

# Poetry Downtown Festival 2025 September 23-28



# John Trudell Look At Us



# Look At Us

**John Trudell**

**February 15, 1946 - December 8, 2015**



**HOUSE OF  
CRAZINESS**

## Colofon:

**Publisher:**

House Of Crazyiness

**Jury:**

Erik van Loon

Paolo Iglori

.....

**Cover:**

Photo ....

**Special thanks:**

**Lecturers:**

....

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# Introduction

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Dear Very Important Poets,

I'm thrilled to present the guide for the 5th Poetry Downtown Festival. This year, we honor the life and work of John Trudell—an American Indian poet, recording artist, activist, speaker, and actor (see his biography on page 18) with our theme, Look At Us.

For those who may not be familiar with the festival, I'm a Dutch artist based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Since my 50th birthday in 2021, I've dedicated each year to celebrating the work of an American poet. Past honorees include:  
2021: Kenneth Patchen with Get Ready to Die  
2022: Charles Bukowski with Some People Never Go Crazy  
2023: Sylvia Plath with I Never Could Talk to You  
2024: Edgar Allan Poe with The Raven

Each year, my literary pilgrimage begins in the poet's birthplace and concludes in the city of their death. This year's journey starts in Omaha (Trudell's birthplace) and culminates in San Jose (his final resting place). As always, we connect these two cities with the Poetry Train—an Amtrak train which last car is reserved for poets. The Poetry Train will travel through 40 urban cities and rural towns, offering readings and events along the way in Omaha, San Jose, the layover cities Denver and San Francisco, and, of course, onboard the Poetry Train itself.

Through this birthday tradition, I aim to promote literacy and unite amateur and professional poets with poetry lovers around the world. I chose poetry because even a simple haiku can have a profound impact on listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Beyond literacy, poetry has the power to improve people's health, well-being, and even financial success.

Look At Us,  
Erik van Loon  
House of Crazyness

P.S. This year, I also organized the Poetry Cab ([www.poetrycab.com](http://www.poetrycab.com)) and the 4th of July Festival ([www.4thofjulyfestival.com](http://www.4thofjulyfestival.com)) in America.

***We the poets foster  
intelligence, literacy,  
confidence and imagination.  
With words we infuse our lives  
with fun, energy and change.***

***Join your local poets or  
writers club, and ensure  
success, spread happiness  
and - most of all - ignite  
positive change!***

**Erik van Loon**  
House Of Crazyiness

September 23

# Omaha



PoetryOnAir.com

11.00 am - 12.00 pm Lecture  
(....., Omaha)

## American Indian Poetry

Explore the resilience, spirituality, and cultural heritage of Indigenous poets.

1.00 - 2.00 pm Talk  
(..., Omaha)

## DNA

Three Indigenous poets discuss the connection between ancestry and the earth's elements reflected in their writings.

3.00 - 4.00 pm Songs  
(Lauritzen Gardens, Omaha)

## .. EARTH ..

John Trudell wrote often songs about nature, identity, and the environment. At the Lauritzen Gardens ..... will play 5 of his favorite John Trudell songs.

8.00 - 10.00 pm Readings  
(..., Omaha)

## Poetry Downtown Omaha

12 selected poets read their work.

10.00 - 11.00 pm PATCH OMAHA

## Poetry And Tales Cocktail Hour

+ Ultimate Typewriter Showdown

(ONLY FOR POETS AND LOVERS)

## Poetry And Tales Cocktail Hour

Everynight from 10 till 11 pm you can meet at PATCH your favorite poet in person and hear their poems and stories!

### Poetry Train

SEPTEMBER 23

NEBRASKA

11.25 PM OMAHA



**Advertisement Full Page**  
**148 x 210.5 mm (5.8 x 8.29 inch)**  
**750 USD**

September 24

# Denver



PoetryOnAir.com

## **Poetry Train**

SEPTEMBER 24

NEBRASKA

12.46 PM LINCOLN

2.22 AM HASTINGS

3.11 AM HOLDREGE

4.22 AM MCCOOK

COLORADO

5.46 AM FORT MORGAN

7.56 AM DENVER

11.00 - 12.00 am      Lecture  
(....., Denver)

## **Poet. Recording Artist. Actor. Speaker.**

John Trudell was identified as a poet, a fighter for Native American rights, an agitator, singer and lots of other things but who was he really!

1.00 - 2.00 pm      Talk  
(..., Denver)

## **We Are Power : Dissected**

In 1980, one of the largest gatherings of Indigenous peoples and their allies took place at Paha Sapa. At this event, John Trudell delivered his iconic "We Are Power" speech. Twenty-five years later, we gather once more to reflect on and explore its deeper meaning.

3.00 - 6.00 pm      Museum  
(Denver Art Museum, Denver)

## **Indigenous Arts of North America**

We visit the Indigenous Arts of North America collection at the Denver Art Museum and the *Kent Monkman: History is Painted by the Victors* exhibition. It's the first major show in the U.S. for celebrated artist Kent Monkman (Fisher River Cree Nation, born 1965).

8.00 - 10.00 pm      Readings  
(....., Denver)

## **Poetry Downtown Denver**

12 selected poets read their work.

10.00 - 11.00 pm      PATCH DENVER

## **Poetry And Tales Cocktail Hour**

+ Ultimate Typewriter Showdown

**Poetry Hotel  
Denver**

September 25

# Poetry Train



PoetryOnAir.com

## **Poetry Train**

COLORADO

8.46 AM DENVER

10.53 AM FRASER WINTER  
PARK

11.22 AM GRANBY

2.43 PM GLENWOOD  
SPRINGS

4.43 PM GRAND JUNCTION  
UTAH

6.32 PM GREEN RIVER

7.53 PM HELPER

10.02 PM PROVO

11.40 PM SALT LAKE CITY

11.00 - 12.00 am Lecture

## **I AM RED**

While travelling along the Colorado River, one of the world's great waterways activist ..... weaves poetic reflection with urgent truths about this vital river and its uncertain future.

1.00 - 4.00 pm Workshop

## **Earth, Wind and Fire**

Discover how to authentically integrate the essence of your DNA and the elements of the earth into your creative work—both literally and figuratively.

7.00 - 8.00 pm Conversation

## **75 years Utah State Poetry Society**

In a unique multi-generational conversation, three members of the Utah State Poetry Society—including the youngest at just 14 years old—will reflect on the legacy of John Trudell. Each poet will also read a poem honoring John Trudell.

8.00 - 11.00 pm Doc Night

## **Remembering John Trudell**

For other great movies and documentaries goto [www.johntrudell.com/film](http://www.johntrudell.com/film)

### **I. Trudell**

*Directed by Heather Rae (2005 - 1h 19 min.)*

A chronicle of poet/activist John Trudell's travels, spoken word performances and politics.

### **II. RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked the World**

*Directed by Catherine Bainbridge (2017 - 1h 43 min.)*

A documentary about the role of Native Americans in popular music history.



September 26

# Poetry Train



PoetryOnAir.com

## *Poetry Train*

NEVADA

3.25 AM ELKO

6.01 AM WINNEMUCCA

9.24 AM RENO

CALIFORNIA

10.33 AM TRUCKEE

12.50 PM COLFAX

2.14 PM ROSEVILLE

3.05 PM SACRAMENTO

3.31 PM DAVIS

4.13 PM MARTINEZ

4.47 PM RICHMOND

4.57 PM EMERYVILLE

BARTH

5.15 PM EMERYVILLE

5.30 PM SAN FRANCISCO

10.00 - 12.00 pm      Workshop

## Spiritual Depth and Wisdom

John Trudell emphasized reconnecting with the Earth and its interconnectedness with all life. In this workshop, you'll learn to create authentic, timeless, and transcendent poetry.

1.00 - 4.00 pm      Workshop

## Zine Making

Artist Erik van Loon teach the poets, artist, musicians, writers and others on the Poetry Train how to make the first Poetry Train Zine in history.

7.00 - 9.00 pm      Poetry Walk  
(Pier 33, San Francisco)

## Listen To Us

Six San Francisco-based American Indian poets will walk from Pier 33 via Telegraph Hill to the American Indian Cultural District, reading their favorite John Trudell poems along the way. They represent California tribes and others from across the nation.

9.00 - 10.00 pm      Concert  
(Pier 4, San Francisco)

## Concert

.... will play eight songs:

Rich Man's War - Bomb's Over Bagdad - Never Never Blues - What he'd Done - Somebody's Kid - Tina Smiled - Baby Boom Che - Wildfires

10.00 - 11.00 pm      PATCH SAN FRANCISCO

## Poetry And Tales Cocktail Hour

+ Ultimate Typewriter Showdown



September 27

# San Francisco



11.00 - 12.00 am Lecture  
(..., San Francisco)

## Poetry, Prose and Art at Alcatraz

This lecture highlights how poetry, prose, and art became tools of resistance and resilience for the five Sicangu Lakota Indians who declared Alcatraz as Indian Land on March 9, 1964, and the following Occupation of Alcatraz from 1969 to 1971.

### Poetry Train

CALIFORNIA

- 10.25 PM SAN FRANCISCO
- 10.30 PM 22ND ST. STATION
- 10.34 PM BAYSHORE
- 10.40 PM SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO
- 10.43 PM SAN BRUNO STATION
- 10.46 PM MILBRAE
- 10.50 PM BURLINGAME
- 10.53 PM SAN MATEO
- 10.55 PM HAYWARD PARK
- 10.57 PM HILLSDALE
- 11:01 PM BELMONT
- 11:03 PM SAN CARLOS
- 11:07 PM REDWOOD CITY
- 11:11 PM MENLO PARK
- 11:13 PM PALO ALTO
- 11:16 PM CALIFORNIA Av
- 11:20 PM SAN ANTONIO
- 11:23 PM MOUNTAIN VIEW
- 11:27 PM SUNNYVALE
- 11:30 PM LAWRENCE
- 11:35 PM SAN JOSE

1:00 - 2.00 pm Talk  
(..., San Francisco)

## The FBI files

The occupation was led by Richard Oakes, LaNada War Jack, and others, with John Trudell as spokesman. After he became national chairman of the American Indian Movement (1973–1979). The government targeted A.I.M.'s spirit and momentum. Trudell's 17,000-page FBI file reflects the intense scrutiny he faced.

3:00 - 5.00 pm Workshop  
(..., San Francisco)

## Ledger Art Poetry

Artist ... will teach us how to create Ledger Art Poetry, narrative drawings or paintings with words on paper or cloth. It flourished from the 1860s to 1920s and was revived in the 1960s–70s. In 2023, it was displayed at the Library of Congress.

8:00 - 10.00 pm Readings  
(..., San Francisco)

## Poetry Downtown San Francisco

Selected poets read their work.

September 28

# San Jose



PoetryOnAir.com

11.00 - 12.00 pm      Speech  
(..., San Jose)

## State Of The Land

On the last day ... will deliver a poetic State of the Land. We will learn about the current condition of the land and we will get reports on American Indians economy, news, progress, achievements and priorities.

1 - 2 pm      Talk  
(..., San Jose)

## The Rise Continues

Due to an Indigenous Reads Rising more stories are being published by Native writers and illustrators every year, reflecting their cultures, Nations, and lived experiences. In this talk, we'll engage with these creators to explore how their work enriches us all and how we can support and learn from their voices.

3.00 - 5.00 pm      Meeting  
(..., San Jose)

## Poets meet Publishers

At Poets meet Publishers poets, songwriters, artist and actors can pitch their work and ideas to American Indian publishers and agents.

8:00 - 10.00 pm      Readings  
(..., San Jose)

## Poetry Downtown San Jose

Selected poets read their work.

10.00 - 11.00 pm      Patch

## Poetry And Tales Cocktail Hour

+ Ultimate Typewriter Showdown

**Advertisement Half Page**  
**148 x 105 mm (5.8 x 4.14 inch)**  
**400 USD**

**Advertisement**  
**1/4 Page**  
**74 x 105 mm**  
**(2.4 x 4.14 inch)**

**250 USD**

**Advertisement**  
**1/8 Page**  
**74 x 52.5 mm**  
**(2.4 x 2.07 inch)**  
**150 USD**

**Advertisement**  
**1/8 Page**  
**74 x 52.5 mm**  
**(2.4 x 2.07 inch)**  
**150 USD**

# Bio John Trudell

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*(Feb. 15, 1946 in Omaha, NE - Dec. 8th, 2015 in Santa Clara County, CA)*

John Trudell (1946–2015) was a Dakota poet, musician, speaker, actor, and activist whose work remains a powerful voice for Indigenous rights and social justice. Born on February 15, 1946, in Omaha, Nebraska, Trudell was a member of the Santee Sioux Nation. His early life was marked by economic hardship and systemic racism, which fueled his dedication to activism.

## Activism

Trudell rose to prominence as the spokesperson for the American Indian Movement (AIM) in the 1970s, advocating for Native sovereignty, land rights, and justice. He played a pivotal role during the 1969–1971 occupation of Alcatraz Island, a landmark protest highlighting the U.S. government's mistreatment of Indigenous peoples. Tragedy struck in 1979 when his pregnant wife, Tina Manning, their children, and her mother were killed in a suspicious fire.

## Poet and recording artist

Turning to poetry and music as forms of resistance and healing, Trudell released over a dozen albums, weaving spoken word with rock and blues. His raw, evocative works explored themes of identity, environmental stewardship, and resilience. Albums like 'AKA Grafitti Man' earned him critical acclaim, with Bob Dylan calling it the best album of its time.

## Speaker

A dynamic speaker, Trudell captivated audiences with his eloquence and sharp critique of colonialism, capitalism, and environmental destruction. Blending stories, poetry, and political insight, into his speeches made him a sought-after voice at universities, protests, and conferences worldwide. Trudell's words not only inspired activism but also encouraged a deeper understanding of Indigenous philosophies and interconnectedness with the Earth.

## Actor

Trudell also appeared in films, including 'Smoke Signals' and 'Thunderheart', further amplifying Indigenous stories. Until his passing, he remained a tireless advocate for Indigenous sovereignty, cultural preservation, and environmental justice. His legacy endures as a testament to the power of art in activism.



# Anthology and Zine

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Every year, we release a Poetry Downtown anthology (see right), showcasing the finest selection of poems. This year we also creating a Zine at the Poetry Train. All poets, writers, designers, artists, and photographers aboard the Poetry Train are invited to contribute to the Poetry Train Zine 2024.

There's just one rule: all creations must be made aboard the Poetry Train itself. The Art Drawing Center will provide paper and pencils for your creative endeavors. Let's make this Zine a true reflection of the Poetry Train experience!

- since 2018 -  
**ART  
DRAWING  
CENTER**  
[www.artdrawingcenter.com](http://www.artdrawingcenter.com)





**The Raven**  
 Edgar Allan Poe  
 Jan 18, 1809 – Oct 7, 1849

Poets from across the United States and around the world joined our tribute to Edgar Allan Poe. From a pool of submissions, our jury selected the 25 finest poems inspired by The Raven to be featured in this anthology.

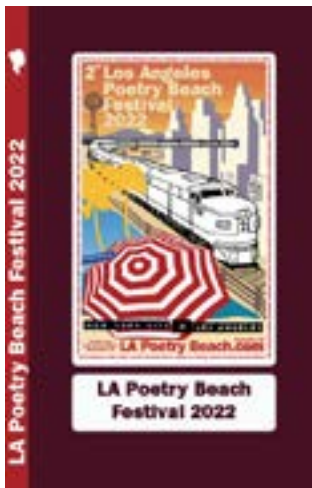
Sixteen of these talented poets were invited to share their work in person at our venues in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore during Poetry Downtown 2024.

**Get Ready To Die**  
 Kenneth Patchen



Poetry Downtown 2021

**Some People  
 Never Go Crazy**  
 Charles Bukowski



Poetry Downtown 2022

**I Never Could  
 Talk To You**  
 Sylvia Plath



Poetry Downtown 2023



# Crowdfunding



**20\$**

**Unlimited**

**Septuagenarian Spew Cocktail**  
 45 ml Grappa  
 30 ml gin  
 30 ml lemon juice  
 15 ml Cointreau  
 15 ml orange juice  
 1 dash dry sherry  
 Garnish:  
 3 olives  
 2 pickles  
 2 garnish pens  
 1 Pop Rocks Tropic



**30\$**

**Unlimited**  
**Poetry Downtown**  
**2025 t-shirt**

Look At Us  
 John Trudell

**Septuagenarian Spew Cocktail Unlimited**

**Poetry Downtown Tshirt 2025 Unlimited**

Donate \$20 to treat one of our poets to a Septuagenarian Spew Cocktail! In return, you'll receive a personalized videopoem featuring a toast in your honor. Cheers to creativity!

Donate \$30 and receive our 5th edition Poetry Downtown T-shirt (available in sizes S, M, L, and XL). Choose from three unique designs that capture the spirit of our poetry festival!





**Poetry Downtown  
Signed Anthology 2025  
Limited to 100**

Donate \$50 and receive a signed copy of the 'Look At Us' anthology, featuring your favorite poet from Poetry Downtown 2024! A personal keepsake from the event.

**50\$**  
100 pieces  
1 1/2 hour event  
Talk to You!  
2023, signed  
64 pages



**Poetry Train  
Polaroid On The Tracks  
Limited to 100**

Donate \$75 and receive a signed American Short Polaroid (3.5 x 4.2 inches) by Erik van Loon. A unique, limited-edition photo capturing the essence of poetry and travel—yours to treasure!



**Poetry Drink  
Limited to 4**

Donate \$250 and enjoy a drink with Erik van Loon while he types an unforgettable poem for you in: Omaha (9/20), Denver (9/19), San Francisco (9/13), or San Jose (9/12).



**Poetry Train Ticket  
Limited to 50**

Donate \$300, and we'll gift your Poetry Train ticket to a poet, supporting their poetic journey. You'll help fuel this literary pilgrimage while supporting the arts!

# Buy Art

Each year, I personally fund the Poetry Downtown Festival. Participating poets contribute only \$5 each, which is insufficient to cover all expenses, including Poetry Downtown, the Poetry Train, and the events in Boston, New York, and Baltimore.

To support the festival and poetry in general, I am selling my ten 33 x 20 ft "I Will Win" paintings from the NYC Marathon at [www.erikvanloon.com](http://www.erikvanloon.com)

**I Will Win**  
2005



**The News**  
2006



**The Statue**  
2007



**The Runner**  
2008



**The History**  
2009



**The Creation**  
2010



**The Crisis**  
2011



**The Elections**  
2012



**The War**  
2013



**The End**  
2014



# Poetry Cab 2025

Poverty and Profit in Today's American Cities and Towns



## POETRY CAB

Submit a poem exploring the theme of poverty and profit in your city or town for a chance to be featured in the Poetry Cab anthology and win a free ride in the Poetry Cab!

### Rules:

- [poetrycab.com/rules](http://poetrycab.com/rules)
- Age limit 21+
- Max 28 lines
- Entry fee \$ 10
- Deadline March 10

Sponsor:



HOUSE OF CRAZINESS

[WWW.POETRYCAB.COM](http://WWW.POETRYCAB.COM)



PoetryOnAir.com

September 23

1-2 pm Lecture  
**Literacy Through Poetry**

3-4 pm Radio Play  
**A Voyage To The Moon**

8-10 pm Reading  
**Boston**

September 24

12,30-1.30 pm Lecture  
**Poe in New York**

1.30-3.30 pm Reading  
**New York**

7-8 pm Lecture  
**Poe in Popular Culture**

8-10 pm Reading  
**Philadelphia**

September 28

2-3 am Lecture  
**A Mad Genius?**

8-10 pm Reading  
**Baltimore**

8-10 pm Final  
**Ultimate Typewriter Showdown**

[www.PoetryOnAir.com](http://www.PoetryOnAir.com)

Since 2024



Events on  
the Poetry  
Train are for  
free but you  
need to  
register  
online via

[www.poetrydowntown.com](http://www.poetrydowntown.com)

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**225 USD**

**Advertisement**  
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**250 USD**

**Advertisement Full Page**  
**148 x 102 mm (5.8 x 4.02 inch)**  
**400 USD**



# Evicted

**A Call for Poems and Songs**

**Write a poem or song, give it a title, and submit it by June 1st. The best pieces will be featured in the**

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**4th of July**  
**Poetry & Song Book**

**send your submission to**

**WWW.4THOFJULYFESTIVAL.COM**

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**750 USD**

# POETRY TRAIN ITINERARY

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## NEBRASKA

### SEPTEMBER 23

11.25 PM OMAHA

### SEPTEMBER 24

12.36 | 12.46 PM LINCOLN

02.22 | 02.22 AM HASTINGS

03.11 | 03.11 AM HOLDREGE

04.22 | 04.22 AM McCOOK

## COLORADO

05.46 ! 5.46 AM FORT MORGAN

7.56 AM DENVER

### SEPTEMBER 25

08.46 AM DENVER

10.48 ! 10.53 AM FRASER WINTER PARK

11.22 ! 11.22 AM GRANBY

02.36 ! 02.43 PM GLENWOOD SPRINGS

04.30 ! 04.43 PM GRAND JUNCTION

## UTAH

06.32 ! 06.32 PM GREEN RIVER

07.53 ! 07.53 PM HELPER

10.02 ! 10.02 PM PROVO

11.15 ! 11.40 PM SALT LAKE CITY

## NEVADA

### SEPTEMBER 26

03.23 ! 03.25 AM ELKO

06.01 ! 06.01 AM WINNEMUCCA

09.13 ! 09.24 AM RENO

## CALIFORNIA

10.33 ! 10.33 AM TRUCKEE

**AMTRAK** 12.50 ! 12.50 PM COLFAX

02.14 ! 02.14 PM ROSEVILLE

03.05 ! 03.05 PM SACRAMENTO

03.31 ! 03.31 PM DAVIS

04.13 ! 04.13 PM MARTINEZ

04.47 PM RICHMOND

05.51 PM RICHMOND

05.55 ! 05.58 PM EL CERRITO

06.01 ! 06.07 PM BERKELEY

06.10 ! 06.20 PM OAKLAND

06.30 PM SAN FRANCISCO - POWEL STREET

**BART**

### SEPTEMBER 27

**CALTRAIN**

10.25 PM SAN FRANCISCO STATION

10.30 ! 10.30 PM 22ND ST. STATION

10.34 ! 10.34 PM BAYSHORE

10.40 ! 10.40 PM SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO

10.43 ! 10.43 PM SAN BRUNO STATION

10.46 ! 10.46 PM MILBRAE

10.50 ! 10.50 PM BURLINGAME

10.53 ! 10.53 PM SAN MATEO

10.55 ! 10.55 PM HAYWARD PARK

10.57 ! 10.57 PM HILLSDALE

11.01 ! 11.01 PM BELMONT

11.03 ! 11.03 PM SAN CARLOS

11.07 ! 11.07 PM REDWOOD CITY

11.11 ! 11.11 PM MENLO PARK

11.13 ! 11.13 PM PALO ALTO

11.16 ! 11.16 PM CALIFORNIA AVENUE

11.20 ! 11.20 PM SAN ANTONIO

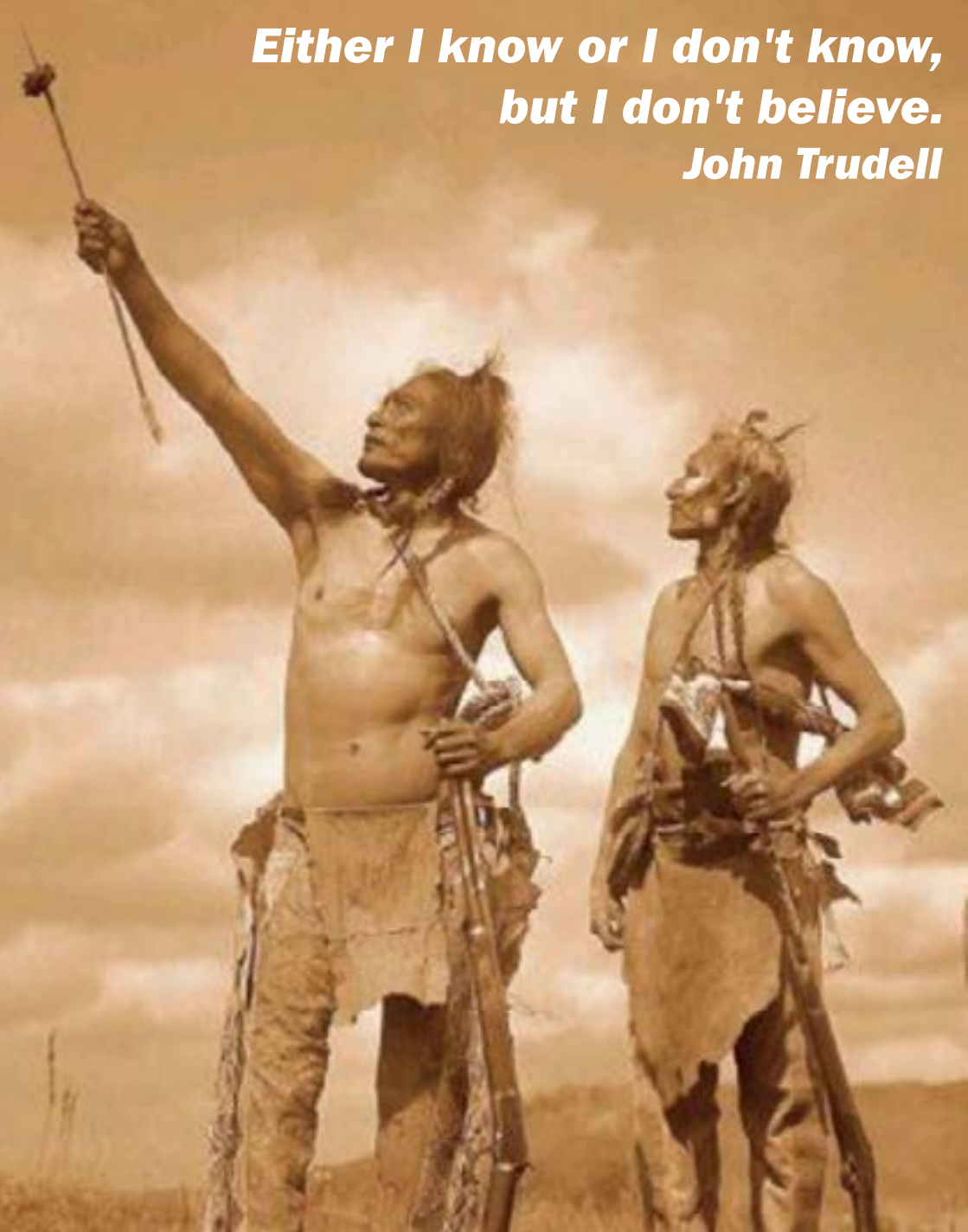
11.23 ! 11.23 PM MOUNTAIN VIEW

11.27 ! 11.27 PM SUNNYVALE

11.20 ! 11.30 PM LAWRENCE

11.35 ! 11.35 PM SAN JOSE

*Either I know or I don't know,  
but I don't believe.  
John Trudell*



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