The SAIL Review

April 2021
Vol. 1, Issue 1

A Review & Announcement Publication

In This Issue

From the Editors
Welcome to *The SAIL Review*
Jeremy M. Carnes... 2

Announcements... 3
Business of the Association
Call for Papers
New Releases and Other Announcements

Reviews
The Only Good Indians, by Stephen Graham Jones
Kali Simmons.. 6
In the Night of Memory, by Linda LeGarde Grover
Robin Riley Fast.. 8
Brother Bullet by Cassandra López
Jane Haladay.. 11
Recovering Native American Writings in the Boarding School Press,
Edited by Jacqueline Emery
Cristina Stanciu.. 14
Bearheart: The Gerald Vizenor Chronicles, Directed by John Purdy
James Mackay.. 18

Welcome to *The SAIL Review*

Jeremy M. Carnes

Welcome to the first issue of *The SAIL Review*, a new online and open access review publication. As you might have guessed, *The SAIL Review* is a companion publication to ASAIL's print journal, *Studies in American Indian Literatures*.

The beginning of this publication started when the current *SAIL* editorial assistant, Sass Denny, and I began talking about and coming up with ideas to make reviews more readily available. We work in a field of study full of incredible scholars that are consistently creating and gifting us with incredible scholarship that deserves our time and attention. Yet, the publication cycle of our print journal made it difficult to get reviews out in a timely manner. And that doesn't even include issues with space constraints. We knew we wanted to do something digital and, if possible, accessible to everyone, whether or not they were a member of ASAIL. We discussed the idea with the University of Nebraska Press, who publishes *SAIL*. They were beyond open to the idea; in fact they absolutely encouraged it. So we decided to dive right in, and here we are!

We hope this publication can do a number of things: keep us all abreast of new publications in the field, foster robust discussions around central and important scholarship, and change and develop to meet the needs of readers and members of ASAIL. However, most of all, we all hope this publication can be a touchpoint in creating, maintaining, and strengthening connections and community within Indigenous literary studies. In many ways, this project grew out of the difficulties of 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic. The isolation that I am sure we all felt made the year that much more difficult. We hope this publication can be another avenue for even more connections, especially when distance separates us for long periods of time.

Work in academia, especially in the humanities, is itself often isolating. In fact, this isolation was touted as one of the biggest benefits of the profession when I started graduate school. Yet, I'm sure I'm not alone in my appreciation for the community and connection within Indigenous literary studies–from readings and dinners to pull-tabs and drinks–connection and relationships are as important as the scholarship we produce.

I hope this publication can be another source for building those connections and relationships. I hope it changes and adapts as we find new ways to use it. And, hey, at the very least I hope you read about some stellar texts that you can spend some time with.

Miigwech.

Thank you.

ASAIL Goes Social

Along with the launching of *The SAIL Review*, ASAIL is also working to develop a more robust and social online presence! Check out the organization on the already extant Facebook page, at our new Twitter account (@ASAIL_org), and on Instagram (asail_org).

ASAIL Nominations

ASAIL is still looking for nominations for Vice President and Graduate Student Representative for the ASAIL executive board. Both of these positions are two year positions and the Vice President will assume role as President at the end of their term.

If you would like to nominate someone or yourself for these positions, please email the ASAIL Secretary, Steve Sexton (steven.sexton@unlv.edu).

ASAIL Membership

Don't forget to renew your memberships for ASAIL! You can see information about membership rates payment options on our website (asail.org). Then, just click "Membership." If you have questions about memberships, you can email the ASAIL Treasurer, Jeff Berglund (jeff.berglund@nau.edu).

Studies in the Novel CFP

Studies in the Novel seeks submissions for a special issue on "Indigenous Young Adult Novels," guest-edited by Christopher Pexa (University of Minnesota), Angela Calcaterra (University of North Texas), and Eric Gary Anderson (George Mason University), to be published summer 2022.

Indigenous authors have been telling stories and writing books for young audiences for a very long time. From oral literatures that enthralled Indigenous youths gathered around the fire, to early written work by Charles Alexander Eastman, Zitkála-Šá, Francis La Flesche, and Luther Standing Bear, to more recent YA texts including Cherie Dimaline's T*he Marrow Thieves*, Louise Erdrich's *The Birchbark House*, Stephen Graham Jones's *Mapping the Interior*, Dawn Quigley's *Apple in the Middle*, Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*, Drew Hayden Taylor's *The Night Wanderer*, and Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel's *Wabanaki Blues*, Indigenous authors have captivated young and adult audiences alike with stories that feature young protagonists, coming-of-age plots, and crucial insights about being and becoming in an often hostile world. Publications including Mandy Suhr-Sytsma's *Self-Determined Stories* (2019) and Dr. Debbie Reese's "American Indians in Children's Literature"—a website devoted since 2006 to the critical analysis of

Indigenous people in children's and YA literature and to the promotion of Indigenous-authored YA texts—have highlighted the long-standing significance of Native YA literatures for Indigenous communities. Despite this important work, however, scholarship largely has not kept up with the proliferation of Indigenous YA literature in the past few decades in particular. In this special issue, we seek a timely intervention with a body of essays that examine Indigenous YA novels both in their own right and in conversation with the conventions of settler YA fiction more broadly. In particular, we ask, how does Indigenous Young Adult fiction address sovereignty, community, resistance, futurity, desire, fear, dreams? How do Indigenous authors engage and/or revise settler YA conventions?

Possible topics include:

- how Indigenous YA novels represent past, present, and future trauma—personal trauma, intergenerational trauma, colonial trauma, environmental trauma, etc.
- the articulation of tribal histories and tribal-national sovereignties in Indigenous YA novels
- ways in which Indigenous YA novels introduce, represent, teach, and work to maintain Indigenous languages and other forms of cultural knowledge
- strategies for teaching Indigenous YA novels
- broadening and deepening the archive/canon of Indigenous fiction by including YA novels—or, ways of reconceptualizing this archive/canon by placing YA novels in conversation with other Indigenous literary and cultural productions.
- how Indigenous YA novels conceptualize storytelling as a genre, mode of cultural expression, and/or site of resistance
- intersections between Indigenous YA fiction and such topics/genres as environmental studies, science fiction, fantasy, speculative fiction, disability studies, LGBTQ+ studies, or comics and graphic novels

See www.studiesinthenovel.org for the full call; send questions and submissions to *Studies in the Novel* at studiesinthenovel@unt.edu. **Deadline: November 1, 2021**

Bearheart: The Gerald Vizenor Chronicles

John Purdy and Write Place are pleased to announce their new movie, *Bearheart: The Gerald Vizenor Chronicles*. A trailer can be viewed on our website where even small contributions allow access to the full movie. We hope you like the take on Vizenor's first published novel. The film follows its pilgrims on their journey and relates the encounters they have to the environmental and social issues we face in our world today. If you have students who struggle with some of his concepts, they will find explanations in the film for terms such as victimry, terminal creed, socio-acupuncture, word wars, and, of course, survivance. The film has several interviews with Vizenor, but also Kimberley Blaeser, Melissa Nelson, Billy Stratton, and Stephen Graham Jones. Be safe be happy. The link to the trailer:

https://www.write-place.org/current-projects/bearheart-the-gerald-vizenor-chronicles/

Resilience Through Writing

Robert E. Walls is pleased to announce the recent publication of a monograph: *Resilience Through Writing: A Bibliographic Guide to Indigenous-Authored Publications in the Pacific Northwest before 1960*, which was published in January of 2021 as Memoir 20 from the *Journal of Northwest Anthropology.*

This work will be of value to anyone interested in the history of early Indigenous writing and print culture, particularly in northwestern North America. Who were the contemporaries of Sarah Winnemucca, Mourning Dove, and Pauline Johnson? This volume provides wide coverage of the many lesser-known Native authors, periodicals, publishers, and self-published works that emerged out of the Far West, including western Canada. This includes boarding school literature, early Native newspapers, letters to editors, political tracts, and rare booklets dedicated to oral traditions and tribal history, all published between the 1830s and 1960. Most annotations contain biographical details about authors, and information about the tribal context and significance of these publications to both academics and tribal descendants.

PMLA, January 2021 Issue

The January 2021 issue of PMLA includes a "Theories and Methodologies" cluster on "Indigenous Literatures and the Antropocene," coordinated and introduced by Melanie Benson Taylor. The cluster includes essays by Stephanie LeMenager, Arturo Arias, Benjamin Balthaser, Iyoko Day, Matt Hooley, Eric Cheyfitz, and Eric Gary Anderson.

Free to a Good Home

A Big Two-hearted Nonprofit. One heart dedicated to literature, the other to the environment.

The Board of Directors for Write Place—a 501(c)3 whose mission is to create and/or support projects that engage literature to inspire appreciation of humanity's intimate relationship with our environment—is offering the organization and its assets to an institution, group of individuals, or like-minded organization that will continue its mission under new management. It has no debts or other obligations and the board does not seek compensation for the organization's transfer.

To date, WP has produced two documentaries, but under its Trademark can offer any number of educational programs or products that fall within its scope, which is broad.

The board will accept proposals through August 31, 2021. Visit our website for information on the organization at: www.write-place.org

For further information, email info@write-place.org. Send proposals to: john@write-place.org

The Only Good Indians by Stephen Graham Jones

Kali Simmons

Stephen Graham Jones. *The Only Good Indians.* London: Titan Books, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-7890-95296. 357 pp.

We are living in a time in which there is a profound desire for justice. Stephen Graham Jones' *The Only Good Indians* is a book in which there may exist a kind of justice, but in which there certainly is no peace.

The narrative of *The Only Good Indians* centers on a group of Blackfoot men: Richard "Ricky" Boss Ribs, Lewis A. Clarke, Gabriel "Gabe" Cross Guns, and Cassidy "Cass" Thinks Twice. Through the course of the novel, these men are relentlessly pursued by a spirit named Elk Head Woman, a manifestation of a cow elk that the group killed in violation of both tribal hunting protocols and proper kinship relations. Elk Head Woman returns ten years after the "Thanksgiving Classic"--the night the men slaughtered a group of elk--seeking revenge not just for her death, but for the death of the unborn calf she was carrying when the four men killed her.

Like his previous work *Mapping the Interior,* Jones seeks to challenge concepts like justice and revenge by telling a story where it is difficult to discern the righteous from the evil. He is careful to present each of the men within all of their complexity: some of the men struggle with addiction, others run away from home to escape feelings of shame. Others feel trapped, culled in like animals on the reservation. Jones does not shy away from showing the shamefulness of Ricky, Lewis, Gabe, and Cass' actions against each other, their families, their communities, and their non-human kin, but he does so while carefully showing that these are people that are doing their best to navigate a world that is deeply anti-Indian. It is a world in which they feel destined fail. It is a world that batters Native people down. Frequently, the Elk Head Woman manipulates this world to her advantage, placing the men in situations where they must face off against armed police and racist locals, taking advantage of the men's place in the world in order to dispatch them rather than killing them directly. These choices not only help to develop the men as complex characters, they require that the reader think carefully about who really deserves what they get in the end.

Jones further complicates this slasher story by incriminating the reader. When given access to the thoughts of the Elk Head Woman, they are presented in a second-person narrative:

"Ten years and now you're here at last.

. . . Neither of these last two know you're in the world at all. That day in the snow they shot you, to them it's just another day, another hunt.

That's why it has to be like this.

You could have taken them at any point over the last day, day and a half, but that's not even close to what they deserve. They need to feel what you felt.

The whole world has to be torn from their belly, shoved into a shallow hole" (262)

It's the literary equivalent of that opening scene from John Carpenter's *Halloween* when the viewer must witness, through young Michael Meyer's eyes, his murder of his sister. Gazing through the eyes of Elk Head Woman, the reader is directly implicated in Elk Head Woman's desire for vengeance. Revenge stories can be satisfying for those who see so little justice in the world, and, initially, it seems easy for the reader to identify with her character. Rick, Lewis, Gabe and Cass openly express their shame about "that Saturday," and it is clear the men's actions were out of balance: They took much more than they needed, and they took something that wasn't theirs to take. Yet Elk Head Woman's reckoning, too, spirals out of balance. Although she begins by hunting the men, her revenge slowly ensnarls into those around them: she kills partners, friends, bystanders and eventually begins to hunt children. It becomes clear that Elk Head Woman has waited to act until these men have something worth taking, something they love, some glimmer of hope.

Drawing from the slasher genre, *The Only Good Indians* re-inscribes horror tropes within a Blackfoot context. I want to be careful to note that this is very much a horror novel: Jones does not shy away from detailing the gruesome ways that Elk Head Woman extracts her revenge through the flesh of the novels' characters. With section titles like "The House That Ran Red" "It Came from the Rez" and "Sweat Lodge Massacre,"--which I personally think all deserve to be made into their own feature-length NDN grindhouse films--it is clear that Jones is closely engaging the horror genre while also remaining in conversation with a long history of Indigenous literary fiction. The narrative's final girl, Denorah, will be very familiar to those who read Native literature: she's the town basketball hero, tough and disciplined and carrying the burden of her father's failures. Although familiar in many ways, the way that Jones ultimately utilizes Denorah's character is refreshing. Rather than following the normative final girl pattern (monster chases girl, girl discovers something about monster, man arrives and kills monster), *The Only Good Indians* tells a slasher story that troubles notions of good and evil, hero and monster. It is only through an act of reciprocity, a moment of care towards a being radically unlike oneself, that the circle of violence is closed. Ultimately, the novel forces readers to consider the ways that one of settler-colonialism's true horrors is the ways that it implicates all in its violent structures. Thus, to think outside of the narratives that colonialism has normalized and imposed requires acts of unthinkable risk...and hope.

Author Bio

Kali Simmons is an Oglala Lakota descendant and Ph.D Candidate in the Department of English at the University of California, Riverside. Her research examines the ways Indigenous peoples have been represented – and represented themselves – within the genres of horror, science fiction, and documentary/ethnography.

In The Night of Memory by Linda LeGarde Grover

Robin Riley Fast

Linda LeGarde Grover. *In the Night of Memory*. U of Minnesota Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-5179-0650-4 (hc); 978-1-5179-0651-1 (pb). 211 pp.

Anishinaabe writer Linda LeGarde Grover's second novel takes on the tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women from the perspectives of children left behind—in this case, the two small daughters of Loretta Gallette. It is a story of irreparable loss, and of how such bereaved children may be enabled to endure and go on. The book is moving not simply because of its subject matter but because of the ways in which Grover evokes the impacts of such loss.

The first chapter's title, "The Surrender of Children," blunt yet ambiguous, raises crucial questions: by whom are children surrendered, and why? Under what conditions? And will the children themselves surrender?

The novel begins with beauty, immediately followed by doubt and loss:

> Our mother, Loretta, gave us the most beautiful names she could think of. She gave us a memory, one that I have told to Rainy so many times that to her it has become real—though I wonder if it never happened at all and is only one of my dreams. And when Rainy was four and I was going on three, our mother gave us to the St. Louis County foster care system….Rainfall Dawn and Azure Sky are our real names, the ones Loretta wrote down on our birth certificates…Nobody has called us Baby and Sister since the morning Loretta was getting us ready to go on that cab ride to the County. We haven't seen her or heard from her since. I think. I am not sure. (3-4)

Loretta surrenders her daughters in the context of historical traumas that include her own precarious childhood. For her children, losing her means losing family, place, history, voice, love. As well, it entails the children's acquiescence to others' views of them, their self-diminishing adjustments, and often their silence. Whether, or to what extent, such losses can be restored, and such diminutions repaired, is another critical question, always implicitly present. One of the ways that Azure responds to these losses is by repeatedly asserting her and her sister's beautiful "real names," an affirmation that reflects her desire to recover all that they have lost.

Azure narrates most of the novel. Her account reflects her defensive reserve and persistent wondering about Loretta, as well as the tension between her fear of change and her desire to believe in recovery and comfort, in the promise of the final foster mother's "make yourselves at home," an invitation that, in the contexts of Azure's experience, highlights how language, and the idea of home, are susceptible to complications and distortions.

Rainfall Dawn is more visibly and persistently fragile. Her brief narration confirms Azure's characterization of her, while it conveys, in her own voice, both her limitations and her insights, as

well as her dependence on her sister: "My sister takes my hand again; there is nothing I can do but trust her" (176).

Four other characters join in narrating the multi-faceted story of Loretta's and her daughters' family. Each speaks from a distinctive experience and knowledge, in a voice and a timbre formed by her history and her relationships. Their voices and stories confirm and solidify the girls' place within the family, hence within the tribal community, and thus within the larger history of colonization and loss. As Auntie Girlie, "the oldest Mozhay elder. By far" (19), and "Loretta's auntie in the Indian way," says:

> There is more to Loretta's story than her disappearance and more to her disappearance than the story. Stories like Loretta's were and are sadly so common that it didn't even merit mention in the news, that an Indian woman who lived a rough life had lost her children to the County and dropped off the face of the earth without anyone even noticing for the longest time. Loretta was one of those women, one of how many we will never know, and just as it was for Loretta it was for them, that the story is more than any individual lost woman's failings, more than speculation about the mystery, surely more than rumor and gossip…It's our history, the loss of land, of course, but there's more to it…so much became lost…people getting moved all over the place…the families that lost their children…the wrecking of lives… (21).

Grover deftly interweaves multiple narrators' voices and stories in her earlier writings as well: in the linked stories of The Dance Boots; and in her first novel, The Road Back to Sweetgrass, where the combination of multiple viewpoints and narrative reserve creates a rich sense of depth. Analogously, in her poetry collection, The Sky Watched, speakers' distinctively grounded voices persuade us that they reflect the realities of genuine lives. With the reappearance of characters across books, and the impressive use of multiple narrators, Grover's work might recall Louise Erdrich's fiction. But In the Night of Memory is less inclined toward symbolism, and Grover steers away from the near-magical language and imagery often integral to Erdrich's work.

As seen in the passages quoted here, Grover creates a subtlety grounded in language that is straightforward, unadorned, and down to earth. Occasionally this simplicity makes way for another mode, image-rich and almost poetic. These different linguistic registers support each other, each confirming the depth of the truths that inspire both. Similarly, the different narrating voices, rather than competing, together strengthen the fabrics of family and story.

The presence of diverse narrating characters and voices (some heard within others' narrations) establishes the importance of story; collectively they evoke the processes of communal story-making, story-keeping, and the power of stories to build the resilience and assurance that make endurance possible. Family, and individuals' connections to family, are the central concerns of these narrators and the story they build. Offering diverse visions and versions of family, they show how family can be maintained and valued, how it can be torn and challenged, thus how it is always in need of maintenance and restoration. We recognize such need as Azure tells and retells the story of the sisters' most precious and comforting

memory, of their mother dancing with the northern lights. Her suppression of bleaker memories reminds us that stories alone, without the reassurance of sustaining love, may not be enough.

Such reassurance is offered when Azure and Rainy are drawn into the multi-generational family at their first powwow, where Auntie Girlie tells them that they look like their mother, Beryl shows them how to arrange their shawls, and a girl their age leads them into the dance circle:

> "We look like Indians," Rainy whispered to Azure….
>
> "We don't know how to dance," worried Azure.
>
> "Follow me; do what I do," answered Crystal (122).

Such gestures of inclusion offer the novel's hope, reflecting, as they do, family members' resolve to act on their grief by recovering and protecting their lost children:

> Beryl set her coffee cup down hard on the table. "How many of you were on the RBC when Junior Gallette was trying to find those girls? How many remember the work that Artense and Shirley and Fred Simon did to get them tracked down?...It was a long, hard road to the Indian Child Welfare Act, and though it's not perfect, it's what we've got. We are still in mourning for the children we lost, and that includes the girls' mother; we lost Loretta…and she may never be found. How can we not do what we can to take care of her children?" (197-98)

In the Night of Memory offers no closure, no end to the loss, though it does imagine comfort in the determined work and love that can enable continuance. Loretta disappears from the reader when she disappears from her daughters' lives. From then on, she is present only in their increasingly tenuous memories, their similarly diminishing conviction that she will return, family members' also limited memories, and the pervasive knowledge of loss. What saves the novel being defined by such grim sorrow is its acknowledgement of the shared effort and faith necessary to going on. There is no easy solace, but the family's dedication and Azure's perseverance together offer credible hope—in Rain's fragile peace, as well as in Azure's equanimity and love, and the hard-won strength of her storytelling voice. This hope persuades due to Grover's deep and sustained attention to language, characterization, and contexts—an attentiveness that makes this novel a rich addition to the stories of Anishinaabe and indigenous lives.

Author Bio

Robin Riley Fast (Emerson College) has written *The Heart as a Drum: Continuance and Resistance in American Indian Poetry* (U of Michigan P, 1999), and published articles on works of Simon J. Ortiz, Carter Revard, Lucy Tapahonso, Adrian C. Louis, Jim Barnes, Thomas King, Chrystos, Wendy Rose, Louise Erdrich, and Maurice Kenny, among others.

Brother Bullet by Casandra López

Jane Haladay

Brother Bullet. Casandra López. Sun Tracks. Tucson: University of Arizona Press (2019). ISBN: 9780816538522. 104 pages.

Even before we come to understand its poignant meaning, the alliterative title of Casandra López's debut poetry collection, *Brother Bullet*, grabs our attention. The collection is an extended elegy, a song of lamentation in four sections ("Bullet Breaks," "Bullet Teaches," "New Language," and "Remains"), that attempts to describe and process through language of López's individual and familial loss after the murder of her younger brother in 2010 and its aftermath. Consistently, López suggests that words are inadequate to outline the depth of this loss, and yet words are not only all she has, but may be the primary medium able to tether her detailed memories of the Brother she knew as the sharpness of his loss slowly lessens.

The front porch of the López family home on 10th Street in San Bernardino is the opening scene of this drama, the stage for the tragedy enacted in the first poem. Here, the poet invites readers into her family's world, their home, to "See where Bullet broke / Brother, see where I break, / where we split into before / and after…" (5). Throughout the collection, López returns to the front porch in her effort to make sense of the complex tangle of emotions, images, and meanings the porch has come to signify since the night she opened the door and Bullet found Brother: "On our porch I reach your / body still flushed with heat. I want to touch your shiver / lips, the flutter of your mouth, to tender / the hurt…" ("What Bullet Teaches" 29); "Here is where you died. / I could be pointing at my center. But I mean / family porch" ("Where Cement Splits" 54); "Father hosed the porch, irrigated-- / blood until it swam into the dampened / dirt…" ("10th Street Porch, Investigation" 7); and "When Brother's First Son asked me/ where it happened, where his father could not outrun/ death, I tell him the truth, but feel heavy with the / weight of witness, a wild gunshot ricochets in my/ throat…" ("Some Boys" 89). Images of the "Sky-blue / door" (5) that López continues to feel guilty for having opened on the night of Brother's shooting commingle with the same cement porch where, long before that night, Brother and the "break-dancing boys" who were his friends (5) spun and flexed muscles in celebration of young life, and with Brother's blood on that December night in 2010. Through these interconnected images that transverse the poems, López reinscribes for readers what it means to continue crossing the literal and emotional threshold of where Brother lived and died each time she opens and closes the door to her family's home.

While *Brother Bullet*'s first two sections explore the immediacy of Brother's death and are primarily located in Southern California, the third and fourth sections, "New Language" and "Remains," move between California and Santa Fe, New Mexico. Poems of romantic and sexual intimacy enter the text in the section "New Language," although Brother's murder haunts the speaker's relationship with her lover: "I want to tell him that since Brother-Death / I haven't been the same, but

he already knows" ("Biological" 61). The poems of romantic and sexual intimacy ask honest, painful questions about the possibility of achieving closeness with someone across the geographies of "race" and grief. "…My brown / thighs hum from the trace of his fingertips," López writes. "I feel soft / about what his almost white hands find there, / want to welcome him in, but instead I wonder if I can / love someone who can never know what I've lost" ("In This Desert" 62). How to negotiate the terrain of intimacy with another human being, challenging and baffling under the best of circumstances, while still feeling so broken, anguished, and lost from Brother's death, is a question López leaves unanswered. As well, López explores in "A New Language" how to even "speak of longing, / a language weighted with / impossibility" ("Continent of Desire" 66), and the way that her desire is inextricable from her sense of feeling "haunted" by "all of the dead / I whisper to, all the names / I want etched into my flesh, / a soft / terrain to lay / down for those I fear / forgetting" ("Continent of Desire" 65).

Who killed Brother and why is never revealed beyond López's reference to the "six bullets, two men and they came for you—hunted you" in "Flight" (25). These details are irrelevant to the story López wants to tell. Instead, the poet's focus is squarely and relentlessly on expressing her relationship with Brother and all that his loss means to her. She describes missing his smell—"I wanted to keep alive Brother's / scent as long as possible" ("Oranges Are Not Indigenous" 91)—of the happy times they shared by water and of the physicality of their brother-sister bond, especially as kids ("Brother and I," "Lake Days," "Refugio Beach"). Imagery juxtaposing deserts and drought with wetness and water permeates these poems and expresses both the literal, physical locations in Southern California and New Mexico that López inhabits, as well as those interior landscapes of emptiness, grief, and gradual rejuvenation that begin to re-inhabit her. López has stated in an interview, "I am drawn to using images of water because it shares a lot with grief. People want to try to control them both and sometimes it is an impossible task" (Quintero).

Signs of healing emerge in the collection's closing section, "Remains." In the final poem, "Oranges Are Not Indigenous," López's closing image reaffirms that, "…Spring comes and mint grows soft / and green from a leaking faucet in the / backyard. My face presses into / ground and I inhale…. / …I need these reminders of /how we survive and still grow / so fiercely against the edges of earth" (92). This poem's single column of text, flush left on the page and written in free verse, contrasts to the opening poem, "Where Bullet Breaks," which has a more disjointed visual arrangement of combined flush-left and offset stanzas, especially the last stanza, in which Brother's murder is described in short, staccato words and phrases with space between them (6). This visually fragmented appearance illustrates the chaos and rupture of the key event of *Brother Bullet*'s larger narrative, while "Oranges Are Not Indigenous" seems to suggest that the quiet, long-term process of moving toward spiritual and emotional wholeness have begun for López.

López's choice not to give oxygen to the reason for or the perpetrators of Brother's murder is shrewd and respectful. Yet reading this collection since the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, in our particular historical moment in which global attention is focused on the chronic violence

perpetrated upon Black and brown bodies, especially but not only of young men, makes Brother's murder resonate in larger ways. The poem "When I Was a Young Girl," for example, tells the story of a mother López once heard a story about who "[threw] herself on to her son's / coffin, not wanting him / to be lowered / into the ground," then expands outward as López recognizes she "can never finish / writing a mother's loss-- / Not when there are Mothers on TV. Mothers in newspapers. / Some made fragile, some made fierce / by the theft of child," and of all the mothers' children stolen by violence (81). It is impossible to read this poem without reflecting on the current reckoning taking place in the United States that demands our collective recognition and activism to end the disproportionate level of brutality inflicted upon brown and Black bodies, and the white supremacist systems that continue to view these bodies as expendable.

In her interview with Quintero, López remarks, "I sometimes hear criticism that too many Native writers write about tragedies or that readers don't want to read stories about gun violence. But this is part of my reality, as well as of many others in my communities, so it is not something I am going to turn away from." The event of Brother's murder, this one specific, senseless death, and its resonance throughout a family through the lens of a sister, demands our understanding that López's reality is all of ours. *Brother Bullet* asks us not to turn away, but to empathize and to bear witness with the poet. This moving collection explores the shock, disbelief, regret, and pain of Brother's loss, as well as the necessity of enduring and commemorating Brother's life. We must do this for the sake of his children, López's nieces and nephews who, like the rest of the family, must carry on with hope and with love as bullets continue to fly and brothers, sons, and fathers continue to fall.

Works Cited

Quintero, Isabel. "Controlling Grief—An Impossible Task: A Conversation with Casandra López." Los Angeles Review of Books, April 13, 2020. https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/controlling-grief-an-impossible-task-a-conversation-with-casandra-López/. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

Author Bio

Jane Haladay is professor of American Indian Studies at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. She holds a Ph.D. in Native American Studies with an emphasis in Feminist Theory and Research from the University of California, Davis. Her co-edited collection, with Scott Hicks, is *Narratives of Educating for Sustainability in Unsustainable Environments* (Michigan State University Press, 2018). She is editor of the poetry manuscript by the late Jack D. Forbes titled, *Songs for California: Poems of the Golden State,* to be published by Seven Stories Press.

Recovering Native American Writings in the Boarding School Press edited by Jacqueline Emery

Cristina Stanciu

Emery, Jacqueline. Recovering Native American Writings in the Boarding School Press. Lincoln: U of Nebraska Press, 2017 (hard cover), 2020 (paperback). ISBN: 978-0-8032-7675-8. 348 pp. Hardcover: $55; Paperback: $30; eBook: $30.

In this much needed and carefully executed edition, Jacqueline Emery unearths a wealth of writings by Native students in the United States, published in the boarding school press: from letters and editorials, to essays, short stories, and traditional stories retold for a new audience. This collection of Native-authored materials in the boarding school press, produced in a complicated historical and cultural context of the Progressive Era and the pressures of the assimilation and Americanization campaigns, is a very timely work of recovery. This collection builds on existing scholarship on the so-called education of Native children in mission and boarding schools—including the ground-breaking work of Brenda Child, K. Tsianina Lomawaima, and Robert Warrior—as well as a number of collections recovering previously little-known or unpublished works by Native writers. The publication of these works adds the voices of students to the canon of early Native American writing, opening up possibilities for future recovery work. It also builds on the theoretical and archival work of literary scholars of Early American Literature—such as Lisa Brooks, Hilary Wyss, Theresa Strouth Gaul, Matt Cohen, and Phillip H. Round—who have contributed to the expansion of the canon of both early American literature and of Native literature. Building on their work, as well as scholarship in Native American and Indigenous Studies, Emery argues that the writers of the boarding school press "resembled their eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century precursors who established northeastern networks by adapting print and English-language literacy practices to serve as tools for resistance and change" (11). Moreover, the book adds to a growing cannon of boarding school literature solidified by the recent work of Karen Kilcup, Bernard Peyer, and Robert Dale Parker, as well as Arnold Krupat's multi-volume work on American Indian Boarding School Literature (SUNY Press 2008, 2020).

The structure of the book invites us to read works by Native students in a variety of genres (Part I) in conversation with late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Native public intellectuals (Part II). As such, Emery organizes a powerful dialogue between virtually unknown or lesser-known voices of the boarding school era and later, better-known writers, who received attention in the national press (such as Gertrude Bonnin, Carlos Montezuma, or Charles Eastman). We learn that Native writers of the boarding school press featured in Part I—from Arizona Jackson (Wyandot), Samuel Townsend (Pawnee), Luther Standing Bear (Oglala Sioux), to Henry C. Roman Nose (Southern Cheyenne), Mary North (Arapaho), J. William Ettawageshik (Ottawa), and Caleb Carter (Nez Perce)—wrote in a variety of genres such as letters, editorials, essays, short stories, and retold tales. In Part II, the editor offers a careful selection of late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Native American public intellectuals, from one of the more famous Native

intellectuals of the twentieth century, Dr. Carlos Montezuma (Yavapai), to other prominent Native intellectuals of the Progressive Era or the so-called "Red Progressives": Francis LaFlesche (Omaha), Charles Alexander Eastman (Santee Sioux), Angel DeCora (Ho-Chunk), Gertrude Bonnin (Yankton Sioux), Laura Cornelius Kellogg (Oneida), John Milton Oskison (Cherokee), Arthur C. Parker (Seneca), Henry Roe Cloud (Ho-Chunk), and Elizabeth Bender (White Earth Chippewa). The volume features the work of thirty-five Native writers and editors who used the powerful yet complicated venue of boarding school publications "for writing against cultural erasure and for serving the interests of Native communities." Whereas the (white) editorial intervention in these publications is well-documented, Emery reads the cultural work of the boarding school periodicals as "complex sites of negotiation" (2).

Recovering Native American Writings in the Boarding School Press brings to the readers' attention a wide range of carefully-annotated excerpts from publications from the boarding school press, from the better-known publications of the notorious Carlisle Indian Industrial School (*Carlisle Arrow*, *Eadle Keahtah Toh*, *Indian Helper*, *Indian Craftsman*, *Morning Star*, *Red Man*, *Red Man and Helper*, and *School News*), to equally significant yet perhaps lesser-known titles to both specialists and non-specialists. The editor has carefully selected writings by Native students and prominent Native figures of the time from roughly fifteen boarding school newspapers. The selections range from *Indian School Journal*, the publication of the Chilocco Indian Industrial and Agricultural School; *Southern Workman* and *Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students of the Normal and Agricultural Institute; Word Carrier* and *Word Carrier of Santee Normal Training School*, and perhaps the least known of all, *Hallaquah*, of the Seneca Indian School. In fact, the editor begins her comprehensive Introduction to the volume with an excerpt from *Hallaquah*'s first issue in 1879, announcing the publication's mission to serve its community of readers, Native and non-Native, and to "pose challenges, albeit subtle ones, to the assimilative policies and practices of the boarding school" (1). The writers are featured in chronological order over a period of over three decades, ranging from 1880 (beginning with a letter by Arizona Jackson, Wyandot, and editor of the *Hallaquah* at the Seneca Indian School) to 1916. (The collection ends with Elizabeth Bender's essay, "A Hampton Graduate's Experience," which recounts her teaching experience at the Fort Belknap Reservation as a teacher to Blackfeet students (95, 311-15). The bio-biographical entries to the thirty-five authors are reminiscent of the excellent work of Robert Dale Parker and his detailed, exhaustive annotations in *Changing is Not Vanishing: A Collection of American Indian Poetry to 1930* (U of Pennsylvania P, 2011), especially the section on "Boarding School Poetry," and of the pioneering work on Native periodicals by Daniel F. Littlefield and James W. Parins, particularly *American Indian and Alaska Native Newspapers and Periodicals, 1826-1924* (Greenwood, 1984).

For any student of Native periodicals of the boarding schools, navigating the sheer volume of work while searching for students' voices is a daunting enterprise. Yet, Jaqueline Emery meets this challenge elegantly, by selecting some of the more resonant Native student voices, who made

regular contributions to the student papers and who, in a few cases, became editors in their own right. One illustrative example is that of Harry Hand (Crow Creek Sioux), a graduate of the Hampton Institute, who founded two tribal newspapers, the *Crow Creek Herald* and the *Crow Creek Chief*. The volume juxtaposes better-known contributors to the boarding school press, such as model student Luther Standing Bear (Oglala Sioux) with lesser-known figures. One such remarkable contributor, we learn, was Robert Placidus Higheagle, or Kahektakiya (Standing Rock Sioux) who attended Hampton Institute in the early 1890s and who was an editor of *Talks and Thoughts* from 1893 until 1894; after leaving Hampton, he returned to Standing Rock Reservation as a teacher, contributing also to the recording and transcription of Teton Sioux materials for the Bureau of American Ethnology's Frances Densmore (79). To the contemporary reader, the pro-assimilation rhetoric of many of these materials is unsettling, although not surprising; but Kahektakiya, we learn, pays lip service to white progressives strategically, in a few sentences, and uses the rest of the space to describe Native life in "Tipi-iyokihe, 1895" (79-80) or child-raising philosophies in Native communities, at odds with the vision of "education" envisioned for and by the boarding schools: "It was customary among the Indians of old to do anything in their power to bring up their children as brave as themselves" ("The Legend of Owl River, 1895," 122-23).

The editor's thematic concerns—such as the Native student's investment in the topic *du jour*, Native education—also inform some of the material choices. Featuring the work of Henry C. Roman Nose (Southern Cheyenne), Mary North (Arapaho), Luther Standing Bear (Pine Ridge Sioux), and Samuel Townsend (Pawnee), all contributors to *School News*, Emery brings together student concerns about the imposition of an English-only policy in boarding schools or their agency (albeit limited) to tell their own stories. Not surprisingly for this body of work, some Native students (like Carlisle graduate John Milton Oskison, Cherokee) praised the role of boarding schools in Native people's lives. Some students, like Elizabeth Bender (White Earth Chippewa) challenged pervasive tropes in the American readers' imagination, such as the "vanishing Indian," and instead demonstrated that Native communities were not disappearing but adjusting to change (26). Other students expressed pride in Native cultures by bringing their communities oral stories and traditions in print. The volume showcases several useful examples to illustrate the students' continued connections with their communities. Showing this range of Native student investment not only in the coercive institutions aimed to change them forever but also in their own tribal communities offers an expansive picture of the boarding press.

If boarding school superintendents and the federal government looked to the boarding school press as a source of materials to drum up (white) support for their "educational mission," in Emery's selected materials we also see glimpses of Native students' wide-ranging interests, aptitudes, and writing complexity reaching beyond institutional constraints and assimilationist agendas. As such, the materials showcased in Part I anticipate the activist work undertaken in the early twentieth century by Native writers and intellectuals coming of age after either graduation from boarding schools or involvement with the boarding schools

in other capacities—as Native teachers or medical doctors, or as activists of the Society of American Indians (SAI) in the 1910s who continued to advocate for Native self-representation and Native rights. The editor's exemplary work, meticulous research, and orchestration of a multi-vocal dialogue between boarding school students and activists across decades paves the way for similar, much-needed work of recovery in the field, both in the boarding school press and beyond. We know that Native students were also skilled poets and performers; this is a study worth undertaking by scholars in the future.

Author Bio

Cristina Stanciu is an associate professor of English at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she teaches Indigenous and Multiethnic literatures of the U.S. and directs the university's Humanities Research Center. Her essays have appeared or are forthcoming in *American Indian Quarterly*, *MELUS*, *SAIL*, *NAIS*, *College English*, *JGAPE*, *Italian American Review*, *Journal of American Studies*, and edited collections. She is the co-editor of *Our Democracy and the American Indian and Other Writings* by Laura Cornelius Kellogg (Syracuse UP, 2015) and the co-editor of a special issue of the journal *MELUS*, "Pedagogy in Anxious Times" (Winter 2017, Oxford UP). Her first monograph, which includes a chapter on print culture and Americanization at Carlisle Indian Industrial School, is forthcoming from Yale University Press. She is at work on a new book on the literatures of the boarding and residential schools.

Bearheart: The Gerald Vizenor Chronicles
Dir. John Purdy

James Mackay

Bearheart: The Gerald Vizenor Chronicles. Dir. John Purdy. Write Place, 2021. Available via https://www.write-place.org/current-projects/bearheart-the-gerald-vizenor-chronicles/

Gerald Vizenor is entirely *sui generis*, a true genius who sits at the unusual confluence of Anishinaabe dream songs, Japanese poetics, and French philosophy. Not only a critical theorist who engages with the most abstract of concepts, Vizenor is also, in no particular order, a veteran reporter with a nose for a good story, a comic storyteller with a highly developed irony gland, a social worker who has seen homelessness and despair close up, a political campaigner willing to stand up against victimry and racism in all their forms, an environmentalist with a fine eye for the actions of mongrel dogs and crows, and a devoted editor who has tirelessly and generously promoted other Native American writers. He also writes books, though one imagines that readers of this journal should not need much reminding of that fact.

Former *SAIL* editor John Purdy, who has written sensitively about Vizenor as well as conducting interviews with Vizenor and teaching Vizenor's works for many years, has now founded Write Place. This nonprofit organization seeks, according to its mission statement, to "find, celebrate and share literary sparks in places that have been, and can continue to be, life changing, life affirming." This documentary film on Vizenor's work is one of the first projects from this group, and it is clearly a labor of love.

Centering on Vizenor's first novel, originally published as *Darkness in St Louis Bearheart* and now better known under the title *Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles*, the documentary is going to be an invaluable teaching guide for instructors seeing to help students find their way through this famously challenging text. Narrated by C. Anne Walker, and filmed by Purdy with the assistance of Chris LaLonde, the film features interviews with four key thinkers in Native American literary studies: Kimberley Blaeser, Melissa Nelson, Billy Stratton and Stephen Graham Jones, as well as extensive interviews with Vizenor himself. In a nice touch, credits for many parts of the filmmaking process are also awarded to many of Vizenor's characters from his many novels: you know you are in safe hands when Benito Saint Plumero is in charge of Continuity.

I do not think a single text by a Native writer has been given anything like such a full accounting on film before. And although I have already described it as a classroom resource, it's pleasing that the end product is very far from a dry discussion of the text. Rather, Purdy and his collaborators have clearly entered into the production with a highly specific aim: to ensure that viewers are left in no doubt as to the relevance of this 1978 novel to our current times. Yes, there is historical context, as appropriate for a novel approaching its 45th anniversary which was written partly in response to the OPEC oil shocks of its time. Yet again and again the speakers stress how much Vizenor's concerns about the way the world was headed have continued to hold true. A world undergoing an intertwined environmental

disaster and societal collapse into small fascistic groups with no operating central government, in which terminal creeds substitute for flexible and creative response, which the documentary voiceover describes as "a shattered country gone mad" – is this 2020's America, or Vizenor's novel?

One phrase is picked out and repeated as something of a thesis statement for both the novel and this film: "Good is an ordeal, evil is not." As the narrator puts it, the enemy is a "belief in a privileged hierarchy that devalues many humans, but also animals, plants, water – all the life-sustaining fabric of a viable diverse environment." Although more time could probably have been spent in the film on Vizenor's work as a social worker and advocate, it is nonetheless made clear that the "socio-acupuncture" of *Bearheart*, for all its complex word play, is based on hard experience and deep thought. In particular, Vizenor himself offers a beautiful definition of survivance, which I hope might just become the standard definition: "it's motion, and presence, and resistance. It's not just survival. It's an –ance, it's a condition, it's a way to think about yourself and a community in spite of all the burdens and problems."

Bearheart is a novel of refusal. It upsets readers by refusing to play the game set out by colonialism, capitalism and human greed. It refuses to romanticize Native lives, and refuses to allow anyone – white or Native, trans, queer, or straight, able or disabled – the status of inevitable victim. The interviewees' love for, and belief in, Vizenor's vision of teasingly intelligent evasion of the death-hungry impulse that underlies so much of petro-modernity will inspire new readers to make their own refusals in turn.

I hope that more documentaries from Write Place will follow in the footsteps of this one, and that they will be of just as high a quality. The film is available online in exchange for a donation of any amount via the website listed above: donations of more than $30 will also get the donor a DVD copy.

Author Bio

James Mackay is an Assistant Professor of British and American literatures at European University Cyprus. He is one of the founding editors of *Transmotion*, a fully open-access journal that publishes peer-reviewed research in postmodern Indigenous Studies. He has edited the *Salt Companion to Diane Glancy* and co-edited *Tribal Fantasies: Native Americans in the European Imaginary, 1900–2010*. He is the current organizer of the 41st American Indian Workshop, "The Sovereign Erotic." Recent subjects of research include trans* poetry, digital poetries, and representation in hardcore pornography.

Call for Reviews

The field of American Indian literature includes poetry, drama, fiction and nonfiction, critical theory, cultural theory, history and all forms of story in the shape of comics, movies, videos, and games. We are excited to hear about the texts that make you think, that answer questions you may have, or that ask for response and revision. *The SAIL Review* is looking for reviews of texts that you find particularly worth discussing, for these or any other reasons. We welcome reviews of scholarly or creative works in any mode or medium that are relevant to the field of American Indian literary studies.

If you would like to review for *The SAIL Review*, you can email the reviews editor, Jeremy Carnes at reviews.at.sail@gmail.com.

ASAIL Editorial Board

President
Molly McGlennen, Vassar College

Secretary
Steve Sexton, UNLV

Treasurer
Jeff Berglund, Northern Arizona U

Historian
Robert Nelson, U of Richmond

Pedagogy Committee Chair
Brian Twenter, Fort Lewis College

Professional Development Chair
Becca Gercken, U Minnesota-Morris

Website Editor
Jeremy Carnes, U of Central Florida

SAIL Editorial Board

General Editors
June Scudeler, Simon Fraser U
Siobhan Senier, U of New Hampshire

***The SAIL Review* Editor**
Jeremy Carnes, U of Central Florida

Editorial Assistant
Sass Denny, U of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Editorial Board
Scott Andrews
Birgit Brander Rasmussen
Jodi Byrd
Cari Carpenter
Stephanie Fitzgerald
Laura Furlan
Daniel Heath Justice
Sarah Henzi
Penelope Kelsey
Molly McGlennen
Kenneth Roemer
Jace Weaver
Paul Worley