

An abstract painting featuring a central circular motif resembling a wheel of life, composed of red, purple, and white segments. This central element is surrounded by thick, expressive brushstrokes in shades of blue, green, and yellow, suggesting a landscape or a dam structure. The overall style is expressive and textured, with visible paint layers and bold outlines.

LEANNE BETAMOSAKE SIMPSON

A  
Short  
History  
of the  
Blockade

Giant Beavers,  
Diplomacy, and  
Regeneration in  
Nishnaabewin

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*To my relatives the Amikwag and all of the land defenders,  
water defenders, body, mind and spirit defenders,  
life protectors, and anti-colonial world builders.*



# FOREWORD

*The CLC Kreisel Lecture Series*

The CLC Kreisel Lectures bring together writers, readers, students, scholars, teachers—and with this book, publisher and research centre—in an open, inclusive, and critical literary forum. The Series has also fostered a beautiful partnership between the CLC and CBC Radio's *Ideas*, which has produced exciting broadcasts that feature the lecturers themselves—including this one by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and ones by Michael Crummey, Heather O'Neill, Margaret Atwood, and Lynn Coady—and further probe each lecture's topic. Through this partnership, the Kreisel Lectures are able to reach an audience of over a million listeners. The series raises a myriad of issues, at times painful, at times joyful, but always salient and far-reaching: Indigenous resurgence, oppression and social justice, cultural identity, place and displacement, the spoils of history, storytelling, censorship, language, reading in a digital age, literary history, and personal memory. The Series



confronts subjects that concern us all within the specificities of our contemporary experience, whatever our differences. In the spirit of free and honest dialogue, it does so with thoughtfulness and depth as well as humour and grace.

These public lectures also set out to honour Professor Henry Kreisel's legacy in an annual public forum. Author, University Professor, and Officer of the Order of Canada, Henry Kreisel was born in Vienna into a Jewish family in 1922. He left his homeland for England in 1938 and was interned, in Canada, for eighteen months during the Second World War. After studying at the University of Toronto, he began teaching in 1947 at the University of Alberta, and served as Chair of English from 1961 until 1970. He served as Vice-President (Academic) from 1970 to 1975, and was named University Professor in 1975, the highest scholarly award bestowed on its faculty members by the University of Alberta. Professor Kreisel was an inspiring and beloved teacher who taught generations of students to love literature and was among the first to bring the experience of the immigrant to modern Canadian literature. He died in Edmonton in 1991. His works include two novels, *The Rich Man* (1948) and *The Betrayal* (1964), and a collection of short stories, *The Almost Meeting* (1981). His internment diary, alongside critical essays on his writing, appears in *Another Country: Writings by and about Henry Kreisel* (1985).

The generosity of Professor Kreisel's teaching at the University of Alberta profoundly inspires the CLC in its public outreach, research pursuits, and continued commitment to the ever-growing richness, complexity, and diversity of writings in Canada. The Centre embraces Henry Kreisel's pioneering focus on the knowledge of one's own literatures. It is in his memory that we seek to foster better understanding