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it's not supposed to be this way
in semi-darkness
ring phone ring ring
I need a voice to talk to now
tell me that story again about your horses
weren't their names bill and charley?
tell me stories about anything
anything on nights like this

Such a deliberate use of non-standard English is not only a sign of rebellion or a signal for change. It is also a statement that poetry is a way to use language to express what grammar, syntax and punctuation cannot convey. Standard English could explain the fragmented memories strung together late at night when a poet is alone, feeling lonely for a special person's affections connected to certain songs long ago, so that she can live through the tomorrows of her life. But standard English would be inadequate in creating the same experience that the poem or song offers the reader.

If there are any points of criticism for *Seasonal Woman*, they are few and weak. For the poetics of *Seasonal Woman* there are indeed few criticisms. *Seasonal Woman* well deserves the Honorable Mention it received in 1983 for an American Book Award and indicates what can be expected in the future from Luci Tapahonso.

William Oandasan
UCLA

She Had Some Horses. By Joy Harjo. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1983. 80 pp. \$6.95 Paper.

Most personal, most startling of her work to date, Joy Harjo's third collection of poems is an affirmation of life. The first section is a cathartic and determined, angry self-discovery. The second is a non-accusative philosophical resignation. The last is devoted to the Horses, metaphor for the People whom she has discovered in multiplicities of injustice and pain. In the final poem, "I Give You Back," she relinquishes fear.

Reviewing her earlier collection, *What Moon Drove Me To This* (I. Reed, 1981), Geary Hobson said (*Greenfield Review*, 1981) Joy's

only flaw is a tendency to particularize. I agree. In many instances I am deflected by a string of strange names so that the poem's power is diffused and is in some way de-fused. For example, in "Anchorage," I know who Nora is, and the mention of Fourth Avenue brings the day alive for me. But I am an Alaskan, and the setting is familiar. This random naming may have been temporary, indulged in by various Native American poets as a wry joke or possibly as a message to others. At any rate the flaw has been toned down, perhaps because Harjo no longer needs to identify, or, ambiguously, wants not to identify with certain temporary travelers.

Comparing Harjo's work with that of others is difficult. Each of the voices is unique; there are some likenesses we may look at here. One thinks of Barney Bush as her tandem poet. In his 1982 *PETROGLYPHS* (Greenfield Review Press), his poems about the splendor of horses, his love for them, are akin to Harjo's. The poem, "In This Time Above Flagstaff" is dedicated to her as traveling companion. In "Leaving Oklahoma Again" he recalls her as "close as bones in the earth." Fellow hitchhikers at times, they shared the feverish rush that compels many poets of color to find identities and connections that can partially erase the unanchored sense that so often overwhelms us. Wendy Rose's triptychs appear as various as do Harjo's here. In *WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE HOPI HIT NEW YORK* (Contact II, 1982), covering America, Rose too finds material inimical to her own culture and evinces similarly angry reactions. On the West Coast, in the Rockies, in the Plains states, on the East Coast, Rose finds her reception less than beneficent. Although Harjo seems not to have encountered quite as inimical receptions, or in any case not to have remarked upon them, we know that they are there in her perception. She calls our attention to them more tentatively than does Rose, whose experiences have possibly been of longer duration in the cosmopolitan milieu.

Returning to Joy's identity search, its catharsis and climax, it is with tremendous relief that we draw a deep breath, thinking, "She's going to be okay. The worst is over," when, beginning with the poem "Fear," she tells us of the "shadow horses kicking and pulling me out of my belly" into the extant culture, "the voices talking backwards" shouting that there is something terribly wrong with the culture, until the poem "I Give You Back," where she says, "I release you with all the pain I would know

at the death of/ my daughters." She has kept escaping like an alcoholic on a "running drunk," feverish, dissatisfied, longing, relating deeply to other haunted women of disillusion.

After the healing of Harjo's relinquishment, discoveries are recorded, connections found between woman and cosmos. "Something has been let loose in rain;/ it is teaching us to love" is a beginning of the possibility of belief. Here follows a salute to words in "For Alva Benson:"

. . . the sound she had always heard,
a voice like water, like the gods weaving
against sundown in a scarlet light . . .

in which Harjo realizes the profundity of the creation of words in her own life. The earth brings a sense of kinship in the universal dream of *One Cedar Tree*:

And I eat, breathe, and pray to some strange god
who could be a cedar tree
outside the window.

Still, the themes of reversal and disorientation are woven in, in "Backwards:" "Something tries to turn the earth/ around."

In "White Bear" appears the first of the philosophical realizations in Harjo's volume:

. . . either way
all darkness
is open to all light.

The Noni Daylight persona in "Heartbeat" ". . . takes the hand of the moon/ that she knows is in control overhead," and "Remember" apostrophizes talisman earth: "Remember the dance that language is,/ that life is." The section *She Had Some Horses* amalgamates all cultures, uniting us with the endline: "They were the same horses." This is the climax of her search. She has begun to find her self in the Others in face of any danger and identifies herself in "Ice Horses" as

An ice horse
galloping
into fire.

Poets belong to their readers in a deep sense. We feel into and beyond words to the whole poet. We hope that now we may

hear Joy's softer voice. Where are her roots? When will she sing of Oklahoma? Where are Raho Nez and Rainy Dawn? What influence had the great-aunt of the book's dedication, Lois Harjo Ball? Where is the rest of Joy Harjo?

We seek her diligently. We await her next communication. With her talents she will do well as playwright, now that she has coalesced and banished her fear and has established a (firm) stable from which to work.

She has herded her horses.

Mary TallMountain
San Francisco

Echoes of Our Being. Edited by Robert J. Conley, Jr. Muskogee: Indian University Press, 1982. 76 pp. (No pagination.) \$5.00 Paper.

This small volume is the collective poetic work of the Tahlequah Indian Writers Group. All the poets represented in this publication are either Cherokee or Muskogee/Creek. Those included are: Robert J. Conley, Robin Coffee, Julia Gibson, Renee Reed, James Grass, Lance Hughes, Joni Immohotichey, Louis Littlecoon, Wilma Mankiller, Julie Moss and Pat Moss. The Group's stated purpose is: "(1) To assist in removing barriers and limitations upon the creativity of the membership by expanding upon it through the creation of opportunities for each individual utilizing group methodology . . . (2) To address the need for Native American writers in all related writing and communications fields through the encouragement and support of local Indian writers."

All the poetry in this volume is written in English. Consequently thoughts take on a foreign aspect in reference to the subject matter. Rhythms that would support the nature of the work, for example, in Cherokee are glossed over in English. Cherokee is an exact language with economy in its structure. There are no cases to know, no articles, no need for prepositions, explanatory phrases, nor clauses. The verbs are the most complex aspect, yet logical if thought through from a Cherokee frame of reference. The language does not employ many individual words. It is largely a system for combining and amplifying word cores.