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 ***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 of its redundancies this collection is sprinkled with occasional pleasing images such as Stephen Meadows's "A chainsaw dismembers the silence/of a white afternoon" and Janice Gould's "to touch you everywhere I am/open." James Luna's lack of fluency 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 hesitate 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: University 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 Poof She Is 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 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 earlier volumes such as *Long Division: A Tribal History*, *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 fragmentation to healing wholeness. Love and beauty almost overcome the stress of the journey, as in the final section from *Now Poof She Is 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 "Coarse gold Morning." Even in these later poems, however, one finds forest fires, "angry moths," and the woman in "Forty, Trembling" who ... is not 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 *Northwest Missouri State University Ravensong*. By Lee Maracle. (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1993. 199 pages, \$12.95.) When a flu epidemic hits her native village on British Columbia's west coast, 17-year-old Stacey risks 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...

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PENELOPE REEDY

The Redneck Review of Literature, Idaho

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