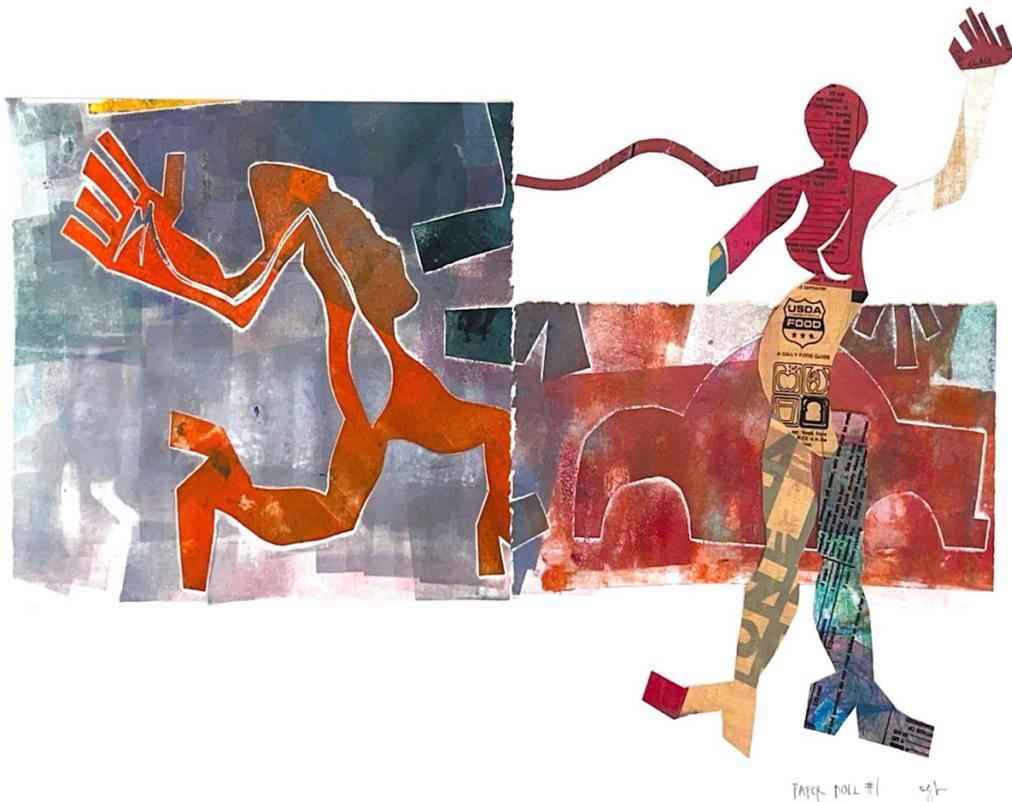


# Reading Indigenous Literatures

## Poetry & Prose



Jeff Berglund

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## The History and Continuance of Indigenous Literary Expression

American Indian linguistic expression is the oldest “literary” legacy in North America. Survival of these early stories has relied on the repeated practice of storytelling down the generations; undeniably, many of these important legacies have disappeared because of the effects of colonization. Still others have been distorted by their careless translation into English and codification in print rather than being performed as living, engaged social practices. The British colonization of North America, beginning in Virginia in 1607 and the Spanish colonization of the Americas, in Florida in 1565 and in the Southwest (then Mexico), led the path for European-led conflict with thriving Indigenous cultures. Within the English-speaking world, which is our focus in this course, early colonial mission schools began to teach English to Indigenous Peoples. Early settlers had much to gain commercially if they could create a class of translators to sustain peaceable relations with indigenous people. The legacies of early speakers and writers of English who are of Native descent demonstrates that writers found the English language an important vehicle to protest injustice and to seek justice. By most accounts, Samson Occom (Mohegan) is the first-recorded Native writer to have published in English; his 1771 sermon, “A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul, an Indian” was republished nearly twenty times.

Most early writing was in the form of sermons, tribal histories, protest literature, or autobiographies. In 1830 Congress passed the Removal Act which forced all Indigenous nations out of their remaining territories east of the Mississippi River. Similar dispossessions and removals followed, accompanied by violence and the threat of violence. The ceding of much of northern Mexico to the United States in 1848’s Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the discovery of gold in California the same year, stimulated even greater interest in the West, leading to greater and greater encroachment on Native homelands. During the Civil War violent conflict raged between the United States and Dakota peoples in Minnesota and Diné and Mescalero Apache people in Arizona Territory, just to name a few examples. By the

1870s, a decade after the end of the Civil War, the United States spanned from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but the violent conflict continued well into the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Dawe's Allotment Act of 1887 developed the reservation system and led to further efforts to assimilate and re-educate Indian people. In the 1870s Washington policymakers decided the best way to "civilize Indians" was through removing children from their homes and placing them in faraway boarding schools. Part of this so-called "civilizing" included suppressing their Native languages, teaching them English and educating them in a vocation, cutting their long hair, dressing them in uniforms, and converting them to Christianity. In many ways, an indoctrination on multiple levels, especially impactful when one considers how this affected young children cut off from their families and culture of origin with its own value systems.

Despite these policies throughout the 19th Century, Indigenous writers continued to publish. William Apess (Pequot), George Copway (Anishinaabe), Jane Johnson Schoolcraft (Anishinaabe), John Rollin Ridge (Cherokee), Sophia Alice Callahan (Muscogee/Creek), Sarah Winnemucca (Paiute), Simon Pokagon (Potawatomi), E. Pauline Johnson (Mohawk). Ridge is considered the first Native writer to publish a novel—*The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta* (1854)—and Callahan is the first Native woman writer to publish a novel—*Wynema: A Child of the Forest* (1898). Cherokee scholar, Daniel Heath Justice, notes in his book, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (2018): ". . . [I]n spite of various challenges and catastrophes, Indigenous writers, scholars, storytellers, and knowledge keepers have, since our earliest ancestors emerged as distinct peoples, worked to articulate lived truths and imaginative possibilities through spoken, written, and inscribed forms and project them into a meaningful future" (pp. xvii-xviii).

Throughout the early part of the Twentieth Century, Zitkala-Ša [Gertrude Bonin] (Yankton Dakota), Christine Quintasket [Mourning Dove/Humishima] (Colville), Ella Deloria (Yankton Dakota), Charles Eastman (Santee Sioux), John Joseph Matthews

(Osage), D'Arcy McNickle (Flathead), Lynn Riggs (Cherokee) were prolific and contributed work that laid a firm foundation for what would follow in the last third of the century. Their writing continues to attract critical and scholarly attention and is frequently featured in university reading lists.

Jump ahead to 1969. That's the year N. Scott Momaday received a Pulitzer Prize for his first novel *House Made of Dawn* (1968) and followed it with *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969), based on Kiowa cultural knowledge. Vine Deloria, Jr., (Yankton Dakota) also published *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* in 1969. Literary critics now characterize this year and the decade that followed as the rebirth of Native American literature, referring to it as the Native American Literary Renaissance. Simon Ortiz (Acoma), James Welch (Blackfeet & Gros Ventre/A'aninin), Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna), Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna & Dakota) and others followed Momaday into print. Joy Harjo (Msvkoke), Linda Hogan (Chickasaw), Louise Erdrich (Anishinaabe), and Luci Tapahonso (Diné) maintained the pace. In the late 20th and first quarter of the Twenty-First Century, Layli Long Soldier (Oglala Lakota), Tommy Orange (Cheyenne), Sherwin Bitsui (Diné), Esther Belin (Diné), Irvin Morris (Diné), Heid E. Erdrich (Anishinaabe), Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene), Kimberly Blaeser (Anishinaabe), Laura Tohe (Diné), Stephen Graham Jones (Blackfeet), Deborah Miranda (Ohlone-Costanoan Esselen), Susan Power (Ihą́kthŭwəŋna Dakhóta), Cherie Dimaline (Metís), Brian Young (Diné), Bojan Louis (Diné), Angeline Boulley (Anishinaabe), and Richard Van Camp (Tłįchq), among many others.

## Cited Work

- Justice, Daniel Heath. [\*Why Indigenous Literatures Matter\*](#). Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2018. [excerpt of Preface, "[Notes for the Long Rebellion](#)," publicly available from publisher].

## Further Reading on the History of Indigenous Peoples in North America

- Blackhawk, Ned. [\*The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History\*](#). Yale University Press, 2023.
- Deloria, Jr. Vine. [\*Custer Died for Your Sins\*](#). Macmillan, 1969.
- Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. [\*An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States\*](#). Beacon Press, 2014.
- Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne, and Dina Gilio-Whitaker. [\*"All the Real Indians Died Off": And 20 Other Myths About Native Americans\*](#). Beacon Press, 2016.
- "[Native Tribes Have Lost 99% of Their Land in the United States](#)," *Science Magazine* [Video].
- [Ned Blackhawk \(Western Shoshone\) and Brenda Child \(Anishinaabe\) in conversation about Blackhawk's book: \*The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History\*](#) at the National Constitutional Center. [Audio and Video formats].
- Treuer, Anton. [\*Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians but Were Afraid to Ask\*](#). Revised and updated edition, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2023.
- Treuer, David. [\*The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present\*](#). Riverhead Books, 2019.

## Terminology

In this section, you'll find information to support your understanding of terminology about Indigenous Peoples. Much of this is adapted from my authored section of an freely available article of which I'm co-author and over which I hold the copyright, "[Four Scholars Speak to Navigating the Complexity of Naming in Comparative Indigenous Studies](#)," first published in *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

Names are more than just a title or designation; they can and do convey powerful messages through the meanings attached to them. Some commonly used terms affiliated with Indigenous Peoples bear the troubling legacy of colonialism. Other terms have existed from time immemorial. And while the meanings of all names are unstable and often ambiguous, they convey powerful imagery and form the cornerstone of our identities. Identity labels, whether they emerge from within or outside of groups, also serve the function of establishing particular populations as different from one another. In subtle ways, therefore, labelling communities suggests an alliance in terms of shared interests, a sense of cooperation, and ties to a common tradition or heritage. A sense of identity is built by contrasting oneself with others: this can occur at the individual or group level. Contrastive roles help to build a sense of self and cement group loyalty.

Accurate terminology and names are important for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, in an academic setting is accuracy. Within university settings and academia, broadly speaking, using accurate and agreed-upon vocabulary is crucial. Learning new concepts, new vocabularies and definitions alongside their historical developments is part and parcel of the experience of study and of mastery. Thus, if you are a student of Indigenous Studies, it is an expected requirement to use accurate terminology and to understand the ins and outs of potential complexities.

If becoming a master of this particular academic subject were not enough on its own, a second — and not insignificant — reason to acquire greater facility with

accurate terminology is respect. Using the appropriate names and accurate terms are fundamentally about recognizing the impact of names on individuals and communities. If you are learning from and about another group and its histories — intellectual, creative, spiritual, political, psycho-logical, physical, and otherwise — how much trust can you afford to squander, how much ill-will are you willing to spread? Imagine if someone always referred to you incorrectly or by the wrong name. After some time — perhaps after even correcting this person — you might begin to infer other meanings and messages attached to their lack of interest or concern: your name doesn't matter, you don't matter, and I can't be bothered to learn or care about you.

The term “Indigenous” is frequently used when speaking about broad categories or multiple groups of individuals. In terms of usage, capitalize “Indigenous” when referring to people and even when you use it as a modifier, for example:

“Indigenous People(s).” It is a term that has global and political significance, in part, because of the work at the United Nations (UN) through the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples. Despite this origin, the UN doesn't even have an official definition. It provides some guiding statements that convey that the term “Indigenous” applies to the original inhabitants and stewards of places who have continuous relationships with those locations from the current moment back through recorded and remembered history prior to settlement by colonial societies. According to a [Fact Sheet](#) available from the Permanent Forum, in addition to self-identification as “Indigenous,” and a continuance presence on lands prior to colonization and the presence of settler cultures, Indigenous Peoples also have a “strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources,” possess “distinct, social, economic or political systems,” and maintain “distinct language, culture and beliefs.”

In the context of the United States, “American Indian” and “Native American” are the most commonly used terms to refer to Indigenous Peoples living in the boundaries of the continental United States (both words in each phrase are always

capitalized). In these 48 states, there exist over 574 federally recognized tribes. In some cases, states recognize the existence of tribal entities or nations that are not recognized by the federal government. While the federal government determines official recognition of tribes, it remands control of tribal enrollment and membership to the tribal nation itself. In many cases, though, dominant national notions of “race” and “blood quantum” determine enrollment policies, thus indirectly influencing how tribal nations determine membership.

According to the [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#), “A federally recognized tribe is an American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entity that is recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States, with the responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations attached to that designation . . . Furthermore, federally recognized tribes are recognized as possessing certain inherent rights of self-government (i.e., tribal sovereignty) and are entitled to receive certain federal benefits, services, and protections because of their special relationship with the United States.” The current list of federally recognized tribal nations is available [here](#). It is important to note that tribal designations are linked to sovereign national identities, a marked political distinction from other ethnic or racial terminology.

For most federally recognized tribes, “reservations” are now sovereign land bases, political entities (with distinctive governance structures) called “nations,” that emerged out of treaty negotiations or other government actions. Today in the United States reservations occupy only 2.3% of the entire nation’s land base. Reservations first came into existence in the late 19th century. According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, “a federal Indian reservation” is an area of land reserved for a tribe or tribes under treaty or other agreement with the United States, executive order, or federal statute or administrative action as permanent tribal homelands, and where the federal government holds title to the land in trust on behalf of the tribe” ([Bureau of Indian Affairs](#), n.d.). The nickname “rez” is often used within specific geographic or cultural contexts.

Members of these tribal sovereign nations are recognized for census purposes as “American Indian,” the term used by the U.S. federal government and major academic organizations and their affiliated journals, giving credence to its use in academic situations. A few examples illustrate this trend: key journals consist of *American Indian Quarterly*, *American Indian Culture & Research Journal* and *Studies in American Indian Literature*. In the state of Arizona, Arizona State University, one of the largest universities in the United States, houses the American Indian Studies Department, as does the University of Arizona. AISA, the American Indian Studies Association, is also a key organization linking academic units across many institutions. Clearly, there’s no fixed consensus on appropriate terminology, as a frequent alternative to “American Indian” is “Native American,” a term that came into usage in the 1960s and 1970s, signaling an evolution away from the term “Indian.” In contrast to the naming practices in institutions and organizations listed above, Northern Arizona University houses the Department of Applied Indigenous Studies, and under non-academic arenas featured the Native American Cultural Center, Native American Student Services and the Commission for Native Americans, but in recent years, these entities have altered their names to the Center for Native American and Indigenous Futures, the Office of Indigenous

Student Success, and the Commission for Indigenous Peoples. A major international organization known by the acronym NAISA struggled with the challenges of nomenclature and finally approved its name, Native American and Indigenous Studies Association. The Native American Literature Symposium (NALS) has employed this term for well over a decade, as well. Thus, the modifier ‘Native’, always capitalized, is an acceptable usage in the United States, and it is common to hear academics speaking of Native history, Native literature, and Native culture. By contrast, the word “Native” in an Australian or New Zealand contexts has negative implications and generally should not be substituted in the place of “Indigenous,” despite its status as a synonym in North American.

Indigenous Peoples living on the land and waters of the state of Alaska are recognized by the United States government as “Alaskan Natives.” (Again, both words are capitalized). This term is distinct for this geographic region and recognizes particular cultural, political, and legal histories. The term “Alaskan Native” was codified by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971 which established “thirteen regional and over 200 village corporations” as a means of asserting Indigenous rights over lands seized by first Russia and then the United States in its purchase of territories from Russia.

“Native Hawaiian” is a term reserved for Indigenous People of the Hawaiian Islands who are not recognized as “American Indians” or as having the rights of other sovereign tribal nations. Since annexation in 1898, Native Hawaiians have been U.S. citizens. “Kānaka Maoli” is how many Native Hawaiians refer to themselves. In either phrase, both words are capitalized.

“Indian” is a term used within Native communities (almost as a reclaimed name), though it is not as commonly used by non-Natives. Native authors and filmmakers may use this term, so it will likely be encountered, but I recommend that outsiders to Indigenous communities only use this term in a direct quotation if authors or artists employ the term.

To fully recognize the specificity and complexity of Indigenous Peoples in the United States, I recommend that my students rely, if possible, on tribally specific names for individuals who are enrolled in particular tribal sovereign nations, though generic terms might be necessary when referring to general experiences or to groupings of individuals from more than one tribe. If a Native person is from the Navajo Nation, for example, appropriate terms are “Navajo” or “Diné” (which is a pre-colonial name meaning “The People”). Today, American Indian nations are also engaged in language revitalizing efforts and are striving to reclaim original names, throwing off imposed terms: Ojibwe or Anishinaabe people, for example, used to be called Chippewa; Lakota people used to be called Sioux; Tohono O’odham people used to be called Papago; and so forth. People from mixed tribal background will either identify their multiple lines of descent or will choose to identify with the tribal nation with whom they are enrolled. Tribally specific terms were used in the Introduction preceding this section and will appear in the biography of specific authors. Note that tribally specific names are always capitalized.

## Further Reading

Carlson, B., J. Berglund, M. Harris, and E. T. A. Poata-Smith. "Four Scholars Speak to Navigating the Complexities of Naming in Indigenous Studies." [\*The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education\*](#), vol. 43, no. 1, Aug. 2014, pp. 58-72.

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## John Rollins Ridge

John Rollins Ridge (1827-1867) was known in Cherokee as Cheesquatalawny/Tsisgwa Daloni, meaning “Yellow Bird” in English. Born in Georgia to a Cherokee father who was among the signatories of the Treaty of New Echota which paved the way for removal from original homelands and what became known as the Cherokee Trail of Tears, forcibly relocating Cherokee people to Indian Territory. According to some accounts, the young Ridge (12 years old at the time) witnessed his father’s murder in retribution for signing the treaty. His European American mother moved him to Alabama and enrolled him in school in her home state of Massachusetts after his father’s death. He eventually became a lawyer, married, and had a child. He owned enslaved African Americans on his plantation. He moved to California during the Gold Rush in 1849, after murdering a man he deemed responsible for his own father’s death. During his time in California, he wrote for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, became editor of *The Sacramento Bee*, wrote what is considered the first novel published by a Native author: *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta: The Celebrated California Bandit* (1854). While this novel critiqued dominant culture’s racism, Ridge often supported assimilationist policies, held racist views (his support of slavery and his support of the Confederacy, to name two examples), and expressed prejudicial views about Indigenous Peoples in California. After his death from encephalitis in 1867, Ridge’s wife, Elizabeth Wilson, published *Poems* (1868) which includes the selections below, many of them written as a young man.

### Readings

Selections from [Poems \(1868\)](#) in Amherst College’s Collection of Native American Literature\*

- “Atlantic Cable” (pp. 17-21)
- “To Lizze” (pp. 35-37)
- “A Cherokee Love Song” (pp. 43-44)

- “The Rainy Season in California” (pp. 46-49)
- “October Hills” (pp. 53-54)
- “Poem” (pp. 78-83)
- “Lines on a Humming Bird Seen at a Lady’s Window” (pp. 86-87)
- “The ‘Singing Spirit’” (pp. 100-102)
- “A Scene along the Rio de Las Plumas” (pp. 105-108)
- “The Still Small Voice” (pp. 109-111)

[\\*Amherst College’s Rights Statement](#)

## Sarah Winnemucca

Sarah Winnemucca (ca 1844-1891) was born to a distinguished Northern Paiute family in what is today Nevada, Winnemucca wrote about her personal life story in the context of her tribal history. Her work is generally recognized as the first published autobiographical account by a Native woman. In this work she develops a strong storytelling voice, turning people in her life into memorable characters within dramatic scenes. Four years after her birth, gold was discovered in California and thousands of emigrants crossed Paiute territory, laying waste and then claim to areas that were traditionally held by Winnemucca's people. She wrote her life story to bring attention to the injustices her people faced because of decades of conflicts and federal legislation that increasingly stripped rights from Native people. From 1883-to 1884 she delivered nearly 300 lectures from Boston to Washington, D.C. to promote her book and spread her message of political justice.

She was limited in the nineteenth century by her position as a woman as well as her status as a Paiute. Nonetheless, today her legacy clearly shines across the decades. Her rhetorical style is impressive, especially noteworthy in this final plea: "For shame! For shame! You will dare to cry out Liberty, when you hold us in places against our will, driving us from place to place as if we were beasts . . . if the white people will treat us like human beings, we will behave like a people; but if we are treated by white savages as if we are savages, we are relentless and desperate . . . I am pleading for God and for humanity" (p. 244).

### Readings

Selection from [\*Life Among the Piutes\*](#) (1883) in Amherst College's Collection of Native American Literature\*

- o [\*Life Among the Piutes\*](#) (pp. 5-15)

\*[Amherst College's Rights Statement](#)

## E. Pauline Johnson

E. Pauline Johnson (1861- 1913) was Kanien'kehá:ka/Mohawk and born in Ontario to a Kanien'kehá:ka father and English immigrant mother and was raised on the Six Nations Reserve. She became a prolific poet and performer. Her first collection of poetry and “tales,” *The White Wampum*, was published in 1895 and consists of verse that combines English poetic forms with Indigenous content. The selections included here come from this book. Johnson took up writing and performing after her father’s death as a means of supporting her family. Appealing to then-contemporary sensibilities, particularly her non-Native audiences, she developed a performance style that included dressing traditionally for part of her appearance and dressing in western/contemporary clothing for the second portion. She often performed under the name Tekahionwake which literally translates as “double wampum” or “double life.” All told, Johnson published two more poetry collections and three books of fiction (two published just after her death). In 2002, her complete works were brought together and reissued in one collection.

### Readings

Selected works from [\*The White Wampum \(1895\)\*](#) in Amherst College’s Collection of Native American Literature\*

- “The Cattle Thief” (pp. 11-13)
- “A Cry from an Indian Wife” (pp. 16-18)
- “The Vagabonds” (pp. 30-31)
- “The Flight of the Crows” (pp. 44-45)
- “The Birds’ Lullaby” (pp. 55-56)

\*[Amherst College’s Rights Statement](#)

## Gertrude Bonin/Zitkala-Ša

Gertrude Bonin/Zitkala-Ša (1876-1938) was born in 1876 in what is today South Dakota. Zitkala-Ša (Lakota) left home at the age of eight to attend a Quaker-sponsored school in Indiana. She returned home after three years, but was unable to adjust to reservation life. She finished her education at Earlham College and then went on to teach at Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. She grew critical of the “anti-Indian educational principles” and assimilationist policies promoted at Carlisle and her strong disagreements with Captain Pratt, director of the school, led to the end of her service there. She studied briefly at the New England Conservatory of Music and then returned to the reservation to collect stories for her first book, *Old Indian Legends* (1901). Zitkala-Ša moved to Utah where her husband worked for the Ute Agency from 1902-1916. *American Indian Stories*, from which the following excerpt is drawn, was published in 1921 and recounts the author’s life from age eight to about twenty-four. Later in life, she became associated with the Society for American Indians and became its secretary. Her family moved to Washington, D.C., because of her position; there she edited the *American Indian Magazine* and founded the National Council of American Indians and served as its president until her death in 1938.

### Readings

[“School Days of an Indian Girl”](#) in *American Indian Stories* (1921) in Amherst College’s Collection of Native American Literature.

- [“School Days of an Indian Girl”](#) (pp. 47-80).

\*[Amherst College’s Rights Statement](#)

## N. Scott Momaday

N. Scott Momaday (1934-2024), whose given name was Navarro Scott Mammedaty, was Kiowa. Although he was born in Oklahoma, he spent much of his early life in New Mexico and Arizona, living near Diné, Pueblo, and Apache peoples. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Mexico and went on to complete an MA and then PhD at Stanford University. Momaday is forever linked to the beginnings of what critics have called the American Indian Literary Renaissance. When Momaday won the Pulitzer Prize in 1969 for his very first novel, *House Made of Dawn*, it marked an important moment in U.S. letters: a book published by a Native writer by a mainstream press won critical acclaim. This paved the way for many writers who followed. Momaday was a fiction writer, memoirist, poet, and painter. He held professorships at the University of Arizona, the University of California-Berkeley, and at Stanford University. He earned many distinctions during his long career, including awards from the Academy of American Poets, the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the National Medal of Arts, and Italy's highest literary award, Premio Letterario Internazionale, in addition to numerous honorary degrees.

### Readings

- [“A Benign Self-Portrait,”](#) Poem-a-Day, American Academy of Poets.
- [“The Delight Song of Tsoai-talee”](#) [includes Joy Harjo’s commentary on it]
  - Momaday [reading this poem](#) in 1993.

### Further Reading

- [House Made of Dawn](#). New American Library, 1968.
- [A Man Made of Words](#). St. Martin’s, 1997.
- [The Way to Rainy Mountain](#). University of New Mexico Press, 1969.

## Simon Ortiz

Simon Ortiz (b. 1941-) is Acoma Pueblo. He was born and grew up in McCartys, New Mexico. He attended the University of New Mexico and later earned an MFA from the University of Iowa. He is among the writers credited with contributing to the American Indian literary Renaissance in the 1970s; his essay, "Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism" (1981), has been influential in reorienting the field of Indigenous literary studies. While he acknowledges that the authentic cultural legacy of the oral tradition can transcend languages and creative forms, what really sustains this inheritance is the "acknowledgement by Indian writers of a responsibility to advocate for their people's self-government, sovereignty, and control of land and natural resources; and to look also at racism, political and economic oppression, sexism, supremacism, and the needless and wasteful exploitation of land and people . . ." (12).

Ortiz held positions at numerous universities, including the University of Toronto and Arizona State University where he is Regent's Professor and emerita professor of English and American Indian Studies. Ortiz has published extensively: poetry, essays, short fiction. Notable titles include *Woven from Stone* (1992), *From Sand Creek* (1981), *Going for the Rain* (1976), *Men on the Moon and Other Stories* (1999), *Out There Somewhere* (2002). He has published children's books such as *The People Shall Continue* (1977) and edited anthologies, including *Speaking for Generations: Native Writers on Writing* (1997) and *Earth Power Coming: Short Fiction in Native American Literature* (1983) from Navajo Community College Press.

### Readings

- ["Becoming Human,"](#) Poetry Foundation.
- ["Dawn Prayer for All,"](#) Poetry Foundation.
- ["To Change in a Good Way,"](#) Hanksville.org.
- ["To Plant Again,"](#) Poem-a-Day, American Academy of Poets.

## Further Reading

- [\*From Sand Creek\*](#). University of Arizona Press, 1981.
- [“Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism,”](#) *MELUS*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1981, pp. 7-12.
- [\*Woven Stone\*](#). University of Arizona Press, 1992.

## Leslie Marmon Silko

Leslie Marmon Silko (b. 1948) is Laguna Pueblo and grew up Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico. Today she lives outside of Tucson, Arizona. She completed her BA in English at the University of New Mexico, briefly attended law school before dedicating herself full-time to writing. Her early story, “The Man to Bring Rain Clouds,” published before she graduated from college attracted critical attention. She is among a small group of writers in the 1970s who received a warm welcome within the academy and in publishing circles, but who also worked to help develop academic and pedagogical approaches to studying Native literature within the university context; notably, Silko was part of the seminal 1977 meeting in Flagstaff, Arizona, sponsored by the Modern Language Association and the National Endowment for the Humanities. *Ceremony* (1977), her first novel, became a mainstay on reading lists as was *Storyteller* (1981), which incorporated “The Man to Bring Rain Clouds.” She was a debut recipient in 1981 of The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. While Silko has published many books, including a recent memoir, *The Turquoise Ledge* (2010), these books and 1991’s *Almanac of the Dead*, a novel of epic scope, which takes on the regional and global history and consequences of colonization, have continued to receive scholarly attention.

### Reading

- [“The Man to Send Rain Clouds,”](#) *The Mexico Quarterly* 38.4 (1968): 133-136.

### Further Reading

- [Almanac of the Dead](#). Penguin Books, 1991.
- [Ceremony](#). Penguin Books, 1977.
- [Storyteller](#). Grove Press, 1981.



## Joy Harjo

Joy Harjo (b. 1951), Mvskoke, is one of the most important poets in contemporary American literature. Born and raised in Oklahoma, Harjo studied at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Sante Fe, New Mexico, the University of New Mexico, and the University of Iowa where she earned her MFA. She has taught at many institutions, including UCLA, Arizona State University, University of Illinois, University of Hawaii, the University of Tennessee, and most recently, the University of New Mexico. Harjo has published eleven volumes of poetry; additionally, she has published memoirs, anthologies and children's books. She is also a musician and plays saxophone with Harjo performs with her saxophone in her band, the Arrow Dynamics Band (and previously with Poetic Justice). She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Frost Medal from the Poetry Society of America, a Ruth Lily Prize for Lifetime Achievement from the Poetry Foundation, the Academy of American Poets Wallace Stevens Award, a Lifetime Achievement Award from Americans for the Arts, among others. From 2019-2022, she served as the 23rd Poet Laureate of the United States and was the first Indigenous Poet Laureate. A number of works linked in this collection were part of a project she curated for the Library of Congress during her Laureateship that culminated in *Living Nations, Living Words: An Anthology of First Peoples Poetry*. Speaking about her poem, "Remember," included here, Harjo notes, "The heart of this poem can be found by the rhythm, the beat that runs through and is repeated in the word 'Remember.' It pumps life in the poem. The driving force reminds us that are all connected and ultimately, we are earth or Ekvncvke" (Eversole).

### Cited Work

- Eversole, AJ. "[Author Interview: Joy Harjo on Poetry & Picture Books.](#)" *Cynsations by Cynthia Leitich Smith* (March 2023).

### Readings

- [“Exile of Memory,”](#) (includes audio and text of poem), Library of Congress, *Living Nations, Living Words: A Collection of First Peoples Poetry*.
- [“Remember,”](#) (includes audio and text of poem), Poem-a-Day, American Academy of Poets.

## Further Reading

- [\*Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings: Poems\*](#). W.W. Norton & Company, 2015.
- [\*A Map to the next World: Poetry and Tales\*](#). W.W. Norton & Co., 2000.
- Harjo, Joy, et al, editors. [\*When the Light of the World Was Subdued, Our Songs Came Through: A Norton Anthology of Native Nations Poetry\*](#). W. W. Norton & Company, 2020.

## Laura Tohe

Laura Tohe (b. 1952), Diné, and was raised near Crystal, New Mexico. She graduated from the University of New Mexico with a psychology degree and earned an MA and PhD in English from the University of Nebraska. She is emerita professor of English at Arizona State University. Tohe served as the second Poet Laureate of the Navajo Nation from 2015-2025. During graduate school she published a chapbook, “Making Friends with Water” (1986). Her first book, *No Parole Today* (1999), focuses on her off-reservation boarding school experiences in the mid-twentieth century, a legacy also connected to her grandmother’s earlier experiences during the federal government’s so-called assimilationist experiments with boarding schools for Native children. This collection includes some nonfiction prose and fiction as well as poetry. Her second collection, *Tséyi’/Deep in the Rock: Reflections on Canyon de Chelly* (2005), concentrated on poetry that explored the importance of place and the ways Diné live in relation to or in kinship with the whole natural world. Some poems in this collection appear in English and in Diné bizaad, the Navajo language. She also edited with Heid E. Erdrich, *Sister Nations: Native American Women on Community* and authored *Code Talker Stories* (2012), an oral history about soldiers in World War II, including her father, who used the Navajo language as a strategic code.

### Readings

- [“I Am Dressed in My Language,”](#) *Poetry Magazine* (March 2025).
- [“Within Dinétah the People’s Spirit Remains Strong,”](#) (includes audio and text of poem), Library of Congress, *Living Nations, Living Words: A Collection of First Peoples Poetry*.

### Further Reading

- [No Parole Today](#). West End Press, 1999.

- *Tséyi': Deep in the Rock: Reflections on Canyon de Chelly.* University of Arizona Press, 2005.

## Robin Wall Kimmerer

Robin Wall Kimmerer (b. 1953) is Citizen Potawatomi, a federally recognized tribal nation presently located in Oklahoma. Kimmerer has a distinguished career as an ecologist. She earned degrees in botany, including her PhD from the University of Wisconsin and is the author of numerous scientific papers in her field. She is a vocal proponent of “Traditional Ecological Knowledge” (TEK). Today she lives in upstate New York and is professor at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, New York where she was the founding director of The Center for Native Peoples and the Environment. She is also a well-known author, particularly for her break-out, discipline-crossing book, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (2013). In 2022 it was adapted for a young readers edition. She was awarded The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 2022 and was named by *Time* magazine in 2025 as one of their one hundred notable people. Her other books include *Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses* (2003) and *The Serviceberry: An Economy of Gifts and Abundance* (2024) from which the excerpt linked below is drawn.

### Readings

- [“Practical Reverence: A Conversation with Robin Walls Kimmerer,”](#) *Emergence Magazine* (21 Nov. 2024).
- [“The Serviceberry: An Economy of Abundance,”](#) (text and audio), *Emergence Magazine* (26 Oct. 2022).

### Further Reading

- [Braiding Sweetgrass](#). Milkweed Editions, 2013.
- [Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses](#). Penguin, 2003.
- [Serviceberry: An Economy of Gifts and Abundance](#). Penguin, 2024.

## Luci Tapahonso

Luci Tapahonso (b. 1953) is Diné and was raised near Shiprock, New Mexico. She was a professor at The Universities of Kansas, Arizona, and New Mexico. Today she is retired and lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She has published six collections of poetry and prose. They include, among others, *Sáanii Dahataał: The Women Are Singing* (1993), *Blue Horses Rush In* (1997), and *A Radiant Curve* (2008), the winner of the Arizona Book Award for Poetry. She served as the Navajo Nation's very first Poet Laureate from 2013-2015. Among other awards, Tapahonso received in 2006 the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas. In an interview with Connie A. Jacobs, Tapahonso explains that writing is essential writing to her: "My work offers a glimpse of a single Navajo perspective and shows the interconnectedness we Diné share and how we relate to each other. The Diné language is the basis for this connection" (*The Diné Reader*, 87).

### Cited Work

- Jacobs, Connie A. "Interview with Luci Tapahonso," [\*The Diné Reader: An Anthology of Navajo Literature\*](#). Eds. Esther Belin, et al. University of Arizona Press, 2021.

### Readings

- "[In 1864](#)," *Blue Ridge Journal*.
- "[This Morning](#)," (includes audio and text of poem), Poem-a-Day, American Academy of Poets.
- "[The Navajo Treaty of 1868](#)," (Background information on The Navajo Long Walk from the National Museum of the American Indian).

### Further Reading

- [\*A Radiant Curve: Poems and Stories\*](#). University of Arizona Press, 2008.

- *Sáanii Dahataaŋ/The Women Are Singing: Poems and Stories*. University of Arizona Press, 1993.

## Louise Erdrich

Louise Erdrich (b. 1954) is Anishinaabe, and an enrolled citizen of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa for whom her maternal grandfather had once been tribal chair. She was raised in Wahpeton, North Dakota, where her parents were both educators at a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) boarding school. Erdrich graduated from Dartmouth College and earned her MFA from Johns Hopkins. In an essay for *The New York Times*, Erdrich shared her desire to gain greater proficiency in Ojibwemowin (or Anishinaabemowin) and the complex insights about how English has affected her knowledge: "This desire to deepen my alternate language puts me in an odd relationship to my first love, English. It is, after all, the language stuffed into my mother's ancestors' mouths . . . English is an all-devouring language that has moved across North America like fabulous plagues of locusts that darkened the sky and devoured even the handles of rakes and hoes. Yet the omnivorous nature of a colonial language is a writer's gift. Raised in the English language, I partake of a mongrel feast." Erdrich is prolific, having published nineteen novels, two collections of poems, a collection of short stories (a second on its way), two books of prose/memoir, five middle-grade novels, and several children's books. Her books have garnered praise from critics and scholars alike and have been nominated for every prize. Her novel, *The Round House*, was the 2012 winner of the National Book Award for Fiction and *The Night Watchman* won the 2021 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. *Love Medicine* (1983) and *LaRose* (2016) were both awarded the National Book Critics Circle Awards. She is often categorized as one of the greatest American writers alive and working today. Many, though not all, of her novels feature characters whose lives are interconnected and ever evolving. Almost always, Erdrich uses multiple points of view and resists strict chronological narratives.

### Cited Work

- "Two Languages in Mind, but Just One in Heart," *The New York Times* (22 May 2000).

## Reading

- [“The Stone,”](#) (text and audio), *The New Yorker* (2 September 2019). Free access to this source is presently based on monthly limits for non-subscribers.

## Further Reading

- [Love Medicine](#). New and expanded version, Perennial, 1993.
- [The Round House](#). Harper, 2012.
- [The Sentence](#). Harper, 2021.

## Kimberly Blaeser

Kimberly Blaeser (b. 1955) is Anishinaabe (White Earth Nation). She earned her MA and PhD in English from Notre Dame University. Out of her dissertation grew a book on fellow Anishinaabe writer, Gerald Vizenor. *Gerald Vizenor: Writing in the Oral Tradition* (1996) is the first book on an Indigenous writer authored by an Indigenous writer. She is now emerita professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and founding director of In-Na-Po (Indigenous Nations Poets), an organization that mentors young Indigenous poets and celebrates and centers poetry by Indigenous People. “Songs for a Tattered Planet,” linked here, was recorded as part of events for In-Na-Po. She is also an MFA faculty member at the Institute of American Indian Arts. In addition to editing and contributing to numerous anthologies, she is the author of the poetry collections, *Ancient Light* (2024), *Résister en dansant/Ikwe-niimi: Dancing Resistance* (2020), and *Copper Yearning* (2019), among others.

### Reading

- [“Songs for a Tattered Planet,”](#) (includes video with transcript), Indigenous Nations Poets. YouTube.

### Further Reading

- [Ancient Light: Poems](#). University of Arizona Press, 2024.
- [Copper Yearning: Poems](#). Holy Cow! Press, 2019.

## Deborah Miranda

Deborah Miranda (b. 1961), who is Ohlone-Costanoan and Esselen, is well-known today for her critically acclaimed mixed-genre memoir, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* (2012) which situates her personal and family story within the context of California Indian history, with particular attention paid to the impact of the Spanish colonial, Catholic mission system. A number of the thematic subjects she explores in this work are treated in the prose and poetry sampled in this book. Miranda focuses on the ways that individuals make sense of fragments of history, of stories that bring pain and confusion, and the challenges of moving forward to make creative futures. Miranda writes of the power and self-knowledge that comes with developing and claiming one's voice and all that this encompasses, including claims of desire and physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual self-possession. She explores the subject of decolonizing sexualities in several of her works, including the edited collection, *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature* (2011). Miranda was an English professor at Washington and Lee University until her retirement in 2021.

### Readings

- [“We,”](#) *Split this Rock*.
- [“Love Poem to a Butch Woman,”](#) *Kundalini Splendor*. [scroll down]
- [“I Am Not a Witness,”](#) Hanksville.org. Originally published in *Indian Cartography*. Greenfield Review Press, 1998.
- [“Transplant,”](#) *High Desert Journal*.
- [“The Voice,”](#) *Chapter House Journal*.

### Further Readings

- [Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir](#). 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition. Heydey, 2022.
- [Indian Cartography](#). Greenfield Review Press, 1999.
- [The Zen of La Llorona](#). Salt Publishing, 2005.

## Mona Susan Power

Mona Susan Power (b. 1961) is Standing Rock Sioux/Ihánktŕuŕwaŕna Dakhóta). Power was born and raised in Chicago and today lives in the Twin Cities of Minnesota. Power graduated from Harvard University, earned a law degree from Harvard, and an MFA from the University of Iowa. Her first novel, *The Grass Dancer* (1994) won the PEN/Hemingway Prize. She's since published a collection of fiction and nonfiction titled *Roofwalker* (2002) and the novel, *Sacred Wilderness* (2014). Her most recent novel is *A Council of Dolls* (2023) from which the linked excerpt "Naming Ceremony" is taken. *A Council of Dolls* follows the lives of three Yanktonai Dakota women and their connections to different dolls that have been eyewitness to trauma and the struggle to endure from the late 19th century to the 21st. In an interview accompanying the short story's online publication, Power notes, "'Naming Ceremony' was the original inspiration for the new novel. I wrote it as a stand-alone story and continued to think of it as complete until a few months after it was published. . . A much-expanded version of 'Naming Ceremony' opens the novel, and then I move back in time to the mother's story, then the grandmother's. The final section of the novel shows the narrator of 'Naming Ceremony' grown up and ready to heal from the trauma she inherited from prior generations so devastated by colonization" (Interview).

### Cited Work

- ["An Interview with Mona Susan Power,"](#) *The Missouri Review* (22 September 2023).

### Reading

- ["Naming Ceremony,"](#) *The Missouri Review* (13 April 2023).

### Further Reading

- [The Grass Dancer.](#) Putnam's, 1994.

- [\*A Council of Dolls\*](#). Mariner Books, 2023.

## Eric Gansworth

Eric Gansworth (b. 1965) was raised on the Tuscarora Nation and is an enrolled member of the Onondaga Nation. He is both an accomplished painter and writer. His paintings and poetry are included in the book *A Half-Life of Cardio-Pulmonary Function* (2008). He earned undergraduate and master's degrees from State University College at Buffalo and currently teaches at Canisius College. His first published novel was *Indian Summers* (1998), followed by *Smoke Dancing* (2004), *Mending Skins* (2005), which won the Pen Oakland Award, and *Extra Indians*, (2010). In recent years, among other publications, Gansworth has received acclaim for his writing for young adults: two novels, *If Ever I Get Out of Here* (2013), winner of the American Indian Youth Literary Award), and *Give Me Some Truth* (2018), and his memoir in verse, *Apple (Skin to the Core)* (2020) which won an honors from the Michael L. Printz award for literary excellence in young adult literature.

### Reading

- [“Angry Planet,”](#) (includes audio and text of poem), Library of Congress, *Living Nations, Living Words: A Collection of First Peoples Poetry*.

### Further Reading

- [Apple \(Skin to the Core\)](#). Arthur A. Levine, 2020.
- [If Ever I Get Out of Here](#). Arthur A. Levine, 2013.
- [Mending Skins](#). Bison Books, 2005.

## Tiffany Midge

Tiffany Midge (b. 1965) is Hunkpapa Lakota, enrolled citizen of Standing Rock Sioux Nation. She earned her MFA in creative writing from the University of Idaho and currently lives in Moscow, Idaho. Her first book of poetry was published in 1996, followed by three others, including *Horns* (2024). Midge is well-regarded for her humorous and satirical spin on contemporary Native life and popular culture, the central focus of her first book of essays, *Bury My Heart at Chuck E. Cheese's* (2021), and evident in the title and content of her follow-up collection of essays, *The Dreamcatcher in the Wry* (2024).

### Readings

- [“Antiquing with Indians,”](#) (includes audio and text of poem), Library of Congress, *Living Nations, Living Words: A Collection of First Peoples Poetry*.
- [“Distracted from COVID-19, Attention Shifts to MIA Maiden from Land O’Lakes Butter Box,”](#) (includes audio and text of poem), Poem-a-Day, American Academy of Poets.

### Further Reading

- [Bury My Heart at Chuck E. Cheese's](#). Bison Books, 2021.
- [The Dreamcatcher in the Wry](#). University of Nebraska Press, 2024.
- [Horns](#). Two Sylvias Press, 2024.

## Esther Belin

Esther Belin (b. 1968) is Diné and was raised in Lynwood, California, in central Los Angeles. Her parents were among the generations of Native People who were relocated to urban areas during the Relocation Era which provided so-called incentives to move away from tribal homelands. Belin is a graduate of the American Institute for American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, the University of California, Berkeley, and earned an MFA in Creative Writing from Antioch University. Her first book of poetry, winner of the American Book Award, was *From the Belly of My Beauty*, published in 1999. The cover of *From the Belly...* featured elements similar to the cover art of this book which Belin also created. In 2019, she co-edited another American Book Award-winning book, *The Diné Reader: An Anthology of Navajo Literature*, the first comprehensive collection of works by Diné writers, spanning almost sixty years. She is currently the Audrey and John Leslie Endowed Chair in North American Indian and Indigenous Literary Studies at Michigan State University.

### Readings

- [“I hope to God you will not ask,”](#) (includes audio and text of poem), Poem-a-Day, American Academy of Poets.
- [“Night Travel,”](#) *Poetry Foundation*.

### Further Reading

- [From the Belly of My Beauty: Poems](#). University of Arizona Press, 1999.
- [Of Cartography: Poems](#). University of Arizona Press, 2017.
- Belin, Esther G., Jeff Berglund, Connie A. Jacobs, Anthony K. Webster, editors. [The Diné Reader: An Anthology of Navajo Literature](#). University of Arizona Press, 2021.

## Layli Long Soldier

Layli Long Soldier (b. 1972) is Oglala Lakota. She grew up mainly in the Four Corner region of the Southwest (New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado) and today lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She earned her BFA from the American Institute of American Indian Arts and her MFA in creative writing from Bard College. Her first full-length book of poetry is the award-winning *Whereas* (2017). *Whereas* won the 2017 poetry award from the National Book Critic Circle and was among the five finalists for the 2017 National Book Award; it was also the 2018 recipient of the PEN/Jean Stein Book Award for book of the year. Although her work engages with history, Long Soldier notes in an interview with *The On Being Project* that she wanted to make her work utterly contemporary: “All of them had to be within living memory. I really wanted it to be grounded in the now, at least within my own lifetime.”

### Readings

- [“38,”](#) Poetry Foundation.
- [“Resolution 2,”](#) (includes audio and text of poem), Library of Congress, *Living Nations, Living Words: A Collection of First Peoples Poetry*.
- [“Layli Longsoldier –The Freedom of Real Apologies,”](#) *The On Being Project*. Podcast. 30 March 2017.

### Historical Context

- [“U.S. Government Hangs 38 Dakota Men in Minnesota,”](#) December 26, 1862, *A History of Racial Injustice*.
- [H.R. 3326-46, Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2010, Section 8113,](#) (pp. 45-46).

### Further Reading

- [Whereas.](#) Graywolf Press, 2017.

## Brandy Nālani McDougall

Brandy Nālani McDougall (b. 1976-) is Kānaka Maoli, known in English as “Native Hawaiian” (both terms, the first of the two, especially, are preferable in the context of pan-Indigenous contexts). McDougall was born and raised on Maui. She is a poet, essayist, and associate professor of English at the University of Hawaii, Mānoa. She earned her MFA in creative writing from the University of Oregon and her PhD in English from the University of Hawaii. In 2016 she published *Finding Meaning: Kaona and Contemporary Hawaiian Literature*, the first in-depth study of Indigenous Hawaiian literature. McDougall is also the author of two poetry collections, *The Salt-Wind / Ka Makani Pa‘akai* (2008) and *Āina Hanau: Birth Land* (2023). From 2023-2025 she served as the State Poet Laureate of Hawaii.

### Reading

- [“This Island on Which I Love You”](#) Library of Congress, *Living Nations, Living Words: A Collection of First Peoples Poetry*.

### Further Reading

- [‘Āina Hānau/Birth Land](#). The University of Arizona Press, 2023.
- [Finding Meaning: Kaona and Contemporary Hawaiian Literature](#). University of Arizona Press, 2016.

## Natanya Ann Pulley

Natanya Ann Pulley (b. 1976) is Diné and is currently an associate professor of English at Colorado College. She earned her PhD from the University of Utah. She is the founding editor of Colorado College's online literary journal *Hairstreak Butterfly Review*. Her short story collection *With Teeth* was selected as a winner of the 2017 Many Voices Project competition and was published in 2019 by New Rivers Press. Pulley has published fiction and nonfiction in numerous journals including the *McSweeney's*, *Waxwing*, and *As/Us*. Her work has been anthologized in *#NotYourPrincess: Voices of Native American Women*, *Shapes of Native Nonfiction*, *Women Write Resistance*, and more. In an interview with Pulley, I once asked her, "What do you hope readers learn from your writing?" She responded, "I'm not sure a reader learns from my writing as much as they learn to listen to themselves. As readers, we listen to when a sentence is striking, or an image feels alive. Listen for when an idea resonates. Writing is never just writing but also listening. I feel we—writers and readers—share this space" (*The Diné Reader*, p. 310).

### Cited Work

- Berglund, Jeff. "Interview with Natanya Ann Pulley," [The Diné Reader: An Anthology of Navajo Literature](#). Eds. Esther Belin, et al. University of Arizona Press, 2021.

### Reading

- [Words Made Real.](#) "Poetry" (March 2025).

### Further Reading

- Pulley, Natanya Ann. [With Teeth](#). New Rivers Press, 2019.

## Natalie Diaz

Natalie Diaz (b. 1978) is Mohave and an enrolled member of the Gila River Indian Community. She was born and raised on the Fort Mohave Indian Reservation near Needles, California. She was a college basketball player at Old Dominion University where she earned her BA in English and Women's Studies. After playing professional basketball in Europe, she returned to Old Dominion University and completed in 2007 her MFA in poetry and fiction. She has won numerous awards for her writing, including the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for her second collection, *Postcolonial Love Poem* (2020) which followed her first book in 2012, *My Brother Was an Aztec*. In 2018, Diaz received the prestigious award, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. Diaz is the Maxine and Jonathan Marshall Chair in Modern and Contemporary Poetry at Arizona State University where she is professor of English. She was also the founding director of the Center for Imagination at ASU.

### Readings

- [“The First Water Is the Body,”](#) *Emergence Magazine* (18 May 2023).
- [“from the Desire Field,”](#) (includes audio and text of poem), Poem-a-Day, American Academy of Poets.
- [“My Brother at 3 A.M.,”](#) Poetry Foundation.
- [“Natalie Diaz: Postcolonial Love Poem: Part One,”](#) *Between the Covers Podcast: Tin House*. [transcript available].

### Further Reading

- [Postcolonial Love Poem](#). Graywolf Press, 2020.
- [When My Brother Was an Aztec](#). Copper Canyon Press, 2012.

## Tommy Orange

Tommy Orange (b. 1982) is a Cheyenne writer known for his well-reviewed debut novel, *There There* (2018), set primarily in contemporary Oakland, California, about the experiences of a large cast of interlinked Native characters. Orange himself was born and raised in Oakland. While the contemporary plotline leads toward the endpoint of a first-ever competitive pow-wow in the Oakland Coliseum, the other plotlines reckon with the characters' complex backstories and histories that have brought them to this pivotal moment. The novel explores the experiences of Native Peoples in urban locations due to policies developed by the federal government in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century as part of Relocation Era efforts; powerfully, Orange also reminds readers that Indigenous Peoples have always been everywhere and that urban locations were once, always have been, and still will be Indigenous places. *There There* was shortlisted for major awards and was the recipient of the American Book Award and the PEN/Hemingway Award in 2019. Orange earned his MFA at the Institute for American Indian Arts and published this novel not too long after his graduation. His second novel, *Wandering Stars* (2024) is both a prequel and a sequel to *There There* and follows related characters after the events in the first novel and long before the events in *There There*. *Wandering Stars* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. In 2025, he received The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship.

### Reading

- [“New Jesus,”](#) *Lithub*.

### Further Reading

- [There There](#). Knopf, 2018.
- [Wandering Stars](#). Knopf, 2024.

## Jake Skeets

Jake Skeets (b. 1991) is Diné and grew up in Vanderwagen, New Mexico. He graduated from the University of New Mexico and earned an MFA from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. After winning the American Poetry Series award, his first book, *Eyes Bottle Dark with a Mouthful of Flowers*, was published in 2019. In “The Memory Field,” an essay included here, Skeets notes, “Poetry has a deep connection with the idea of memory field. For me, a blank page becomes an altar where the memory field is teased into existence. The field of the page becomes a kind of physio-textual landscape, and it’s the poet’s job to render a blank page into a literal field using language.” Skeets is an assistant professor of English at the University of Oklahoma. In 2025 he was named the third Poet Laureate of the Navajo Nation. His novel, *Dawnhouse*, is forthcoming from Pantheon and his second poetry collection, *Horses*, is forthcoming from Milkweed.

### Readings

- [“Drunktown,”](#) (text and video), *Songs at the Confluence: Indigenous Poets on Place by Indigenous Nations Poets* [scroll down].
- [“The Memory Field: Musings on the Diné Perspective of Time, Memory, and Land,”](#) (text and audio), *Emergence Magazine* (14 Oct. 2020).

### Further Reading

[Eyes Bottle Dark with a Mouthful of Flowers](#). Milkweed Editions, 2019.

## Manny Loley

Manny Loley (b. 1994), who is Diné, grew up in New Mexico. He earned an MFA in Fiction at the Institute for American Indian Arts and his PhD from the University of Denver. His work has been featured in *HIKA*, *Pollentongue*, *RED INK*, and elsewhere. Loley's short story, "Na' Nízhoozhí Dí," was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in fiction by the *Santa Fe Literary Review*. In an interview for *The Diné Reader*, Loley notes, "Writing is more than a solitary act. Our writing stems from our upbringing, personal experiences, and, although we may not think about it often, from our ancestors. We carry their stories in our being. As Diné writers, we have a responsibility of representation and cultural legacy that non-Diné writers may not have to deal with" (339). Loley is a member of Saad Bee Hózhó: A Diné Writers' Collective, co-founder and director of the Emerging Diné Writers' Institute, and former chair of the advisory board to the Navajo Nation Poet Laureate. Today he is editor of *Leading the Way* magazine whose mission is "To preserve lifestyle teachings for future generations, uphold traditional values, and provide wisdom to the Navajo People."

### Cited Work

- Berglund, Jeff. "Interview with Manny Loley." [The Diné Reader: An Anthology of Navajo Literature](#). Eds. Esther Belin, et al. University of Arizona Press, 2021.

### Readings

- ["10 Questions Interview with The Massachusetts Review."](#)
- ["Butterfly Man Tells a Story,"](#) (includes audio and text of poem), *Poetry Magazine* (July/August 2022).
- ["Esther Belin in Conversation with Manny Loley."](#) *The Poetry Magazine Podcast* (14 July 2022). [audio with transcript].
- ["Let There Be,"](#) (includes audio and text of poem), Poets.org.

## Artificial Intelligence & Indigenous Literatures

It is tempting to rely on Chat-GPT or other versions of Generative Artificial Intelligence to support one's understanding of what you've read or viewed, partially as a corroboration of your own thoughts, but also as tool to resolve uncertainties. Certainly, for audiences who have not been well-educated in the history of Native American Peoples and cultures, one may also feel that support is needed to fill in some of the gaps in learning and understanding. While it is true that supportive research and further study will help all audiences understand the meaning and value of a work, relying on Artificial Intelligence presents an array of pitfalls when interpreting literature, music, film, and art, generally. This is even more true for creative expression produced by Indigenous Peoples.

Why is this the case? To answer that, first let's pause on the notion that all art—what I group under the term “creative expression”—is meant to help humans reflect on and understand the human condition. This includes the mysteries of human existence, things that we may not fully understand and may need to reflect on. Some of these ideas are timeless and impossible to fathom: Why do I exist? What is the meaning of life? What is the nature of joy and pleasure? Why must pain and suffering exist? What happens when I die? Art can amuse and entertain us; it can make us cry but also laugh. It also explores some of the most mundane parts of our lives as well as the way we understand our histories and the shifting political and social moments we live in.

No matter how sophisticated Artificial Intelligence becomes, it can never provide us a sense of the human experience of reflecting on and interpreting art. Moreover, we won't grow and deepen in complex ways as individuals if we depend on machines to inform our thinking and feeling. When Artificial Intelligence provides its answers, it is simply scraping or mining what is publicly available (usually what is free and accessible) and most frequently sourced—thus the responses are often simplistic at best. Artificial Intelligence isn't producing unique or original ideas. It is

synthesizing some of the most obvious and common responses.

When it comes to creative expressions about and by Indigenous Peoples, the responses are even more limited or misguided due in large part to the lack of available and existing published responses to the works. For example, if you ask AI a question about a sonnet by Shakespeare, there are hundreds of years of critical responses to his work, but if you look at a contemporary Indigenous poet, even a prize winner like Jake Skeets or Layli Longsoldier, AI will likely rely on mainly book reviews, interviews, and blog posts.

With even more widely read works, Artificial Intelligence often collects from the works with the most common denominators, eliminating complexities. On top of this, Artificial Intelligence is not equipped to represent the views of Indigenous communities and glosses over nuances of such contextually specific information. AI like Co-Pilot has begun to caution users that the views are limited and that a full examination of the subject should engage Native Peoples and/or communities. Some of these views, in fact, have been shaped by Indigenous scholars and users who have developed critiques of Artificial Intelligence. But just because that note of guidance is provided, it does not mean the responses are adequate or trustworthy.

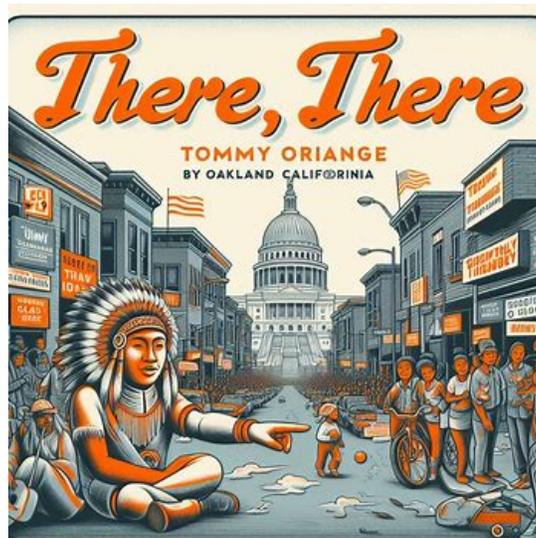
Indigenous ways of storytelling and “meaning-making”—even those published and made available to everyone—implicitly ask readers to consider how each of us stands in relation to the work? How we respond to it is also a way of developing a relationship with the realities that the work represents, including the culture, community, and artist or author or filmmaker, etc. Artificial Intelligence disrupts those fundamental relationships because we are unable to relate to other thinkers and knowledge producers.

To profile the ways that AI offers us limited understandings, in my classes I've asked students to prompt Co-Pilot or Chat-GPT to design book covers for novels or even short stories or essays we have read, providing essential details about plot, character, theme, time period, etc. I encouraged such uses because the process revealed the limitations of Artificial Intelligence to represent the complexities of information and its overreliance on stereotypes.

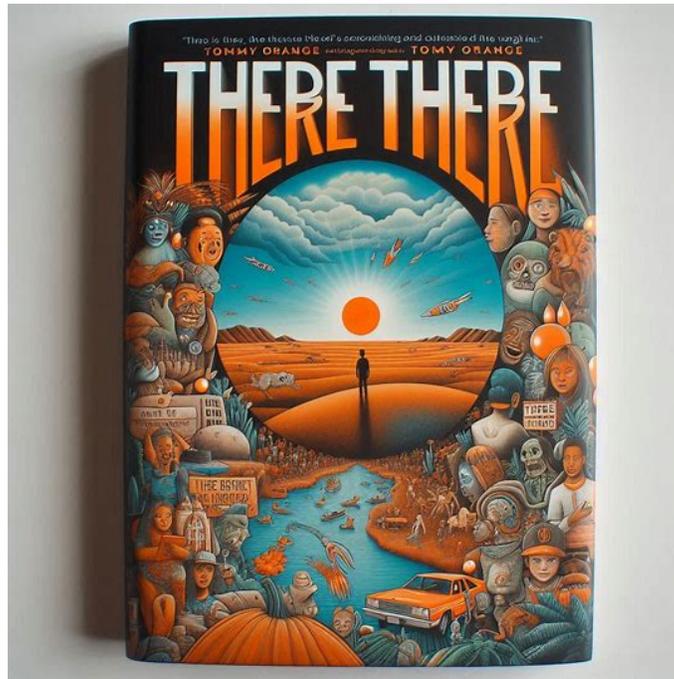
Below are just a few examples:



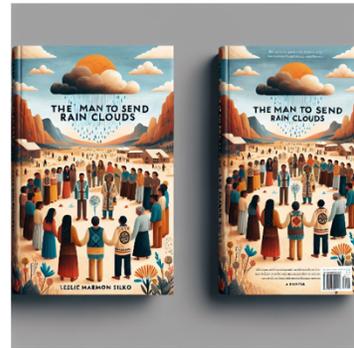
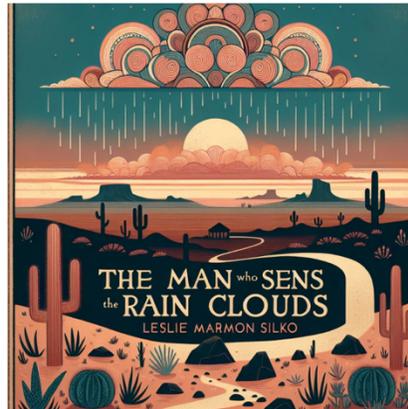
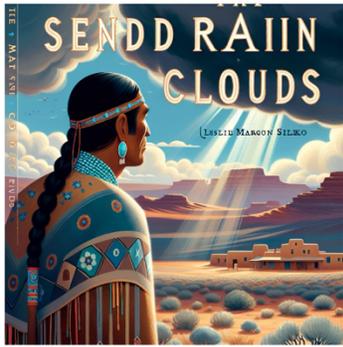
This is AI-generated art for Chief Standing Bear's (Ponca) speech, "What I am Going to Tell You Here Will Take Me Until Dark," testimony delivered during an 1879 court case, the first time according to most accounts, a Native person addressed a court of law. Note the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century dress of audience members, the contemporary, electric microphone, and Standing Bear's stereotypical "traditional dress," all in a concert-size open-air setting, not a courtroom in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. How well does this image represent history?



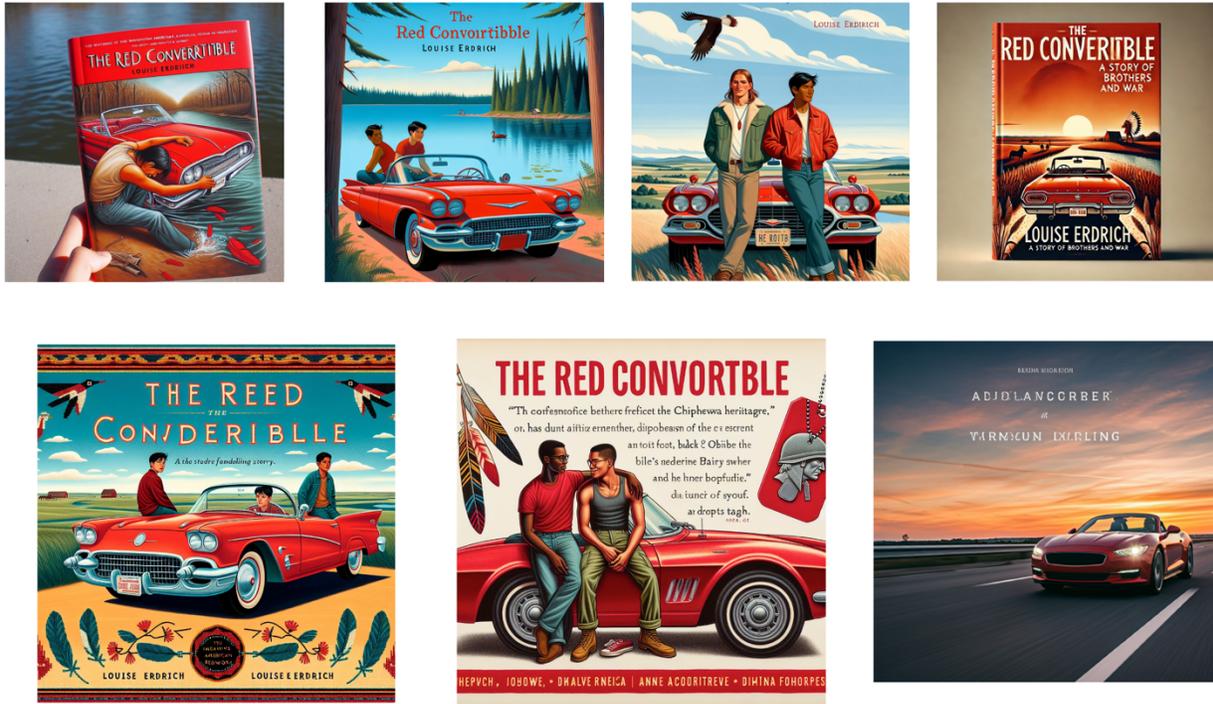
AI-generated cover art for the 2018 novel, *There There*, by Tommy Orange (Cheyenne) produced from this prompt: “Design a cover for Tommy Orange’s *There, There* that incorporates Native Americans integrating into the cultural landscape of Oakland, California.” Note that the images are hardly representative of contemporary Oakland and feature larger-than-life stereotypes from a different era. Is that the U.S. Capitol building in the background? What other missteps do you recognize?



Another example of AI-generated art for the 2018 novel, *There There*, from this prompt: “Design a cover for *There There* by Tommy Orange that depicts the major themes and cultural practices of the novel.” This cover features inexplicable elements that have no bearing on the novel and indicate AI is perpetuating and mining stereotypes about Native People. It’s mind-boggling that the center features a landscape like Mars with rocket ships as the novel is set in 2018 Oakland and has been characterized by reviewers as gritty and realistic. AI has generated many other stereotypical images. What stands out to you?



AI-generated cover art for Leslie Marmon Silko’s short story, “The Man to Send Rain Clouds,” linked in this book. Prompts for these iterations generally included information about the story title and its setting in a Pueblo community in New Mexico, as you know, having read this story. Note the consistent color scheme that AI has used, likely based on its “knowledge” of the Southwest. Astute viewers will note that in northern New Mexico there are no saguaro cactus, that Pueblo peoples do not dress as the man does on the leftmost image, and that the story features no community-wide ceremony. In fact, the image on the right bears some similarities to [Sing Down the Rain](#) (1997) written by Judy Moreillon and illustrated by Michael Chiago about the Tohono O’odham saguaro wine ceremony rather than any cultural practices for Pueblo people.



AI-generated cover art for Louise Erdrich’s short story, “The Red Convertible” (1981), about two Ojibwe/Anishinaabe brothers after one returns home from the Vietnam War and suffers from post-traumatic stress. The story was later incorporated as a chapter in the novel, *Love Medicine* (1984). The figures in the bottom middle image don’t appear to be Ojibwe/Anishinaabe while the image on the bottom right looks like a recent automobile advertisement, not something set in the 1970s. What other strange elements do you find in this set of cover images?

Careful readers will note the missteps of AI in the examples above. These illustrations show how disconnected AI is from interpreting literature. While AI may produce explanations about this story and others based on existing information, it is unable to offer meaningful and accurate insights about literature and culture in the ways that humans are capable of.

I encourage all students to explore the possibilities of AI use, but also its perils. Students who I have worked with largely find that AI produces inferior results to human-generated thinking about literature. AI, to risk repeating, is really only able to summarize and synthesize responses to literature that are already public. For example, when we asked Co-Pilot, “Why Does Artificial Intelligence have trouble engaging in literary analysis?,” we received the following reply which cuts to the heart of some of the issues at stake:

Great question, Jeff! Artificial intelligence can engage in literary analysis to a certain extent, but it faces several challenges that make deep, nuanced interpretation difficult. Here’s why:

1. Lack of Human Experience

Literary analysis often draws on lived experiences, emotions, cultural context, and personal interpretation. AI doesn't have consciousness, emotions, or cultural identity, so it can't truly "feel" or "relate" to literature the way humans do.

2. Ambiguity and Subjectivity

Literature thrives on ambiguity, symbolism, and multiple layers of meaning. A single passage might be interpreted in vastly different ways depending on the reader’s background, beliefs, and emotional state. AI can identify possible interpretations, but it doesn’t choose one based on personal insight—it just presents options.

3. Contextual Depth

AI can analyze text based on patterns, themes, and historical context if provided, but it may miss subtle intertextual references, irony, or cultural nuances unless explicitly trained on them. For example, understanding the significance of a Shakespearean metaphor might require knowledge of Elizabethan beliefs, which AI can reference but not intuitively grasp.

4. Creativity and Originality

Literary analysis often involves creative thinking—drawing connections between disparate ideas, proposing novel interpretations, or challenging conventional readings. AI tends to be more conservative, relying on established interpretations unless prompted otherwise.

5. Evolving Language and Style

Authors often bend or break linguistic rules to create unique styles. AI can struggle with texts that are experimental, fragmented, or linguistically unconventional (e.g., stream-of-consciousness writing like James Joyce or Virginia Woolf).

That said, AI can still be a useful tool for literary analysis! It can:

- Identify themes, motifs, and stylistic devices.
- Summarize critical interpretations.
- Compare texts across genres or periods.
- Assist in close reading by highlighting patterns or anomalies.

When we asked ChatGPT—rather than Co-Pilot—the same question, we received this succinct response: “AI can face challenges in engaging in literary analysis because it primarily relies on patterns in data rather than genuine understanding or subjective interpretation. While AI can analyze themes, characters, and stylistic devices based on learned patterns, it may struggle with nuanced, symbolic, or deeply contextual insights that require human experience and cultural knowledge. Additionally, literary analysis often involves interpreting emotional, philosophical, or aesthetic aspects that are difficult for AI to grasp fully. However, AI can be a useful tool for identifying patterns and generating initial analyses, serving as a complement to human interpretation.”

It’s precisely the lack of human experience that is rooted in emotion, cultural components linked to philosophy and aesthetic and lived experiences, that will always challenge AI. Of course, the carefully crafted sentences, laden with a sophisticated vocabulary, provides an illusion of accuracy and authenticity. This lack of human connection means something else entirely in the context of Indigenous studies, which includes Indigenous literary studies. Australian Aboriginal scholar, Tamika Worrell, writes in “Yarning about Uncle Chatty Gee: AI Harming Indigenous Knowledges” that AI presents three distinct risks: 1) “Misrepresentation and inaccuracy,” 2) “Cultural appropriation,” 3) “Erosion of traditional knowledge transmission” (33).

The illustrations above demonstrate one example of misrepresentation and inaccuracy. Considering the latter two categories, especially, cultural and political sovereignty is abrogated. That, is, the autonomy and control over knowledge, beliefs, and practices is diminished. Even if in reality, Indigenous communities ultimately retain control over their sovereignty, AI introduces the illusion that such concerns don’t matter since the consumption and control model of AI asserts that anyone can have access to any ounce of information and knowledge at any time rather than in accordance with practices of people in relationship to one another. Indigenous leaders and scholars are exploring how guardrails might be put in place

to protect privileged knowledge and what kind of strategies might be employed to safeguard Indigenous knowledges ([Carlson & Richards](#)).

To fully understand how AI interacts with the subject matter presented in this book/OER, one should really test it out. At the conclusion of exploration of the uses of AI in the context of Indigenous literary studies, a former student concluded: AI is limited when it comes to Indigenous literature because it relies on publicly accessible content, most of which might not contain complex, community-held knowledge. AI tools could be modified to collaborate with Indigenous groups and scholars while upholding cultural sensitivity and intellectual property rights in order to address this. In addition to ensuring that AI supports Indigenous narratives rather than distorting them, this cooperative approach may aid enhance interpretations” (Anonymous Student, Fall 2024, Northern Arizona University).

After some extensive experimentation, another concluded:

“Especially in terms of Indigenous literature, AI is not a be-all-end-all, one-stop shop for researching cultural identities. Because it only scans publicly available material, AI should warn people of that stipulation and encourage students to read from Indigenous authors and interpret primary resources. I think an even better step would be for AI to only recommend Indigenous literature and reliable Indigenous resources instead of providing an answer. That way, people still have to do the work manually and create their conclusions about these works” (Anonymous Student, Fall 2024, Northern Arizona University).

Students also raised ethical questions about a reliance on machine-generated and sorted knowledge that cut Indigenous Peoples out of the conversation, essentially abrogating the possibilities of developing relationships with Indigenous knowledge holders and creators and honoring the fact that Indigenous People should maintain authority over their own traditions. Further, students raised concerns about the ways that AI can easily fabricate illusions of true knowledge. Other students throughout the semester raised other ethical concerns about the technology itself, citing sources that documented the significant environmental impacts of the

technology—in terms of raw materials and in terms of energy consumption (Gelles). While problematic for many reasons, this fact itself represents the ways that technologies may lead humans to live out of balance with the other-than-human world rather than in relation with it.

## Cited Works

Carlson, Bronwyn and Richards, Peita. "Indigenous Knowledges Informing 'Machine Learning' Could Prevent Stolen Art and Other Culturally Unsafe AI Practices." [\*The Conversation\*](#), 8 September 2023.

Gelles, David. "A.I.'s Insatiable Appetite for Energy." [\*The New York Times\*](#), 11 July 2024, online.

Worrell, Tamika. "[Yarning about Uncle Chatty Gee: AI Harming Indigenous Knowledges.](#)" *TLN Journal*, 31: 2 (Winter 2024): 32-36.

## Appendix

### Open Educational Resources (OERs)

This book is an example of an Open Educational Resource (OER). It was made available to you free. Its contents were both already available publicly for access and the author curated these elements and created a unifying approach to support their use for study and research in the context of the field of Indigenous literary studies in the present moment (trends do change).

According to the [Creative Commons Wiki](#), OERs are “are teaching, learning, and research materials that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others.” This “repurposing” or what is often called “remixing” must be done only in the context of creating other open-access materials—often with attribution of the source OER—and is encouraged in the spirit of inviting others to be co-creators of knowledge. [UNESCO](#), a specialized agency of the United Nations, focused on education, science, culture, and communication, describes “Open Educational Resources (OER) are learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others.” UNESCO’s endorsement of OER initiatives is about equitable networking, sharing, and cooperation with respect to knowledge and education.

My (the author’s) academic home institution, [Northern Arizona University](#), promotes the use of OER as part of its mission to increase access to higher education. Reducing textbook costs is one strategy among others to support access. The writers and creators of the texts linked in this book made decisions to make their work publicly accessible. As the author of this OER, I have simply directed attention to many of these already public resources, and I seek no personal profit from this effort. Those who are deceased and whose works are no

longer restricted by copyright are a separate case—the three early writers whose full manuscripts have been digitized by a college’s library is a case in point. In addition to the curation of this material, I have shared my thoughts based on original research and from my own published work that is free to anyone through a Creative Commons license. As an educator and scholar, it’s my view that as many readers as possible should understand the vibrancy and complexity and urgency of Indigenous literatures (in their many varied forms). And I presume that living writers, musicians, and filmmakers, among other creatives, want to foster audiences for their work—and that is why they make decisions to share some of their work publicly and for free (in some cases it’s as simple as wanting to support particular initiatives or organizations, or even to raise their own public profile). My hope is that academic interest in a few of their works shared here will garner wider interest in their full-length works available from publishers, bookstores, and, of course, libraries. Please support the writers included here!

In addition to being made available to anyone through Northern Arizona University’s Cline Library and their initiative, Indigenous Knowledges Digital Learning Library and IOER, it has been submitted and distributed through other Open Educational/Access Repositories globally.

When searching for OERs, readers/consumers should apply typical criteria when assessing the merit and value of a particular work. Research the editor or author, look for evidence of their prior publications, their connections to their fields. This will help you determine if the resource is one you may trust and rely on. In reality, this is not all that different from what you might do with a book published and distributed by traditional publishers, but some OERs do not pass through the same rigorous peer-review process related to the content of a work. That said, many academic journals are now seeking Creative Commons licenses and creating new possibilities for readers interested in Open Educational Resources. In the case of me, the author of this OER, I’ve provided links in my biography to previous publications and others may be found through traditional research at your library.

Within Indigenous Studies, including work in literature, it's important to consider the types of experts and sources you consult to ensure their authority and accuracy. The sources you cite demonstrate the types of intellectual relationships you're developing; in effect, whose minds and brains you put yours next to. By consulting sources from scholars or knowledge holders from within tribal or Indigenous communities, or those who have established respected roles within academic communities aligned with Indigenous Peoples' interests, you demonstrate your intellectual kinship with these experts. This should also inspire to think about reciprocity, that is, the ways you can return the gift of what's been given to you. Beginning to ask such questions is an important way to avoid being yet another extractive force taking from Indigenous communities.

## Resources

### Useful Resource to Consult for Citation Practices in Indigenous Studies

Younging, Gregory. [Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and About Indigenous Peoples](#). Brush Education Inc., 2018.

### Resource on Indigenous Children's and Young Peoples Literatures

[American Indians in Children's Literature](#), founded by Debbie Reese (Nambé Pueblo)

### Professional Organizations Supportive of Indigenous Literary Studies

[ASAIL/Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures](#)

[Indigenous Literary Studies Association](#)

[ILSA-sponsored Collaborative Online Workshops](#), *many of which have been archived. They've focused on writing abstracts, polishing presentations, writing positionality statements, etc.*

[MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States](#)

[NAISA/Native American and Indigenous Studies Association](#)

## Author Biography

Jeff Berglund is Professor of English at Northern Arizona University where he teaches Indigenous and American Indian literatures and film, U.S. multi-ethnic literature, U.S. Southwest literature, and contemporary U.S. literature. From 2016-2022, he served as the university's Director of Liberal Studies (now General Studies).

Berglund is the author of [\*Cannibal Fictions: American Explorations of Colonialism, Race, Gender, and Sexuality\*](#) (2006, U of Wisconsin P), the editor of [\*Sherman Alexie: A Collection of Critical Essays\*](#) (2010, U of Utah P, co-edited with Jan Roush), the editor of [\*Indigenous Pop: Native American Music from Jazz to Hip Hop\*](#) (co-edited with Jan Johnson, and Kimberli Lee), [\*The Diné Reader: an Anthology of Navajo Literature\*](#) (2021, U of Arizona P, co-edited with Esther Belin, Connie Jacobs, and Anthony Webster), and [\*Indigenous Peoples Rise Up: the Global Ascendancy of Social Media Activism\*](#) (2021, Rutgers University Press, co-edited with Bronwyn Carlson). He is the author of numerous scholarly articles or chapters on Esther Belin, Simon Ortiz, *The 1491s*, *Reservation Dogs*, and *Rutherford Falls*. His most recent publication at the time of writing is “Intellectual and Creative Claims of Sovereignty by Indian Boarding School Students in *The Colored Land: A Navajo Indian Book, Written and Illustrated by Navajo Children* (1937)” published in the journal, *NAIS (Native American and Indigenous Studies)*, Fall 2024.

He has received awards for his teaching, service, and research, including in 2008, the university's prestigious award, The President's Distinguished Teaching Award. In 2019 he was awarded by the Commission for Native Americans the Cal Seciwa Award for Outstanding Faculty in recognition of “great contributions in support of Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Alaskan Natives on the NAU campus.” He was recipient of the 2022 Research and Creative Activity NAU Award for Most Significant Research/Scholarly Work for his work on *The Diné Reader* which also

won the American Books Award that same year. He was the recipient of a 2023 faculty award from the National Endowment for Humanities for his research on Diné literature. In 2024, he was awarded an inaugural TRAIL (Transformation through Artificial Intelligence in Learning) grant from NAU to integrate Artificial Intelligence into components of his courses.

Berglund is a frequent collaborator with Indigenous scholars in Australia and New Zealand where he has conducted numerous workshops for Indigenous PhD students. He was a member of FIRE (Forum for Indigenous Research Excellence), the Working Group on Emergent Indigenous Identities, and an ally-affiliate with the [Centre for Global Indigenous Futures](#) at Macquarie University. He is the Treasurer for the [Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures](#). At NAU, he is an affiliate faculty member with Applied Indigenous Studies. He was among the first group of NAU faculty to attend the [Yale National Initiative](#) which supports the development of culturally responsive education in public schools in underserved communities. He is on the executive committee for [DINÉ](#) (The Diné Institute for Navajo Nation Educators) and [INE](#) (The Institute for Native-Serving Educators). In 2020, he led a seminar for Diné teachers on stories of home, belonging, and kinship, and in 2024, a seminar on relationality in the humanities.

Contact: [Jeff.Berglund@nau.edu](mailto:Jeff.Berglund@nau.edu)

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Cline Library at Northern Arizona University for the support to develop this OER (Open Educational Resource). Special thanks go to John Doherty, Associate Dean of Cline Library, and Jordan Garcia, Instructional Designer with the Teaching and Learning Center at NAU, for helping me with accessible design.

I am especially indebted to the many writers whose writing is curated here for teaching me and allowing me to learn and grow from their art. Thank you for your generosity and for willingness to share your work in open-access formats. It is my hope that interested readers will find other examples of your work online or in books from libraries, bookstores, or your publishers.

As always, I thank Monica, my partner in all things, for encouraging me to imagine the possibilities and for reminding me to stop and ask for directions sometimes.

Finally, I thank the many students I've had the good fortune to work with over the past three decades in higher education. You continue to respond to the incredible writers I bring into your orbit and remind me of the impact they have had on you in your lives. More recently, you have inspired me to search for cost-effective alternatives to reduce your educational expenses, hence the creation of this very OER. I'm especially indebted to Fall 2024 students in English 243 and English 245 who explored the ins and outs of AI in the context of Indigenous literary studies.

## Land Acknowledgement

Northern Arizona University sits at the base of the San Francisco Peaks—a sacred mountain—and on land that is within the homelands of several tribal nations, including the Navajo/Diné, Hopi, Zuni, Paiute, and Havasupai. We honor and respect the many diverse Indigenous Peoples connected to this land on which we study, work, and live. We acknowledge their elders— past, present, and future. The San Francisco Peaks have been held sacred, since time immemorial, by the Navajo/Diné, Hopi, Zuni, Tewa, Hualapai, Havasupai, Yavapai Apache, Yavapai-Prescott, Tonto Apache, White Mountain Apache, San Carlos Apache, San Juan Southern Paiute, Fort McDowell Mojave Apache, and Acoma.

Names by which the San Francisco Peaks are known: Dook'o'oostiíd (Navajo/Diné); Nuva'tukya'ovi (Hopi); Dzit Tso (Dilzhe'e/Tonto Apache); Tsii Bina (Acoma); Nuvaxatuh (Southern Paiute); Hehasahpatch or Huassapatch (Havasupai); Wik'hanbaja (Hualapai); Wi:mun Kwa (Yavapai); Sunha K'hbchu Yalanne (Zuni); 'Amat 'likwe Nyava (Mojave).