

unfolded. Every baseball afternoon, fans would flock to the Polo Grounds to see him take batting practice, after which McGraw would display his managerial genius while his high-priced “Bonus Baby” would silently seethe on the dugout bench. In both pre- and post-game press interviews, McGraw would again command the spotlight, waxing eloquent about Thorpe’s baseball background, potential, and future. Even Warner quickly discerned that his friend “McGraw never handled Thorpe properly. ‘Jim was a horse for work and McGraw didn’t give him that work. Otherwise he’d have been one of the finest players of all time,’” the astute college coach concluded (91).

Cook’s biography is vastly different from the two mature, full-length studies that survey the entirety of Thorpe’s life and career. In 1975 appeared *Jim Thorpe: World’s Greatest Athlete*, Robert W. Wheeler’s seminal volume, the author’s reworked master’s thesis at Syracuse University, a biography that took its creator on a seven-year hitchhiking trek of thousands of miles through more than twenty states to interview, via tape recorder, relatives, teammates, competitors, and others who had interacted with Thorpe prior to his passing in March of 1953. No other study can claim the abundance of primary sources collected in the graduate student’s revised thesis; clearly, Wheeler’s volume is unique, a rich repository of information and insights on which virtually all subsequent writers on Thorpe have drawn. Cook is among those writers. Predictably and abundantly, however, he incorporates materials found elsewhere, content from a host of writers and resources appearing after 1975, including fifteen websites.

Nor does Cook’s study resemble Kate Buford’s *Native American Son: The Life and Sporting Legend of Jim Thorpe*, published in 2010, just months before Cook’s biography appeared. Buford’s tome is gargantuan, more than twice the size of Cook’s, overflowing with facts, dates, details, and anecdotes that delight members of the academy and overwhelm those laboring elsewhere. Buford’s encyclopedic biography, a decade in the making, stands alone in Thorpe studies, a tribute to its creator’s perseverance, thoroughness, and energy.

Cook is neither a Wheeler nor a Buford. He is distinctive, a retired health care administrator and one-time township councilman in New Brunswick, New Jersey, who enjoys authoring readable texts about Americana and fascinating figures therein, a learned layman with a special commitment to knowledgeably probing and succinctly updating the lives of figures in the nation’s past who warrant reexamination. Jim Thorpe is the latest, but not the last, beneficiary of Cook’s refreshing chronicling.

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**Leaving Holes and Selected New Writings.** By Joe Dale Tate Nevaquaya. Norman: Mongrel Empire Press, 2011. 78 pages. \$15.00 paper.

Joe Dale Tate Nevaquaya’s award-winning collection is long overdue—and this is not abstract or exaggerated praise. As a victim of poor timing, among other things, the winning manuscript of the 1992 Native Writers’ Circle Diane Decorah Memorial

Award for Poetry languished in publication limbo for nearly two decades before finding its way into print in 2011. Just recently it has been given a second honorific, “Winner of the 2012 Oklahoma Book Award for Poetry.” The work has considerable range: from surrealistic poems of pain and memory; to short poetic gifts of tribute, dense with the weight of rich imagery; to prose pieces characterized by poignant vulnerability and honesty, with both sly humor and candid depictions of brokenness.

In the first section, “Leaving Holes,” many of the longer poems such as “Lying Upon Darkness” string together imagery without entirely sturdy metaphorical correspondences. These instabilities create disequilibrium, foiling efforts at strictly linear explications. This is not to suggest that they are nonsensical, at least not in any pejorative sense—only that they take on supra-rational qualities at times, in the way the best poetry often does. Metaphors are not tightly bound down or too neatly drawn but suggestively open for a kind of unrestrained exploration. The images evoke particular moods and seduce the reader into strange imaginative meanderings. In this way they are no doubt dreamlike, the progeny of a self-avowed “dream warrior.” Often they invert typical orientations among images. For example, in lines 7–8 of the poem, “The Dream Warrior,” one reads of “a river of blood that pours outward / beating against the sun at dawn.” Here it is the blood that “beat[s]” and not the sun, and it does so at “dawn” rather than noon. Such inversions set the mind to flight, but flight without a fixed destination, for which the flying itself is, at least in part, its own reward. Yet for all the drifting the images inspire, it is not as if the poems lack purpose. While frequently surreal and dreamlike, they are nonetheless deliberate in their provocations. In the case of “The Dream Warrior,” it determinedly probes at the legacy of contact and colonial trauma. Take, for example, this portion from the fourth stanza: “I am a dream warrior, / silhouetted against the day of bad sign talk, / against the signing away of my mother’s breath, / against the part and parcel of your reality” (lines 17–20). Colonial lies, empty peace treaties, and the sting of the allotment era haunt these lines as the poem maintains a resolute voice, unwilling to forget or capitulate on the dream of the people.

While many poems rely on the power of surreal imagery, others work very differently. “For the Grandmothers,” for instance, is a very direct rumination on identity and heritage, concerning itself both with giving due honor to ancestors and fostering communal self-awareness of becoming ancestors to others. Nevaquaya perceptively observes, “We often disguise ourselves, / as if we were of our own making” (lines 8–9); “We should remember / in a clear light, / all that has come before, / and acknowledge that we too are leaving, / these days for others to remember” (15–18). There is wisdom in these words earned by perspective and humility, both of which Nevaquaya’s speaker seems to have in spades. His tone avoids didacticism, feeling as much like an observation and a self-determining statement as it does a directive for others.

Geary Hobson, who authors the book’s foreword, is right to note the haiku-like qualities of the short poems for acquaintances in the latter portion of the book. Intimacy, warmth, and—at the same time—blunt honesty saturate these pieces, as Nevaquaya pens lines of honor, striking dual poses of address and observation. Each poem’s title indicates the person or people for whom it is written, and he speaks to

them and of them at the same time, as if they are being toasted in tribute in front of a listening crowd, but without any of the posturing or distance of such formality. In a sense, the reader assumes the crowd's role, and in so doing gains seemingly genuine glimpses into Nevaquaya's relationships, glimpses that feel like an unearned privilege. There is a unique sense of identity in each of the poems individually, but taken as a whole they speak most powerfully of Nevaquaya, of the care and warmth with which he pays respect to each person with his gift of expressive image. Often they invoke wildlife and water. Consider the "Poem for Hochene Botone," for example: "Blue fish dancing / in the stars, / their tongues of silver / are singing your name, backwards / like rain falling." Another, "Poem for Greg Miller," works similarly: "There is a river / inside your flesh, / it carries the barge of dreams / to your heart and tongue. / You speak of it nightly. / Fish scale orphaned at noon."

The "selected new writings" are well worthwhile in their own right. In fact, one wonders if they might not have been more appropriately collected in a more expansive volume alongside similar work. Still, their inclusion does not make the book unwieldy. "Notes from the Mayor over to Red Wasp," a selection of diary-like narrations in the form of correspondence, contains vignettes from the character's investigations of various supernatural events happening in the small town. Peppered with humor and vibrant depictions of a few of the town's colorful inhabitants, each "note" relates one or more mysterious occurrences, presumably all connected, running the gamut from frightening noises and shape-shifters to the strange behavior of birds and bizarre effects of ominous weather events. Save one entry from a character named Cookson, all are treated with the somewhat reluctant investigative efforts and superstitious reverence of "Hizzoner," the mayor and primary narrator, through whom Nevaquaya is able to convey a sense both of the quirky, oddball milieu one often finds in the small towns of Indian country and a real dignity and insight in Hizzoner's homespun observations. Nevaquaya creates a very sympathetic character, broken in many ways, yet still endearing and not without certain admirable qualities, among them an utter lack of pretentiousness and a refreshingly direct and genuine narrative voice.

"Poems of November's Grace," a small section of only a few prose poems and two in verse, contains emotive descriptions of autumnal and winter landscapes alongside weighty narratives filled with characters from "a failed novella that refused to go home after the last call" (63). There is definitely coldness, as the section title implies, but there is unmistakably grace too. "Sistuh" recounts a stop at a back-roads diner somewhere in Mississippi, where the speaker makes a meaningful connection with a waitress over a wanted poster seeking justice for a murder victim. The waitress comments that the victim was a "sistuh" and could have been one of the speaker's too. The empathy that forms their bond becomes one of November's graces amid the traumas and horrors of the characters' experiences. In this way, the poet confronts brokenness head on in a way that is neither hollow or dismissive, nor despairing and hopeless. Nevaquaya leaves the reader with a prose poem epilogue that offers these pieces as "the prismatic minutia of [his] word," which "becom[e] the shadow of stone, the memory of ancestral utterance."

Throughout the collection, complicated issues of identity—personal and communal—and the grit and pain of experience are treated wisely, with honesty and strength in a voice that speaks unapologetically but not clumsily, freely yet with purpose. Surreal imagery and humanizing narratives cohere powerfully in a collection well deserving of the praise and recognition bestowed on it over two decades. *Leaving Holes and Selected New Writings* is the work of a gifted artist whose words and images express strength in the midst of brokenness with deep and convincing sincerity and immense poetic beauty.

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**Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846–1873.** By Brendan C. Lindsay. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012. 456 pages. \$70.00 cloth.

Since the turn of the century, one can discern two trends in American Indian historiography. First, responding to the way in which tribal histories isolated American Indian nations from broader trends in the United States, historians have endeavored to insert American Indians into American history's broader narrative. Second, scholars argue that the "new Indian history" places too much emphasis on Native agency and power. Using colonialism as a theoretical framework, historians have pointed to the uneven power relations that existed in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century United States that circumscribed Native peoples' ability to act. In *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846–1873*, historian Brendan Lindsay builds on both of these historical inquiries—placing Native peoples into United States history and using colonialism and other theoretical models to examine the American West's asymmetrical power relations—to argue that American settlers used democratic and republican traditions to commit genocide against California Indians. Lindsay intends to offer a more comprehensive examination of California genocide and situate the California genocide at the center of nineteenth-century American history. Although the author strives to benefit contemporary Californian Indian communities, this reviewer wonders if the work does not harken to older narratives of American Indian history.

Lindsay contends that previous studies of California genocide have conceived of their topics too narrowly. Historians Lynwood Carranco, Rupert Costo, Benjamin Madley, and Jack Norton have argued that Spanish and American Californians committed genocide against California Indians, but they have offered local studies of these atrocities. Lindsay explores genocide from a statewide, if not national, perspective. He argues that overland emigrants to California were convinced that they had successfully defended themselves against violent Indians on the overland trail. These travelers arrived in California prepared to use force to acquire California Indian land and resources. In southern California, ranchers and farmers compelled Indigenous people to work and defeated Quechans and Cahuillas, who either competed against Anglo-Americans in economic activities or defied labor control methods. In northern