

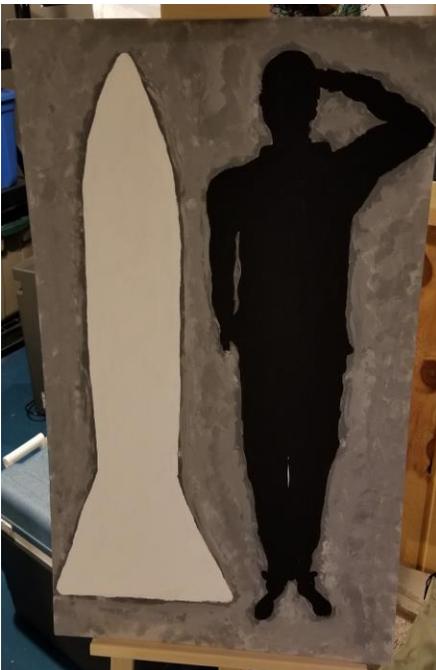
A Poem: So, this is where you have Taken Us

[Prolog]

[A little autobiography to share with you before the reading]: Over the last year or so I have been getting acquainted with my Native heritage. My Anishinaabe ancestors are of the White Earth Reservation. My family has a long history with both the Ojibwe and Oglala Lakota people. It is in this last year in becoming aware of the beauty and uniqueness of my ancestor's perspective on life and way of being that my life has evolved and my heart has opened to other possibilities. It is a sacred trust now that has descended to me and it is speaking to me. This poem is about two cultures [Native and Western] that co-exist in the same space and time. Long ago the two happen upon a fork in the path of life, each taking its own new path. I have a "foot" in each culture. It is from this vantage point that I wrote this essay and read it to you now.

- "So, this is where you have Taken Us"
 - [NOTE: Prop is SLBM* warhead] by David Fritze
 - I was once nearly a practitioner of mass death, genocide
 - We were, among us, 126
 - If not for the behest, I guess that you would know
 - The executioner is us all
 - I cry out, we should all cry out, please I intone "The Path not Taken"
 - For the path taken with the Siren's call, is intoxicating but merely a distraction
 - And here beside me [uncover the warhead] is the fruit of our endeavor, a species killer
 - Forever we will banish ourselves, the 126 and all who do not heed the call
 - To consider the other path, the one taken long ago but now forgotten
 - As we discover that the way we are, famished of good ideas that will never come, a world void of anything human
 - Please Great Spirit, Great Mystery, nudge us back onto the path, the other one
 - You, the path taken, have given us the "Scientific Method", to manipulate nature for manipulation's own sake
 - Where is the wisdom in this, though it is not without merit
 - But it is past time to at least allow the other path to inform the one we're on
 - This is my prayer, my crying out to the Great Mystery for a vision, give us wisdom
 - The End

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- This poem is not a condemnation of any particular way of being. It is a prayer that all of us considers where we are at this moment in our collective history and reflect on what might be a better use of our power as human beings.
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- **Narrative** about the **weapon**
 - 68" tall, 22" in diameter at the base, ~ 800 lbs
 - The yield is ~ 1.2 Megaton equivalent TNT
 - One stick **TNT** is 8" by 2 1/2" in diameter and a **weight** of ½ lbs
 - That's one million two hundred thousand sticks equivalent!
 - **NOTE:** To give some perspective, this **single weapon** can **kill** some **millions of people**
 - "**The Road not Taken**" by **Robert Frost** [that what I would **intone**]
 - Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarine [FBMS]
 - *SLBM-Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile



This is art work by my Granddaughter, Zoe Johnson, as the prop for the poem. The sailor is looking in a mirror reflecting on what he is about to do.