

Until today, I did not know Oregon had a state song. Friends of mine let me know about this bill, and I looked at the lyrics of Oregon, My Oregon and was appalled by the deeply and explicitly racist language. This song upholds and lauds very harmful attitudes: that white settlers are heroes for having stolen land from others, for having committed genocide. The true story of Oregon is far more complex than this song suggests.

I do not believe the legacy of this song can be healed merely by changing some lyrics. The whole song is steeped in injustice, from the lyrics to the process of its coming to be (a process which only accepted submissions from white folks). I believe we need to start afresh, have a just and equitable process, and choose a song that better reflects the beauty and possibility of all those in our communities.

Thank you for considering!