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Author

Presley, John Woodrow

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when lying flat, they become especially impressive when presented three-dimensionally.

Samuel gives us a useful description of the differences between the later more familiar Chilkat blankets and the Raven's Tail robes in terms of form (5-sided vs. rectangular), technique (made of mountain goat wool and cedar bark as opposed to completely made of mountain goat wool) and imagery (curvilinear representations of crest images vs. geometric designs). Then Samuel analyzes in great detail the fifteen robes available for her to study, arranging them according to complexity of design. Her treatment of the existing robes is impeccable; what she does with Russian illustrations and a photograph is particularly impressive.

Both *Face, Voices & Dreams* and *The Raven's Tail* further our understanding of the art of the Native peoples of the north considerably. They will both become classic sources on their topics. One only wishes that the quality of the illustrations of the wonderful artworks with which these authors deal would have been finer. However, this is a minor criticism of what are major contributions to scholarship.

Aldona Jonaitis

State University of New York at Stony Brook

Survival This Way: Interviews with American Indian Poets. By Joseph Bruchac. Tucson: University of Arizona Press and Sun Tracks Press, 1987. 363 pp. \$24.95 Paper.

In 1982, Joseph Bruchac was awarded a Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Fellowship to study "Themes of Continuance in Contemporary Native American Poetry," helping to make possible the interviews in *Survival This Way*. As founding editor of The Greenfield Review Press, which is one of the leading publishers of contemporary American Indian poets, as an anthologist and as a writer and scholar himself, Bruchac is uniquely qualified to conduct the interviews, some forty of which he has completed. The 21 interviews selected for *Survival This Way* show Bruchac's deftness as an insistent, yet friendly interviewer, and his wide-ranging, specific acquaintance with the poets and their works.

It is interesting for everyone, from the scholar to the casual reader to the absorbed reader of a favorite poet, to hear not only

the poet's ideas and explanations of theme and technique but also to hear the tone of voice of an artist. These voices range from what Bruchac calls "punk" sensibility to the almost ponderous tones of a near-lecture from one of the academic poets interviewed. Yet it is the spontaneity of the interview form which differentiates *Survival This Way* from more formal collections like Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat's *I Tell You Now: Autobiographical Essays from Native American Writers* (University of Nebraska Press).

It is precisely Bruchac's skill as an interviewer—and his own concerns—that makes *Survival This Way* different from many mere collections of interviews. While wide-ranging, from political to religious to social or literary topics, Bruchac's questions bring each of these poets to focus on some central themes: the new role of women in Native American poetry; the tension of two cultures felt by these poets, particularly those of mixed blood ancestry; the emptiness of the "Vanishing Redman" myth; and finally survival—survival of traditional ways, of nations, and the personal survival of each poet.

It is, of course, the poets' words that best illuminate these themes. Paula Gunn Allen, explaining why Laguna Pueblo has produced so many good writers such as Carol Lee Sanchez, Leslie Silko, Harold Littlebird, and herself, says Lagunas "were a polyglot people . . . the writers from Laguna are all breeds . . . Pueblo." Wendy Rose, whose poem "Builder Kachina" says "a half breed goes from one half home to the other," remarks in her interview, "History and circumstance have made half-breeds of all of us." This almost offhand remark explains, of course, the powerful position of these poets, poised between two radically different cultures, and it hints at the reasons many different audiences are now responding to them.

Karoniaktatie, the Mohawk poet, speaks at length about the evocative position of the mixed-blood. "My poetry and my art are all about an individual caught in these cross-cultural goings-on. Sometimes that individual is talking from one side and trying to forget where he came from and looking ahead. Sometimes that individual is on the fence and trying to look both ways at once. Sometimes that individual is on one side and wondering what he's doing there, wondering if it's the right way to go, wondering why he is alone and wondering if he can fit in with other people."

Nine of the poets interviewed are women. Joy Harjo, asked to explain the appeal of female characters in her work, says, "They're very strong people, and yet to be strong does not mean to be male, to be strong does not mean to lose femininity, which is what the dominant culture has taught." Diane Burns sees women as mediators between cultures, too, like mixed-bloods: "Belonging and not belonging . . . as a woman it gets exaggerated." Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, the Dakotah poet, speaks about what she calls "respect for gender" in Dakotah ritual life and the ways in which that respect is often misinterpreted as an expression of male dominance in Sioux life. In reality, a Sioux woman who catches the horses for her ill older husband is simply facing up to life's challenges. In many ways, of course, female writers who are also American Indian are minority poets twice over, conversant with two minority cultures that white male academic poets can't know. This makes their subjects unique, and it makes for strong poems and strong characters. As Wendy Rose says in *Lost Copper*, "Silko and Allen and Harjo and me—our teeth are hard from the rocks we eat." As she tells Bruchac in *Survival This Way*, "I stopped after naming just those because that was the meter of the poem . . . Hogan and northSun and Burns and Tapahonso and so on and so on. They're in there."

Scholars and poets alike will enjoy reading James Welch describing the revision and publishing history of the last lie of "The Man from Washington"; Gerald Vizenor's very straightforward account of the way he uses two grammars in his poems ("I like playing with words and I think part of it is a mixed-blood tribal effort at 'deconstruction'"); Maurice Kenny on the difference between *piece*, *chant*, poem; Joy Harjo on *song*, *memory*, and *speaking*; and Simon Ortiz explaining the importance of the *heeyanih* (road) image in his work. These poets' attitudes toward the English language itself are very revealing: "English is an enemy, but it's the way we communicate," says Lance Henson. And yet it is their great two-edged resource; Karoniaktatie says "English is meant to be fooled around with . . . I fooled around with the language and the culture of English and America fooled around with me and my life."

Each interview is prefaced by a poem which was chosen for reading by the poet being interviewed, and often these poems are discussed with Bruchac in some detail. Carter Revard, the Osage poet interviewed on the campus of Washington Univer-

sity—the site where Geronimo was exhibited in chains for tourists—reads his “Dancing with Dinosaurs,” and explains, “We as Indians survive as the dinosaurs learned to do, transforming ourselves and putting on the feathers, traveling between red and white ways.” Dinosaurs, we think, evolved into birds; Osage creation stories say the people made their bodies of the Cardinal Redbird or the Golden Eagle. Carter Revard was given the Osage naming ceremony when he won the Rhodes scholarship to go to Oxford from Oklahoma; it was not until later, in writing a poem, he “took the coyote’s voice . . . and I could talk Oklahoma and I wasn’t trying to talk Oxford and I wasn’t trying to talk Yale.” Revard’s stories of transformation point to the meaning of Bruchac’s title for this collection. “So what I’m talking about,” Revard explains, “is the way in which you transform yourself out of something which is an obsolete and extinct species, according to a lot of notions of Indians that non-Indians have, into something that stays alive.”

It is survival this way, by transforming into art, into the new cultural forms, that concerns Duane Niatum, who ends his interview by talking about Brodsky’s idea of poetry as a mode of endurance, both personal and cultural, even racial endurance. “I feel a responsibility to retain some of the values of my Native America ancestors in art,” Niatum says. “I think one of the best ways they can survive is in art. They might even survive long in art than in any other form.”

John Woodrow Presley
Augusta College