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Reviews

Another Attempt at Rescue. By M. L. Smoker. New York: Hanging Loose Press, 2005. 64 pages. \$24.00 cloth; \$14.00 paper.

Another Attempt at Rescue represents M. L. Smoker's balancing act between Native and non-Native heritage, history and modernity, and English and tribal tongues. Assiniboine and Sioux tribal member Smoker blends her experiences as an educator, a woman, and a Native American into a collection of poetry. Smoker, who holds a bachelor's degree from Pepperdine University and a master's of fine arts from the University of Montana, has been honored with scholarships and the publication of this first volume of her original poetry.

Smoker's dedication of this book to her beloved mother summarizes the direction of her poetic compilation. "There are stories to be let loose with comb and water," Smoker writes. "We gather these up again on shoulders and around waists where they endure," she continues. Finally, Smoker posits that "this begins but does not end here: We know only this route home."

"This route home" is a fundamental foundation of Smoker's poetry. Smoker writes of physical paths and geography in "So Far, So Long," as she describes the wintry conditions of the reservation and of the journey to return home. In "Birthright," a prose poem compares emotional landscapes to geographic ones by saying "how long could we have held ourselves back, away from our need to feel claimed by a place we can only, with our limited tongue, call home."

Smoker balances the features and facets of a physical home and the landscapes of the reservation, urban areas, and transition in the search for emotional and intellectual semblances of home. In "Untitled," she reflects on the conception of linguistic identity. Smoker muses,

In the passage that exists between word
and thought
I have been forced
to learn a great deal of the collapse
of one language upon another.

Smoker shares that, “I offer up many explanations for this / too-often conflicted tongue, never / arriving at any shape of reconciliation.” Finally, states Smoker, “I am asking for this same miracle, / the blood and body of the only language / I want to be known by.”

Linguistic survival is a prominent aspect of Smoker’s version of home. “Casualties” laments the “ruin in each Assiniboine voice” as “I ignored them all. / On / the vanishing, I have been / mute.” Similarly, “Grandfather Poem” intertwines indigenous “words . . . ones no longer spoken” with English remembrances of family and heritage. “The Necessary Bullet” contains “the sound of the old women clacking / their old tongues to the roofs / of the mouths in the dust?” as it declares “we are our own proof.”

Identity comprises a major component of home in Smoker’s compilation. “Call it Instinct” delineates the “fantastik we all might choose—if given the chance / to name ourselves over again.” Smoker centers on the concept of collaboration as a theme for balancing various ethnicities and the definition of home in “Several Poems for the Non-Indian in Me.” The poet cleverly examines collaboration between historical enemies, family members, and cultures in this poem. “Intertribal” and “Can You Feel the Native American in Me” both chronicle Indian identity’s intersection with Smoker’s poetry.

“Seven Days is Never Enough” balances all of the issues of home found in this poetry volume. Incorporating “Cowboys and Indians,” her tribal tongue, the idea of

back home
 caught in a February blizzard
 icicles frozen black from the stain
 of glossy prayers that our dead
 look away from

and “confused blood cells,” this poem is symbolic of the works contained in this book. *Another Attempt at Rescue* offers Smoker’s idea of home and insights into identity—encompassing ethnicity, linguistics, land, and verse.

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Cash, Color, and Colonialism: The Politics of Tribal Acknowledgment. By Renée Ann Cramer. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005. 234 pages. \$24.95 cloth.

Author’s Note: This is my most challenging book review. I know too much. First, I have worked on federal acknowledgment cases from both sides (before my current federal employment). Second, I was twice on ad hoc committees advising the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in developing guidelines for evaluating petitions for federal acknowledgment. I once served on a task force on federal acknowledgment for the Association on American Indian Affairs. And, I am the only anthropologist who has done in-depth