



### **Some Quotes and Prose by Chief Dan George**

"O Great Spirit whose voice I hear in the winds,  
I come to you as one of your many children.  
I need your strength and your wisdom.  
Make me strong not to be superior to my brother,  
but to be able to fight my greatest enemy:  
"Myself"

## **The Wolf Ceremony**

I wanted to give something of my past to my grandson. So I took him into the woods, to a quiet spot. Seated at my feet he listened as I told him of the powers that were given to each creature. He moved not a muscle as I explained how the woods had always provided us with food, homes, comfort, and religion. He was awed when I related to him how the wolf became our guardian, and when I told him that I would sing the sacred wolf song over him, he was overjoyed.

In my song, I appealed to the wolf to come and preside over us while I would perform the wolf ceremony so that the bondage between my grandson and the wolf would be lifelong.

**I sang.**

In my voice was the hope that clings to every heartbeat.

**I sang.**

In my words were the powers I inherited from my forefathers.

**I sang.**

In my cupped hands lay a spruce seed, the link to creation.

**I sang.**

In my eyes sparkled love.

**I sang.**

And the song floated on the sun's rays from tree to tree.

When I had ended, it was if the whole world listened with us to hear the wolf's reply. We waited a long time but none came.

Again I sang, humbly but as invitingly as I could, until my throat ached and my voice gave out. All of a sudden I realized why no wolves had heard my sacred song. There were none left! My heart filled with tears. I could no longer give my grandson faith in the past, our past.

At last I could whisper to him: " It is finished!"

"Can I go home now?" He asked, checking his watch to see if he would still be in time to catch his favorite program on TV.

I watched him disappear and wept in silence. All is finished!

***Chief Dan George***

The beauty of the trees, the softness of the air, the fragrance of the grass speaks to me.

The summit of the mountain, the thunder of the sky,

The rhythm of the sea, speaks to me.

The faintness of the stars, the freshness of the morning, the dewdrop on the flower, speaks to me.

The strength of the fire, the taste of salmon, the trail of the sun, and the life that never goes away, they speak to me

And my heart soars.

***Chief Dan George***

**The following words were spoken by Chief Dan George; he is a hereditary Chief of the Coast Salish tribe and honorary Chief of the Squamish tribe of B.C., Canada. This speech was given at Canada's centennial celebration in Vancouver in 1967.**

"How long have I known you, oh Canada? A hundred years? Yes, a hundred years. And many many seelanium more. And today, when you celebrate your hundred years, oh Canada, I am sad for all the Indian people throughout the land.

For I have known you when your forests were mine; when they gave me my meat and my clothing. I have known you in your streams and rivers where your fish flashed and danced in the sun, where the waters said come, come and eat of my abundance. I have known you in the freedom of your winds. And my spirit, like the winds, once roamed your good lands.

But in the long hundred years since the white man came, I have seen my freedom disappear like the salmon going mysteriously out to sea. The white man's strange customs which I could not understand, pressed down upon me until I could no longer breathe.

When I fought to protect my land and my home, I was called a savage. When I neither understood nor welcomed this way of life, I was called lazy. When I tried to rule my people, I was stripped of my authority.

My nation was ignored in your history textbooks, they were little more important in the history of Canada than the buffalo that ranged the plains. I was ridiculed in your plays and motion pictures, when I drank you fire water, I got drunk, very very drunk. And I forgot.

Oh Canada, how can I celebrate with you this Centenary, this hundred years? Shall I thank you for the reserves that are left to me of my beautiful forests? For the canned fish of my rivers? For the loss of my pride and authority, even among my own people? For the lack of my will to fight back? No! I must forget what's past and gone.

Oh, God in Heaven! Give me back the courage of the olden Chiefs. Let me wrestle with my surroundings. Let me again, as in the days of old, dominate

my environment. Let me humbly accept this new culture and through it rise up and go on.

Oh, God! Like the Thunderbird of old I shall rise again out of the sea; I shall grab the instruments of the white man's success, his education, his skills, and with these new tools I shall build my race into the proudest segment of your society. Before I follow the great Chiefs who have gone before us, oh Canada, I shall see these things come to pass.

I shall see our young braves and our chiefs sitting in the houses of law and government, ruling and being ruled by the knowledge and freedom of our great land. So shall we shatter the barriers of our isolation. So shall the next hundred years be the greatest and proudest in the proud history of our tribes and nations."