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but the author's empathy clearly is with the Cheyenne people.

The illustrations are relevant and thought-provoking, complementing the Indian tales and the documented research. Artists' renditions, photographs, maps, and charts contribute effectively to the text. Many of the photographs are high-quality prints of the time period, but Sonneborn introduces the reader to more contemporary photographs as well. The pictures clearly provide clues for effective prediction and closure in the reading process. However, maps depicting specific territorial and migration issues would have been more helpful if they were introduced earlier in the text and were more varied.

What is clear in Sonneborn's work is her respect for the young reader and her enthusiasm for her subject. In sum, *Cheyenne People* is an enjoyable, well-developed book depicting the Cheyenne tribe in a sensitive, developmentally appropriate manner—an inviting text that will attract children again and again.

G. Cornelius

Drawings of the Song Animals. By Duane Niatum. Duluth, Minnesota: Holy Cow! Press, 1991. 148 pages. \$18.95 cloth; \$10.95 paper.

Duane Niatum, one of the best-known Indian poets writing today, has produced a beautiful work in *Drawings of the Song Animals*. This book collects fifteen poems each from his previous four out-of-print books and presents eighteen new poems written since 1978. The poems from the early books, chosen by the author to represent what he feels is his most authentic voice, establish a tight circle when organized with the newer poems, those the poet hopes will show a new direction. Thus, this book becomes an outstanding introduction to one of our finest poets.

Niatum's precise and acute imagery dances around sound, music, and color in delightfully unexpected combinations. Human beings in these poems are animals within the circle of other beings in the creation, the animals that sing. These songs are drawings or paintings—brightly dancing images in the sound and color of Niatum's controlled brush of language.

The book's title is taken from a poem first presented in an earlier book, *Songs for the Harvester of Dreams*, which was published in 1981. In this poem, the speaker promises, in the first stanza,

"Before the day is buried in dusk / I will trust the crumbling earth" (p. 104). The next four stanzas give images of the crumbling earth as animals—teal, raccoon, crow, and deer—that endeavor to cope with foghorns, concrete, chemicals, dams, freeways, and dashboards. By the end of the poem, the speaker is dancing in the field of Bumblebee, soul unmasked after forty years.

This poem and, in fact, the whole book illustrate very well the generalizations about Native American poetry that Niatum makes in his essay "History in the Colors of Song." In the essay, he predicts that Indian verse will present the contemporary situation through some aspect of the past in a way that is cyclical. Niatum states that what distinguishes contemporary Indian poets from their shamanistic ancestors is a point of view that considers the world as a whole rather than an ancient or tribal culture. Niatum, then, uses the world as it is found today, with all its joys and limitations, as the canvas on which to experience and paint his tribal background in the careful English of a master poet.

We experience this cyclical nature of revelation in one poem, "Visiting My Son Marc at Port Angeles," when the speaker addresses the grandfather upon seeing the grandfather's image in the face of the son. Cycles continue as characters from the earlier sections of the book show up in the new; we see Uncle Joe and Old Patsy in both sections of the collection. The speaker says, "I am the parts I fall from" ("The Reality of Autumn"), demonstrating the continuing sense of fragmentation to whole that makes up the collection.

Music and color are the most recurrent motifs in *Drawings of the Song Animals*. The speaker in "The Reality of Autumn" asks, "What does it matter that I am / the animal whose one pliant structure / dies a song?" The poem "Winter in New York" gives us nature in the language of music; there is "the symphony of aspen" that "lightly scores the sky-hued voices / with an ascending rondo of spring." Music and color dance throughout the collection.

In his preface, Niatum writes, "[I]t takes a long time to discover what your art is all about" (p. 8). He continues, "My four books record with joy a few human and spiritual encounters that I don't want to ignore" (p. 9). Niatum ends this preface with the hope that the new poems "[may] show a new direction, a new departure from the dream wheel's center" (p. 9). What we have in *Drawings of the Song Animals*, then, is Niatum's sense of what his poetry has been about over the years and the new direction he believes it to be taking. Necessarily, the opening section gives us the ancestors

and mythical figures, presenting a boy who is "Grandson to hawk and cedar." But even in this opening section, there is a consciousness of the continuity of generations, as the speaker hopes that his son "might yet dig for the heartbeat in the ashes / choose to drum for shaman and salmon" (p. 25).

Through the course of the book, we see the breakup of village life, the desire to maintain the culture despite the continuing encroachment of technological society, Western civilization. The poem "Spider" exhorts us to "spin with me past . . . / Touch the yellow, orange, and green threads—" declaring, in a final stanza,

There are things about us
too beautiful to lose;
our many-colored song
not even the Raven knows.

Not even the creator deity of Niatum's Northwest Coast tradition knows the range and beauty of the human song.

The aspirations of the human spirit are seen in "Meditation on Visiting Hurricane Ridge," a "dance of hanging between night and day, / where cedar and star settle with the ants." Climbing the trail, the speaker discovers the relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm, down to elemental origins, beginning with "an impregnating flow of sunlight . . . / coming to rest with the molecular, / lava layers exposed to eternity." At this point, the poet asserts, "When the vein pulse in our toes is the sky's, / we will hear the earth's core shift." Here is the relationship of the song animals to the world: singing the joy of life, tradition, hope, "the sky pounding in our veins" as we "touch the earth."

This collection is the perfect invitation to "dance . . . into the burning words" with one of America's finest poets. Those already familiar with his work will find the selections characteristic of Niatum's range of voice. Those who have not yet read Duane Niatum will find this volume a painting of song in colors that should not be missed.

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