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English translations that allow linguistic outsiders to appreciate the wealth within. Someday technology will be employed to amplify and transcend text-only presentations of oral narratives like those in *Remember This!*, pairing rich visual and audio representations with the printed text.

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**Silent Snow: The Slow Poisoning of the Arctic.** By Marla Cone. New York: Grove Press, 2005. 246 pages. \$24.00 cloth.

Marla Cone, a veteran environmental writer at the *Los Angeles Times*, describes in *Silent Snow* how, in the space of a few decades, the Arctic has become a chemical garbage dump as prevailing winds and ocean currents convey pollutants from industrialized countries to the once-pristine world of the Inuit in Canada, Alaska, Greenland, and Russia. The contamination by PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) and other chemicals has become so intense that some Inuit mothers have been warned not to breast-feed their babies.

A matrix of geographical and cultural factors has placed the Inuit and other Arctic peoples, writes Cone, “at the very top of the natural world’s dietary hierarchy” (22). In the world of persistent organic pollutants (such as PCBs and dioxins), in which the effects of deadly toxins bio-magnify (multiply several-fold) with each step up the food chain, such a position can be extremely hazardous for a people’s health.

The Inuit, according to Cone, “eat 194 different species of wild animals, most of them inhabiting the sea. Often, on a daily basis, they consume the meat or blubber . . . of fish-eating whales, seals, and walrus four or five links up marine food chains” (22). “Today,” she continues, “about 200 toxic pesticides and industrial chemicals have been detected in the bodies of the Arctic’s indigenous people and animals,” as well as mercury, which is released by coal-burning power plants and chemical factories (23). Thus, the Inuit and other Arctic peoples have become “the industrial world’s lab rats, the involuntary subjects of an accidental human experiment that reveals what happens when a boundless brew of chemicals builds up in an environment” (45).

The Inuit diet is very nutritious, containing an average of forty times the omega-3 fatty acids of typical industrial-world fare. Beluga whale, for example, has ten times the iron of beef, twice the protein, and five times the vitamin A. Omega-3 fatty acids protect against heart disease. A seventy-year-old Inuit in Greenland has coronary arteries as elastic as those of a twenty-year-old Dane eating Western foods. Some Arctic clinics do not even keep heart medications such as nitroglycerin in stock.

Now that toxins are stored in the body fat of many animals, the same diet has become a deathtrap, Cone writes (48). While heart disease and prostate cancer are very rare among the Inuit, toxicity-related maladies have exploded in recent years, especially among the young. On the Faroe Islands, high mercury levels have caused irreversible neurological damage to fetuses,

diminishing their learning ability later in life. The residents of the Faroes are Nordic, not Inuit, but they eat pilot whales so, like the Inuit, they consume a traditional diet that is high in iron, vitamins, proteins, and omega-3 fatty acids—but also, in our time, laced with several industrial toxins.

The only alternative to country food in the Arctic (which has no agriculture) is air-freighted “southern” fare that is not only costly but exposes the Inuit to higher risks of various cancers, heart disease, tooth decay, and diabetes. This is true across the Canadian Arctic, Alaska, and northern Russia, where the collapse of the Soviet state has forced numerous indigenous peoples to rely on a traditional diet.

Cone brings to life many of the people who have played leading roles in presenting the chemical degradation of the Arctic to influential world diplomats and politicians, including several scientists and Native leaders. Sheila Watt-Cloutier, president of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, raised scientific and diplomatic conferees to their feet when she put a human face on the otherwise staid proceedings by saying such things as: “A poisoned Inuk child, a poisoned Arctic, and a poisoned planet are all one and the same” (200). After the negotiation of the Stockholm Convention, which outlaws many of the “Dirty Dozen,” the most noxious pollutants, Watt-Cloutier evoked tears from some delegates with her note of thanks on behalf of the Inuit. The treaty, she said, had “brought us an important step closer to fulfilling the basic human right of every person to live in a world free of toxic contamination. For Inuit and indigenous peoples, this means not only a healthy and secure environment, but also the survival of a people. For that I am grateful. Nakurmiik. Thank you” (202).

Cone’s work is richly detailed, often evocative, and generally a pleasure to read. She also describes the Arctic with her readers in mind, experiencing the same cross-cultural time warp I felt on Baffin Island—sea hunters coming home to Bart Simpson and Tom Brokaw via satellite dish. She has a wonderful eye for detail. However, although telling us that today’s Inuit sometimes spice their seal meat with salsa is incisive and instructive, repeating this information three times in the course of the book constitutes sloppy writing and editing. Cone might have mentioned that Watt-Cloutier serves dinner guests some of the world’s best Arctic char sushi—so I have heard via mukluk telegraph.

Cone’s journalistic approach has its limits. She misses, for example, the work of people who have been exploring the same themes. (I might add that she seems not to have encountered my book, *The Dirty Dozen: Toxic Chemicals and the Earth’s Future* [2003].) *Silent Snow* has no reference infrastructure (other than a seven-page bibliography), which limits its usefulness as scholarship. Cone has read Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962); she quotes the book frequently, and her title borrows from it. Cone is also on speaking terms with Theo Colborn’s work on the gender-bending properties of the toxic chemicals under discussion, as well as some of the scientific work describing their spread among the Inuit and their food sources.

Roughly half of *Silent Snow* departs from the subject of chemical contamination as Cone describes various hunting expeditions in which she took part. At times, *Silent Snow* becomes a travelogue—a light read that paints a vivid

picture of how the Inuit live. In other places the author seems so preoccupied with establishing her on-the-scene bona fides that the main subject gets lost.

Such narrative is valuable, however, in illustrating for a “southern” audience that a traditional diet is more to the Inuit than a source of nutrients and energy—it is a way of life. “Our foods do more than nourish our bodies,” Cone quoted Inuit rights activist Ingmar Egede as saying in *Mother Jones*: “When many things in our lives are changing, our foods remain the same. They make us feel the same as they have for generations. When I eat Inuit foods, I know who I am” (Marla Cone/Hartford Web Publishing, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/27b/059.html> [accessed 2 November 2005]).

*Silent Snow* also contains a few references to the devastating impact of chemical pollutants in areas beyond the Arctic. The impact is worldwide, especially among indigenous peoples. The Mohawks of Akwesasne, for example, have been afflicted with many of the same chemicals as the Inuit. The book focuses on the indigenous peoples of Greenland, Nunavut, and Alaska; Russian Arctic peoples are mentioned only occasionally, and the Sami (Laplanders) of Scandinavia not at all.

Cone closes with an account of the Inuit’s ongoing struggle for survival. As some of the chemicals that have poisoned the Arctic are being outlawed, she writes, a new crop of legal contaminants are polluting the Arctic, including chemical flame retardants (polybrominated diphenyl ethers, or PBDEs), which, like PCBs, scramble hormones and depress intelligence. These new chemicals are now building rapidly in the bodies of the Inuit and the animals they eat.

While one may pine for endnotes in *Silent Snow*, Carson’s famous book also had none, and its impact, nonetheless, has been enormous. *Silent Snow*’s strength lies in its ability to tell a large, general audience a compelling story—one that is well worth being heard by the people of the industrialized world whose effluents are poisoning the Arctic.

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**Subjects unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England.** By Jenny Hale Pulsipher. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005. 357 pages. \$35.00 cloth.

Colonial Massachusetts has never looked more imperial than in Jenny Hale Pulsipher’s marvelous new book. There is a lengthy historiographical tradition examining Massachusetts’ aggression against neighboring Indians and colonies and local religious dissenters within a transatlantic context, but no scholar before Pulsipher has so successfully balanced treatment of the multiple English and Indian actors, with all of their complex priorities. Additionally, in what amounts to the book’s most significant contribution, Pulsipher integrates Massachusetts’ strivings against proprietary Maine and the Wabenakis with more familiar events from southern New England. These qualities, combined with Pulsipher’s fluid writing and lively chronological