

## **We Exist**

By Janice Gould

For Beth Brant

Indians must be the loneliest people on Earth—  
lonely from our histories,  
our losses,  
even those things we cannot name  
which are inside us.  
Our writers try to counteract the history  
that says we are a dead, a conquered People.  
But our words are like a shout in a blizzard.

In snow one December,  
those at Wounded Knee lay dying,  
dead, their mouths frozen open.  
Soldiers dug a ditch  
for the bodies.  
Then prairie soil crumbled over the People  
and their hearts fed on roots and stones.  
Their mouths filled with dust.

Janice Gould is a member of the Maidu tribe of Northern California.