

**UCLA**

**American Indian Culture and Research Journal**

**Title**

Stands Alone, Faces, and Other Poems. By Patrick Russell LeBeau.

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8nh9v5jh>

**Journal**

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 24(3)

**ISSN**

0161-6463

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**Publication Date**

2000-06-01

**DOI**

10.17953

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level of inspiration and craftpersonship that is found with regularity among First Nations artists today.

Though *Mythic Beings* offers many improvements over the release of *Spirit Faces*, both books serve their audience well as an introduction to and overview of the kind of fine work being created today by some of the most prominent artists in Canada.

Steven C. Brown  
Seattle Art Museum

**Stands Alone, Faces, and Other Poems.** By Patrick Russell LeBeau. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999. 84 pages. \$15.95 paper.

If one is looking for poetry that centers on the traditional, the ceremonial, and the balance of life and death, then Patrick Russell LeBeau's book *Stands Alone, Faces, and Other Poems* is a must read. His style is one that utilizes free verse and fragmented sentencings to present intensely realistic poetry. For the Native American scholar, the images and symbolic references may seem obvious and at times contrived, but the overall concept and circular form of the entire work will redeem it. For the general audience, the poetry clearly presents universal themes through common Native American literary devices, such as circularity, repetition, and animal imagery that are easily recognizable and enjoyable.

What readers will appreciate in *Stands Alone, Faces, and Other Poems* is the variety of topics LeBeau explores, offering tradition in "Pollen, tobacco to feed / the spirit—," mythology in his references to Old Man and Nanabush, and modern concerns that include the always-present alcoholic and cross-cultural questions. *Stands Alone* is interestingly divided into four sections, each referring to a different "man" in the movement through isolation, self-exploration, community, and experience. This separates the poetry by point of reference and allows LeBeau to ponder many past and present issues. The addition of *Faces and Other Poems* further illustrates LeBeau's versatility. Though LeBeau touches on common social issues, as do many other modern poets such as Sherman Alexie, it is the extension beyond these issues that makes his writing engaging and it widens his range of audience to encompass both the Native American scholar and the general reader.

One of the principal strengths of the book is the cycle of life and death that is interwoven throughout. The opening poem, "Deer Dragger," focuses on this cycle as it is once again played out by the hunter and the hunted, offering vivid descriptions of "Red hoof prints— / Bloody snow" and the hunter "[weeping] for the love / of [the deer's] life" (p. 3). The poem incorporates the traditional and the ceremonial through references to the hunter thanking the deer for his life, offering tobacco, and covering the deer's eyes. The cycle continues within other poems as the book progresses and eventually closes with the poem "Sweet Grass and Sun," which is a ceremony unto itself: "Burn sweet grass / rinse your face / with smoke" (p. 83). This final

ceremony reassures the reader of the continuation of life and tradition and ends the book with a feeling of peace.

One questionable aspect is the very obvious images presented in the poems. There are references to “Anthropological exhibits” (p. 31), “alcohol spinning in [a person’s] head” (p. 33), and a “serpent carved stick” (p. 53), to name a few. Buffalo Bill, Sioux City, and Herman Melville also make appearances. However, the honest realism of LeBeau’s work uses these common ideas to reveal to the reader the historical and contemporary issues that face not only Native Americans but also other cultures in the world today.

LeBeau’s first published contribution is revealing in its raw, emotional presentation of life and death. It is an exceedingly honest exploration of the self, one recommended to those not afraid to face the reality of living.

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