This issue is the first of its kind. It is a collaboration between two street newspapers—the Street Sheet in San Francisco and the Street Spirit in Berkeley—and the Sogorea Te’ Land Trust, an urban Indigenous women-led land trust based in the San Francisco Bay Area that facilitates the return of Indigenous land to Indigenous people. Within these pages you’ll find stories of displacement and struggle, calls to action, and dreams of a future where decolonization is not merely a metaphor, but instead, a real return of land to those who have always called this place home.

As we fight for safe and permanent housing for all people, we also grapple with what that means on stolen land. The United States is a genocidal project, one built on the colonization of land and people. Colonial capitalism has meant the destruction of cultures, of ecosystems, of lives, all for the sake of profit, and it continues today. Homelessness, too, is born of capitalism, and the idea that housing, like land, is a commodity to be hoarded and owned by those with wealth. In this way, we see the liberation of homeless people to be entwined with the decolonization of these lands.

For this issue, we asked writers and artists to reflect on what it means to struggle and survive on stolen land, and for visions of what it would look like to live in reciprocity with Indigenous lands. In these pages, you’ll find poetry, personal stories, and artwork depicting the hardships imposed by colonization, as well as envisioning a liberated and decolonized future. We hope you enjoy this issue, and as you do, we invite you to reflect on your relationship to this land and how it might evolve to honor the original peoples of this place.

SOGEREA TE’ LAND TRUST

Sogorea Te Land Trust is an urban Indigenous women-led land trust based in the San Francisco Bay Area that facilitates the return of Indigenous land to Indigenous people. Through the practices of rematriation, cultural revitalization, and land restoration, Sogorea Te’ calls on Native and non-native peoples to heal and transform the legacies of colonization, genocide, and patriarchy and to do the work our ancestors and future generations are calling us to do.

We envision a Bay Area in which Ohlone language and ceremony are an active, thriving part of the cultural landscape, where Ohlone place names and history is known and recognized and where intertribal Indigenous communities have affordable housing, social services, cultural centers and land to live, work and pray on.

Thank you to our contributors for this issue:

HUGE thank you to Inés Ixierda of Sogorea Te’ Land Trust for your guidance and input on this issue.

Contributors to this issue include: Tiny, Israel Muñoz and Amir of DeeColonize Academy and Homefulness Project, Terry Johnson, Ava Cameron, India Price, Alej, Jason Hamann, Tatiana Luyubik, Jocelyn Radeny, Arcenia Macedo Sixto, Linnea Kingbird-Martini

Copieditors include: Kaveh Waddell, Fia Zhang Swanson, Zach Walsh, Otis Lerner

“Two hundred fifty years ago, there was no concept of homelessness or hunger in this territory, today we are homeless in our own homeland”

—Corrina Gould, Confederated Villages of Lisjan Nation & Co-Founder, Sogorea Te Land Trust

Before colonization and before land became something that was owned, the Bay Area was a place of shared abundance. There was no such thing as private property and there was no such thing as homelessness. Indigenous people are still here, still struggling and surviving, still experiencing disproportionate displacement, houselessness, violence and precarity.
**The End of Street Spirit for Street Spirit**

by Alastair Boone

After nearly 28 years of uplifting the voices and stories of homeless people in the East Bay, this may be our last issue. Truth Spirit moved to San Francisco last year and the San Francisco Street Sheet has found a new home and a new fiscal sponsor: Western Spirit Artworks, our publisher of the last 28 years, which will go longer afford to support Street Spirit. The end this calamity.

The future of Street Spirit will also rely on the financial support of our readers and community members. If you are able, please consider making a generous donation to help us continue our work. Our current goal is to raise $200,000 or more to cover the first year’s budget and other associated expenses. You can send donations through our new fiscal sponsor: Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP), an amazing advocacy organization based in San Francisco whose director Paul Boden helped us get our start back in the 1990s. WRAP accepts tax-deductible donations online and through the mail. If you are writing a check, please write that the money is intended for our project by writing “Street Spirit” on the memo line.

Checks can be sent to:
Western Regional Advocacy Project
1555 20th St, Suite 104
202-2 San Francisco CA 94103

If you are giving online, go to tinymoon.com/SAVES STREET SPIRIT and write “Street Spirit” in the box they tick on the page that says “If you have a special purpose for your donation, please let us know.”

Take care. We trust that we will be back soon.

Street Spirit first took flight in the spring of 1991, and for the past 28 years, it has been sold by homeless vendors in Berkeley and Oakland and funded through street and talk to people as they sell papers. Our vendors come into our office to pick up copies of Street Spirit and may have a cup of coffee, then they go out onto the streets, a nearly complete failure to realize that they are our brothers and sisters.

Brothers and sisters. That may sound like a self-righteous holier-than-thou tone about the eventual fate of any society that refuses compassion and justice to those in need. It is a terrible prophetic warning that life is sacred led him to the repressive attempts by political officials to realize that they are our brothers and sisters. That may sound like a self-righteous holier-than-thou tone about the eventual fate of any society that refuses compassion and justice to those in need.

Beatitudes. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice. For they shall be filled.”

The Beatitudes. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice. For they shall be filled.”

I found that so many of these incredibly dedicated witnesses for peace and justice were directly inspired by the poet from Nazareth, Jesus, himself born a homeless child, who “said: ‘The Lord is your oppressor, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free.’”

The New York Times famous slogan was, “All the News That’s Fit to Print.” Street Spirit had directly from the poet’s mission was, in its own humble and imperfect way, to follow the path of the poet of Nazareth, to be a voice for the poor and oppressed.

And for all the writers, poets, and artists who have selflessly worked to defend the lives of their fellow citizens living in poverty on the streets, I think always of the words of the Lord Jesus, himself born a homeless child, who “said: ‘The Lord is your oppressor, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free.’”

The New York Times famous slogan was, “All the News That’s Fit to Print.” Street Spirit had directly from the poet’s mission was, in its own humble and imperfect way, to follow the path of the poet of Nazareth, to be a voice for the poor and oppressed.

Good news to the poor. The only news that’s fit to print.
Once upon a time, my Navajo people were a proud Indigenous community living on our ancestral lands, in present day Arizona and New Mexico. For generations, they lived in harmony with the land, respecting and preserving its natural resources. However, as the world around them changed, the community found itself increasingly marginalized and pushed out of its traditional lands. Without power, political support or resources to fight back, they were finally forced to move out of the land. This was the unfortunate beginning of our journey toward generational homelessness.

Regardless of our ancestors’ efforts to resist displacement, they were eventually forced to leave their homes, government and private interests sought to exploit the land for their gain. With no other options, they were forced to leave the only home they had ever known. Areas that were totally unfamiliar with, a life they could barely afford.

This posed a whole new challenge as they struggled to get on their feet. It is also necessary to live on the streets without access to food, shelter or medical care. Others found temporary shelters in overcrowded shelters or with relatives but were often subjected to discrimination and abuse. This is what led to our experience with homelessness, and it’s the worst situation ever.

However, even with these challenges, our beloved ancestors remained resilient and committed to preserving their traditional way of life. They formed new communities in the urban areas, supporting each other and working together to overcome the many obstacles they faced.

Over time, some members of our community began to organize and advocate for their rights. The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission has been the backbone of this rebuilding as it fights to manage, protect, and conserve our Navajo Nation’s natural and cultural resources for the sake of the Navajo people. The organization is specifically to raise awareness about the unique challenges faced by Indigenous peoples who have been displaced from their traditional lands, and to secure funding and support for programs that could help us rebuild our lives. Through its efforts, my tribe has been able to secure funds for programs, from food banks to educational programs to help support the preservation of these lands.

As we began to rebuild, we also re-established a connection to the land. We have worked to cultivate gardens, continue traditional practices, and preserve our heritage. Through these efforts, we have been able to persevere and rebuild, thanks to the strength of our cultural traditions and the support of our allies.

Today, we continue to advocate for Indigenous rights and to promote policies that will ensure the protection and preservation of Navajo land. This is our legacy, and we will continue to fight for it until the end.

I grew up on stolen land. As a Black woman in the Bay Area, primarily in the East Bay and partial-ly in the Peninsula, I never fully understood that the land was even stolen, and that’s actually where the problem began. You grow up seeing white people, wealthy people, really damn near every one except Black people owning homes and having everything. And you believe that it may have always been this way, and maybe it should be this way, but there’s always this unsettling undertone that you can’t quite put your finger on.

Growing up poor and Black in the Bay Area is like going to an amusement park and not being able to get on any of the rides. You know that there are all of these opportunities for growth, you know the land is full of gold just like it was during the Gold Rush, but you don’t have access to any of it. You’ve never had any access to it, but you believe that if you work hard enough you just might get a chance to have a say in the future. And you believe that the land belongs to seemingly everyone but you and anyone Indigenous. But you come to realize you can never work hard enough.

I was nine years old when I first felt the sting of houselessness. My terminally ill mother and I were living with my grandparents at the time. My grandparents had recently lost their jobs as apartment managers. My grandfather had injured his back and the company didn’t want to pay worker’s compensation. Despite working a full day job of 10 years, but their place of residence was also gone in the blink of an eye. Being a Black man in the ‘90s, my grandfather had a very difficult time finding a steady income, and as a result we ended up in Hayward at a dingy Motel 6. I remember at first it felt like the world was crashing down around me. Where I once had my own space, now my mother, my grandparents and I were confined to one small room with two beds. I hated it.

Every night my grandparents would argue about how they would pay their weekly rent—and to make matters worse, I was being brutally bullied at my new elementary school. It really felt like I couldn’t catch a break. There was no freedom. I felt trapped. I remember not wanting to go to school because I didn’t know what to wear to make the kids stop teasing me. I was beaten for the clothes I wore. I took a key and began scratching myself with it until my mother came in the room and immediately began going off on me.

The solace I do remember having during that period of my life came during Christmas Eve. My mom surprised me with three new Beanie Babies: a kangaroo, a penguin and a sloth. At the time, Beanie Babies were the new craze, and I was just so excited to even be able to get a gift. My mother, a nurse, had forwarded with me in the dark space. She always helped me see the world as beautiful, even when everything around us was bleak. My mother was the pot of gold that so many of us yearned to reap out of this stolen land.

We lived in Motel 6 for close to a year, and during that very long year we overheard pimps, johns, sex workers, drug dealers and their users, lovers’ quarrels—the list really does go on. Finally, my grandparents found another job as apartment managers. And my mother, after seven years of waiting on an Oakland affordable housing list, was finally awarded her very own apartment. I remember feeling so excited: I was finally going to have my own room.

It seemed like the universe was finally shining down on my family. And then we moved into our Oakland Housing Authority apartment in West Oakland, and it was the worst apartment I had ever seen. There was garbage piled up to our waist in the backyard, crack needles in the freezer, and I vividly remember the warms welcome my mother and I received after friends and family helped us clean the apartment of all the debris that had been left from the previ-ous tenants: The next day, I woke up to a huge pile of human feces on a door.

This piece depicts life on stolen land—specifically the Bay Area. I grew up seeing sex workers on East 14th St in Oakland. The gun violence, the cars, the traumatic presence of guns was overlooked by many, the wild life and the aspect of it just being a concrete jungle was part of my experience.

As we have just seen, the story of the Bay Area is a story of displacement and struggle, and it is a story that must be told. The struggle for affordable housing on stolen land is a struggle for justice, and it is a struggle that must be won.

I see for this once stolen land requires more than just being a concrete jungle, where over-policing is not necessary, but rather where the police peoples themselves, where this adage of it taking a village comes back into play. Where we have an awesome center for youths to spend their time, like the American Indian Child Resource Center where I worked as a youth. Where we have more food banks, more food and farms for people to learn how to grow their own food and medicine. Where there is a revised medical system, one in which a young Black woman isn’t neglected to the point of her death, where her voice is valued like all people deserve. I know these ideas are a little far fetched, but it’s a reality that existed long before this land was colonized, and it is my belief that through stories like mine and many others, we will rebuild this reality again.
Standing on Rocks with Fists

On cusp dusky twilight, periwinkle wide - breaching highest cotton edge, our souls touched.

Tasked selling the Epic Triathloniversary, 45th & not in merchandise mood. I hadn’t been since the indigenous occupants’ diffusing back to their land after stand together.

I heard the Muscogee hymn from Trail of Tears throughout the moon phases & couldn’t cease it. Rattled me like birth.

Nak O’mvl-ku-ha-hi-cv-tet [He has created all things]

Souix , Creek...
Showing tribes’ colors, so many. So bright.
Every 1 m’visitors welcomed, or imposed, must see the prison island.
Up, down, within.
Touring guests to hellspot where once dwelled 3 escapes / prospective free men? As an empath, this stage so gruesome be.

He-sa-ke-tv (God lives)

Pomo , Paiute...
Split my neck as the stench of Diamiguites met us as we docked at the guard gate. Aha! Triathlon to Alcatraz featured the not usual tests: Running, Swimming, Cycling.

Was I mad?

These ferry tickets to jail mountain, spent from her purse. I infer to align to dim, I winced unheard - “treaty is imposed, must see the prison island.

Yet that hand hasn’t been a hand in vastly 25 years,
He’s dead.
you’re safe,
go home.

But, remind me again
where is your home.

Where is MY home?

Did you take mine, because they took yours? well, I’ve changed the key.

You can walk yourself home, maybe to another’s (to borrow)

Because you will not assume control over mahalu my home.
You can live through and fight your own problems.

I was born from an opening where a river spilled from, a person.

You’ve taken me far beyond the river, I’ve built a boat with what I have left, and I’ll paddle until I see where the sky and the sea kiss and bear the teeth of land and trees.

Smiling back at me.
to give me the gift of a welcome to home.

Journey Longing Home

Alej (they/them)

Fleeing in the middle of the night, who are we trying to be, a band of coyotes? but fearfully running to the nearest place that would take us, accept us. It’s not that they wouldn’t accept us. If we suggested to stay, it only determined how much she was willing to sacrifice... All in the name of me. all. for. me. (question myself; me?)

Did you make us leave because his truth was so erratic, striping— it tore off this fake enamel you plastered over your exposed steel bars— those bars, a cage.
But a cage not occupied by greeting mourning doves, the confinds of the cage hold gentle, messily dismembered bodies holding feathers; left with one life in an eye.
Scab and scab again. Trying to heal but struck again before your cells, your soldiers could gain their strength, build themselves back up again.
To knowingly be prepared for the next hardship, likely the same hand again.

Yet that hand hasn’t been a hand in nearly 25 years,
He’s dead.
you’re safe, go home.

But, remind me again
where is your home.

Where is MY home?

Did you take mine, because they took yours? well, I’ve changed the key.

You can walk yourself home, maybe to another’s (to borrow)

Because you will not assume control over mahalu my home.
You can live through and fight your own problems.

I was born from an opening where a river spilled from, a person.

You’ve taken me far beyond the river, I’ve built a boat with what I have left, and I’ll paddle until I see where the sky and the sea kiss and bear the teeth of land and trees.

Smiling back at me.
to give me the gift of a welcome to home.

On cusp dusky twilight, periwinkle wide - breaching highest cotton edge, our souls touched.

Tasked selling the Epic Triathloniversary, 45th & not in merchandise mood. I hadn’t been since the indigenous occupants’ diffusing back to their land after stand together.

I heard the Muscogee hymn from Trail of Tears throughout the moon phases & couldn’t cease it. Rattled me like birth.

Nak O’mvl-ku-ha-hi-cv-tet [He has created all things]

Souix , Creek...
Showing tribes’ colors, so many. So bright.
Every 1 m’visitors welcomed, or imposed, must see the prison island.
Up, down, within.
Touring guests to hellspot where once dwelled 3 escapes / prospective free men? As an empath, this stage so gruesome be.

He-sa-ke-tv (God lives)

Pomo , Paiute...
Split my neck as the stench of Diamiguites met us as we docked at the guard gate. Aha! Triathlon to Alcatraz featured the not usual tests: Running, Swimming, Cycling.

Was I mad?

These ferry tickets to jail mountain, spent from her purse. I infer to align to dim, I winced unheard - “treaty is imposed, must see the prison island.

Yet that hand hasn’t been a hand in vastly 25 years,
He’s dead.
you’re safe, go home.

But, remind me again
where is your home.

Where is MY home?

Did you take mine, because they took yours? well, I’ve changed the key.

You can walk yourself home, maybe to another’s (to borrow)

Because you will not assume control over mahalu my home.
You can live through and fight your own problems.

I was born from an opening where a river spilled from, a person.

You’ve taken me far beyond the river, I’ve built a boat with what I have left, and I’ll paddle until I see where the sky and the sea kiss and bear the teeth of land and trees.

Smiling back at me.
to give me the gift of a welcome to home.
DECOLONIZING OR DYING?

I mean how can we talk about just transfers and still b owning her while she b deserted and yet we keep buying and selling and buying Mama earth is who I speak of

Our great mama who like our mamas we only have one of her purchase

Your profit

leads to all these violent Evictions and sweeps that got us poor peoples dying" from Winnemucca to Wood Street to around the corner from 1st nations elders to grandmamas like Iris Canada and Elaine Turner

Buying selling renting and dwelling - if u po' lucky if u win the real ennake monopoly end up housed instead of at the mercy of scamlords, police and more selling

It u worked all yo life to own yo spot -1 ain't mad at ya - it's all we been taught Sold and told it's what we shud attain jus to b safe in a krapitalist pyramid game that keeps poor people in chains breaking poor peoples backs grown on poor peoples labor and intentional poverty by the ongoing lie of private property

Would u sell yo own mama ?

Would u put her on the auction block Would u evict and sweep

So u never have to see

How much she got robbed, thowied, and bought

What's the answer ?

Clarifying the problem

It's a complete shift to same ole same ole process

Stop the Wealth hoarders so they can't steal and profit and tell the Philantihops-dimps don't dilute out yo blood-stained dollars Cuz they stop exchanging mama earth on the market

Begin by questioning all you have bought

All you have been sold and all u have been taught

Fight for 1st Nations and Black Land Back

Fight for no more hygienic metaphors about the poor

Question the multiple lies of rent.

The scamlord and the poverty pimp

The ones you pay to keep a roof

The one Who gets paid to Help you while seeing your struggle as moot

Fight for her -

Your mama -

our mama - our Mama Earth

fight for her so we all stop this hurt

DECOLONIZING HOMELESSNESS

“A lot of us elders, disabled elders, who have been here for decades have been evicted and are now homeless,” said Jim Ayer one of many life-long 1st Nations residents of the Winnemucca Indian Colony which was established by the US settler government in 1917 for ‘homeless indians.’

The Winnemucca tragedy, which ended in the eviction of scores of long-time elder indigenous residents, is sickeningly ironic as the so-called colony is on land already stolen from First Nations peoples to make them ‘homeless’ in the first place, and now in the 21st century, indigenous peoples from Turtle Island in many settler towns make up the majority of the unhoused population in their community.

“Two hundred years ago, before colonization, there wasn't even a concept of homelessness,” said Corrina Gould, talking chief and spokesperson of the confederated villages of Lisjan Ohlone and co-founder of the Sogorea Te Land Trust, at a powerful shellmound to shellmound walk from the over 5,000 year old shellmound in West Berkeley to the centuries old shellmound in Emeryville which the settlers and CoprRapshuns turned into a mall.

Poverty has been a consumer product of krapitalism since the settlers first came here. As a matter of fact, poverty and disability was a crime in all the countries the settlers came from.

WHERE DID HOMELESSNESS COME FROM?

The origins of homelessness are not because of lack of rent control, redlining, violence, trauma or profiling, ableism, racism, eviction and gentriFUKation, as many 21st century researchers will tell you. Those are most definitely what has catapulted homelessness to terrifying epidemic levels. But these are not its roots, and homelessness as we now experience it could not have taken hold had it not been for the original theft of Turtle Island, implementation of the deep Settler Lie of private property to launch the real ennake speculative industry, and a multitude of extractive industries set up because of that original theft for profit, extraction and colonization.

“I've been staying under the 101 offramp on and off for the last five years and then one day, they came and took all my belongings and threatened me with guns if I didn't leave,” said Rogelio C, an elder migrate houseless relative from Michoacan, Mexico, now residing houseless in San Francisco.

Clearly describing the colonial origins of homelessness enables us to clarify what we are fighting against and fighting for, while we recognize the violation of homelessness, including death from exposure, sweeps and polIce terror. The criminal acts—called sweeps—against houseless people's bodies are increasing from Seattle to San Francisco and they are directly tied to the commodification and decolonization of Mama Earth.

Settler politicians want us to be confused so we don't question, upset and resist the original crime. So we don't all recognize our deep connections to each other's struggles as houseless people, Black, Brown, Indigenous, migrant and even po' Wites—people I call broken settlers.

Instead, we demand land from systems put in place by the settler government that will never give us land because it was taken for the sole purpose of profit. We demand actual affordable housing, which will never happen because then no one would make money off that housing. We demand not to be policed and incarcerated for sitting, standing, walking on Mama Earth without paying ground rent, which will never happen because we are taking up space without paying for it, and therefore no one is making any money on the spaces we inhabit—not to mention our mere presence "prowering property values" as we poor people are told by scamlords, realEsnakes and racist, classist neighbors all the time.

So as we resist the onslaught of violent criminalization and sweeps against our unhoused bodies all across this occupied land, we need to incorporate the larger demand of decolonization. It's not enough to fight against criminalization, we need to fight against the settler lie of ownership of mama earth itself.

OWNERSHIP OF MAMA EARTH IS A LIE

Well technically it's not a lie, because ownership of mama earth happens everyday, everywhere, and in occupied Turtle Island (aka the US), it is the most "solid" krapitalist investment there is, as reported by ekkomonistas constantly. But all indigenous peoples and ancestors across Mama Earth will tell you Mama Earth has never been, is not now, and never will be for sale. Selling, renting, profiting and extracting from her and off of her is the roots of most colonial terror we deal with today, including polIce terror, gentriFUKation, displacement and eviction violence, and of course the endless laws created to criminalize poor and disabled people from being alive on her without paying money to someone, AKA rent.

The settler colonial narrative of ownership began way back with the feudal societies creating papers and documents asserting that they owned indigenous people’s lands of origin in Europe, launching the idea of the landed gentry—the roots of gentriFUKation—and then suddenly charging people rent for the lands they had peacefully stewarded for centuries. This led to massive evictions and huge and deadly exoduses by displaced people.

Centuries later, this genocidal style of land removal and land theft was being carried out across the ocean as the same wealthy slave and land-owner class came here to suddenly "own" Turtle Island. It was also continuing back in Europe.

One of the most famous examples was the wrongly named potato famine. It should have been called the scamlord famine because what is rarely talked about is it led to the eviction of literally hundreds of thousands of indigenous peoples from their lands. At those times, just like now, it mattered not if you were an elder, disabled, sick or a child, if you were in the way of profiting off of rent you were evicted. Period. Thrown on the street with the clear knowledge you might die. Historians and others have long debated the exact number of people who were evicted during these famine years, with some estimates suggesting between 250,000 and 500,000 families were removed.

The famine evictions were actually part of the second wave of deadly evictions—preceded by Pauper laws, which of course were the precursor for the anti poor people and anti houseshare people laws we have today in the United States. Famine era evictions occurred in four great waves. Firstly, following the introduction of the Irish Poor Law Act in 1838, landlords began to remove tenants, and requiring them to new created workhouse system where they were somebody else's problem.

And then of course all these lies—I mean laws—led to the ugly Laws and the criminalization of being disabled and poor in public, which was just another way to profit off of poor people's bodies by throwing them in jail or settlement houses—early forms of shelters which were supported by the settler governments again.

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROJECT CALLED PARKS

At the turn of the century, as concerns about the impacts of development grew and illegal land use by corporations expanded, a new idea emerged. A number of leaders including President Theodore Roosevelt, naturalist John Muir, and Gifford Pinchot, the fourth chief of the U.S. Forest Service, began to advocate for some of the lands continues on page 11...
HOMEFULNESS IS LIKE HEAVEN

AMIR, DECOLONIZE ACADEMY

Homefulness is a community launched by Dee and Tiny Garcia. Homefulness is a safe place for people of color that could join us in the movement to free Mama Earth along with all of our Po Uncles, Aunts, Grandmas and Grandpas. I study at Decolonize Academy - a school at Homefulness in East Oakland.

Homefulness is a place that helps our fellow houseless relatives on the streets. We give out food to see their smiles. They also have their own radio show led by youth skolaz and adult uncles, aunties, grandmas and grandpas. We support our people in the streets.

Homefulness is not just a place, it’s much more than a place – it’s like heaven. We save lives during this pandemic, we help our community and never stop, always help the poor. Homefulness is a place where you can feel safe.

Homefulness is different from the other schools. It is led by our community from the streets. They are also teaching the young ones how to take care of the elders in our community. Homefulness teaches so many things that are different from the regular schools.

Homefulness is a special space for all of us and this community fights the cruel injustice on our people. We are not a fake organization. We are the real deal, and we are always showing up and supporting anyone who needs our help.

Homelessness has become one of the biggest menaces that has hit quite a good number in the USA. What most of us do not know is that one of the causes of homelessness is privatization of Indigenous land. Years back, people would live in places of their choice without having to worry about human displacement or eviction. Many places in America have been home to different Native Nations over time. However, many Indigenous people no longer live on lands to which they have ancestral ties. They have been forced to move, making space for greedy and selfish private developers who are only concerned with making their lives better. Indigenous land that could be beneficial to generations and generations is now owned by a few.

Skyscrapers, industries and private offices stand on land that could have been used for government projects to house the huge number of homeless people who have nowhere to go. There are people that call the shots inside the government, one way or the other, and trying to go against their word leads to serious repercussions. Court cases against land-grabs generally find against the common citizen, or take so long that those fighting back become frustrated and tired. This is a clear indication that the legal system has also been compromised. It does not have the common citizen’s interest at heart anymore, but is focused rather on what brings money to the pockets of these in power.

It’s so sad that as a country, we do not have leaders who can fight for the sake of suffering people without being compromised. These resettlements from Indigenous land were organized by people with the mindset of extracting resources, with an aim of making the rich richer. Money has proved to be the No. 1 influential factor in matters that involve important decision-making, favoring the rich few. Indigenous land on which we could build cheap housing and healthcare institutions for almost every American citizen is now owned and managed by a few rich souls, while the proceeds benefit only them. This is very evident by the number of homeless people on the streets of American cities currently, and the number is still on the rise. Who will help us, as people who lost their land? Land that should be housing and feeding us and our descendants for generations.

The effects of these selfish acts have been felt over the years, and like a domino effect it has grown, up to this moment. Trauma and sad reality hits us every morning. A wave of bitterness every time we read the history of our ancestors. The reality of the large areas of land that were owned by our ancestors until they were violently chased out, some at gunpoint. Take a visit even to the rural areas of some states and you’ll find individuals who possess large acres of land. Yes, some may be inherited, but you’ll find quite a number that were evicted from with little or no compensation at all.

The big question is, what can be done to at least try to resolve this enormous issue? My thoughts are, The American government needs to come up with a plan to identify the descendants of those chased out of their Indigenous lands and compensate us fairly with reparations. This will definitely help provide homes to a good number of the homeless people on the streets. The government should also work on reclaiming some of the land acquired forcefully, and develop government projects that are aimed at housing the homeless. I believe that, putting into consideration the resources at the government’s disposal, we should not have people on the streets. We should not be sleeping in the cold, hungry.

Submitted through the Hospitality House Community Art Program
Hoy los médicos solo saben dar medicina para vóltigo adicto, y en realidad los mejores remedios son los que nos da la madre tierra sin pedir nada a cambio. Por eso, gente ambiciosa y sin escrúpulos está explotando a la madre tierra, destruyendo tierras que tenían mareas naturales y abriendo de ellas. No saben lo que tienen hasta que se acaba la tierra, ya no tienen cómo sacar para sus propias adicciones, y solo entonces saben el verdadero dolor.

Today, like everyone, I continue struggling through each day. To quit alcohol, to quit the way of the outdoors that my family and I was in high school with no comprehension of how to fight a corrupt system. We eventually found an apartment in San Pablo and have yet to be houseless again. These terrifying struggles took emotional tolls on my family and me. Attempting to remain in the Bay Area continues to be a constant struggle because living in Richmond you must endure the Chevron Refinery plaguing your lungs and air. Finding housing in the East Bay has been difficult all my life.

Though I sometimes feel pushed out and overwhelmed with my experiences living in the Bay, I also feel grateful. The Bay has the potential to truly revolutionize the world. The Sogorea Te’ Land Trust is just one example. Urban Tilth has had an immense impact on a green and hopeful future for communities of Richmond. Indigenous and Black knowledge of survival, resistance, stewardship, decolonization, and rematriation are pervaded and amplified in the Bay Area and provoke wild thoughts of living in reciprocity and symbiosis with the land.

I envision homes in the so-called Berkeley Hills with no signs preventing others from picking fruit from trees growing on affluent lawns. Black Lives Matter signs on tidy yards cared for by Brown hands must stand for something by action, not by performative alliance. Blake Garden in so-called Kensington needs to be returned to the Sogorea Te’ Land Trust. It is managed by UC Berkeley and it’s close to all Kensington residents that have the privilege to enter sacred land that is and has always been cared for by Native people. Additionally, the privacy of the garden promotes societal hierarchies beliefs that those with an abundance of money live in neighborhoods with lush protected gardens and that such said gardens are exclusive for those residents.

Living in harmony with the land would require the dismantling of the idea of private property. Such lands would need to be maintained by Indigenous people and should be accessible to all communities of people who will value and appreciate nature. Accessibility and walkability are in unity against oppression and colonization. City landscapes should be planned in accordance with the earth and humans, not cars and roads. We need equitable transportation that will mitigate climate change. Living in reciprocity with the land would require access to public spaces such as gardens, parks, cultural centers, and most importantly access to free health care. I envision a society where Richmond and San Pablo residents can have an abundance of gardens and trees in their neighborhoods. Where free bus and shuttle services to gardens, libraries, schools, and parks in the East Bay would be a guaranteed option fostering environmental sustainability.

Most importantly, I believe to live in symbiosis with the land we must abolish the police. We must destroy and end every form of terror that are killing us and the land. The dependency on oil must be replaced with cycling and expansive sidewalks for people with disabilities to have space to get around. Creating safer spaces in nature for all of society can be achieved by ending the toxic masculinity that exists in the “outdoor industry” along with referring to nature as such. Education should be expanded to include food sovereignty, urban planning, financial advocacy, and decolonization. I believe in the radical idea to imagine a world where we renounce our oppression and examine our plight’s origins to comprehend why we are living in impoverished conditions.

I hope that the homelessness can eventually go away. I dream of the Bay Area thriving with California Native plants and an abundance of food grown locally meant to be shared with one another. I plant seeds in my mind and heart of resilience, change, and harmony. My ancestors were never “illegal” to this land. They managed to survive on stolen land under a colonizer regime. Now as a descendant of resilient Indigenous people my focus is my allegiance to the rematriation of Native land and the transformation of our relationship to the land.
There are many reasons we got here—not the least of which is systemic racism, wite supremacy, fake-ass skool profiling, polIce terror, abuse, domestic violence and more trauma than can fill a settler dam—but the thing in this society that brings us all together and democratically our struggle is the inability to function within a system that puts a price tag on the Mama Earth below our feet—or our tent, to be exact. It is our inability to pay rent. Even if we lose our places because we had to fleeing an abusive partner, lost our job, got in a struggle with addiction, can’t take the pain inside our heads, we are never able to get back in.

Supervisor Matt Haney of San Francisco just proposed new legislation that I thought was interesting. He proposed we cap the security deposit that scarclords charge at the equivalent of one month’s rent. As it is now, scarclords can charge prospective tenants 3 or more month’s rent just to get inside. Not to mention the credit score check and job requirements that no one low to no-income or houseless can ever attain. But the oddest thing to me was that the example given in the report was a $5,000 per month 2-bedroom apartment. Who can afford $5,000 per month in the first place, even if we only have to pay one month’s rent deposit?

Back in the day when me and mama were houseless, she would insist that my 12-year-old self would don the rent starter suit and leverage my skin privilege to lie to scarclords about my job, credit, age and ability to pay exorbitant rents. Racism is alive and well in the United States where a majority of small businesses are owned by white people. We have to work harder, and we have to lie to scamlords about our ability to pay. It means being a part of settler-colonialism. This does not mean being a part of peaceful settlement.

...
Hello everyone, the saga of Vernon Dailey continues. First of all, I'd like to thank Street Spirit and my readers, customers, friends, and family. By the way, I turn 66 this May 1st and I must say, not only has it been a pleasure working with you all—you guys have shown me nothing but love, kindness, and supported me in my time of need—but I just wanted to let my readers know that I really appreciate you all. There have been some bumps in the road, but together we got over it. My first article was the story of my life. I talked about how I became homeless: that my wife died of cancer, that I couldn't pay all the bills myself, and I lost everything. In my second article I talked about how I received housing in Fairfax, only to become homeless again through housing section 8. My third article was about how some of my customers generously gave me their old car. I'm still homeless but I am not careless. So this is my fourth article. I want to sum it all up in one, and say that the saga still continues. I am very much in need of housing. I'm in different programs, and have been working on finding housing, but this is hard to do. So if you're a millionaire, and have a house you want to donate or a fixer upper...call Vernon: (510) 472-7899.

Vernon Dailey is a Street Spirit vendor.