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colonial accounts that mythologized the roles of Tokamahamon as the ephemeral shadow figure, Wituwamat as the murderous savage, and Tisquantum is discussed at length as both teacher and turncoat. Enumerating the roles in which these caricatures of Native identity have continued to prosper, Donohue's wit and sense of humor shine, further convincing the reader of the validity of her claim—that *Of Plymouth Plantation* is the best early example of colonial literature through which to read Native influence on white literary culture.

Betty Booth Donohue's *Bradford's Indian Book* introduces new ways of reading American and Native American literature, and could do great service to students and scholars looking to ground themselves in individual approaches of highly communal subject matter. Her examination of the "First Text" as it relates to the histories and literatures of the Algonquians and Plymouth colonists is intriguing and highly informative, and offers new ways through which to reconsider the whole of American letters and literature.

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**Crazy Brave: A Memoir.** By Joy Harjo. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2012. 176 pages. \$24.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

Joy Harjo's memoir *Crazy Brave* is a remarkable book, as multifaceted as any of her fine poems. Even so, Harjo's life is in some ways ordinary; it's a story of rising above the challenging circumstances of alcoholism, physical abuse, and poverty to become an author—like Rick Bragg's *All Over But the Shoutin'*, or Jeanette Walls's *The Glass Castle*. Add in racial prejudice, and it's like Richard Wright's story in *Black Boy/American Hunger*. But in truth *Crazy Brave* is like none of those. What sets this memoir apart, besides the Mvskogee cultural context and personal details, is the ease with which Harjo mixes the supernatural with the ordinary, and her compact use of specific events to stand for years of experience and history. *Crazy Brave* is a poetic memoir from a renowned poet and musician.

Harjo recounts a period of a little more than two decades, from her earliest memories in Oklahoma, through her years in New Mexico at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) and the University of New Mexico, to the momentous night when "the spirit of poetry" came to her in a dream and she embraced it (163). Harjo organizes the memoir into four sections. Each is named for a cardinal direction with a description that sets the tone. While her life story roughly corresponds with the physical geography, it's the emotional geography that guides the structure. The opening section is the East, a place

of beginnings that evokes not only Oklahoma, the place of her birth and early childhood, but also the original homelands of her Creek and Cherokee ancestors. Next, the story moves to the North, to Tulsa, which sits on “the northern border of the Creek nation” (17), a description that asserts a Mvskogee worldview. This section sees Harjo through the difficult years of her mother’s second marriage—her controlling and abusive stepfather is surely one of the “difficult teachers”—and covers her high school years at IAIA, a place for the “prophecy” about the centrality of art, poetry, performance, and music (55). The third section is identified with the West, the direction of endings, tests, and finding a way in the darkness. It describes the years when she becomes a teenage mother, living with her feckless husband in Tahlequah. Finally, Harjo’s story turns again to the South, the direction of release, creativity, and transformation, marked by her return to school at the University of New Mexico where she begins painting again and claims poetry as her primary means of self-expression.

*Crazy Brave* especially takes poetic form in the first section. The narrative loops between earthly experience and the spirit realm, and combines personal, family, and ancestral history. This last technique recalls N. Scott Momaday’s *Way to Rainy Mountain*, but Harjo plays the connections like jazz, fluidly moving among the perspectives without precise divisions. The narrative form is demanding. Harjo requires her readers to embrace mystery, though we might be tempted to read these passages as metaphor, even fiction. Also, she barely touches on the big names of history, giving half a sentence to the Battle of Horseshoe Bend and Osceola and so requires readers to inform themselves. At first the longest passages devoted to one subject are often just one or two paragraphs, such as those describing riding in her father’s Cadillac on a hot summer day, ancient gatherings on Congo Square, her parents’ first meeting, and her own birth. The shifts between these topics and time periods, all of which come up in the first dozen pages, are sudden and require careful attention. For example, this is how she concludes the description of the family’s oil revenues: “Then the oil company stopped the payments. Stories can be very demanding and need care and assistance. The family oil story has a spirit. This is another story that I need to tend” (23).

As Harjo’s focus moves to the later periods of her life, the sections grow longer, but dreams, poems, and the past continue to erupt. The point of this memoir is to celebrate stories and the wisdom of experience, not to create a seamless narrative of self-development. Harjo wrote *Crazy Brave* because she is the doorway to her family’s memories; she wrote it, too, for the young people struggling to find direction in an often hostile world and for the women who need to escape alcoholism and abuse as she did. The struggles of Harjo’s early life make for difficult reading, as surely as this was difficult to write, but the

fear, despair, and mistakes are intertwined with dogged determination, spiritual guardians, and human kindness, not the least of which is Harjo's forgiveness of and reconciliation with most of those who caused her pain.

Abandonment is a key theme. It crops up in a story about the trickster Rabbit and recurs throughout. Her father drinks and chases other women; her mother too often sides with her second husband; Harjo herself first abandons her inner wisdom as she begins to drink and party, and then her artistic gifts as she pursues unhealthy relationships with men. The fathers of her children likewise drink, fail to support her and the children, chase other women, and abuse her physically. Harjo writes about all these men, except her white stepfather, with a divided understanding that marks their behavior as wrong even as it recognizes the social forces and psychological wounds that contribute to their abusive actions. And she openly writes of her own difficulty in recognizing that ending these relationships was the right thing to do.

Harjo also shows how kindness teaches those who have suffered violence to trust themselves and to find allies. When the teachers and staff at the Indian boarding school protect her and other deeply wounded students, Harjo learns again the importance of truthfulness and recovers her ability to care for others. Later, women friends will talk Harjo into ending her relationship with an abusive and alcoholic poet, and she will use her house as a safe haven for abused women from nearby Pueblos and the urban Native community. *Crazy Brave* affirms the miracle of Harjo's strength to withstand so many setbacks and to commit to motherhood and artistic expression.

Because Harjo's memoir fits with preconceived notions of Indians as alcoholics or mystic visionaries and because its opening section may be rhetorically challenging, faculty will need to give careful thought to how they incorporate this book into their classes. It does contain a few excerpt-worthy stories that may work in lower division classes. In the fall of 2012, Harjo gave several radio interviews about the book, which can be accessed at her website *JoyHarjo.com* and may benefit classroom and scholarly work with this text. Fans of Harjo's music, poetry, and other writing will eagerly embrace this intricate book. Those with an interest in indigenous autobiography will welcome another fascinating example of how personal writing transcends the tale of a single individual.

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