

INSTRUCTIONS

Put on your orange coat
Use the ear plugs when offered
let the medics take care of you
if you forget to take care of yourself have someone remind you
Put the Tanka Bars in your pockets for later
Drink as much coffee as you need to
Be calm
stay calm
Try to be rational in this calm, spread it like coals hoping it will
catch fire, it won't
Smear on your war paint if you remember
Stand with your friends
Lead by example
Never ask anyone to do something you are unwilling to do
Write two letters;
One to your mother that's filled with pages and pages of stories
and grief telling her you forgive her and in your heart you know she
always loved you even when she couldn't be there
To your father you must write
I love you, I tried my best, thank you
Leave them in your tent in case you won't be coming back
Smell the sage burning
Walk to the frontlines
Hold the line
Hold the line
Hold the line until you can't
The cops tell you to go back to Camp
Don't listen to them
check in with your friends, try to plan something
see the canupa being loaded, spare an indulgent moment in
reverie for that life you once had and the warm circle of prayer that
once wrapped your days
Snap out of it
notice the growing chaos like madness
When you can look down the scope of the snipers rifle it means he
is pointing it at you
Don't flinch

Decide what you are going to do
let go of it all
let the world shrink into a handful of moments falling one into
another
Try to rally your people
fail at it
If they won't follow, leave your friends behind
It is not your job to protect them
You can't keep them safe
It is the only thing you want to do, but you can't
Smoke the cigar you saved for just this moment, blow the smoke
heavily from your nose like an angry bull
Walk, don't run
Don't look back
when they send the swarming line of cops at you they will scream
STOP MOVING
Don't listen to them
Laugh at the mercenaries shifting on their heels as you get closer
and closer
Notice they're afraid of you
Don't look back
Get tackled by police
Hold
Sit down
Hear the strange pop in your shoulder as you are lifted off the
ground by your cuffs
Go to jail
Repeat
Repeat
Repeat

MIGHT AS WELL CONSIDER THIS A CLARIFICATION OF PURPOSE.

I am Oglala, we don't live long. Unless I quit drinking, learn to take care of myself, and keep living a life filled with purpose I will be dead in fifteen years. Mid forties is the life expectancy of an Oglala man and it's the lowest in the Western Hemisphere outside of Haiti.

I have lost four relatives since this started in July. I have gone back home for two funerals since I've been in camp.

Since moving back home to Pine Ridge two years ago, we have buried 19 of my relatives. I am not counting the dozen or so more friends' relatives who have passed.

I am not saying this to be melodramatic or court your pity. But you need to understand the basic mechanism of Oglala existence is predicated on new life, Lakota babies are why we still exist as a people. Whenever we lose a relative we make two more to replace them. Even now I have new nieces and nephews who are going to come into this world. And that's all you can do in the face of this onslaught of death and genocide, you have to keep living and choose life.

Now us Oglalas we drink our water from the Missouri River utilizing the largest fresh water pipeline in the country, the Mni Wiconi pipeline. Back home each time we drop a new water well we run the risk of hitting a contaminated or radioactive part of the water table. The deep wells going into the aquifer are projected to dry up in one or two generations. The Angostura Reservoir near the reservation has radioactive isotopes in its water supply. We need the Mni Wiconi pipeline.

Benzene. Look it up. It's in the fracked oil that the Dakota Access Pipeline is attempting to pump out of the Bakken Oil Fields. Benzene is water soluble and can evaporate into the air. When benzene is digested it is rapidly metabolized in the body. It can get down into the bone marrow and break apart DNA strands causing cancers and mutations. That's fine, we've dealt with massive amounts of cancers for generations.

There is no safe amount of benzene that can be in drinking water. Less than 20 drops poisons 55,000 gallons of drinking water. This is cancer incarnate, it is a river killer, the anti-life.

It destroys birth rates, causes infertility and birth defects.

For the Oglala if our water is contaminated with Benzene this could be the tipping point that fractures our society. It can end us.

Some of our more functional and longer lived Lakota relatives can absorb a ten or fifteen percent drop in birth rates and will wisely adjust their lifestyles or just pipe in water from above the pipeline with some handshake deals. We Oglalas cannot.

Do you get it? We are doing this for our survival. We can fight off the meth dealers, learn to expose the pedophiles and rapists, build homes that don't get us sick, but we can't make water appear in a land that's becoming more arid due to climate change. We can't absorb the loss of our new Lakotas because our population growth will flatline. Then, it will decline. Just enough so people move away, just enough that there's not that critical grandma or grandpa in a community to keep everyone going. We will fracture

We are opposed to the pipeline because it threatens our existence. DAPL = Genocide.

Now our leaders have asked us not do anything that could endanger lives and I'm going to respect that considering the amount of pressure at the moment. I have seen 12 or more massive waves of people come and go without ever being empowered or utilized to stop the pipeline and I imagine this will be different. I imagine we will ask these veterans to become loyal to the indigenous people of this country, to become warriors instead of soldiers, and fight for the people rather than a flag.

We got some hard times. Give up hope, no heroes are coming to save us, it's just us out on the ragged edge of the winter. We can win once our leaders decide it. On that hill? Victory, history, beauty, power, sacrifice, and writing the future with our own hands while our ancestors cheer us on.

I've been waiting for the Oceti Sakowin to come together all my life, I can wait a little longer.

The way is forward. The way is up. Whenever you're ready, gents.

#NoDAPL

**YOU FEAR THE COPS ARE
GOING TO KILL SOMEONE**

I fear
if we lose
and that broken pipe gets built
it will poison our water,
there will be no more Lakota

You fear the wrong things

REPEAT IT UNTIL YOU BELIEVE IT

On a plane back to rapid city
he's thumping his head
against the window pane of the plane
Mumbling to himself
You weren't meant to die on the drill pad
You weren't meant to die on the drill pad
You weren't meant to die on the drill pad
You weren't meant to die on the drill pad
He does not believe
His Indian name should be Little Faith
He exists there
spirit dwelling in a fortress of stone wrapped in razor wire