

Living Nations, Living Words: A Map of First Peoples Poetry  
Poem commentary by Louise Erdrich, 2020

Speaker: Louise Erdrich

Date of recording: August 11, 2020

Location: Minneapolis, Minnesota

Length: 3 minutes, 58 seconds

START OF RECORDING

[Louise Erdrich reads “Advice to Myself”]

Louise Erdrich: I wrote this poem for myself as a single mother. After my children would go to school, I would need some sort of guidance in how to get past the folding of the laundry, the cleaning of the refrigerator, the dishes, the rolls of dust coming up under the surfaces—all of those things. I had to get past them. I had to sit down and focus. I didn’t have much time.

So, this poem was written as a help—as a helper for myself. I offer it here for anyone who needs a similar sort of reference. Something that will get you past all the things that need to be done, that don’t really need to be done, right now. Get you past, get you to your real, true task in life, which is to be more aware. To be in touch with the great movements of the universe. To be in touch with the sacred. With the profound. With the idiotic. With the sensual.

Here it is, “leave the dishes.”

END OF RECORDING