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that "perhaps we shouldn't plan to arrive at the end/ of love, but should move inside its mystery." (64) It is that acute balance between ecstasy and mystery she wants to inhabit. "In "Reaching New Town, N.D.," she tries to understand her relationship to her lover as "wind over water" and "wind through cottonwoods," but

**We were neither wave nor wood,  
but wind finding wind in North Dakota.**

\* \* \* \*

**until funnels formed in the sky over Stanley.  
Wind over wind. I dreamed of tornadoes  
and welcomed their voices,  
my love, oh, my love. (65)**

In another poem, she takes the famous excursion boat, *Maid of the Mist*, beneath Niagara Falls, where she identifies her spirit with the birds that soar within the cove of the cataract: "A thousand gulls charmed that frantic air." (71) The storm image recurs in a poem dedicated to Oscar Howe, where she sees herself in an image from one of his paintings "balanced . . . within a cyclone."

A tremendous energy animates these poems, but it is always made to dance, choreographed by well-modulated rhythms and a good ear for the emotional echoes of language. Sometimes her images are too private, perhaps, but most often they stun us with their clarity and force. Over all prevails a sense of exquisite balance, like that of gull in a cliff's updraft, a hawk hung on the roaring wind, the poise, the power.

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**The Rattlesnake Band & Other Poems.** By Robert J. Conley. Indian University Press: Muskogee, Oklahoma, 1984. 124 pp. \$5.00 Paper.

In exchange for this review, I have received an interesting perhaps even unique book, but one that I am afraid I cannot whole-heartedly recommend.

*The Rattlesnake Band & Other Poems* is an English/Cherokee edition with translations by Durbin Feeling and Adalene Proctor Smith following the poems presented in modern alphabetic transcription and in Cherokee syllabary. A few of Conley's drawings illustrate the book and noted writer/scholar Geary Hobson has contributed an introduction. The volume is a well-produced effort with good paper. If you decide to buy it though, I would check the pagination to make sure you get every page. I got two extra.

This volume collects two other books by Conley: *21 Poems* (Aux Arcs Press, 1975) and *Adawosgi, Swimmer Wesley Snell: A Cherokee Memorial* (Blue Cloud Quarterly Press, 1980). These two previous books comprise two of the three sections of this volume. The last section includes previously unpublished love poems.

Conley's strengths in this book are two-fold—his direct, honest, declarative sincerity and his Cherokee oral material. In the opening poem, he writes that a poem should be honest and a man who writes a poem should be humble, because language, hence the poem, is sacred "only insofar as it is honest." His poems do present a humble honesty as he remembers childhood incidents, or as he writes of the exploits of some famed Cherokee outlaw hiding from the Whites. The same humble honesty emerges in his love poems where he writes to his wife, "The nearest thing to worship that I know/ is the love I have for you." Most of the poems in this volume are short, under fifteen lines. This directness is most convincing and strongest in the short, almost haiku-like poems which work off a contrast of images such as "Smokers" and "For Evelyn." Some of these poems highlight a short quote from an oral source. The images are contrasted and a moment of insight crackles between the poles. Throughout the first two sections of the book, Conley records the words of others concerning Cherokee insights into the weather, justice, fishing, cross-cultural relations and hero/outlaws. These bits of what a White anthropologist would call "folklore" (or what Hobson calls "Cherokee things") are the real power of the book. They carry us past the poem to the Cherokee world, but only momentarily.

Conley's poetic treatment of the material, however, leaves much to be desired. Too many poems stop before they have time to get started. They seem to settle for the barest of outlines. There is little play, little surprise for the writer and little surprise for the

reader. Few images are developed past hints, few descriptions completed for an impact on the reader. Often the lines are predictable—the verbs dull and the nouns unmodified. I can't help but see so many missed chances for development in the poems. Some of the lines even include an ampersand instead of an "and." How these and other lines scan seems to be haphazard, as if the writer did not care how the reader will sound the line. Here is the poem:

**Tsgili**  
**(Gary Colbert told this tale)**

**it was a dog  
that ran out in the road  
he barely saw it  
in his headlights  
before he heard the thump  
and felt the smash**

**he stopped his car  
and found dead beside the road  
an old and withered man  
lying twisted, naked  
in the moonlight**

**and he had a hell of a time  
telling his tale to the cops**

These prosey lines break at expected intervals. The unadorned words do not spark the writer nor the reader. The images are underdeveloped. The powerful oral material is not given an adequate presentation. Hobson mentions that Conley also writes prose in which he uses much of the same material. I can not help but think that this material could be better presented by Conley as a short story.

Conley's objective in the Swimmer Snell section is to present a "great" man, but this type of poetic presentation does little to convince the reader of his greatness. What we learn is third hand with only the briefest sketch of his actions and more often declarative statements of respect, rather than letting the reader see the greatness in action. A similar problem informs the love poems such as the following:

2.  
Since that first dance  
I've loved only you  
I've wanted none other  
& nothing has changed  
except that each day  
I love you more  
than I did the day  
or the night before.

There is little here to make this more than a diary entry or an excerpt from a letter. He states early in the series, "When thoughts torment my brain, I write." The love poems in the series pick up more power when placed next to each other, but more than therapeutic intensity and directness is needed to make a love poem rise above cliché. A few of the untitled love poems later in the series seem more imaginative. However, while the reader believes in the sincerity of the poet, there is little here to make the poems memorable. Hobson maintains that the poems reflect the form and content of old-time Cherokee love incantations. I bow to his superior knowledge on the matter, but for me, they seem to lack the symbolic intricacy, imagistic suggestiveness and dramatic intensity of the Mooney or Kilpatrick collections.

In one of the poems, Conley mentions finding a conjuring book among Snell's belongings. Realizing it is sacred, he holds onto the book but does not try to decipher it. An argument could be made that this is what Conley does with experience. Perhaps he wishes to record and not explore the significance of what he records. Yet his work does not adequately record the experience, nor does this type of approach jibe well with emotions such as love and respect, nor with his apparent goals to present a vibrant culture, a great man and an over-powering love.

It might also be said that Conley is attempting to write in an psychological manner which downplays description to emphasize story. While this may be true, it is also true of many other contemporary American Indian writers, and he does not create his poems with the imagistic richness of Young Bear, the dramatic/lyric intensity of Kenny or the narrative/political punch of Ortiz. Many of his poems do deal with psychological situations, though they are underdeveloped, and story, while not requiring

characterization, does require characters. To engage the reader, the story must be more than an outline.

Still, the book will find an important use in classes looking for creative material to read in Cherokee. It is a unique book, and I hope that Conley will continue to develop his skill so that such excellent material will have a medium to match.

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**Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota-White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650-1862.** By Gary Clayton Anderson. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1984. 383 pp. \$25.00 Cloth.

This is a twelve-chapter synthesis of frontier Minnesota and Eastern Dakota Indian history. Development within and between the twelve chapters is both topical and chronological. The author employs the time frames generally utilized by other historians and anthropologists when dealing with this subject matter: (1) The Sioux and Their Ecosystem, 1650-1700; (2) Population Decline in the Woodlands; (3) Breaking the Algonquin Monopoly, 1670-1760; (4) Traders and the Evolution of Kinship Bonds, 1760-1800; (5) Conflicting Loyalties, 1805-20; (6) Intertwining Loyalties; (7) The Origins of Government Paternalism, 1827-36; (8) Culture Change and the Assault on Land Tenure; (9) The Treaties of 1851; (10) The Failures of Early Reservation Development, 1853-57; (11) The Dissolution of Kinship and Reciprocity Bonds; (12) Epilogue: The Upheaval, August-December, 1862.

The notes and the bibliography are excellent and extensive. Anyone desiring more information on the topics discussed can easily find the needed primary and secondary sources. Purists will note only two omissions: *The Scanlon Papers* and Father Paul Zylla's biography of Taliaferro (*Major Lawrence Taliaferro, Indian Agent in Minnesota, 1819-1839*, Catholic University of America). Individuals interested in pursuing the topics Anderson covers would be well-served by the following published accounts: S.W. Pond (1908), "The Dakotas or Sioux in Minnesota as They Were in 1834, *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society*; Ruth Landes