

## Ellis Island

*by Joseph Bruchac*

Beyond the red brick of Ellis Island  
where the two Slovak children  
who became my grandparents  
waited the long days of quarantine,  
after leaving the sickness,  
the old Empires of Europe,  
a Circle Line ship slips easily  
on its way to the island  
of the tall woman, green  
as dreams of forests and meadows  
waiting for those who'd worked  
a thousand years  
yet never owned their own.

Like millions of others,  
I too come to this island,  
nine decades the answerer  
of dreams.

Yet only part of my blood loves that memory.  
Another voice speaks  
of native lands  
within this nation.  
Lands invaded  
when the earth became owned.  
Lands of those who followed  
the changing Moon,  
knowledge of the seasons  
in their veins.