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high culture in the Southwest, it is of relatively little value to those focused on American Indian artists, writers, composers, or playwrights.

Richard N. Ellis
Fort Lewis College

Exploding Chippewas. By Mark Turcotte. Evanston: Triquarterly Books, Northwestern University Press, 2002. 78 pages. \$14.95 paper.

Mark Turcotte's *Exploding Chippewas* is my new favorite poetry book. With skill and imagination, Turcotte brings his life and the lives of many aboriginal people to the audience. He paints word pictures that make us imagine how his life has played and imagine that we know him. For aboriginal readers, like myself, we can see many elements of our lives in his. His descriptions of the aboriginal experience are both personal and universal.

For me, *Exploding Chippewas* brings to mind the work of Sherman Alexie, Chrystos, Jimmie Durham, Esther Belin, Adrian Louis, and other aboriginal poets whose work is both raw and elegant at the same time. Turcotte's work is beautifully crafted, yet it seems not crafted at all, like a traditional song which has sung through him from his heart, from the land, from the spirit world, and from other places we cannot go at will. There is a haunting quality to some of these poems that speaks to the emotional depths of a man who has been there and back again.

The way Turcotte has written this book of poetry in chapters or sets, which refer to each other or to a theme, leaves the reader with the feeling that real and profound events are being portrayed. This telling of stories in pieces compelled me to keep reading until the book ended, and regretting when it did. Telling his stories this way left me with the feeling that Turcotte has more good stories to tell that I am sure he will tell well. I wanted to get in my car and go to his place to hear some more. I wanted to see the man who wove these tales, meet his family, and see where he comes from. Turcotte's stories are so involving that I felt like I knew him, but wanted to know more.

I believe the non-aboriginal reader of Turcotte's stories will gain a better understanding of the complexity of aboriginal lives and identities. Within the pages of *Exploding Chippewas* are stories of poverty, pain, and discrimination and stories of love, joy, and triumph. Many aboriginal readers, I expect, will recognize these stories and their portrayal of the painful and jubilant realities of aboriginal life. Turcotte's stories of *Exploding Chippewas* are stories of love lost and longed for, of love found and cherished, of the quick road down and the long road back, of abject places and the most hallowed ones. These stories are blessed and agonizing, blissful and tragic, but they are all stories of hope. I look forward to reading more of Mark Turcotte's work in the future.

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