re like, well, when they say Meech Lake, they actually do mean this thing that I’m talking about. So, it’s like a balance that I find tricky to have between, like, being a little bit more, like, strict or putting up boundaries around what a reference could mean, because you want them to know the history that’s being referred to, but then also being open and able to, like you said, maybe take your

suggestion and come back to something productive or some productive reading of the text based on students' suggestions.

JADE: And like, not shutting it down, either, like "Okay that's not right." It's like, "Okay, that's what that reminds you of? Okay, cool, let's write that up there because that could be something that you might, you know, take from this. What else could we..." you know? And kind of just manage to, or "Oh that reminds me of this other thing..." you know? And kind of try to work towards it.

JESS: Totally. And also because, like, readers make meaning, too. So if, you know, let's say "from sea to shining sea" -- that line in the poem -- if that takes a reader somewhere else that nobody has ever really thought of or heard of, that's also... That can be enveloped into the meaning of the poem and can be part of the poem's sort of like interpretive history eventually, right? So yeah.

Well I guess this kind of goes back to, I guess, larger topics that you said this poem addresses for you, or that you focus on: Indigenous activism and resistance. But I was just going to ask, especially in the wake of more recent John A Macdonald statue activism, if that real-world activism sort of played a part in your discussions of this text, or if you think maybe that real-world activism around the statues will play a part in the future of how you teach this text?

25:26 JADE: Yeah, definitely. So we definitely did talk to... That was less, like, centered in the discussion than our actual conversations around, like, the railway, because this was the time when that rail blockade was happening. So it was like "hey, wait a minute, like holdin' up the train! Like, this idea of you're halting progress, you're halting the expansion of industry," right? And it's like "ohhh! Hmmm!" You know? So we really made a lot out of that.

And then we also of course talked about John A Macdonald as this figure, right? Because this was still a part of the conversation, the wider national conversation, but of course this year, that's kind of the more immediate context that we could potentially kind of look at. And I'll be teaching some other texts that talk about John A Macdonald as well, right? So we'll have like maybe a class where we kind of look at this poem, and maybe the next day we'll look at something else and put them into conversation with each other. Because this is such a... For whatever reason, right, people still feel the need to defend this memorialization of this figure, right?

JADE: Yes, if they could see your face when you said "figure," I feel like the feeling would be even more there. Yes, this "figure."

Okay, so in the past you've taught this text in relation to real-world activism going on at the time, which makes sense in the context of how big the railroad figures here, or the railway figures in this poem, and what's been happening in 2020. My larger question -- and I actually just wrote this down right before our interview started because I've been thinking about it and it's kind of a heated question -- is literature activism? Like, this is obviously a poem that represents so many different moments of organizing, activism, resistance, that sort of thing. But is this poem itself activism? Like...

JADE: Oh my. So I mean, to me, I always... I guess it depends, for me, right? In this case, I think for Dumont to be asserting this like, "I'm still here," "we're still here," that to me is like such a resistant

and radical statement, really. And the idea that this resistance will keep on recurring, it's all a part of the same process, right? It's all a part of the same continuum, it's alive in all of us because we're still here. And that that persistence, in existing, is this radical act and is resistant and is spitting in the face of everything that Macdonald was trying to do. To me, and once again if you can communicate these ideas, I feel like our 110 class... Like, we got riled up in that class, you know? And I think that it prompted a lot of discussion about the ways that we talk about Indigenous activists and the way they're portrayed in the media, right? So, like, talking about that critical kind of media lens as well. So that was a way in to that, it was a way in to talking about all of these awesome -- just filling in our history about these awesome Indigenous activist movements that students might not have learned about at all, right? I never learned about Meech Lake Accord when I was at school, certainly, right? Or any of that. So, reaffirming that continuity, I think, is super valuable in this poem, specifically. I can't speak to, like, every....

JESS: Not all literature? Hashtag, #NotAllLiterature? It's actually very true, though, literally no: not all literature is activism, and some literature is activism in all the wrong ways, in the wrongest of ways.

JADE: Yeah, exactly, right? So I think that teaching a text like this can be really, it can be transformative, I think, for students for sure. It just depends on how far you're willing to take it.

JESS: Mmhmm. And actually as you were talking I was just thinking about how you sort of approach that question from the standpoint of an instructor, and getting students "riled up" in the classroom. So of course that opens up the larger question of teaching as activism, and again just like #NotAllLiterature, not all teaching, either! Right? Because some teaching, again, is not activism period, but also not activism in the most wrong of ways, also just truly harmful... I mean, like, the university as a settler-colonial institution and etc etc, and so much more that we could say about that, means that not all teaching is activism. But it's interesting how the combination of a text, plus probably the way that you teach it, and everything else contextual around that, sort of feels to me, as you're talking, like a kind of activism or like a kind of organizing. Especially when you characterize it as "getting all riled up," like that energetic, that sort of energy that really accompanies a lot of organizing and resistance.

30:47 JADE: Yeah, absolutely. So a lot of it is very contextual. You might not... You're probably not going to be able to get there with most sections of students, right? And you're probably going to have to work through some resistance in certain sections, too, like to this poem -- to the tone of it, to the message, to all of it, because of course you know not everyone's gonna be on the same page, anyway. It's really going to depend on the students that you've got in that room, and on your relationship with them.

JESS: Mmhmm, that makes total sense. And I guess that's probably going to be, I'm imagining, a recurring thing on this podcast, is like: this is all so contextual. So, this poem taught by you in a specific program is different than this poem taught by somebody else in a different program, and talking from my subject position, and in the way that I teach, and in the kind of shit disturb-y way that I like to be in the classroom, is much different than how a certain text would be in other contexts. So, I'm going to guess that that will come up probably a lot as I continue on here.

JADE: Absolutely. That totally makes sense, right? And that's why, to me, it makes sense, like whatever section you're teaching, whatever it is that your group of students is, you have to try and try and try to build that rapport, to build those relationships, and build the trust. Because if you don't have that, how can you go anywhere with any of the texts you're teaching, really?

JESS: Yeah and then that rapport can make texts that might be unfamiliar to students, or have unfamiliar topics, way more legible to the students, if you build that rapport first. It's like, introducing unfamiliar viewpoints or unfamiliar material can be so much more legible to them and so much more.. Yeah! That rapport, I think, is everything.

So any last thoughts or things that you wanted to say about the poem, first of all I guess, any last things that we didn't get around to?

JADE: I just... I think it's awesome, I don't know. I love this poem. And it holds up! This is from 1996 and you can still find things in it that you... Like, and that to me, thematically just reinforces that continuity, keeps coming back, keeps coming back, right? I feel like this is going to be, like, an evergreen poem, because there will always be that activism, there'll always be things for us to pull out of it in whatever political context we're teaching it in. I think that's just fantastic.

JESS: Absolutely, like you've already pointed out the ways that, you know, the railway reference applies to 2020, and certainly John A Macdonald -- I don't even want to say the "sir" part -- John A Macdonald as a figure obviously relates so much to activism that's happening in 2020.

Did you say you are teaching this text this semester?

JADE: I am, yeah.

JESS: Okay, well I'll be interested to hear the update on that.

JADE: Yeah, me too! I'll be interested to see how this section engages with it.

JESS: So, thank you so much for coming on this podcast! And at the very end here, is there anything that you want to highlight or plug? Or where can listeners find you, or?

JADE: Oh well yeah, you can find me kickin' around the internet for sure. So, my website is muskrat-hands.com. There's a little dash between the "muskrat" and the "hands." if you wanna check it out, it's got my -- it's mostly my graphic design, and there's links to my cv and stuff there too. That's home base. And yeah, so if you are interested or curious, you can always contact me through there.

JESS: Great! So I'll actually put a link to that in the show notes, and... muskrat-hands.com, with the little hyphen or the little mark in between the two words. Anyways, it'll be in the show notes. But thank you so much for coming on!

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[Music: "Homer Said"]

34:42 Thank you so much to Jade for coming on the podcast, and also for making our awesome podcast graphics! Find more of Jade's work [@musktrat.hands](https://www.instagram.com/musktrat.hands) on Instagram or at musktrat-hands.com.

This episode was recorded on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. I'm recording this outro on October 19th, 2020, which is the first day of the National Week of Action called for by Idle No More in solidarity with the Mi'kmaq peoples' inherent right to fishing and as a stand against the horrifying racialized violence committed by non-Indigenous commercial fishers against Sipekne'katik First Nation fishers in Mi'kma'ki.

I'm going to put the link for INM's call to action in the shownotes – it includes a document compiled by Charlotte Connolly with ways to support Mi'kmaq treaty rights, including by donating (if you're able) or by calling/writing to elected officials. But I also want to highlight a book that will be of importance to white settlers or non-Indigenous folks who are finding themselves unfamiliar with treaty history in Mi'kma'ki: it was compiled and edited by Marie Battiste, a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Mi'kmaw scholar who has long lived and worked and shared her knowledge on Treaty 6 territory as a professor (now emerita) at the University of Saskatchewan. The book, published in 2016, is called *Living Treaties: Narrating Mi'kmaw Treaty Relations*, and it includes contributions from a variety of Indigenous lawyers and academics. These contributors, and I'm now taking this straight from the [publisher's website](#) because I think it's phrases so well, seek "to enliven the treaties out of the caverns of the public archives, to bring them back to life and to justice as part of the supreme law of Canada; and to use them to mobilize the Mi'kmaw restoration and renaissance that seeks to reaffirm, restore and rebuild Mi'kmaw identity, consciousness, knowledges and heritages, as well as our connections and rightful resources to our land and ecologies." Please check it out.

Thank you, also, to Dyalla Swain for the podcast music. You can find more of their work at <https://soundcloud.com/dyallas>.

You can follow the podcast on Twitter and Instagram @TeachinBooksPod (no "g" in that teachin'!).

To chat about the podcast, use the hashtag #TeachinBooksPod, which I have actually now started using myself! So, you'll see a few instances of it out there on Twitter and in the world.

You can also get in touch via email at teachinbookspod@gmail.com. Please do tell me what you think of these episodes and of the podcast as it goes along!

I'm still not sure what my sign-off should be and I've been loving the suggestions that are coming in. I can see that, for friends that are suggesting things, you know me so well and you know the spirit of the podcast already. If you have an idea for a sign-off, please do get in touch with me. You can send it to me at teachinbookspod@gmail.com if you like.

For now I will say ok bye!

[Music: "Homer Said"]