

## **STATUS / NON-STATUS ESSAY - By Adam Sturgeon (Nme')**

It is within the small and simple things that we find ourselves. On a long drive, a quick walk down to the river, or cooped up in silence at home. It is in our language and in our names. When I started making this music, I didn't know a whole lot about myself or who I was. Métis, they would call me. Part Ojibwe. Part this or that. Which part? Same old story for the mixed breeds. Never saw my true reflection staring back at me.

On those long and lonely drives between tour stops, you can see life move but you only get a dusty windshield of a view. The occasional flat lets ya stop to peak the landscape. A snowstorm lets you know its history. These things shape you, give you "experience". I've seen a lot of gas stations, no doubts there: informed.

*Giving the time and reflection to do my best* is what it comes down to. That, and driving overnight. Sometimes our best hurts. Hurts ourselves, hurts others. It always hurts you when it hurts someone else by the way. And so at night, out there ... nowhere, I've touched down and untangled the black roots of this strawberry heart. There were things I couldn't see around the corner, not on this dark road. Not even on the brightest prairie day. At night, on the road, on and off stage I fill myself. Wake up new, on a floor, on the move, anywhere.

Music has helped me when I can't find answers. For a long time I didn't know where we were driving, and I mean all of us. This road put my mind together and maybe we all can too. Find a new way. Until then, I keep filling the tank. Reclaimed ...

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Andrew Sturgeon did not report his young children to Wooster in 1907 ([link](#)), but by 1919 he and some of his children appeared on the Chisholm Roll ([link](#)). It identified the Potawatomi people displaced (and now residing in Canada as part of the Three Fire's Society Treaty([link](#))) by the United States government's push west. Many Potawatomi were lost along the infamous Trail of Tears.

The Sturgeon family is one group of Potawatomi people that made it to Canada, migrating and then homesteading with permission from the Canadian government by way of the Caradoc Indian Reserve. Rights were established and a new way of life began: labour, urbanization, enfranchisement, addiction, and the introduction of the foster care and residential school systems.

Ralph Edward Sturgeon is the son of Andrew, brother of Lorne and Ida Hanna. This family's story, like so many others, remains mainly untold. Today, their ancestors exist outside the Indian Act, and struggle in their own ways to reconnect, put the pieces back together, and remain sensitive to the trauma that has occurred, the addictions they have faced, the resiliency they have built. Military children Peter, Mike, Wendy, and Ralph represent both the failed policies of assimilation endured, and the strength and perseverance that grew along the way.

Adam Sturgeon is responsible for telling their stories and for fulfilling the Sturgeon prophecy of resurgence amidst the lighting of the Eighth Fire ([link](#)). As a father himself, Adam grasps the full intergenerational significance of this task as he witnesses the light of his ancestors reflecting back at him and shining into the future. *Oda Aki — The Heart of the Earth*. ([link](#))