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In-Between Places. By Diane Glancy. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005. 119 pages. \$32.95 cloth; \$15.95 paper.

Diane Glancy captures the now rather popular academic concepts of hybridity, transculturalization, and borderlands through a simple but apt image: a pot holder. While reading *In-Between Places*, I imagined Glancy's pot holder to be similar to those constructions of interwoven, multicolored nylon that I made for my mother's kitchen when I was young. I used a cheap plastic loom that I found in the aisles of Toys 'R Us. I never quite got the corners right. Over the years, the pot holders became slightly stained and unraveled just a bit, and they weren't quite thick enough to use for an extra-hot cast-iron skillet. But overall, they held up.

Glancy's text is a kind of pot holder, situated in a sweet spot that bridges her roles as poet and academic, mother and daughter, traveling homebody, and Christian Indian. The writer's multiple and at times conflicting facets of identity weave together in ways that are ostensibly imperfect, not "traditional" per se, permeated by loss, and marked by memory. This weaving imagery is in the tradition of Michael Dorris's hair braiding motifs in *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water* (1987) and *Cloud Chamber* (1997) or Linda Hogan's images of left and right pants pockets that hold white and Indian hands in "The Truth Is." However, Glancy's illustrations contain harder edges. In one potent image, Glancy portrays her identity as a "straight-backed chair . . . woven with strips of bark. It is rough, coarse, uneven, crude" (82). Throughout the narrative, Glancy provides similar images that encapsulate divisions, creating pot holders that somehow hold up despite their rough edges.

Particularly insightful is Glancy's first vignette, "July," in which she interrogates key concepts that frame the production and teaching of literature and criticism, illuminating ways in which those concepts often tend to unravel despite their universality. For example, Glancy questions Edward Said's postcolonial association of Native American life with destruction. She writes of Native American literature, "I like to think of the literature as self-referential (with a reason). Beginning in itself. I think it also wants to define itself, be itself without any outside definition of what it is, or should be. . . . I do not want other voices shedding their *light* on our *darkness*" (16). This discomfort with outside definitions of Native literature and life informs Glancy's classroom, as she experiences frustration with students who beg for clear explanations, "what she wants" in essay assignments, and structure. The most she can offer them is "A quilt-like effect. A splaying of meaning" (28). Interestingly, her travels to and from various teaching jobs and speaking engagements across the Midwest can be understood within a broader family tradition of migration: her father's movement among stockyard jobs in various cities, his Cherokee people's trek from the Southeast to Georgia, and her mother's ancestors' voyage to America. In this light, "July," with its problematic patriotism, unifies Glancy's summer teaching at the Native American Preparatory School with contemplations of heritage, good and evil, the natural world, and national identity embodying "thirty-one pot holders sewn together like a quilt" (27-28).

The rest of the collection extends the threads of this quilt, foregrounding geographical locations as springboards for deeper meditations on the

questions introduced in “July.” One such springboard is Iowa’s corporate hog barns, the smells of which accompany a return trip to Minnesota. In “Hog Barn,” Glancy cleverly imagines a hog’s perspective, referencing animal depictions in philosophy, fairy tales, and the Bible and considering a hog’s response to them. This convergence of human and animal concerns signifies a border crossing, or “in-between place,” that differs from stereotypical characterizations of American Indian nature writing. However, although it lacks overt humor, the hog’s narration, interspersed with Glancy’s comments on the brutalities of livestock farming, is wholly in the tradition of subversive American Indian trickster tales. The afterword, or moral of the story, is another pot holder of sorts: “*What have they done to deserve this?*” (60).

“Indian Guide” also confronts industrialization and its effect on the natural world. Several sections, each unified around particular strip-mining locations, highlight the spiritual implications of violating the earth, revealing the rage that simmers in the upturned land. One such location, Rocky Mount, was originally a natural formation that the Osage used as a lookout, the place where Glancy’s grandparents are buried. After the land marries “an electric shovel,” the area is bereft of its vitality: “the remains of a battlefield where old spirits tried to step to the sky from the underworld but were turned back” (43). Subtly, but beautifully, Glancy again forges a connection between broader issues of land and environment and her own personal heritage, linking the violation of Rocky Mount to the quiet tension that simmers under the surface of her family’s difficult farming life on the prairie.

While “July,” “Hog Barn,” and “Indian Guide” contain concrete images that give vivid unity to a bevy of ideas and concerns, other parts of the collection contain prose that is not so anchored. “Turning Slowly Nature,” a discussion of nature that revolves around a visit to a rented cabin on the Lake of the Ozarks, probes central conflicts, such as American Indian versus Judeo-Christian ways of believing, that are addressed elsewhere in the text, yet their presence here lacks the imaginative dimensions that are so strong in the other essays. Similarly, although “Terra-Cotta Horses,” based on a visit to China, is an interesting and unexpected counterpart to the examinations of government, national identity, and geography in “July,” its presentation of traveling across a list of Chinese landmarks creates a catalogue effect that hampers the contemplative tone that so distinguishes the collection’s other bright spots. However, the essay’s ending, a yearning for land expressed in letters from a son serving on a ship in the Persian Gulf, is a powerful complement to central themes in the text as a whole.

Glancy’s *In-Between Spaces* is a creative counterpart to contemporary concerns voiced in Homi Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture* (2004) and Gloria Anzaldúa’s *La Frontera/Borderlands* (1987), texts that name “in-between spaces” as sites of contestation, alliance, and resistance. Thankfully, Glancy’s writing gives imaginative elegance—through pot holders, quilts, homelands, and words—to multiplicitous experiences and conflicts that are not clearly defined, contain rough edges, and tend to unravel at the seams.

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