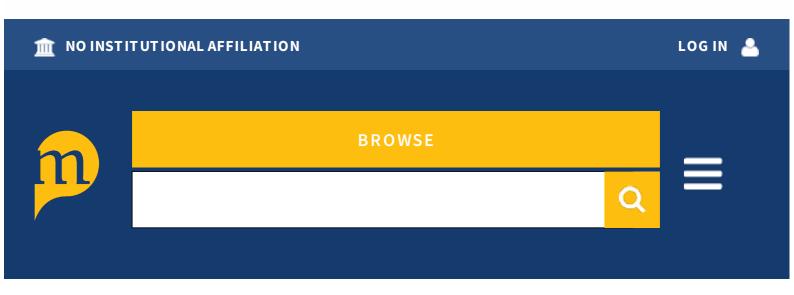
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Bone Dance: New and Selected Poems, 1965-1993 by Wendy Rose.



O Bone Dance: New and Selected Poems, 1965–1993 by Wendy Rose (review)

James R. Saucerman

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REVIEW

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Reviews 125 The Sound of Rattles and Clappers: A Collection of New California Indian Writing. Edited by Greg Sarris. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994. 161 pages, \$30.00/\$14.95.) The Sound of Rattles and Clappers may be technically "new" writings from California, but little of it says anything new. Most of the work in the first three quarters of the book recounts the same whining "personal" histories of the abuse of ancestors by white invaders that we can read in any and all anthologies of literate English-speaking Native American writers. These "histories" pass themselves off as poetry because they are written in short lines and appear in vertical columns on the page. The quality of these verbal verticalities, even when they invoke a "native" response to nature and the resurrection and reinvention of native culture is, however, simply

unremarkable. That said, it can be noted that in spite ofits redundancies this collection is sprinkled with
occasional pleasing images such as Stephen Meadows's "A chainsaw dismembers the silence/ofawhite
afternoon"and Janice Gould's "to touch you everywhere I am/open."James Luna's lack offluency in English, his
prolific use of clichés, i.e. "around wood stoves containing glowing embers" and mundane little diary
entries lend a certain "charm" to the collection that one would he sitate to call art. Unfortunately, too, the
pathetic fallacy is kept abundantly alive and well in these "poems" as in Meadows's "Above Suicide
Creek/the trees felled/one by one/can be heard to scream." The strongest material in the book is the
editor's own. Greg Sarris can tell a pretty good story. PENELOPE REEDY The Redneck Review of Literature,
Idaho Bone Dance: New and Selected Poems, 1965-1993. By Wendy Rose. (Tucson: Uni versity of Arizona
Press, 1993. 108 pages, \$19.95/\$10.95.) Bone Dance serves best as a Wendy Rose sampler because it
contains samples from each of her seven previous books of poems along with seven poems from a new
volume, Now PoofSheIs Gone. It also profiles her struggle to find poetic voice and personal and cultural
identity from her younger years to the present. Her search takes her many places, including California,
Connecticut, New York, New Hampshire; it takes her from scientific encounters generating from her original
academic discipline, anthropology, (which sharpens her focus on the treatment of Indian skeletons and the
fragmenting of a culture symbolized by museums' classification and shelving of "bones" and by the
commercial market for Indian skeletons) to the prejudice she encounters 126 Western American Literature
in "Incident at a Hamburger Stand: Iowa City"; and it takes her into the movement of indigenous people
around the earth. The introduction Rose has written for this volume briefly outlines, through mention of the
inclusions, this search for identity—not merely as Hopi or Miwok or English or Prussian but as a human being
in her particular circumstance. Familiar poems from earliervolumes such as Long Division: A TribalHistory,
Lost Copper, Halfbreed Chronicles, and Going to War with All My Relations (not against but with) enrich the
present volume. Existence in this world is a struggle (an almost victorious struggle) to move from
frag mentation to healing wholeness. Love and beauty almost overcome the stress of the journey, as in the
final section from NowPoofSheIs Gone, where one finds even more hints of almost mythic survival of the
individual as in the poems "Do You See Her Alone on the Mountain" and "Coarsegold Morning." Even in the se
laterpoems, however, one finds forest fires, "angry moths," and the woman in "Forty, Trembling" who is not also also also also also also also also
of this world and no one rides to the rescue. Bone Dance is a good sampler because it may entice the
reader to enjoy other poems that kept this present sparse selection company in earlier volumes. JAMES R.
SAUCERMAN NorthwestMissouri State University Ravensong. By Lee Maracle. (Vancouver: Press Gang
Publishers, 1993. 199 pages, \$12.95.) When a fluepidemic hits her native village on British Columbia's west
coast, 17-year-old Staceyrisks her coveted dream of attending university to stay in the village and nurse the
ill. For days and nights on end, she drips fluids, one drop at a time, into the mouths

Reviews 125

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PENELOPE REEDY

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- The Sound of Rattles and Clappers: A Collection of New California Indian Writing ed. by Greg Sarris, the burozem has contradictory pluralistic parameter of Roding-Hamilton.

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