

Explorations in Sights and Sounds

individual writer and the (female) reader, García Pinto at times achieves such intimacy, as, for example, when Puerto Rican writer

Rosario Ferré reveals, "Perhaps deep down what I'm trying to do is recover a world that has disappeared, even though it's a world based on such tremendous injustice that I'm glad it's changed. ...For me, it's a world full of memories and terrible rancor, a mixture that makes for excellent literary material. It's a fight over the bones and the leftovers, since nothing else remains" (87). In passages such as this, metaphors take on flesh as the writer speaks of painful relationships of exile or marginality with her homeland.

Although not thematized, issues of ethnic marginality and social oppression emerge in several interviews. Feeling squeezed between different cultures is a common experience. Margo Glantz not only never learned Yiddish, her father's literary language, but she was also too poor to attend Hebrew school and was thus ostracized when she attended the Jewish high school in Mexico City. French-Mexican-Polish Elena Poniatowska arrived as a refugee in Mexico during World War II, and, while attending English school, learned Spanish ("thought to be the language of the colonized" [166]) from the servants. Learning to manipulate this language marked by race, gender, and class, the women interviewed interest us most when they are prodded to dwell on their "intimate histories," the accumulation of sensual, painful, and joyful memories that reveal their stature as great writers. For such moments of illumination, García Pinto's book rewards the reader, but, for a comprehensive view of the state of Latin American women's literature today, the reader must look elsewhere.

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Diane Glancy. *Claiming Breath*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992) 160 pp., \$15.95 cloth.

In her seventh book of poetry, Diane Glancy presents a moving account of the portrait of the artist as Native, woman, and poet. Of German, English, and Cherokee descent, Glancy's prose poetry, as she states in her "Preface," is often "about being in the middle ground between two cultures, not fully a part of either. I write with a split voice, often experimenting with language until the parts equal some sort of a whole." The sixty-three poems in this volume (with the last composed of eight parts) are a non-linear journey, a physical and psychological traveling through the senses and intellect. The details of the poet's life accumulate initially through

journal-like entries that set forth the parameters of her life: a failed marriage, two children, her many teaching trips across the Midwest as artist-in-residence, her home twice vandalized by thieves, and her mother's losing battle against cancer. Ultimately, the book is about writing, or "wrioting," as the title of one piece suggests, and the search to "explore my memories & their relational aspects to the present. I was born between 2 heritages & I want to explore the empty space, that place-between-2-places, that walk-in-2-worlds. I want to do it in a new way."

Glancy, in *Claiming Breath*, does explore the "walk-in-2-worlds" in a new way. This exploration takes her faith in Christianity, and perhaps even more, in the indomitable power of language—which is ultimately rooted in the oral tradition—as it impetus, as she says in "February/The Iron Cranberry": "Poetry is road maintenance for a fragmented world which seeks to be kept together." At this stage of the journey, there is "The AUTHORITY of the written word & I seek MORE-." The poet gathers her material from "ordinary circumstance" and the "hardness of prairie life," yet as she says in "January 13," "Words are not my inheritance," given the tribal heritage that was not taught to her. As the poet deals with the facts of everyday life, her not unwelcome isolation as a writer, and the loss of her second parent, she mourns the loss of this tribal heritage, as she writes in "Ethnic Arts: The Cultural Bridge": "I can't remember anything my Indian / grandmother said to me, yet her heritage stands / before me like a stone iceberg, a huge presence, / all the more terrible for its silence."

Yet within the losses and the pleasure of her life (a handwritten note from a student in "February/The Iron Curtain," reading the dictionary in "Eucleation"), there is a growing awareness of independence that becomes evident in "SHEdonism": "It was to my benefit to learn the agonies of that journey [from her mother's generation] - that pulling off of adhesive that had been stuck there so long." After the death of her mother, the poems begin to deal more with the poet's tribal heritage and her place within that heritage. "A Hogan in Bethlehem," "A Confession or Apology for Christian Faith," "Dance Lessons with the Spirit World," and "The Nail-down of Oral Tradition" meld together the poet's faith in Christianity and the importance of Native spirituality, with the overriding power of the word/Word. "I may make some Native Americans who read this mad. I'm not militant. I'm content to sit in my room & write," she states in "Part Four: Oral Tradition Carries the Fire (The Spirit of the People)." However, Native spirituality is the transcending force that the poet wants to see in Native American poetry, the force that infuses her own work as it has been combined with her own life and writing experiences. By the final section of the poem, "Part Eight: At the Pow

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Wow Grounds," the journey to "claim breath," for now, has reached a new plateau: "All I saw is / these Hymbian totems / this renascent self. / I believe I'm here, disappeared and back. / I want a library in a bundle. / Fax, man / this God head up there / this re-written self / I've got to see."

Claiming Breath received the North American Indian Prose Award, an award it richly deserves. In the title poem, the poet says, "I think it's also important to know why you write," and in this journey through space, time, memory, and consciousness, the poet can come to a renascent self through the recognition of the necessity and importance of spirituality and art to all cultures, a recognition that is necessarily inherent in the oral tradition of Native American people. For Glancy, the power of language is as essential as breathing.

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Roger Goodman. *Japan's 'International Youth': The Emergence of a New Class of Schoolchildren.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) xv, 275 pp., \$65.00.

Japan's rapid expansion in the world of commerce since the 1960's has not only brought economic prosperity to the country but new social phenomena to its isolated monolithic culture. Roger Goodman's book focuses on just one such problem concerning "kikokusijo", or secondary schoolchildren returnees who resided abroad more than one year due to overseas assignments of their parents. The increase of returnee school children from 1, 543 (1971) to 10, 498 (1986) began to raise concerns in the mid-1970's with the Ministry of Education, mass media, and various public and business communities. The creation of remedial schools and special classes was hastened largely due to powerful lobbying by the returnees' parents who are mostly social elite. Why does a handful of returnee children raise a major social concern in this age of global travel and communication? A plausible explanation is the main undertaking of this book.

A useful demography of the returnees including their overseas locations, returnee community and schools, and sources of their financial support is initially provided to develop their backgrounds. Subsequently, readjustment problems of the returnees to Japan's cultural and educational systems are brought up in Chapters three and four. Previous studies are reviewed critically for overemphasis on the returnees' conflict with the moral values of homogenous, exclusivist, and conformist Japanese society which are perpetuated further by the Japanese educational system. Drawing from his own