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## Annotated Bibliography

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### Writing in Love: An Annotated Bibliography of Critical Responses to the Poetry and Novels of Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris

Compiled by Lillian Brewington,  
Normie Bullard, and R. W. Reising

In recent years Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris have teamed to enrich the Native American Renaissance in a way previously unknown in imaginative literature. Working collaboratively, the pair, married since 1981, have agreed that first-draft creation should dictate subsequent claims to authorship. Whichever of the two writes the initial draft of a volume gains credit for that volume.

Although multiple drafts have proven as crucial as consistent husband and wife interaction concerning content and style, first-draft primacy has governed the professional relationship, which to date has produced four critically acclaimed volumes. The first three carry Erdrich's name, the most recent Dorris's: *Jacklight*, a book of poetry published in 1984; *Love Medicine*, a novel appearing in the same year; *The Beet Queen*, a novel published in 1986; and *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*, a novel published in 1987.

The method of collaboration and authorship-determination is so unusual, the success of the team so rare, and the future of their efforts so promising that critics and teachers are certain to find the following bibliography helpful. Each of the bibliography's four parts treats an Erdrich-Dorris volume. Included and tersely annotated are reviews and essays from newspapers, journals, and magazines, as well as audio-tapes, which have appeared prior to October 1, 1987.

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Lillian D. Brewington currently serves as circulation supervisor in the Mary Livermore Library at Pembroke State University. Normie L. Bullard is reference librarian in the Livermore Library at Pembroke State University. Dr. R. W. Reising is a Professor of Communicative Arts and American Indian Studies at Pembroke State University.

The pair have promised two novels in the foreseeable future. *Tracks* and *American Horse*, both to carry Erdrich's name, are to complete the four-volume series initiated by *Love Medicine* and continued by *The Beet Queen*. Doubtless, the marriage of talents, unique in the annals of *belles lettres*, will continue to have salutary impact not only upon the Native American Renaissance but also upon the whole of contemporary literature. The bibliography that follows, itself a collaborative venture, reflects its creators' respect and gratitude for the artistry and power that Erdrich and Dorris have united, artistry and power certain to gather critical and scholarly attention for decades to come.

### *Jacklight*

- Clark, Tom. "Louise Erdrich is a Visitor from Poetry's Future." Review of *Jacklight*. *Herald Examiner* (Los Angeles, CA) 25 July 1984. Focuses on the magic in the volume.
- Loudon, Michael. Review of *Jacklight*. *World Literature Today* 60 (Winter 1986). Argues that Erdrich describes the degradation found on Indian reservations.
- Shetley, Vernon. Review of *Jacklight*. *Poetry* 146 (April 1985). Says that Erdrich treats everyday life in her poetry.
- Waters, Richard K. Review of *Jacklight*. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* (Vol. 9, No. 4, 1985): 136-139. Explains the importance of jacklight in the book.
- Yerburgh, Rhoda. Review of *Jacklight*. *Library Journal* (February 1984): 183. Praises Erdrich's turbulent imagination.
- Review of *Jacklight*. *Publishers Weekly* 224 (23 December 1983): 57. Says that Erdrich concentrates on bitterness and passion to the extreme.
- Review of *Jacklight*. *Booklist* (15 March 1984): 1023. Maintains that the poetry describes the difficulty and despair of reservation life.
- Review of *Jacklight*. *Choice* (June, 1986): 1509. Praises the imagery of the poetry.

### *Love Medicine*

- Bruckner, D. J. R. Review of *Love Medicine*. *The New York Times*, 20 December 1984, C21. Deals with the language of Erdrich.
- Bruckner, D. J. R. Review of *Love Medicine*. *Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY) 30 December 1984. Revises the Bruckner article published in *The New York Times*.
- Davison, Anne. "'Love Medicine' a First Novel with Magical Power." Review of *Love Medicine*. *Star* (Kansas City, MO) 13 January 1985. Says that Erdrich reveals the social conditions of the modern Indian.
- Drake, Anstiss. "'Love Medicine' a First Novel with Magical Power." Review of *Love Medicine*. *Tribune* (Chicago, IL) 4 November 1984. Praises Erdrich's power of love.
- Dudar, Helen. "'A Novel Partnership.'" Review of *Love Medicine*. *The Wall Street Journal* 204 24 October 1984, 30. Describes the unique way Erdrich and Dorris have for collaborating on their writing.

- Dunbar, Mark. "'Love Medicine' Works Its Magic." Review of *Love Medicine*. *Dispatch* (Columbus, Ohio) 3 March 1985. Treats Erdrich's use of language.
- Gilbert, Harriett. "Mixed Feelings." Review of *Love Medicine*. *New Statesman* 109 (February 1985): 31. Deals with the tragedy of the volume.
- Hulbert, Ann. "Rural Chic." Review of *Love Medicine*. *The New Republic* 193 (September 1985): 25-30. Discusses the realism and romanticism of the volume.
- Jahner, Elaine. Review of *Love Medicine*. *Parabola* :96-101. Explains how love and its healing power work in the book.
- Ketcham, Diana. "Plains Upbringing Helps Louise Erdrich Take Characteristics of Big City To Task." Review of *Love Medicine*. *Tribune* (Oakland, California) 7 September 1986. Celebrates Erdrich's focus on the lifestyle of Indians.
- Kilpatrick, Thomas L. Review of *Love Medicine*. *Library Journal* 109 (October 1984): 1860. Treats love—mother love in particular.
- Kitterman, Barry. "Life on the Reservation." Review of *Love Medicine*. *Washington Post* (D.C.) 24 March 1984. Discusses the lack of a main character and a plot.
- Lenfestey, James P. "North Dakotan's Novel a Colorful Complex Roller Coaster Ride." Review of *Love Medicine*. *Star and Tribune* (Minneapolis, Minn.) 31 March 1985. Shows how Erdrich depicts love and its happiness and hurt.
- Lewis, Robert W. Review of *Love Medicine*. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 9, (1985): 113-116. Praises the excellent picture of contemporary reservation life which Erdrich provides.
- Lyons, Gene. "In Indian Territory." Review of *Love Medicine*. *Newsweek* 105 (11 February 1985): 70-71. Maintains that the novel is really a book of related short stories.
- Parini, Jay. Review of *Love Medicine*. *Saturday Review* (November-December, 1984): 83. Describes the mix of characters in the book.
- Paul, Jeanne. "Erdrich Mixes Powerful Tonic of Life in 'Love Medicine'." Review of *Love Medicine*. *Sun* (Baltimore, MD) 20 January 1985, 75. Praises Erdrich's use of language.
- Portales, Marco. "People with Holes in Their Lives." Review of *Love Medicine*. *New York Times Book Review*, 23 December 1984, 6. Addresses the love and survival of the novel.
- Seale, Doris. Review of *Love Medicine*. *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin* 16 (July 1985): 22. Treats the laughter and sadness of the work.
- Taylor, Linda. "On-and-Off Reservation." Review of *Love Medicine*. *TLS*, 22 February 1985. Says that the novel deals with survival.
- Towers, Robert. "Uprooted." Review of *Love Medicine*. *The New York Review* 32 (11 April 1985): 36. Praises Erdrich's dramatized picture of contemporary Indians on a reservation.
- Warren, Colleen Kelly. "Debut of a Fine, Natural Storyteller." Review of *Love Medicine*. *Post-Dispatch*, 20 January 1985. Salutes the humor of the novel.
- Williams, Helen E. Review of *Love Medicine*. *School Library Journal* 31 (November 1984): 145. Compares the writing of *Love Medicine* to that of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*.
- Review of *Love Medicine*. *English Journal* (February 1985): 103. Explains the importance of the title.
- Review of *Love Medicine* by Louise Erdrich. *Booklist* 81 (September 1984): 24. Says the novel treats the problems of contemporary Indians.

- Review of *Love Medicine*. *Publishers Weekly* (10 August 10 1984): 73. Describes the melodrama used by Erdrich.
- Review of *Love Medicine*. *Kirkus Reviews* 52 (August 1984): 765-766. Discusses the violence and mystery combined in the novel.
- Review of *Love Medicine*. *Wilson Library Bulletin* 59 (April 1985): 537. Explains how Erdrich describes the lives of the Chippewa Indians.
- Review of *Love Medicine*. *Choice* (June 1986): 1508. Deals with the ordinary setting of the book.

### *The Beet Queen*

- Banks, Russell. "Border Country." Review of *Beet Queen*. *Nation* 243 (1 November 1986): 460-63. Praises Erdrich's orchestration of multiple voices.
- Becker, Afido. "Loneliness and Longing in the Midwest." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Detroit News* (Michigan) 12 October 1986. Discusses the effect of loneliness and longing in the lives of the women of the novel.
- Bly, Robert. "Another World Breaks Through." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *New York Times Book Review*, 31 August 1986, 2. Treats Erdrich's ingenious use of metaphors.
- Cady, Jack. "First Person." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Seattle Times* (Washington) 24 August 1986. Criticizes the author's inability to succeed in writing in first person.
- Chase, Elise. Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Library Journal* 111 (August 1986): 168-69. Says that the novel treats the challenge of the ordinary by bizarre coincidences and surreal fantasies.
- Clifford, Craig. "Looking in on Fragmented Lives." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Dallas Morning News* (Texas) 12 October 1986. Compares the fragmentation in *The Beet Queen* to that in T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*.
- Croke, Vicki. "A Wry Tale of Two Children." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Boston Herald* (Massachusetts) 7 September 1986. Treats the absurdity of life revealed in the novel.
- Cryer, Dan. "Beet Queen." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Newsday* (Long Island, New York) 31 August 1986. Praises Erdrich's use of prose.
- Dowling, Tom. "A North Dakota Saga about a Woman without Illusions." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *San Francisco Examiner* (California) 6 November 1986. Discusses Erdrich's use of illusion and practicality.
- Erdrich, Louise. *Louise Erdrich Reading 'The Beet Queen' and 'Love Medicine'*. (excerpts) The American Audio Prose Library, 80 minutes, 1986. Focuses on two characters, Dot Adare and Gerry Nannapush, appearing in both Erdrich novels.
- Erdrich, Louise. *Interview with Louise Erdrich*. The American Audio Prose Library, 50 minutes, 1986. Provides insight into the structure and imagery of *The Beet Queen* and *Love Medicine*.
- Frenkiel, Nora. "Louise Erdrich." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Sun* (Baltimore, Maryland) 17 November 1986. Comments on the language used in the novel.
- Furman, Laura. "'Beet Queen' Seduces the Romantic." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *San Jose Mercury News* (California) 7 September 1986. Criticizes Erdrich's use of narratives and the lack of cohesion in the book.

- Goudie, Jeffrey Ann. "'Beet Queen' Puts Comic Touch into Harsh Reality." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Kansas City Star* (Missouri) 28 September 1986. Treats the author's use of harshness and comedy.
- Greenberg, Joanne. "But Incidents in 'The Beet Queen' Do Not Flow or Lend Themselves to Any Real Story Development." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Denver Post* (Colorado) 14 September 1986. Deals with Erdrich's use of multiple points of view.
- Helber, Linda. "Author Fills Her Books with Offbeat Personalities." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix) 18 November 1986. Argues that the book provides compulsive but unsettling reading.
- Johnson, Greg. "'The Beet Queen' a Stunning, Bold Novel." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Journal* (Atlanta, GA) 7 September 1986. Deals with the fantasy and mythicism of the novel.
- Kakutani, Michiko. "Family Members Run, Drift, Turn Away from One Another." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Knoxville News Sentinel* (Tennessee) 12 October 1986. Treats the gloom and the fragmented family life of the novel.
- Ketchem, Diana. "'The Beet Queen' Fulfills Erdrich's Promise as Novelist." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Tribune* (Oakland, CA) 7 September 1986. Deals with Erdrich's use of melodrama.
- Kleinpoppen, Paul. "Bleak Struggle for Survival Is the Subject of 'The Beet Queen'." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Florida Times-Union* (Jacksonville) 19 October 1986. Lauds the description of harshness in the lives of the characters.
- Krawiec, Richard. "'Beet Queen' Wonderfully Written Despite some Flaws." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Pittsburgh Press* (Pennsylvania) 5 October 1986. Deals with shifting viewpoints as one of the major flaws in Erdrich's writing.
- Lesser, Wendy. "Louise Erdrich's Plains Song." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Washington Post* (D.C.) 31 August 1986. Demonstrates the ability of Erdrich to force the reader to make emotional connections.
- Lundergaard, Bob. "Erdrich Book Is Full of Life and Magic." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Minneapolis Star and Tribune* (Minnesota) 31 August 1986. Treats the humor and individualism revealed by Erdrich's characters.
- Nelson, John S. "'Beet Queen' Traces Delicate Web of Family Ties." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Wichita Eagle-Beacon* (Kansas) 5 October 1986. Discusses Erdrich's use of texturing the world as her characters move in and out of the web.
- Rubins, Josh. "Foundling Fiction." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *The New York Review* 33 (15 January 1987): 14. Discusses the comedy and tragedy of the novel.
- Silko, Leslie Marmon. "Here's an Odd Artifact for the Fairy-Tale Shelf." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Albuquerque Tribune* (New Mexico) 7 October 1986. Shows how Erdrich uses realism in placing her characters in places and situations.
- Simon, Linda. "Small Gestures, Large Patterns." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Commonweal* 113 (October 1986): 565-66. Deals with the difficult web of relationships delineated by Erdrich.
- Smith, Martin Cruz. "Spinning A Family Web of Steel." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *San Francisco Chronicle* (California) 10 August 1986. Focuses on Erdrich's use of women as the center of the family.
- Tyler, Anne. "After 'Love Medicine' A Still Better Novel from Erdrich." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC) 31 August 1986.

- Discusses the way Erdrich's characters meet again and again, causing events to happen.
- Unger, Jeffery S. "Author, Author." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Dallas Times Herald* (Texas) 13 November 1986. Describes the ability of main characters to tell a story.
- Vancheri, Barbara. "'Beet Queen' Is A Finely Crafted Work." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* (Pennsylvania) 18 October 1986. Treats the concepts of sexual obsession and abandonment important in the novel.
- "Writing Shines from A Poetic Pen." Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Washington Times* (D.C.) 22 September 1986. Discusses Erdrich's use of prose.
- Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Library Journal* 112 (January 1987): 55. Discusses the amusement and tragedy of the book.
- Review of *The Beet Queen*. *Publishers Weekly* (4 July 1986): 60. Deals with Erdrich's blending of fantasy and reality.

### *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*

- Alberts, Laurie. "Three Women to be Reckoned With." Review of *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. *Albuquerque Journal* (New Mexico) 26 May 1987. Centers on the three mothers who deny their daughters love.
- Brown, Dave. "Dorris' 'Yellow Raft' is a 'major' ". Review of *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. *Des Moines Register* (Iowa) 3 May 1987. Discusses the three women who are continually beaten down but who continue to fight for survival.
- Broyard, Anatole. "Eccentricity Was All They Could Afford." Review of *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. *New York Times Book Review* (17 June 1987). Treats the luxury of eccentricity apparent in the novel.
- Chetkovich, Kathryn. "A Poignant Look at Mothers, Daughters." Review of *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. *San Jose Mercury News* (California) 17 May 1987. Cites the worn-out metaphors of the novel.
- Devlin, Colleen. "Dorris Debut Describes, Describes and Describes." Review of *Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. *Chicago Times* (Illinois) 10 May 1987. Criticizes Dorris' excessive use of descriptive phrases.
- Kakutani, Michiko. "Multiple Perspectives." Review of *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. *New York Times*, 9 May 1987. Addresses physical descriptions as well as emotional details in the novel.
- Keyser, Lucy. "Write for Each Other." Review of *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. *Washington Times* (D.C.) 28 October 1986. Deals with the political issues latent in the novel.
- Sundvall, Herbert. "Adrift with no Oar." Review of *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. *Seattle Times* (Washington) 31 May 1987. Maintains that Dorris compares with Shakespeare in his use of imagery.
- Review of *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. *Booklist* 83 (1 March 1987): 946-47. Discusses the struggles of the three Indian women of the work.
- Review of *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water* by Michael Dorris. *Publishers Weekly* 231 (20 March 1987): 70. Praises the novel for accentuating the pain, poverty and social problems of the American Indian.