

# Studies in American Indian Literatures

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Illustrations in this issue are by Kahionhes and are from The Wind Eagle and Other Abenaki Stories (pp. 174 and 211 [book reviewed on p. 205]) and Visions in Ink (pp. 198 and 210 [reviewed in SAIL 8:3/4, 1984]).

Paula Gunn Allen. The Woman Who Owned the Shadows. San Francisco: Spinsters, Ink, 1983. pp. 213. pb. \$8.95.

Ephanie is "a split name, a name half of this and half of that: Epiphany. Effie. An almost name" (3). So thinks Ephanie, the protagonist in The Woman Who Owned the Shadows (TWWOTS), and with good reason, for she is a "halfblood," neither this nor that, at odds with her self, her heritage, and her environment, leafing, as it were, through her memories and dreams to find clues to understanding existence--her existence. Like the eponymous anti-hero of James Welch's 1979 novel The Death of Jim Loney, Ephanie suffers from amnesia--an amnesia which sometimes borders on controlled oblivion--and like him she struggles to interpret the signs and visions she receives. Unlike Jim Loney, however, Ephanie struggles against both racism and sexism.

Being the first contemporary Native American novel that details the self-splitting experiences of mixed-blood women, The Woman Who Owned the Shadows elaborates themes that have found expression in the poetry of mixed-blood writers such as Joy Harjo, Linda Hogan, Mary Tallmountain, Wendy Rose, Carol Lee Sanchez, Leslie Silko, and Paula Gunn Allen herself, of course. These are themes of confused identity, antagonistic socialization, exclusive alliances, alienation, conflicting world views, racism (from both sides), sexual exploitation, invisibility, historical distortion, fear and rage. The narrator describes the effects of this fear and rage:

that sound within her now, that sound she could not abide, would on hearing become senseless, enraged, a buzzing angry like bees, like wasps, like hornets, in her brain just behind her eyes, near the top of her head, in her skull, in her eyes, in the throat shutting off words, in her chest, tight in her chest, a buzzing like static so that she could not breathe. (14)

The Woman Who Owned the Shadows addresses this fear and chronicles Ephanie's efforts to master it and to be able to say, in Joy Harjo's words:

I take myself back, fear.  
You are not my shadow any longer.

("I Give You Back," in She Had Some Horses, p. 74)

Shifting back and forth among synchronic and diachronic, personal and mythic levels of understanding, the novel at places reads like the stream of consciousness of a timeless being. Coming in fours like all good things, each of its individual parts is introduced by a Prologue which relates scenes from way back when Spider Grandmother--Thought Woman--created the world. Along with stories of Sky Woman and the War Twins, for example, these Prologues turn out to be the keys to understanding Ephanie's crisis and development. Throughout the novel, Ephanie tries to uncover the meaning of these stories and through a series of epiphanies she arrives at a convincing re-interpretation of the mystery

of the ever-going (re-) creation and of her own place within it.

When we first meet her, Ephanie is clinging to a few thin threads of life like a spider from a torn web, and we follow the hazardous, meticulous, and seemingly never-ending job of rebuilding her existence by working herself back and forth, back and forth, over time and place and back to the center--Shipap. Sometimes making advance when heeding the advice given her through dreams, visions and remembrance of stories by that masterweaver--Spider--and sometimes myopically losing sight of the grand design, she slowly adds weft to warp, texture to structure, meaning to apparent chaos.

Ephanie's quest for meaning is physical and spiritual. It takes her from rural New Mexico to urban California and back, from adulthood through adolescence to childhood and back. She travels the places of her heritage--the reservations of contemporary Native Americans and Caucasians--and moves through the times of her people. Dimensions of reality mix as she unveils layers of lies that have alienated people from each other and from themselves.

During this process she discovers the reasons for her partial amnesia--a traumatic rape experience, a fall from a childhood tree, and her only childhood girlfriend's rejection of her love--and she finally realizes that ago-old stories speak directly to contemporary events. The tribal oral tradition relieves sexual and racial tensions, and in her interpretation they elevate

the mixed-blood woman to the position of androgenous world creator, healer and helper. In the final, climactic vision One flows into the Other, inside coalesces with outside, man becomes woman, woman becomes man, forever changing, growing, returning.

She understood the combinations and recombinations that had so puzzled her, the One and then the Two, the two and then the three, the three becoming the four, the four splitting, becoming two and two, the three of the beginning becoming the three-in-one. (207)

The Woman Who Owned the Shadows is an extraordinary first novel. It is intricately structured and its imagery is consistent, innovating and sometimes surprising, but never out of focus. Ephanie's search for a definition of herself and of the role of mixed-blood women is both haunting and reassuring, and Paula Gunn Allen convincingly describes the power of applied mythical wisdom to cleanse, heal, and create. The Woman Who Owned the Shadows is a book of hope, promise, vision, and survival. Ephanie's spirit woman/tutor tells her:

Pass it on, little one. Pass it on.  
That is the lesson of the giveaways  
that all the people honor. That is

the story of life here where we are  
and where you are. It is all the  
same. Grow, move, give, move.  
(210-11)

Bo Schoeler  
University of Aarhus

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Paula Gunn Allen. The Woman Who Owned the Shadows. San Francisco: Spinsters, Ink, 1983. pp. 213. \$8.95.

The Woman Who Owned the Shadows is a tightly organized novel, evolving around a single character, a woman named Ephanie whose name, an adaptation of the term "epiphany," conjures up both the religious picture of the wise men's discovery of the Christ child, the manifestation of God's presence in the universe, and Joyce's more secular rendering of the term as a sudden revelation caused by a commonplace object or scene. For Ephanie is a seeker for whom knowledge, both secular and religious, comes intermittently, in a series of revelations, in a series of visions.

We come to the novel through the constant introspection of the main character. The prose style sets itself to mimic this introspection, moving in sentence fragments and multiple conversations that are fractured and set in opposition to one another.

This constant introspection tempts the critic to refer to the novel as "confessional," a term that Joanna Russ, in her book How to Suppress Women's Writing, argues is

misused as a critical term for women's writing. Taking her cue from critic Julia Penelope, Russ argues that the term suggests a work that is "shameful" and too "personal," with little value as literature, a work that features rage, accusation, and unacceptable sexuality. Having read Russ (and agreeing with this particular conclusion), I am thus robbed of what is really a fine descriptive term. While The Woman Who Owned the Shadows does deal with rage and accusation and while it does contain subtle suggestions of "unacceptable sexuality" (lesbianism in this case), these aspects of the novel are, for the most part, handled well and they tend to be strengths rather than weaknesses; they do not conjure up an image of a coven of sins in search of a priest. Perhaps one might call The Woman Who Owned the Shadows an "emergence" for it links a Native (tribal) sense of universe and origins with a personal discovery of self and place.

The story is about a woman who comes away from the reservation and a bad marriage, leaving her two children with their grandmother. She goes to San Francisco, meets and marries a Nisei named Thomas Yoshuri, and has twin boys by him. One of the twins dies and shortly thereafter Ephanie divorces Thomas. Later she attempts suicide by hanging herself. However, after all this trauma, after all these misadventures and wrong turnings, after the anger, frustration, and sorrow, Ephanie apparently finds peace through the spiritual intercession of an old Indian woman and a vision that links her with other Indian women and with what one might call the feminine force in the university. The story is

not a particularly gripping saga and were the novel simply a vehicle for the action, Allen would have wasted her time and the readers'. But the novel is about the character, about Ephanie and her struggle to maintain balance and to persevere.

The Woman Who Owned the Shadows is at best an uneven novel. There are moments of real power where Allen is able to capture emotions, especially rage, and hold them there for the reader to see. Her description of the demands of the convent where Ephanie went to school is one such moment.

Long, empty, polished corridors. Silent white faces of women whose whole heads and bodies were encased in black heavy fabric. Whose rosaries hanging dark and heavy down their legs clinked with every quiet step they took. Of those white faces, almost always unsmiling. Of those white hands that never touched a child. Of those white faces smiling, tight and stiff, as though that simple expression caused great pain. Who said she must pray. Must ask to be forgiven. Must remember to walk quietly. Never to run. Never to climb a tree. Never to have messy hair. Or a dirty dress. Never, never wear jeans. Must sit quietly at the table. And never ask for more. Who must eat when told, sleep when told, wake when told, play when told, work when told, study when told, piss when told, shit when

told, and must never never use too much paper to wipe her butt. Her tiny child's butt. (154)

Her description of the relationship between the two nuns, Sister Claire and Sister Mary Grace, the suggestion of a sexual relationship or an intimate friendship or possibly both, and the grief that accompanies Sister Claire's transfer is equally powerful, for, in using the Catholic Church's regulations concerning the development of "particular friendships" between its clerics, Gunn Allen is able to point an accusing finger at a church and by extension at a society that insists on an isolating distance between people.

Equally powerful is the distress and confusion that accompanies Ephanie's relationship with men. Her relationship and marriage to Thomas is marred by the destructive distance that Ephanie acknowledges exists between men and women. But the knowledge is not salvation. Like many of us, Ephanie ignores the obvious and allows the practical considerations of companionship, security, and the family unit to dictate the structure of a life. Gunn Allen shows that there is not so much a wrongness or error in this kind of decision, simply consequences.

She wondered herself why she would think of marrying him, knowing that it was because she was too tired to fight. That resisting was not her way, antagonism was not possible. "After all the years of death," she finally said, almost

whispering so Teresa had to lean close to her, "you finally quit doing things out of anger or out of fear. You learn that mad, scared or not, some things just have to be . . . you'll see. The kids and I, we need someplace. We need some thing. We're alone too, and we're tired of it. The other day Ben asked me when he was gonna have a daddy--when I was going to give him one. He said he wanted three things. A daddy, a television, and a car." She looked for a second at Teresa, felt the familiar spasm begin around her eyes, felt the tears rising in her throat, closed them off, looked away. Act relaxed, she said to herself. Act like you know what you're saying. Surreptitiously she pinched her leg hard. She sniffed. Smiled. "Now he will have all three things." (91-92)

At the same time Gunn Allen has the annoying habit of underestimating the reader, not trusting the reader to read without being told. There is the insistence in the novel on interrupting Ephanie and intruding the authorial voice. Not only does this intrusion break the narrative but it also destroys the imaginative play that goes on between the reader and the work. When she hints and suggests and invites the reader to read and imagine, the novel is a feast. When she tells us what to think and how to feel, the novel becomes a great bowl of dull porridge.

At the end of the novel Ephanie is visited by a spirit, a woman, an Indian, who shares with her the secret of life. Ephanie has been privy to many "secrets" throughout the novel and they have all proved to be, at least in part, false and she has learned from the truth that each contains and the error that is a part of the truth. Yet at the end of the book Gunn Allen would have us believe that Ephanie comes to the knowledge and the harmony that she sought.

And around her the room filled with shadows. And the shadows became shapes. And the shapes became women singing. Singing and dancing in the ancient steps of the women, the Spider Singing they stepped, slowly, in careful balance of dignity, of harmony, of respect. They stepped and they sang. And she began to sing with them. With her shawl wrapped around her shoulders in the way of the women since time immemorial, she wrapped her shawl and she joined the dance. She heard the singing. She entered the song. (213)

This final passage bears a strong resemblance to the closing scene in N. Scott Momaday's novel, House Made of Dawn. But in The Woman Who Owned the Shadows, given the context of the novel, the final scene conjures up childhood memories of fairy tales where everyone lives happily ever after.

When Abel joins the other runners at the end of House Made of Dawn, his participation in that ceremony represents not a "happy" ending but just another beginning.

Yet for all the problems that the novel contains, for all the lapses of faith in the reader's ability to understand, and the wanderings into the sentimental and the banal, there are times when the prose is clean and sure, quick and measured, the narrative powerful and moving. These times suggest that Gunn Allen may possess a talent that will come to its own place in its own time.

Thomas King  
Native American Studies  
University of Lethbridge--Alberta

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#### Blackening the Robe

Brian Moore. Blackrobe. NY: Dutton, 1985. 246 pp. \$15.95 hb.

Writing historical novels is not an easy task, yet Walter Edmonds, Thomas Berger, Willa Cather, John Neihardt and now Bruce Burton are among a few of the writers who have been successfully teased. Walter D. Edmonds' classic, Drums Along the Mohawk, is not only a good read with solid characters, credible accuracy of research, but, and most important, continues to fascinate new readers with its lively narrative and fresh and vivid language. Thomas Berger's Little Big Man is doubtlessly a comic-satire masterpiece. In these works the reader is not only carried

along by depth of character, conflict and plot, but also by the accurate information about historical setting. The ease with which the wheels turn in such fiction is deceiving, however, and the reader often forgets the struggle and the sweat an author of a historical fiction must endure to produce a work of art. With novels by Edmonds, Cather or Berger you never pause and think about their source material. It has all been thoroughly examined, digested and re-produced artistically.

Which brings us to Brian Moore's newest fiction, Blackrobe. Moore is a Catholic Irishman who emigrated to Canada some years back but now spends much of his time living in California. He has written fifteen other novels, including the internationally acclaimed The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne and The Luck of Ginger Coffee, both novels of genuine interest and strong characterization, somewhat short on plot but good studies of human frailty. With Blackrobe, he prods into the dark past. He admits in a preface that while reading the essays of Graham Greene he discovered a Jesuit priest by the name of Chabanel who struck his fancy and carried his thoughts into researching Parkman for additional information. Parkman's Jesuits in North America sent him scurrying deeper into the prime source itself, the Jesuits' famed Relations. Ah, the treasures he discovered, some so brilliant and smouldering: hot coals from a village fire that Parkman had not dared to retell and legitimize in his histories except through smutty suggestion. Moore discovered the "lascivious Savage" (his words), his scatological word usage, his

pension to lust and his wallow in blood, human and animal. Moore also discovered the Indian's intelligence, his disapproving, often obscene, comments on the European and the Jesuit in particular, and the Indian's distaste for the European's chicanery, greed, and physical weakness, among other lesser attributes. He discovered the Indian lied to the whiteman but would not lie to his own. The life of the village, the Nation, totally depended upon truth. The life of the European, the French, the Normans or the Jesuits were unimportant to the Indian. He came only for furs and the pleasure of their women's flesh. Then they would return to their land in "wooden islands" as soon as both needs were satisfied. But Moore, I fear, was as duped by the Jesuit's Relations as the Jesuits were duped by the French Crown and the Indian caciques. Moore obviously became enthralled with the Jesuit records and mainly those which established for the church the "lascivious Savage," his lust, his total inhibitions, and his craze for cruelty--even admitting, which Moore does admit, that the Indian took special care not to harm his children, not a hair of the head or a cheek of the rump.

Blackrobe contains the most impossible characterization since the dime novels of the 19th Century. The dialogue is as flat and un-human as Walt Disney animated animals--if you can imagine Pluto and Minnie Mouse using four letter words. And here there is an oddity. Brian Moore allows only his Indian characters to use obscene profanity that might make a Brooklyn dock-worker shudder. His Europeans are utterly saint-voiced. They

may think obscenities but never give them life by lip or tongue. In his reading of the Relations, Moore states in the Preface, he discovered that all the Indians of the Americas often spoke scatologically. To quote, "As for the obscene language used by the natives at that time it was a form of rough banter and was not intended to give offense." Here is a sample of the speech Moore puts in the mouths of the Algonkuins:

"You're a great little fart,"  
Neehatin said.

"What a fucking wonderful mind this  
man has," Ougebemat said.

"Have you told that fart of a  
Blackrobe? . . . He's going to  
shit himself."

"Fuck the Blackrobe," Neehatin said.

Instead of coming off as rough banter this comes off offensive.

An excellent occasion for having Father Laforgue (the name Moore uses for Chabanel for unknown reasons) use obscenities is during a scene when the good Jesuit is observing his young companion with his intended girlfriend in the bush. The boy sodomizes the young Indian girl. The priest is on his knees and his thoughts are presented to us. As the boy thrusts his flesh into the flesh of the girl, Laforgue is riveted to the action:

And Laforgue, peering through the leaves, saw it all, saw her nakedness, her pointed breasts almost

touching the ground, her face contorted as though in pain. And as he saw it he tried to still his own agitation. He watched and watched, afraid of being seen, his mind flooded with this vision of lust. He felt his penis swell and stiffen until it hurt. He moved his head a little, peering in, not wanting to miss the next thrust of the boy's loins. And to his shock and excitement it was as though he were the boy, rearing above the Savage girl  
. . . .

What comment is Brian Moore attempting here? Such a passage seems purposefully pornographic. It may sell novels. The ploy worked with Ruth Beebe Hill's Hanta Yo, so why not try it again with a Jesuit priest? All is fair when making money.

But the most bothersome feature of Blackrobe remains the dialogue. There is little doubt today that in the traditional, ancient languages of all tribe peoples of all times, there was "rough banter" of speech, obscenity used in play or ridicule. Romans used it in their poetry. Catallus shows the Egyptians had phallic sculpture and temple wall drawings, suggesting they, too, could speak bluntly. Obscenity is even found in the Bible. In 1985 we realize cursing is common, and we expect to find it in our literatures, whether in novels by James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, William Burroughs, or Brian Moore. Four-letter words are now accepted and expected. But Brian Moore does commit a sin with his peculiar use of such

language, the sin of omission, of stereotyping, of racial discrimination, in trying to shore up weak dialogue. This bespeaks the weakness of the whole novel.

It is flagrantly wrong to compare Moore's Blackrobe to the novels of Edmonds, Cather, or Berger. This is a novel that should be embarrassing to white readers and red readers alike, even though it has been highly praised in both The New York Times and Time Magazine. For shame.

Maurice Kenny

Co-editor of Contact/11 Magazine and author of Blackrobe: Isaac Jogues, A Poetic Narrative. His The Mama Poems received the American Book Award for 1984.

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Janet Campbell Hale. The Jailing of Cecelia Capture. NY: Random House, 1985. 201 pp. \$15.95 hb.

This new work of fiction by a member of the Coeur d'Alene tribe is probably most interesting for its contrast to the most successful recent fiction by Native American writers. Hale's protagonist Cecelia is a law student at Berkeley who is arrested for drunken driving and spends a weekend in jail remembering her past life. She recalls her childhood, made difficult by a drunken Indian father and an embittered Irish mother, that included a brief residency on a reservation. Cecelia drifts to San Francisco, becomes a teenage welfare mother and cheat; the father of her son is killed just days after being

sent to Viet Nam. But Cecelia, whom we are to understand is very intelligent, manages to educate herself and win a scholarship to law school. Here, though intellectually capable of the work, she is subject to depressions that lead to her drinking, the depressions exacerbated by loneliness, memories of her unsuccessful marriage to a husband (an improbable descendent of Mayflower passengers, no less) who has remained with their children in Washington while she studies, and some unrewarding sexual encounters. The novel is notable for being one of very few to treat the situation of a lone Indian woman in urban circumstances.

Unfortunately, Hale has no particular ear for dialogue nor much gift for characterizing; all her male figures are phantasmal. The accepted form of this kind of novel seems to me also to handicap a novice writer. A first-person account comes to us in a third-person telling, though the material is presumably mainly autobiographical. The attraction of this mode seems to be that it enables a writer to concentrate on sensory details while retaining freedom to observe large implications and significancies inappropriate to the reproduction of a first-person rendering. A talented writer can overcome the main weakness of this popular form, namely, that biography and autobiography are not stories, but it leads an unskilled writer into strained and unconvincing presentations, particularly when the style of writing is, like Hale's, expository "realistic."

The Jailing of Cecelia Capture made me realize how successful at evading or transforming the stereotypical patterns of ethnic fiction have been the best recent Native American novelists. Both Ceremony and House Made of Dawn, for example, come close to the standard pattern of protagonist finding his/her way between the demands of a dominant culture that has rendered a particular ethnic heritage marginal and a nostalgic clinging to an outmoded lifeway. But Momaday's and Silko's inventiveness of incident, originality in manipulating language, and subtle uses of elements drawn from traditional cultures free their works from stereotypicality. The same is true of James Welch, though perhaps even more important to his achievement is his harsh, relentlessly tragic vision. Louise Erdrich, on the contrary, exploits comic techniques for radical innovations--as was discussed variously in this year's first number of SAIL. One hopes that Hale, and other young Native American writers, will dare to pursue the unusual directions pioneered by leaders of the Native American Renaissance in fiction.

Karl Kroeber

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D'Arcy McNickle. Wind From an Enemy Sky. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978. 256 pp. \$8.95.

Though well known as a prolific writer on Indian affairs in such fields as anthropology, history, and biography, D'Arcy McNickle began and ended his writing career as a

novelist. His first book was The Surrounded (1936), the best novel by an Indian author published in the 1930's. Except for writing the juvenile novel Runner in the Sun (1954), McNickle subsequently turned from fiction to scholarship. Forty-two years after the appearance of The Surrounded, his third novel Wind From an Enemy Sky was published posthumously.

Like The Surrounded, this new novel deals with the violence which results from the cultural clash between the Indian and non-Indian worlds. Once more the setting is the Northwest, this time the fictional Little Elk Reservation. The conflict erupts over two symbols of power: the tribe's Feather-Boy medicine bundle, missing for years, and the whites' dam, which has cut off the Indians' water and violated a holy place. The disruption of tribal unity which inevitably results from government pressure to alter traditional Indian lifestyle is demonstrated by the thirty-year-old family quarrel between the protagonist Bull, a fierce conservative, and his elder brother Henry Jim, a progressive. Angered at Bull's selection as principal chief, Henry Jim left the tribe, turning over the sacred medicine bundle to a local priest who sent it to the wealthy businessman Adam Pell. While Henry Jim became a successful but lonely farmer, Bull kept his people as far away from the white influence as possible.

As the novel opens, Bull takes his grandson Antoine to view the new dam, which he shoots in frustrated anger. As he tells the boy, "the white man makes us forget our holy

places. He makes us small" (9). Shortly thereafter, Henry Jim, through the efforts of the holy man Two Sleeps, comes to Bull's camp to admit his error in starting the quarrel. Aware that he will die soon, Henry Jim persuades Bull to ask the government agent Rafferty to get back the bundle. Unfortunately, this peaceful mission is doomed by a young Indian hothead who strikes at the offending dam by killing an engineer. This act brings Adam Pell, the man responsible for its construction, to a confrontation with the tribe. As a theoretical liberal and owner of a museum full of Indian artifacts, Pell decides to express his regret for the damage done by the dam by restoring the tribe's bundle. When he learns that the bundle has rotted away from neglect, Pell attempts to present the tribe with a substitute--a priceless gold statue of a naked virgin, made by South American Indians. The angry Indians refuse to listen to his explanations of its artistic value. Bull, after telling his grandson that this man is human and can therefore be killed, shoots Pell. Then he shoots Rafferty, who tries to intervene. Finally Bull allows himself to be killed by an Indian police officer who has served as a go-between for the Indians and the government.

Although the novel lacks the descriptive power of The Surrounded, it is nevertheless a forceful book which will hold the attention of middle-school through college readers. McNickle's characterizations of the Indians and his descriptions of their interaction are vividly real. The scenes between Bull and his wife Veronica and between her and Two

Sleeps are especially touching. The novel is weakened by the portrait of Pell, which is more caricature than characterization. Four decades of experience in Indian affairs since the publication of The Surrounded have deepened McNickle's sense of pessimism about the amelioration of the conflict between two greatly different value systems. The moving portrayal of this problem in Wind from an Enemy Sky is a fitting monument to a man who devoted his life to its solution.

A. LaVonne Ruoff  
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Leslie Marmon Silko. Raccontare, translated by Laura Coltelli. Indianamericana 2, La cultura degli indiani d'America. Milano: La Salamandra (Via Fabio Filzi, 27, 20124 Milano), 1983. 148 pp. Lire 15.000.

La terra e tua madre,  
e ti abbraccia,  
Il cielo e tuo padre,  
e ti protegge.

Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine merchant with the Medici, gave his name to the "New World" of some 30 to 40 million natives speaking over 2,000 languages. Some 500 years later, translations of those indigenous cultures are making their way back to Italy. Professor Laura Coltelli, University of Pisa, has completed a fine translation of Leslie Silko's short fiction, Raccontare, complete

with meticulous notes, extensive bibliography, and a critical introduction at once informative and sensitive to Silko's narrative art. A few years ago, an Italian survey showed 80,000 prospective readers of Native American literature, already responsive to translations in print of Neihardt's Black Elk Speaks (Alce Nero parla), Momaday's House Made of Dawn (Casa fatta di alba), and Welch's Winter in the Blood (Inverno del sangue), among twenty or more titles available. And so with Raccontare Professors Coltelli and Gaetano Prampolini, University of Florence, have initiated an Italian Native American Series of prose fiction, with Momaday's The Way to Rainy Mountain next to appear. The series will include contemporary works by Welch, Momaday, Mathews, Silko, McNickle, Storm, Vizenor, and Ortiz, as well as an anthology.

Considering that European ethnologists figured among the founding fathers of Native American Studies earlier this century--Boas and Sapir from Germany, Bandelier and Gatschet from Switzerland, Radin from Poland and Hrdlicka from Czechoslovakia, to name a few--the European rediscovery of Native America, and a scholarly commitment to the field of study, seem to remain strong.

Kenneth Lincoln  
Fullbright Scholar, Italy, 1984

Larry Evers points out that the format adopted by Coltelli and Prampolini in Raccontare is superior to any equivalent work in the U.S.: solid introductory essay, complete bibliography of the author, and good

selected bibliography of writing about her and her traditions is what is not found in our editions.

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Paula Gunn Allen. A Cannon Between My Knees. New York: Strawberry Press, 1981.

At the center of this eleven-poem collection, in a four-part poem, "Suicid/ing(ed) Indian Woman," Paula Gunn Allen interweaves moments from the stories of the mythic Iyetiko (corn woman), a "small woman huddled on the couch / . . . Laguna would-be suicide," and an "earthwoman / as authentic as any whiteman / could wish." The poem is about American Indian womanhood, which is also the central theme of the collection. Allen asks,

. . . is it a small wind  
we carry in our genes?  
A fear of disappearance?  
An utterance that hovers  
at the edges of the lips,  
forever to-be-said?

It is perhaps Allen's ambition in her poetry to articulate that utterance, to give the Indian Woman a voice.

"Mary, Kyukuh," part I of "Suicid/ing(ed) Indian Woman," begins with an account of the myth of Iyetiko's disappearance, but ends with Allen's alternate interpretation of the myth:

So Iyetio got angry and went away.  
That's what the story says, and  
maybe it's so. Maybe She knew that  
we could do without her presence in  
the flesh and She left the perfect  
ear of corn behind to remind them  
that she was near, to honor women,  
the woman in the earth, and in  
themselves [.]

Iyetiko's anger is the result of the men's refusal to listen to the women (they "hid in the kivas so the women / couldn't nag"), but it's her very departure, according to Allen, that leaves room for the woman's voice: "She" has withdrawn her Authority and left room for the woman author. The men, we learn in part IV, "Shipapu Iyetico," "put women out of the center." Allen, however, puts this poem--the spirit of womanhood--back into the center in her own work just as she sees women at the center of the Indian tradition ("the tribe / laws which only women honor").

She proposes a solution to a problem that is more implied than articulated in part III, "Delilah, Navajo":

it will not be like that for you,  
and you know  
it must unless you get away  
but how divideyourself  
from yourflesh? Division  
does not come easy to a woman,  
it is against the tribe  
laws which only women honor

Division becomes the only way to

escape the ties of brutaldrunken  
father  
gossipy sisters/aunts scolding  
uncles/brothers  
who want you to buy and cook their  
food

--to escape, in other words, not the richness of the mythic tradition, but the oppression of the man-made "laws" that use tradition to subjugate women.

But Allen, like Adrienne Rich, sometimes allows her justifiable anger to reduce her poetry to statement. The immediacy of her wondering "how divideyourself / from your-flesh?" allows the reader to share her pain; however, in the same poem, she insists:

Navajo maiden you can't  
understand why your squawman sits in  
a chair  
orders you and your young sisters  
about

Here she tells the reader, and the Navajo maiden, what they should be feeling. Her tendency towards statement also leads her sometimes to explain her metaphors, as in "The Beautiful Woman Who Sings":

beautiful women. woman like corn:  
ripe and full. sweet. self  
generating. tasseled.  
blowing in the wind. meeting.  
juicy. feeding. coming back  
every time. coming home.

The image of corn as an emblem for woman allows free play for the reader's imagination and, in so doing, conveys a sense of an impenetrable, almost mystical, tradition. But when Allen lists the traits to which she is referring, she both de-mystifies the tradition and takes away the reader's chance to participate in the poem. Iyetiko has left the poet the freedom to imagine and create, but Allen fills the role of authority and deprives the reader of the same opportunity. With this imposition she loses the strength of her poetry, which lies in the tension she creates between tradition (belief) and self (interpretation).

In her most moving poem, "Lament of My Father, Lakota," she pushes past the feminist zeal that occasionally causes her to over-explain her images, and reaches out instead to touch an experience in which she is a vicarious participant:

Now come to us our broken victories,  
 hawks mounted on the tortured wings  
     of kill;  
 old age sits upon the frozen window  
     sills  
 too alien for our age-dimmed sight's  
     belief.  
 And fleshless fingers touch  
 the careful cobwebs of our days  
 that hold the butterfly called  
     morning--  
 turned now into the owl song of  
     night.

The hawks, cobwebs, butterfly and owl both capture a tradition that tends to animate the

landscape and present the poet's vivid interpretation of the experience. Through her use of alliteration as well as vibrant imagery, Allen encourages the reader to participate in the poem, which she ends with the direct, sincere and painful declaration, "I wonder how a man can cling to life."

The debate over what constitutes poetry notwithstanding, she is most compelling--and therefore most political--when she is least explicitly political. She is speaking more clearly in her voice and will therefore affect more people with her message, when she writes honestly about some personal feeling than when she makes the kind of statement that moves her to express her power as "A Cannon Between My Knees."

Priscilla Wald  
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In Barney Bush's My Horse and a Jukebox, what is done with one of the strands of mainstream contemporary U.S. poetry is not often done by American Indian writers. Many of these poems reveal that Bush has absorbed a peculiarly modern aesthetic whose assumptions cannot be found in traditional cultures. Nevertheless, his poems are rich with traditional beliefs and with that special anguish--the result of two cultures colliding head on--which characterizes contemporary American Indian writing. In other words, in Bush's poems we find the themes we expect to find, but the aesthetic being used is most unexpected. The result is something different--

something perhaps that only the youngest generation, Bush's generation, can manage. I say this tentatively, mostly because criticism has the tendency to box up an author's work and send it off somewhere where it does not belong.

A hint of what I am talking about is found in the title. Obviously, the word "horse" suggests the coherence of traditional culture, perhaps nomadic, organized according to cyclic or seasonal change. "Jukebox," in these poems at least, suggests paradoxical terms. On the one hand, it suggests bars, booze, fast cars, and the instability of human relationships, cultural confusion in other words. But Bush, in a very deep sense, also celebrates "jukeboxness." Investigating why and how he celebrates it takes us, I believe, to the core of at least one strand of this country's current aesthetic practice.

A strong Bush poem like "Indian boy in a cowboy hat," even excerpted, is recognizably Indian only because of its subject matter. Its aesthetic roots are elsewhere.

Bush's best poems celebrate, more or less, that same sense of immediacy, that sense of time being fractured so as to place the instant here in front of us, that is found in the work of the best poets of the fifties and also in Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Koch, and, in music, John Cage, to name only a few. It is a tradition that goes back finally to Whitman by way of Charles Olson and Williams. They are part of the same strand, the same aesthetic which, perhaps, is most associated with the celebration of

contemporaneity. Their language is usually plain and direct rather than symbolic; their style quick, breezy, and often comic and irreverent; their intention to convey an appreciation of the surfaces of things. This appreciation of "thingness" simply means that these artists look upon the things of the world as being sufficient.

Though my description is a bit simplistic, the assumption underlying this attitude is that the things of the world do not need some large meaningful context in order to acquire value. They do not need to be adorned with the fancies of the mind. It is their simple existence, nothing more, that gives them value. For those who adopt this position, there are certain consequences. Because the things of the world cannot be organized according to some easy generalization, life seems untidy, disorderly. Likewise, the poem should be a bit disorderly, hence the rambling quality and broken syntax of some of Bush's best poems. Related to this is the celebration, both in life and art, of the chance juxtapositions of things.

Finally, most importantly, there is also the celebration of impermanence itself. Bush and other American Indian writers are drawn to the coming and going of it all and look upon that process as essential and, for the most part, wonderful. The result of this is that their work utilizes the concept of movement and, simultaneously, develops many ways to capture its sensation. It is no surprise, therefore, that the plot of a typical Bush poem includes travel in some way, perhaps to or from the last pow-wow

somewhere in the Mid- or Southwest, or the comings and goings of lovers or friends.

The idea of movement is, finally, what generates the emotional core of these poems. For instance, "chance" and "change" are two of Bush's favorite terms. It is the concept of change that produces the emotion that he handles frequently and perhaps best, that of melancholy at the moment of separation or just after when the objects associated with lover or friend are still radiating that person's aura. Similarly, melancholy is the backdrop for almost all of his poems, usually the transition of season, almost always summer moving into fall or fall into winter, or if none of these then the dead of winter itself. Spring, or transitions into or out of, and the heat of summer rarely appear. Furthermore the word "time" in its abstract sense is mentioned ten times within the book's thirty-one poems. But the most frequent words occur eleven times: "lonesome" or its derivatives, "lonely"/"loneliness," and the closely related "sad"/"sadness." In other words, at their cores these poems are troubled, though not despairing. A chill sits there, that of both human separation and cosmic separation.

"Lonesomeness" is probably an inevitable response to being plugged in to the coming and going of it all. Bush's lonesomeness is of a different kind than what is usually found in the mainstream aesthetic traditions. These poems are blood-linked to a cultural conception that gives purpose and integration to things.

Yellow beaded cradleboard  
. . . made by steady hands  
and spirit that design  
with value of purpose

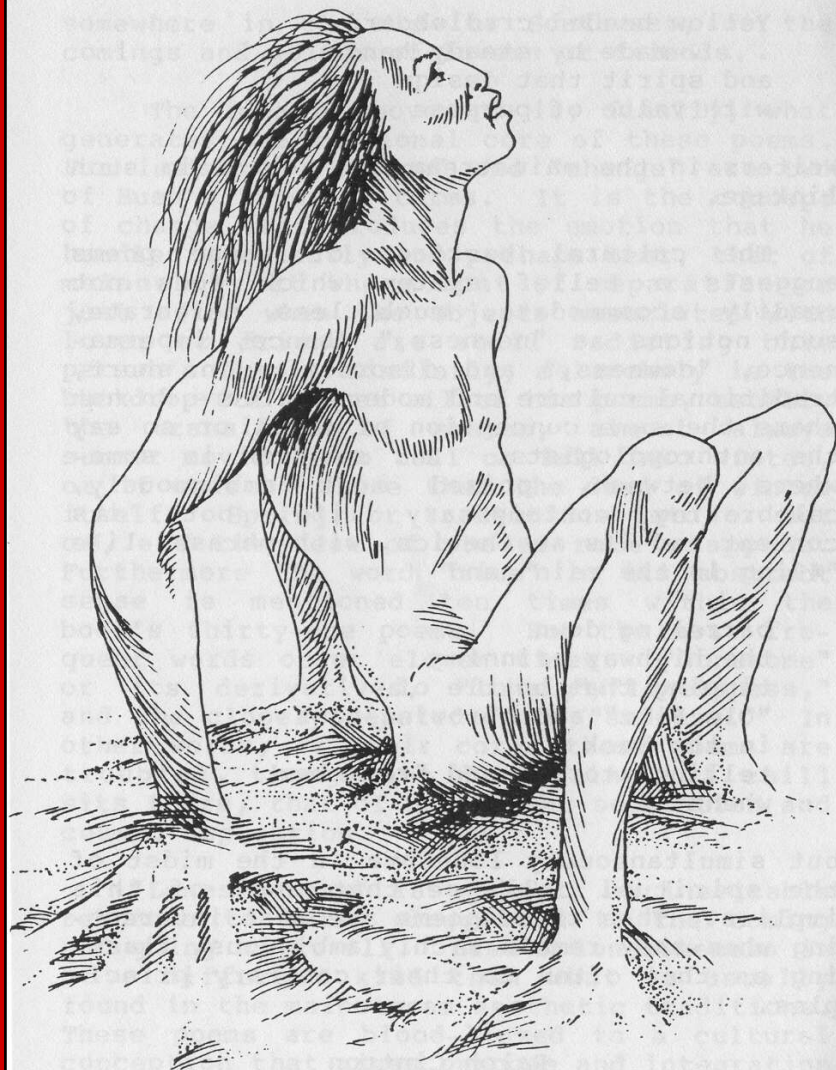
Writers in the mainstream can not claim such linkage.

The cultural backdrop of these poems suggests a belief system which does not readily accommodate, much less celebrate, such notions as "newness," chance, impermanence, "nowness," and disorder. In short, traditional culture and modern culture do not share the same conception of time, or so say the anthropologists. And so Bush is somewhere between, poised most ambiguously, celebrating contemporary life, both its content and its aesthetics, with phrases like "49ing in the rain" and

barreling down  
the highway grinning  
tipping that bottle of  
"Ole Fitz" and throwing cans  
in the back  
telling stories and "remember  
whens"

but simultaneously lonesome in the midst of the spiritual collapse that much of this implies. Thus these poems are most interesting when they remain richly ambiguous, flashing as they often do their contrary principles.

Ralph Cintron  
University of Illinois--Chicago



NATHANIELS

Joy Harjo. What Moon Drove Me to This? New York: I. Reed, 1979. pp. i + 69. pb. \$5.95 and She Had Some Horses. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1983. pp. i + 74. pb. \$6.95.

Joy Harjo's What Moon Drove Me to This? initiates the complicated process of creating a coherent self out of membership in multiple and sometimes hostile worlds--the Native American and white worlds; the worlds of mythic and daily, common reality; the worlds of men and women, etc. The predictable poems here are mostly those which concern the predicament of Native Americans caught in a white world which neither respects or understands their values and which destroys all it conquers. But the strongest poems here, the ones which open new territory, are those which evoke disparate worlds in such a way as to illuminate their complexities, as well as to show the conflicts that exist between them. The sense of personal dislocation is evoked in forceful, direct language in poems such as "It's the Same at Four A.M."

The movement in What Moon Drove Me to This? is always towards escape from that sense of dislocation. The poems in a more rhetorical vein, such as "Blackbirds" and "Crows/And I Know My Part In It Too," assert the certainty of collective survival on the basis of an ineradicable spirit: "every blackbird has a thousand lives," and "crows survive anywhere / even in Iowa / their sleek bodies dance / along the edge of the city riverbed." In most of the other poems in this volume survival is linked to a yearning for the past. Every emptiness signifies something lost which must be recognized and

reclaimed if that emptiness is not to engulf one's spirit completely.

The process of self-centering begun in What Moon Drove Me to This? seems uncompleted because of the presence of numerous different voices representing the disparate elements of the self. Sometimes an angry feminist speaks in clear-cut, political language. Sometimes the voice switches to a slow-moving rhythmical chanter of old incantations. Sometimes the voice is a distant technician controlling diction, stanza, enjambment, meter. The different voices do, of course, throw the disparate elements of the self and its world(s) into greater relief, but they also seem to argue that, at this stage anyway, no single personality would be capable of harmonizing the different selves which exist in this poetry.

Another reason that one senses that the process of self-centering is incomplete is an ambivalence in What Moon Drove Me to This? about the solution which is proposed. In a poem such as "For A Girl I Once Knew" the notion of going home, or moving backwards represents stagnation of the self, not development and unification of the self, as it should. In She Had Some Horses, Harjo resolves this ambivalence. The motion is backwards here from the first poem: "Heartbeat / and breathe back sharply. Breathe / backwards." Going backwards does not signify here a literal return to a physical home or to any customs or traditions of the past. The essential connection between the prior and present worlds is to be established through memory. It is not only language that

comes from memory, but the reverse also. With the recognition that collective memory is the key to cultural survival, language takes on a new power and force. Survival depends upon the ability of language to generate and evoke memory.

In She Had Some Horses Harjo's voice is stronger, more assured, consistent. Different elements are brought together in a language so direct that the relationship between self and earth, myth, history, and spirit seem irrevocable and completely natural.

Carla Kaplan  
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The Resurrection of a Gros Ventre Pipe Keeper

The Seven Visions of Bull Lodge. As Told by his Daughter, Garter Snake. Gathered by Fred P. Gone. Ed. George Horse Capture. Ann Arbor, MI: Bear Claw Press, 1980. Pp. 125. \$6.95 pb.

In 1977, I remember being invited to participate in a Language Conference at St. Paul's Mission near Hays, Montana, on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, the home of the Gros Ventre and Western Assiniboine Tribes. The conference was called to explore means to stave off another instance of that cultural tragedy that has become only too common among the cultures of America, the disappearance of a living Native language.

Aa'ni, the language of the Gros Ventre or White Clay People, was about to become extinct as a living language. Already in 1977, there remained living only one speaker of the traditional Aa'ni dialect, Mr. George Bird Tail, who was then 84 years old. Of the later or corrupted Aa'ni dialect there were sixteen speakers at the conference, but only one was under the age of sixty, and he was over fifty. Because of age and ill health two other Gros Ventre speakers could not attend the conference. However, at best in 1977 we could total only 19 living speakers of Gros Ventre in the world.

Thanks to the efforts of this conference and particularly to its organizer, George Horse Capture, who was then an Indian Studies teacher with the College of Great Falls in Montana, various means have been successfully undertaken to preserve Aa'ni. A taped library of Aa'ni material has been collected, Aa'ni is taught in Gros Ventre schools, and an Aa'ni dictionary has been published. Now, George Horse Capture is working on the translation and publication of major Aa'ni literary works of which The Seven Visions of Bull Lodge is the first and probably the most significant example.

During an informal discussion following the language conference in 1977, I remember the first time I heard mention of the work when Horse Capture spoke in tones of hushed reverence of his efforts to revisit the seven mountain peaks where Bull Lodge had his visions and received his spiritual gifts as a healer and warrior. As Horse Capture notes in his introduction to The Seven Visions of

Bull Lodge, he had climbed others of the old vision-quest mountains but only when he reached the summit of McCann Butte in the Bearpaw Mountains had he been overwhelmed by the lingering power of traditional Ha'annanin (Gros Ventre) religion.

Horse Capture recounts his experience on McCann Peak because it was there that Bull Lodge experienced his third great vision and received his third spiritual gift. Horse Capture noted that when he visited the summit of McCann Butte the pits and rock mounds of countless generations of vision-questers were still distinguishable, perhaps one such mound or pit being the precise site of Bull Lodge's remarkable experience.

Bull Lodge's vision-quests carried him to the tops of seven major peaks in three mountain ranges of what is now north central Montana. In fact, a precise sense of geography and terrain is one of the notable features that pervades Bull Lodge's descriptions of his visions. To my limited knowledge of the region, his geography appears correct to the most minute detail.

His first vision and his most difficult ordeal was on Black Butte in the Judith Mountains, a short distance from present day Lewistown. His two last experiences were in the Sweet Grass Range (also called Three Buttes) on the Montana-Alberta border. But most of his visions like that on McCann Butte were in the ancient mysterious Bearpaw Mountains, called Many Buttes by the Gros Ventre. The volcanic symmetry of some of the Bearpaws

and the splendid scenes that can be seen disappearing into the blue haze of the far-distant horizon have made them a favored range for young vision-seekers of many tribes; the mountains themselves seem transcendent.

Bull Lodge climbed seven peaks, offered seven sacrifices of his own flesh, cried repeatedly for the pity of Those Who Watch and received as his reward a variety of powers as a healer, a warrior, and a pipe-keeper that are awe-inspiring even to the jaded skeptic. It is too bad that so many aspects of his healing procedures cannot be revealed, but we can not second guess his need to maintain the secrecy of his gift. The elements of his healing that he does reveal are remarkable enough as is the testimony of his daughter, Garter Snake, who tells her father's story, and of Fred Gone, who originally transcribed the narratives, and states that Bull Lodge "never lost a case."

This spare little book speaks on every page of a favorite daughter's love of her father and her sense of duty to his memory. Fred Gone recorded Garter Snake's narratives of her father as a W.P.A. project, which was subsequently edited by George Horse Capture. The work limits itself to an account only of the spiritual life of Bull Lodge. Although he was a very noted warrior and war leader, for example, only three brief accounts of his war experiences are included because, says Garter Snake, "I can only speak here of those which were supernaturally directed."

At the age of 40 Bull Lodge gave up the life of a warrior despite the eminence and riches it brought him. He turned his attention to becoming a healer in accordance with the gifts of his visions and the sacrifices he had made. He became one of the most eminent of all Indian healers revered by many tribes, but his prestige among his own people was increased even more by his becoming the fourth and last "supernatural keeper" of the sacred Feathered Pipe of the Gros Ventre, a pipe which is not to be confused with the even more ancient sacred Flat Pipe of the Arapaho and Gros Ventre.

Bull Lodge served the Feathered Pipe all his life, and it was the source of his gifts as a warrior and a healer. In addition to Bull Lodge's own personal experiences with the Feathered Pipe, Garter Snake recounts his story of the origin of the Feathered Pipe and of its divine significance for the Gros Ventre people. As her father foretold, Garter Snake was destined to tell "this story" of the Feathered Pipe "exactly as I tell it."

Garter Snake was born just four days before her father became the keeper of the Feathered Pipe. When she was six years old, she became the Pipe child, who shared with her father and his wife the responsibilities for the ceremonies involving the Feathered Pipe. Her own feelings for the Pipe provide a moving summary of the Pipe's significance for traditional Gros Ventre people. Because she grew up with the Pipe, she says, "I . . . thought just as much of it as of my own blood relatives."

When while I was Pipe child I had been out playing and in the evening would come home and see the Pipe bundle over the door, I would stand and look at it a long time and would say: "Feathered Pipe, I am going into our lodge now." Once when I was sitting on the bed in the lodge I got to thinking, and all the folks were there, and I said: "Feathered Pipe, my dear brother, look down on me and watch over me." I was not told to say this, and I do not know what made me say this prayer to the Feathered Pipe."

For the dilettante or casual reader The Seven Visions of Bull Lodge may seem repetitious, prolix, and dull. However, for anyone genuinely appreciative of the power of Bull Lodge's vision, this little book is a pearl of great price and a unique monument to a great spiritual leader of the Gros Ventures.

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Michael Castro. Interpreting the Indian: Twentieth-Century Poets and the Native American. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983. xx + 221 pp. \$22.50 hb.

Michael Castro, himself a poet and editor, sets out to do two things in the seven chapters of Interpreting the Indian. Assuming the central importance of poets as either creators of or reflectors of social values, he first (and most successfully) traces the ideas about and images of Native Americans in the literature of the first half

of the twentieth century. Castro is especially good on establishing the habits and assumptions of "Early Translators of Indian Poetry" (Chapter 1). He shows both the awareness and limitations of Mary Hunter Austin and Natalie Curtis. Sadly enough the conservative anti-modernist "establishment" reaction of Louis Untermeyer and Carl Van Doren to non-Western European poetics and culture expressed in their reviews of the "Aboriginal Poetry Issue of Poetry" (February 1917) are still with us today, though perhaps not as blatantly racist.

In his second chapter, Castro traces the Native American as symbol in Vachel Lindsay ("Our Mother Pocahontas," "Doctor Mohawk"), Hart Crane (The Bridge), and William Carlos Williams (In the American Grain, Spring and All, Paterson). Putting Lindsay in the company of two major poets could be either incongruous or embarrassing if handled wrong. It is a tribute to Castro as a critic that he does not take "cheap shots" at minor poets, but instead sees them (both Vachel Lindsay and Lew Sarett) as enthusiastic and often amateur reflectors of social values and limitations.

Chapter 3, "Translating Indian Consciousness," gains much by contrasting the well-intentioned but unconvincing attempts of Lew Sarett with the eloquent and masterful achievement of John G. Neihardt's Black Elk Speaks. Following up Neihardt's hint in an interview with Sally McCluskey, Castro draws attention to the additions and deletions that Neihardt made to and from the 1931 verbatim transcript of his sessions with Black Elk.

This awareness of "editorial decisions" is an important addition to the growing recognition of *Black Elk Speaks* as both an unusual "work of art with two collaborators" and as a moving and eloquent spiritual testament.

What I have called the book's second purpose, Castro's review of contemporary writers of the last thirty years (Charles Olson, Jerome Rothenberg, Gary Snyder), is less successful. Chapter 4, "Towards a New Poetry and a New Man: Charles Olson's Projective Verse," includes an interesting analysis of "The Kingfishers" along with an investigation of the implications of Olson's theories about breath/body and verse forms in his famous essay on "Projective Verse." Never content with the abstract and purely intellectual, Olson's 1951 trip to Yucatan provided him with concrete evidence of Mayan culture. And it was this kind of "ground sense" which he predicted Americans would need to "repossess" in order to understand their land and themselves.

Much of that campaign of cultural "repossession" has been aided and advanced by Jerome Rothenberg whom Castro treats in Chapter 5. Yet in contrast to his chapter on Olson the treatment of Rothenberg seems perfunctory and partial even though it takes more pages. Part of the problem is that Rothenberg is still a controversial figure and, to my mind, another is that Castro treats Rothenberg as an anthologist (Technicians of the Sacred and Shaking the Pumpkin) and as a translator (an advocate of "deep image" and "total translation"), but not as a

poet. Though Castro later refers to Rothenberg's A Seneca Journal (1978), his passing allusion misses the opportunity of seeing Rothenberg as editor-translator-poet all in one book.

Chapter 6, "Gary Snyder: The Lessons of Turtle Island," is a much better treatment of an important and popular poet who, as Castro puts it, "in his best poems . . . seems to be inside nature, interacting with it, rather than outside talking about it." This is certainly the best chapter of the second part of the book. Yet its very strength makes the final chapter, "Snyder and the Emergence of Indian Poets: Restoring Unity," even more disappointing. While it is understandable that a final chapter should look forward as well as backward, that it should perhaps be suggestive and imaginative rather than stolid and scholarly, the problem here is that the title of this chapter promises more than it delivers.

In most of the chapters, except perhaps in his treatment of Rothenberg, Castro had balanced discussion of poetic theory with cogent examples and analysis of that poetry. Here, however, his treatment of the "Emergence of Indian Poets" is too brief, impressionistic, and even too abstract. While we do get a taste of some of the right people--James Welch, Simon Ortiz, Maurice Kenny, and Leslie Silko--and while we are given several catalog lists to suggest that there are many more, these only serve to whet an unsatisfied appetite for more. Castro is certainly right in drawing our attention to Leslie Silko's and Geary Hobson's attacks on the

cultural shame of sham "White shamans" and the related issue of cultural imperialism and dilettante expropriation. In fact my quibble is not so much with his ideas in this final chapter (though in their brevity his discussion of Viet Nam and social action seem cryptic and commonplace), as it is with his ending an otherwise excellent book with a series of hollow notes.

Indeed, the very excellence of the first chapters and the often excellent insights of the later chapters make me hope that Castro will continue and expand his examination and analysis into another book on the emergence, diversity, and excellence of Native American Poets. Interpreting the Indian will thus have prepared Castro and his readers for the equally important interpretation of White American Culture that is even now being done by Native American poets and writers.

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Rennard Strickland. The Indians in Oklahoma: Newcomers to a New Land. Edited by E. Wayne Morgan et al. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980. \$9.95 hb., \$3.95 pb.

Rennard Strickland, professor of law and history at the University of Tulsa, describes his book, one of a series on major ethnic groups in Oklahoma, as "a brief chronicle that attempts to capture the life and spirit of Oklahoma's Indian people." His purpose is

to show the contributions made by Indian people to Oklahoma history in order to erase stereotypic images of Oklahoma Indians. Strickland is to be applauded for his endeavors to write about more than sixty-five tribes, their cultures, and their contributions to Oklahoma history from the period around the Indian Removal Act of 1830 to the present. Strickland focuses on the Five Civilized Tribes, although there is also considerable information about the Plains tribes. Strickland has done wide research in history, anthropology, and federal archives and he provides an extensive bibliography. To present an Indian perspective, he cites such well-known writers as N. Scott Momaday, John Joseph Mathews, Will Rogers, and Lynn Riggs. He also includes examples of the work of such acclaimed artists as T. C. Cannon, Richard West, Woody Crumbo, and Steven Mopape as well as examples of paintings and sculptures at the Philbrook Art Institute and the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa. In addition, the book contains a generous collection of photographs of Indian people from the period covered by the book.

Strickland's organization of the historical material is based on the Indian calendar of four seasons. The first chapter focuses on early Indian life in Indian Territory and on the diversity of Indian cultures. Chapter II, "The Dark Winter of Settlement and Statehood," is a poignant historical view of the whites' attempts through their political machine to destroy Indian civilization soon after numerous tribes were removed to Indian Territory. For instance, he describes how Indian leaders resisted the breakup of tribal

government and reservations that resulted from the passage of the Dawes Allotment Act, which distributed Indian land in severalty, and the resultant 1889 land rush. In his brief summary of the initial steps toward Oklahoma statehood, Strickland reveals the atrocious crimes of murder and theft committed against Indian people by settlers coveting Indian land. He emphasizes that at the time of the Allotment, Indians in Oklahoma held 30,000 acres of land; by 1920, they had lost 27,000 acres through white corruption and fraud.

Chapter III, "The Long Spring of Tribal Renewal," describes how Oklahoma Indians endured the hardships of the 1920s and 1930s. World War II, however, brought a new sense of pride, as the elders honored the soldiers with song and ceremony, that ultimately stimulated a revival in Indian culture. As pride in Indian identity rose, so did Indian political leaders in such fields as art, music, theater, ballet, literature, and sports. Since 1946, when the Indian Claims Commission began litigation against the government for ignoring treaties and payments for stolen Indian land, a gradual recognition of Indian rights has emerged. Indian lawyers have forced Oklahoma to take another view of the treaties and laws of Indian territory.

In the final chapter, "The Sprit of Modern Indian Summer," Strickland discusses the contrast between Indian and white values toward ecology. The chapter is an appropriate and worthy summary. Strickland's forceful conclusion stresses that modern Oklahoma Indians are not a mere tourist attraction but

rather a strong society with close ties to family, heritage, and nature. Strickland emphasizes that the waste of nature and the depletion of earth by modern non-Indian society contrasts vividly with the traditional respect for nature and the earth practiced by Indians. Overall, The Indians in Oklahoma will attack the American conscience.

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University of Oklahoma

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Rayna Green, ed. That's What She Said: Contemporary Poetry and Fiction by Native American Women. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

What can you say about an anthology in a nutshell, except, perhaps, that the editor has exercised her power of selecting the authors well. While teaching at the University of Nebraska--Lincoln, I have taught from numerous anthologies, and Native American literature anthologies in particular, and I know that students would very much appreciate the introductory essay by Rayna Green and her inclusion of the glossary and biographies of the contributors in the last section of the book. I refer primarily to non-Indian students, but even though Native American students are informed on their own tribe and about modern conditions and customs of other tribes, they are not usually well-informed about the history and cultural background of other tribes outside of their own. Most

college students do not understand the differences between Native American literature and American literature of other cultures.

One of the outstanding characteristics of Native American literature is the intersection of different kinds of expression, for example, imagery of sound and sight, intersection of visual and dramatic arts, the intersection of concrete and practical forms in mystical experiences and ceremony. In Native American literature and art, the intersection of different kinds of expression parallels the intersection of many-faceted experiences, both spiritual and natural, which emerge in different ways and from different angles of perception, according to which poet, fiction writer, or artist is the focus of attention and which single item of artwork is under consideration. Each Native American artist is unique. Each one stems from the Native American cultural heritage which has enough general characteristics in modern times to provide a community of interests for these artists and their people; yet they express the condition of marginality where too many of their compatriots suffer the discrimination and alienation of the joining and, at the same time, separating out of majority and minority ethnic groups and cultures. Survival, therefore, is as important as the preservation of culture. In the contemporary world of the Native American artist who wakes every day to a new day, there are risks that must be taken and challenges to be met. Changes come about.

Many of the short stories in this anthology reflect these concerns. Paula Gunn Allen's "The Bearer of the Sun Arises" is a story about two persons, male, female, of differing cultural backgrounds who do not belong in the modern setting in which they live. The organization of the story is a bit choppy, but the dramatic quality comes through clearly. The character of the woman is less sympathetic than that of the man, but the writing style is almost flawless.

Louise Erdrich's "Scales" is a love story about a man who spends most of his time in prison but escapes often, the last time to see his wife give birth to their child. The story centers on the touching relationship between Anishinabe persons caught by forces in modern mainstream society. These characters are unlovely persons, but they love each other, and the compassion of the author comes through.

Rayna Green's "High Cotton" is a raucously humorous story about a drunkard whose wife forces him to do two things at once--give up hard liquor and dedicate himself to the way of Jesus. The wife uses a powerful illusion to make her husband change; the apparition of Jesus in a white robe is in actuality his wife in a long, white, flannel nightgown. The poor, "dehydrated" alcoholic who has gone three days without a drink becomes transformed.

In Linda Hogan's "New Shoes," the setting of both outdoor and indoor scenes, the season, the puberty rite symbolized by the "new shoes," the credibility of the characters of

mother and daughter, all mesh in a well-told short story. However, there is almost too much social distance between mother and daughter. It is clear that the mother is accepting of the direction the daughter is moving in, away from the Native American cultural heritage and into the Anglo-American world. It is also clear that youthful persons usually are incapable of appreciating the wisdom and love of their parents and elders, fully, at this period of growing up.

Mary Tallmountain's "Naaholooyah" is a tragic story of a woman forced to give up her children to a kindly non-Indian couple because she, the Athabaskan woman, has terminal consumption. It is a very touching story. The Native American culture is most easily brought in by the author who obviously knows her language and the ways of her people.

In Roberta Hill Whiteman's "Fire Dragon, Fall Near Me Again" the rock that the boy, Allen, sees as the significant emblem of his vision, which he received after suffering a frightening night outdoors alone, is the symbol of the boy's role as cultural transmitter of his Plains (Sioux) grandfather's beliefs and attendant cultural and social responsibilities towards his family. The tension between the two brothers, the one believing in the Fire Dragon, and the other one ashamed to believe because such belief would mark him as different from his Anglo-American neighbors is symptomatic of the tensions between the majority-minority cultural members, the arrogance of supremacy being on the side of majority.

In Shirley Hill Witt's "La Mujer de valor," the setting of the mountains of Mexico (probably), the campesinos (minor characters), the major characters (learned persons from the outside), the theme, and the plot are very convincing. The writing style could be tightened up by deleting some of the trite phrases, such as "She had second thoughts," and "So now you see me, what is left of me." It is in character for a university-trained woman to say, "I taught them cultural relativism rather than economics," yet she makes the comments about the culture of which she has become very much a part, one that she healed as a "curandera," "more with the strength of will than by sleight of hand."

The Native American women poets included in the anthology use the English words and the language as a whole to express the imagery that they have selected, condensed, expanded where necessary, in all, abstracted from their own lives. Mastery of technique enables them to express their experiences, their thoughts, their feelings. In a sense, the printed page is the medium for a sharing with others the multi-dimensional world.

Joy Harjo in "Ice Horses" conjures up the pain of a passionate relationship. "These are the ones who cut your thighs, / whose blood you must have seen on the gloves / of the doctor's rubber hands. . . . These are the ones who loved you. / They are the horses who have held you / so close that you have become / a part of them, / an ice horse / galloping into / the fire."

Nora Dauenhauer expresses the rhythm and song of the women's dance in the poem "Voices": "We sound like crying bullheads / when we sing / our songs. Granddaughters dancing, / blossoms / swaying in the wind."

Diana Burns conveys the rhythms and convivial atmosphere of '49ers as they sing and dance their songs: "'49 in the hills above / Ventura / Them Okies gotta drum." Then comes the '49 song: "I'm from Oklahoma / I got no one to call my own / if you will be my honey / I will be your sugar pie, way hi yah, / Way yah hey way yah hi yah." She is very serious in "Our People"; in this poem the reader is made aware of the unique qualities of her people's environment, telling qualities of their cultural history and their lives. "We lie together / Souls split open raw / and bleeding / We embrace / and rub / the wounds / together." The next verse identifies the change of seasons: "On Lac Court Oreilles / the ice is breaking up / melting / succumbing to April. / The Canadian geese / are flying / home." The following verses touch on two settings, the one where "Uncle Waynaboozhoo and Grandpa / are making little birchbark baskets / and whittling spigots / . . . Waiting on the maple trees" and in the next verse, "But / in Washington Square Park / the trees are showing / tips of green / and youngblackmeninArmygreenjackets . . ."

Paula Gunn Allen is very much in the modern world as she writes about the dangers of modern technology, destructive actions taken by industry in exploitation of the earth, and the threat of war in nuclear testing. She is at home with the life,

traditionally speaking, and in modern life of the Laguna people; and she has made her mark in the feminist movement.

Wendy Rose expresses her deep appreciation of mixed tribal heritage--Hopi of the Southwest and Miwok of Central California. She expresses the problems that the representative of the Native American minority faces in the Anglo-American world, particularly the person who feels the need of rising in the hierarchical system of mainstream America, an example of which is the academic world and another example, the urban setting. "The Poet Haunted" and "Naming Power" are very effective in bridging the gap between the traditional world and the modern world. Wendy is a poet who will not forget her traditions, and she will do this in the face of rebuffs from an older and more staid generation. However, Wendy will not stand still; her voice will be heard as she tells us about the ironies of the outsider's perception of Native Americans whose remains are preserved as "artifacts" in museums and in endless chains of words in scholarly manuscripts. She warns us of the dangers of nuclear energy which can readily be corrupted by war-minded and greedy powers.

Wendy Rose and other Native American women poets are concerned about the roots of descrimination. "Julia" is a poem written by Wendy about a deformed woman whose husband only married her because he wanted the money from putting her on display in a travelling

circus, i.e., he treated her as less than human. Roberta Hill Whiteman expresses her concern for the incarcerated men she taught in "The Long Parenthesis."

The contemporary issues for Native Americans are such that any person who becomes involved in espousing or fighting them is caught in a vortex of intense activity, even suffering; but then again the prolonged sharing often leads to satisfaction and great joy.

"Black Hills Survival Gathering 1980" by Linda Hogan is an expression of the concern by the author for contemporary issues involving Native Americans, in connection with the environment, survival of cultural heritage, and survival of humans on the planet Earth. She shares her experiences with her husband and children for whom she expresses her overflowing love and gentleness.

Facing contemporary issues calls on the powers that come from inside the persons involved, and for many, this means spirituality. The outer forces in the external environment and/or opposing groups of people or ideologies must be dealt with using non-violent methods. Opposing forces can be reconciled and unified and then can happen constructive transformations, and change. Joy Harjo's poem "Remember" speaks to the relationships of people and universe.

Remember the wind. Remember her  
voice. She knows the  
origin of this universe. I heard  
her singing Kiowa war  
dance songs at the corner of  
Fourth and Central once.  
Remember that you are all people  
and that all people  
are you.  
Remember that you are this universe  
and that the  
universe is you.

Charlotte de Clue ends her poem "To the Spirit of Monahsetah" on a note of great compassion, after commenting on life, death and rebirth:

and there is something else here.  
the Mystery that speaks of life and  
death  
and rebirth  
has been stretched to its limits  
violence has imposed  
new conditions.

for downstream  
a woman's body was found  
delivered naked and nameless  
into the river's lap.

my fingers claw wet clay  
touch earth touch earth.  
If you get lost  
touch earth.

. . .

we could forget  
and the river would be as it  
once was

at night  
the river flows silently  
past my bed

. . .

be whole again  
little one.  
be whole.

Woesha Cloud North  
California State College--Fresno

\* \* \* \*



## Short Reviews

Andrew Wiget. Native American Literature.  
Twayne: Boston, 1985.

That in the 125 pages allotted by the Twayne series format Andrew Wiget has dealt with the entire sweep of Native American literature, from oral narrative and song through contemporary poetry and fiction in English, with even a brief glance at non-fictional prose, is an accomplishment worthy of praise and wonder. Wiget turns the trick by keeping his eye on his introductory purpose: his presentations are simple, clear, and focused on essentials. He puts more emphasis on explaining and organizing than on interpreting. But he also helps the beginner by making judgments of his own, consistently sound ones, and making good use of commentaries by other scholars and critics. From the opening chronology (running from 50,000 B.C. to 1977) to the well chosen bibliography, this is a book that will be a godsend for introductory courses.

\*

Robin McGrath. Canadian Inuit Literature: The Development of a Tradition. Canadian Ethnology Service, Paper No. 94. National Museum of Man Mercury Series. Ottawa, Canada K1A 0M8.

The first study, and a most useful one if (of necessity) a bit pedestrian at places, of how the Canadian Inuit developed their oral tradition in Inuktitut into written English.

There is an extremely valuable 33-page illustrated listing of newsletters, newspapers, and magazines by, for, and about Canadian Inuit, and an extensive bibliography.

\*

In Honor of Eyak: The Art of Anna Nelson Harry, compiled and edited by Michael E. Krauss. Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska, 1982 (Fairbanks, Alaska 99701).

A collection honoring a remarkable storyteller and her people, and, though not pretending to cultural or linguistic completeness, through notes and introductions nonetheless makes fully accessible the art of a remarkably gifted woman and of an interesting people. An excellent introduction describing the life of Anna Nelson Harry and the history of her people includes several photographs and gives the non-specialist the background necessary to an appreciation of the fascinating stories.

\*

Athabaskan Stories from Anvik, Reverend John W. Chapman's "Ten'a Texts and Tales," retranscribed and edited by James Kari. Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska, 1981 (Fairbanks, Alaska 99701).

Chapman's book in 1914 was the first extensive and authentic collection of Alaskan Athabaskan texts to be published. Between 1975 and 1985, Kari re-elicited the texts by going over Chapman's published texts

sentence-by-sentence with one or more native speakers. To each interlinear text Jane McGary has added a free translation.

\*

The Sapir-Kroeber Correspondence, edited with notes and index by Victor Golla. Report #6, Survey of California and Other Indian Languages, Department of Anthropology, Berkeley, CA, 1984.

This superbly edited book covers the years 1910-1925, a period of decisive importance for the evolution of linguistic study of American Indian languages. Through the happenstance of Kroeber and Sapir usually being separated during the period, their correspondence provides an almost complete picture of the development of this aspect of linguistics. Thanks to the warm mutual regard that, after a bad start, developed between two scholars with extraordinarily broad ranges of intellectual and aesthetic interests, as well as to their shared psychological perceptiveness and uninhibited frankness in expressing their insights. Thanks, too, to Golla's adroit and judicious notes on persons and issues, the volume provides a kind of insider's history of the early years of American anthropology and the vagaries of some of its more entertaining practitioners.

\*

Bernard L. Fontana. Of Earth and Little Rain: The Papago Indians. Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Press. With photographs by John P. Schaefer, 1984.

A personal, unpretentious discussion of Papago life and history by an author who lives alongside the reservation and has come to know a good many Papago and to understand sympathetically the economics of their life-ways. The photographs are of extraordinary sharpness and clarity, though slightly stereotyped in character and lacking in vitality.

\*

Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins. Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims, edited by Mrs. Horace Mann. Sierra Media, Inc., Bishop, CA 93514, 1969. (Distributed by the Chalfant Press at this address.) This is a photographic reproduction of the original edition of 1883, with a Preface by M. R. Harrington and an Introduction by Russ and Anne Johnson.

The character and quality of this book, probably the most outspoken and entertaining work by an Indian published in the nineteenth century, is illustrated by its second and third sentence:

I was a very small child when the first white people came into our country. They came like a lion,

yes, like a roaring lion, and have continued so ever since, and I have never forgotten their first coming.

Sarah, daughter of Chief Winnemucca and granddaughter of Captain Truckee, describes both her personal experiences and those of her people in their contacts with Whites. She led a life more adventurous than that of most men, with the added danger to her of rape (photographs show her to have been a most attractive woman), a danger she escaped sometimes by skilled riding of a fast horse, sometimes by defending herself with a knife. Her attitude was realistic but intransigent: "I know what an Indian woman can do. She can never be outraged by one man, but she may be by two." This clear-sightedness characterizes her descriptions of Piute life and her attacks on the agency system employed against it. The wrongs and claims of Piutes, both as individuals and as tribal people are picturesquely and eloquently set forth in this book, that has been called "the best history of the Piute Indians" yet written. Few readers will disagree with Mrs. Horace Mann's judgment of the work, which she edited:

It is the first outbreak of the American Indian in human literature and has a single aim--to tell the truth as it lies in the heart and mind of a true patriot, and one whose knowledge of the two races gives her an opportunity of comparing them justly. At this moment, when the United States seem waking up to their duty to the original

possessors of our immense territory, it is of the first importance to hear what only an Indian and an Indian woman can tell.

Don't overlook this jewel.

\*

A Sender of Words: Essays in Memory of John G. Neihardt, edited by Vine Deloria, Jr. Salt Lake City: Howe Brother, 1984. xi + 177 pp. \$15.95 cloth.

A collection of fourteen essays about Neihardt, a majority focused on Black Elk Speaks, including pieces by Gretchen Bataille, Bobby Bridger, Dee Brown, Raymond J. DeMallie, Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., N. Scott Momaday, and Frank Waters. While few of the pieces are profound, or attempt much in the way of scholarship, most are written with appealing warmth, and the total effect of the volume is to suggest that Neihardt's work is deserving of serious re-valuation, at least that portion of it most closely linked to the Lakotas. There is a useful chronology of Neihardt's thirty books, including The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt, edited by Raymond J. Demallie, University of Nebraska Press, 1984, which includes the stenographic record of the original interviews with Black Elk.

\*

Spirit Mountain: An Anthology of Yuman Story and Song, edited by Leanne Hinton and Lucile J. Watahomige. Tucson: Sun Tracks and the University of Arizona Press, 1984.

A large, fine collection of songs, stories, and non-fictional material, all presented in dual language form, with useful introductions and helpful bibliographies for each of the groups, which include Hualapai, Havasupai, Yavapai, Paipai, Diegueno, Maricopa, Mojave, and Quechan. The usual Sun Tracks high standard of clear typography and fine photographic illustrations is continued in this valuable volume.

\*

Sun Tracks and the University of Arizona Press have republished (1983) Hopitutuwutsi/Hopi Tales, which appeared in 1978 bearing the name of Ekkehart Malotki as author under the imprint of the Museum of Northern Arizona. The current publication is identified as narrated by Herschel Talashoma, recorded and translated by Ekkehart Malotki (and charmingly illustrated by Anne-Marie Malotki), and costs only \$14.95 paperbound.

\*

The Wind Eagle and Other Abenaki Stories, as told by Joseph Bruchac, illustrated by Kahionhes. Bowman Books: The Greenfield Center, NY 12833, 1985. 38 pp. \$4.99 pb.

This volume introduces, splendidly, a new series from Greenfield Review Press which will publish retellings or makings anew by

contemporary writers of traditional Indian stories. These tellings are characterized by Bruchac's customary easy charm, and the illustrations by Kahionhes, as one can see from the pair reproduced in this issue, are apt and vigorous. In honor of Joseph Bruchac's new endeavor, herewith the first story from this first volume in the Bowman series.

### The Coming of Gluskabi

Waudjoset ndatlokugan bizwakamigwi alnabe bimisigeniganiye agwedewabizun. Long ago my story was walking around, a forest lodge man with clothing made of sheets of moss and with strips of ashwood for his belt. And this is the place where my story decided to camp. And here this story of Gluskabi begins.

After Tabaldak had finished making human beings, he dusted his hands off and some of that dust sprinkled on the earth. From that dust Gluskabi formed himself. He sat up from the earth and said, "Here I am." So it is that some of the Abenaki people call Gluskabi by another name, "Odzihozo," which means "The Man who made himself from something." He was not as powerful as Tabaldak, but like his grandchildren, the human beings, he had the power to change things, sometimes for the worst.

When Gluskabi sat up from the earth, The Owner was astonished. "How did it happen now that you came to be?" he said.

Then Gluskabi said, "Well, it is because I formed myself from this dust left over from the first humans that you made."

"You are very wonderful," The Owner told him.

"I am wonderful because you sprinkled me," Gluskabi answered.

"Let us roam around now," said The Owner. So they left that place and went uphill to the top of a mountain. There they gazed about, open-eyed, so far around they could see. They could see the lakes, the rivers, the trees, how all the land lay, the earth. Then The Owner said, "Behold here how wonderful is my work. By the wish of my mind I created all this existing world, oceans, rivers, river lakes." And he and Gluskabi gazed open-eyed.

Then Gluskabi said, "Can not I also cause something to be created?"

And The Owner replied, "Make whatever you can do according to your power."

"Well," Gluskabi said, "Perhaps I can make the wind." Then Gluskabi made the wind blow. It came up and blew so hard that the trees bent over and some were torn out by the roots. Gluskabi was very pleased.

"Enough," said The Owner. "I have seen how powerful you are and what you can do. Now, in return, I too will make the wind blow." Then the wind rose. It blew so hard Gluskabi could not stand. It tangled up all

the hair on Gluskabi's head and when he tried to smooth it down the wind blew the hair right off.

"Enough," said Gluskabi. "I have seen how powerful you are. No longer will I try to cause anything to be created." So it was that Gluskabi had his first encounter with the wind and learned the limits of his own power.

But The Owner left Gluskabi the power to change things. "Now you will be in charge of this earth," The Owner said. "You will work to make it a good place for your grandchildren, the human beings."

And so Gluskabi began to do just that.

\*

#### Poetry Notes

(Listing in this section does not preclude review in a later issue.)

Blue Cloud Quarterly (P. O. Box 98, Marvin, SD 57251, \$4.00/year). Volume 30, No. 1: Diane Glancy, Brown Wolf Leaves the Res & Other Poems, 1984. Volume 30, No. 3: Wilma Elizabeth McDaniel, Who is San Andreas, 1984. Volume 30, No. 4: Karoniaktatie (Alex A. Jacobs), Landscape: Old and New Poems, 1984. Volume 31, No. 1: Ralph Salisbury, A White Rainbow: Poems of a Cherokee Heritage, 1985. Volume 31, No. 2: Silvester J. Brito, Looking Through a Squared Circle, 1985.

Diane Glancy. Traveling On. MyrtleWood Press, 4312 East 105 Place, Tulsa, OK 74136, 1980, 2nd Ed. 1982.

William Oandasan. Round Valley Songs. West End Press, Box 7232, Minneapolis, MN 55407, 1984.

Carter Revard. Ponca War Dancers. Point Riders Press, P. O. Box 22731, Norman, OK 73070, 1980.

Ralph Salisbury. Going to the Water: Poems of a Cherokee Heritage. Pacific House Books, Eugene, OR, 1983.

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#### Notes

A talk will precede the Newberry Library Cocktail Party, to be held during the MLA meetings at 6:30 p.m., December 28

An Introduction to the  
Newberry Library's Special Collection in  
American Indian Literature

Saturday, December 28, 6:00-6:30 p.m.  
Room 101, Newberry Library  
60 West Walton St.  
(just a short walk from the MLA center)

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