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the general reader—will profit. The respectful and affectionate attitude toward the language and its people is pronounced.

As fluent Creek speakers become ever more rare, work such as this will become increasingly more difficult to produce. We all should avail ourselves of this first-line research as part of our educations in Indian language and culture.

Marcia Haag
University of Oklahoma

Ledfeather. By Stephen Graham Jones. Tuscaloosa: Fiction Collective 2, University of Alabama Press, 2008. 212 pages. \$17.50 paper.

In his latest novel, *Ledfeather*, Stephen Graham Jones tells a story of the Blackfeet Reservation through two characters and two centuries. Jones invokes multiple histories, narratives, and narrative techniques while reminding of us of the interconnectivity of stories even before his own overtly connect in the narrative. The novel centers on themes of power and redemption—large and small, bureaucratic and personal—while illustrating the transformative qualities of Indian land and cultural ways: the Blackfeet people and their land can destroy and save those who live within their purview. This beautifully crafted book signals Jones's emergence as an author whose work must be considered in any discussion of important contemporary Native American literature. His characters and rendering of history will appeal to literary scholars and historians alike, who will find his treatment of personal and communal history artfully rendered and educational. Historians in particular will appreciate the lesson of one act's implications resounding through decades and even centuries. Readers interested in the art of storytelling and narrative theory will find the complex web of Native American storytelling traditions and the postmodern juxtaposition of multiple voices and techniques a fascinating case study in the all-too-often theoretical debate over what makes a Native-authored text postmodern as opposed to traditional. Jones's novel is realistic about contemporary Indian life without being depressing and realistic about history without being accusatory. In this intricate and original story, it takes both Indian and white experiences across two centuries to complete a small circle of life within one Native community.

Jones's complex and initially bewildering structure—six narrative voices in the first forty pages and the introduction of Francis Dalimpere's "letters" on page 47—may put off readers, but those who read on and see the stories merge will find that it was worth the work. Jones is a master storyteller, and *Ledfeather* is simultaneously a postmodern novel and a traditional Native story.

What makes Jones's novel riveting is his ability to create these distinct yet kindred narrative bodies that exist to tell one tale together.

The story opens with Doby Saxon's seemingly imminent death from exposure. We learn of his survival through those around him who tell of his struggle to overcome the deaths of his father and his best friend, both witnessed by Doby, as well as his guilt for the sacrifice his mother made in her effort to save him—singing her own death song to fool the spirits. The central point of Doby's story is his ongoing suicide attempt, to which Jones returns the reader again and again after flashbacks to Doby's childhood and his more recent present. Doby fights the despair that seems to pervade the reservation in increasingly futile ways: substance abuse, gambling, theft, and eventually a suicide attempt. Those who report Doby's story clearly understand it as a commentary on their own lives and on the history of the Blackfeet; Doby binds them to their past and protects their future.

The notion of these larger implications for Doby's life makes the narrative shift to nineteenth-century Indian Agent Dalimpere only slightly less jarring for the reader. Like Doby, Dalimpere is driven by survivor's guilt as he watches the Blackfeet, whose care is his charge, die around him as a result of his own pride and government indifference. He channels his frustration and fear into two impulses, an effort to save a suicidal boy named Lead Feather and a transcription of his efforts that he hopes his wife Claire will one day read. His guide on the reservation is a Piegan man named Yellow Tail, who asks the agent when his "spiritual apology" for the death of so many Blackfeet will begin. Dalimpere answers "100 years hence," and thus the connection to Doby is made, for Dalimpere's wife will not read his narrative will, but rather it is read by Doby, who is a descendant of Lead Feather (156).

Jones divides his narrative technique as he divides his story, beginning with clear demarcations in the tales of Doby and Dalimpere that erode as the stories' interdependence becomes clear. Multiple voices, white and Indian, tell Doby's story, and yet in this multivalent narrative there is no anxiety about the production of Doby's story, only the certainty that it will eventually be told in its entirety. Dalimpere's story begins in epistolary form, letters to his wife that become increasingly incoherent and offer the same resistance to chronology exhibited in the Doby narrative. But what separates Dalimpere's story most significantly from Doby's is not the form, but rather the agent's anxiety about how his story is produced and who the audience for his story will be. His early letters to Claire are typed, and he worries that she will "not recognize [his] hand in this mechanical type and think it a charade" (52). As he watches over the Lead Feather boy, his letters invoke ledger art as he writes in a "leather bound sheaf . . . on the backside of the pages" (144). Equally as stressful to

Dalimpere as these unusual methods of production is his concern that Yellow Tail will not deliver the letters as promised.

Both of the worlds that Jones creates are equally real and equally compelling, the pain of both the primary characters is equally intense. In the petty bureaucracies, grand sacrifices, and broken and mended hearts of the Blackfeet Reservation, we see the ramifications of everyday decisions ripple forward into new centuries. *Ledfeather* is a lyrical and haunting novel that offers a whisper of hope not only for the present, but also, through Doby's delivery of Dalimpere's narrative, for the past.

Ledfeather reveals that Jones is a Native American storyteller not in a derivative sense, although one can see hints of Louise Erdrich and Sherman Alexie, but in a traditional sense. Jones's novel demands that the reader play an active role in translating and shaping the story's meaning. Although one wants the resolution to Doby's and Dalimpere's stories, one does not want their stories to end, and the brilliance of Jones's characters and structure is that readers can return to the start of the book as soon as they finish it knowing that more will be understood in a second reading. Readers learn what Dalimpere learned among the Blackfeet: we need to "track back through [stories] to the real meaning" (155).

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Modoc: The Tribe That Wouldn't Die. By Cheewa James. Happy Camp, CA: Naturegraph Publishers, 2008. 352 pages. \$19.95 cloth.

Although the line between history and fiction is blurry, as any postmodern scholar will tell you, academic historians rarely cross and recross it as freely as Cheewa Jones does in *Modoc: The Tribe That Wouldn't Die*. A professional keynote speaker and corporate trainer with Modoc heritage, James spices her narrative with "fictionalized vignettes" in order to dramatize the tragedy that befell her paternal grandfather's tribe from 1872 to 1873 (19). The result is a highly personal, somewhat quirky, yet frequently engaging account of the Modoc War and its aftermath. Scholars will likely question the accuracy of her creative characterizations, as well as the depth of her research and even her self-proclaimed "way with words" (12). For general readers, however, James offers a useful introduction to a struggle that historians have largely neglected despite its many remarkable features. If not for the Battle of the Little Bighorn, she insists, "the Modoc conflict would probably be remembered as the most significant Indian confrontation in America's western history" (19). That claim