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**I Swallow Turquoise for Courage: Poems.** By Hershman R. John. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007. 101 pages. \$15.95 paper.

Hershman R. John's first book of poetry bears witness to the ironies of contemporary American Indian life. John, a Navajo tribal member who is on the English faculty at Phoenix College, is well positioned to explore these ironies. Layered images, starkly rendered landscapes, use of form, and the mining of traditions that range from Navajo coyote stories to haiku master Basho and American poet Elizabeth Bishop make this collection stand out from the many that appear every year.

In "Two Bodies of Elements," the title poem of the first of the book's four sections, John draws connections between urban "Indian" country and his Navajo homeland. The image of a sleeping teenager, "heavy as sand," his shoulder a "sloping rock" gives way to the speaker's grandmother washing her hair with yucca root, her arms like "thick piñon tree branches" and her breasts like "crested sand dunes." In John's poetic world, bodies become linked to landscape, and landscapes become linked to the histories they encompass. His haiku series, "Watering the Sheep," links the landscape of Dinétah to the haiku traditions of Basho:

Dark Navajo boy  
sitting under evergreens  
eating hard frybread.

A roadrunner, big  
as a chicken strikes the pond—  
swallowing wet jade.

John's willingness to link disparate literary traditions is also evident in his poem "Coyote's *Ad Infinitum*." Here John portrays the traditional figure of Coyote on the beach "reading about King Midas and his touch." Instead of turning what he touches to gold, Coyote multiplies himself "*ad infinitum*" by clapping until he "loses himself over and over again. Which one of his selves is the original?" In "She Is Ready to Weave (for poor Leda)," Coyote appears again, this time with Spider Woman, and together they entrap the Swan with the "warp and weft" of Spider Woman's weaving.

Despite these forays into other literary traditions, John does not neglect the political landscape that is so much a part of contemporary Native life. In "Buffalo Head Nickel," John ponders the "sandstone wash that cuts through the Navajo- / Hopi land dispute." The buffalo head nickel acts as metaphor linking this contemporary issue to the Long Walk to Fort Sumner in 1864 and to scenes from everyday Navajo life.

The theme of the Long Walk also figures in what is likely the most ambitious poem of the collection, "Post-Modernity in Kayenta." Written "after Elizabeth Bishop" and dedicated to Mohawk scholar Scott Manning Stevens, the six-and-a-half-page poem follows two lovers from the East as they make

their way from Chicago to San Diego via K-town (or Kayenta). Standing amidst a landscape peopled with red sand cliffs, dry mud washes, sheep, and jackrabbit burrows is a Burger King restaurant. Inside, John tells us, it is “like walking into a Life magazine / pictorial of the Southwest.” Navajo grandmothers in velvet dresses are flanked by black-and-white photos of Navajo Code Talkers, while a little girl plays with a Pocahontas figurine, one of “the tiny exploitations” of Native life. She, like countless other Navajo girls,

must walk the Long Walk—  
without a map, they walk from  
Ft. Defiance to Bosque Redondo  
which is their same journey  
through life, the corn pollen path  
over the reservation and past  
every modern man-made city.

John’s poetry gives voice to all those caught up in the tangled web of Native postmodernity. A quick glance at his Web site reveals a second book underway—if the first is any indication, it will be well worth the wait.

*Stephanie Fitzgerald*  
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**Long Journey Home: Oral Histories of Contemporary Delaware Indians.** Edited by James W. Brown and Rita T. Kohn. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008. 448 pages. \$34.95 cloth.

*Long Journey* presents oral histories derived primarily from individuals descended from the peoples called Delaware Indians. Earlier versions of some of the narratives provided here appeared in Rita Kohn’s *Always a People: Oral Histories of Contemporary Woodland Indians* (1997; see Becker review 1999, *Journal of American Folklore*, 112). Kohn now has joined with a colleague in the journalism program at Indiana University to produce a lavish volume focusing on statements made by descendants of some of the many Native peoples who once lived in the northeastern woodlands. A brief introduction is followed by four sections, each of which contains a series of “interviews” from a specific recent period. The order of presentation of these “histories” within each part is alphabetical. Part 1 includes ten accounts derived from the Indian Pioneer Collection, originally recorded as part of a 1936 Works Progress Administration project. Part 2 includes only three accounts, derived from tapes made in 1968 by Katherine Red Corn. Part 3 includes two interviews conducted in 1995 by Kay Wood as part of a doctoral research project. Part 4, filling three-fourths of this volume, is composed of thirty-one histories collected by the editors between 1998 and 2004 (103). Interspaced throughout this volume are some ninety-five recent color photographs and plates by James Brown. These vibrant illustrations provide an impressive visual record of a re-created “culture,” but