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beliefs of most native people—in the author's native Australia as well as America and Africa.

As a Nez Perce woman, the author's version of the sacred is too limited. What I consider sacred, the Great Spirit that moves through all things with divine grace, is missing in the descriptions of battlefields and conflict. The Mystery that makes sacred space sacred is absent. We pray for all the people, for the land, for all our relations when I have the privilege to attend ceremonies in the round house or sweat lodge. Sacred land is not restricted to Mount Shasta, Mount Graham, or Mount Harney where Black Elk did his vision quest. Sacred land includes traditional areas where plants or animals are tended and gathered, acorn is ground, baskets are woven. The vitality of the intrinsic connection to place by divergent cultures and religions is absent from this approach to sacred space. Missing is the transformation which comes from opening to the Divine, to the inner space addressed by many American metaphysical religions.

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Boston Mountain Tales: Stories from a Cherokee Family. By Glenn J. Twist. New York: Greenfield Review Press, 1997. 145 pages. \$14.95 paper.

Glenn J. Twist's *Boston Mountain Tales: Stories from a Cherokee Family* is a group of nine stories which become emblematic of the white man's treatment of the Native American in the nineteenth century as well as a microcosm of the world of the conquered Cherokees and their will to endure. The book has its genesis in the stories Twist heard as a child. A member of the last generation of his family to have been born on allotted land in the Boston Mountains of eastern Oklahoma, Twist preserves these few stories in a series of nine anecdotes. In all of them, he ably demonstrates his familiarity with the subject matter and writes with keen insight and perception about the plight of the Cherokees, for these stories reflect "the life he had known as a youngster," and "were his touchstone, his identity" (p. vii). In each story, Twist paints a vivid picture of the emotional suffering, physical pain, cruel indignities, and callous mistreatment of the Cherokees by both the lawless white man and the federal government. The Cherokees' suffering is not unlike that of other

tribes described by Dee Brown in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970).

Twist divides his text into nine chapters, arranged in a loose but not chronological fashion. While such random presentation lacks clear unity and continuity and creates difficulty for the reader in making quick and proper connections between related stories, the major theme of the collection is clear and effectively supported by the themes of the individual stories as they unfold. Twist bases each story on an actual incident, thus giving credibility to his characters and to the intensity of the tale's drama.

Opening his text with "Susie's Place," Twist introduces some of the major themes—hopelessness, deprivation, Christian faith, hypocrisy, superstition, drunkenness, destruction, cruelty, merciless tyranny, and gross mistreatment by the lawless whites and the federal government, to name a few. He begins his narrative in the quiet, reflective atmosphere of a cemetery—Susie's place. Susie's place is the graveyard on top of Black Mountain where she and five of her babies lie buried, an early death for five of her twelve children. "Susie's Place" stands like a monument to the Cherokees' struggle in the "promised land," a land that kills. The new land is their "reward" from the government who has forced them from their ancestral lands in Georgia. In the very beginning, Susie becomes an analog for the Cherokee woman in general.

In the next eight stories, Twist candidly and forcefully portrays the Cherokees' courage when their lands are taken from them, their strength of will to survive as they travel the "trail of tears" westward, their bravery and steadfastness as they face lawless gangs of whites, and their incredible degree of fortitude as they are forced to endure unjustified brutalities committed against them, while trying to eke out a hardscrabble existence in the Boston Mountains.

In "The Dispossession," the callousness of the federal government becomes piercingly clear when it orders the forced removal of the Cherokee family of Ganu'teyo'hi from their home in Georgia. The depraved and derogatory treatment of Ganu'teyo'hi's wife, Rachel, by the government officials is unrelenting. Such scorn toward Rachel is reminiscent of the hatred espoused by soldiers toward the Lakota Sioux women and described by Mary Crow Dog: "Kill 'em all, big and small, nits make lice!" (*The Lakota Woman*, 1990, p. 9). Twist uses the cruel treatment here to emphasize the strength of Rachel's character as she is evicted from her home which, along with her personal

belongings, are then given to Silas Werfford. Werfford, who has "won" Ganu'teyo'hi's homestead in a lottery, sums up the meaning of "dispossessing the Cherokee" when he says: "I gets it all!" (p. 19). Ganu'teyo'hi and his family, classed as savage heathens, have nowhere to go except to the forest to live like animals or to remove west, to their new home "promised" by the government.

But the Boston Mountains is no "promised land." Twist depicts the utter lawlessness that reigns supreme in that mountainous region. Dastardly deeds of shootings, hangings, rapings, pillaging, arson, and drunkenness appear in "Ol' Anse Finds Sarah's Cow," "Black Mountain's Blackest Hour," "Jacob Didn't Wait for the Sprinklin'," and "Mama's Remedy for Drinkin'." The destruction and brutality meted out by the renegades are met with the Cherokees' bravery and fierce determination to survive whatever befalls them. Twist tempers the cruelty and viciousness of these four tales with two in which the Cherokees seek spiritual peace and contentment. "Na'Ci'e and the Ani'tsa'ghui" turns on the Cherokee belief in the Great Spirit, while "The Lord Provides" deals with problems that Cherokees who have "converted" to Christianity have with that religion. The "converts" continue to combine their "faith" in the Almighty with their belief in superstition and the Great Spirit to gain peace of mind and contentment.

In "The Promised Land," Twist's major focus is on the Cherokees' emotional and physical suffering as they make their trek westward in the dead of winter. In this story Twist reaches his apex as a master storyteller by bringing the book to a close with a most dramatic and powerful tale, a tale that not only ends the book but also concludes the plight of the Cherokee family in "The Dispossession."

Recounting the "trail of tears" in diary fashion and using a first-person narrator, Twist paints a picture of the Cherokees' bravery, strength, and fortitude through the words of Rachel, the wife of Ganu'teyo'hi. Day after day, she describes personal suffering endured by members of her family as they walk westward during the dead of winter. The scarcity of food, lack of warm clothing, lack of medicine, sickness, and death beleaguer their every step. Christmas day on the trail illuminates the hypocrisy of the Christian missionaries and other sanctimonious whites. Each day brings the Cherokees nothing but utter despair as one after another member dies on the trail. Even after reaching the "promised land," their feeling of hopelessness continues, for they find that white squatters have already "claimed" the rich

bottom land along the river. The Cherokees are relegated to the top of the wooded range of mountains.

If Twist believed that "The Promised Land" would amplify the emotional impact of the story, as well as the book, and be a fitting, dramatic conclusion to the collection, he was right. As Rachel describes the sickness, freezing, starvation, death, and burials that take place, the shameful treatment of the Cherokees rises from the pages with unforgettable intensity and grimness.

The impact of *Boston Mountain Tales* would be considerably improved, I believe, if the stories were rearranged in chronological order: 1,7,5,3,6,4,8,2,9. The recurrence of certain themes would then be emphasized, and the major focus of this powerful collection would become clearer and even more powerful. "Susie's Place" would still stand first as a monument to the struggle of the Cherokees, but that story would be followed by "The Lord Provides," "Black Mountain's Blackest Hour," and "Ol' Anse Finds Sarah's Cow," all three about the same family. The themes of cruelty, hypocrisy, and mistreatment of Indians are introduced here and would be echoed in the next two. Neither "Mama's Remedy for Drinkin'" nor "Jacob Didn't Wait for the Sprinklin'" have any family connection to the other seven tales, but they do echo the same themes, which are also illustrated in the remaining three tales. Grouping "Na'Ci'e and the Ani'tsa'ghui," "The Dispossession in Georgia," and "The Promised Land" together at the end of the book would provide not only a definable unity but also a compelling and more forceful conclusion to the collection as a whole.

Still, as *Boston Mountain Tales* now stands, Twist has given us an intense and powerfully emblematic book which adds immeasurably to the canon of literature about and by the Native Cherokee.

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Handbook of North American Indians, Languages, Volume 17.
Edited by Ives Goddard. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1996. 957 pages. \$74 cloth.

Volume 17 of the *Handbook of North American Indians* series surveys the indigenous languages north of Mexico. Approximately half of the volume, consisting of fifteen articles, covers a wide