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Author

Roemer, Kenneth M.

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The Indian Who Bombed Berlin and Other Stories. By Ralph J. Salisbury. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2009. 256 pages. \$24.95 paper.

It is common knowledge to *AICRJ* readers that of all the ethnic groups in America, American Indians have the highest rate of enlistment in the armed services. Hence it is not surprising that some of the best-known novels and short stories by Native authors focus on the returning veteran, especially veterans suffering from various degrees of post-traumatic stress disorder—Abel in N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (1968), Tayo in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977), Henry Junior in Louise Erdrich's "The Red Convertible" from *Love Medicine* ([1984]; the story is also the title story of her new collection). Ralph Salisbury's *The Indian Who Bombed Berlin* joins and expands this genre. Like Abel and Tayo, Salisbury's returning veterans offer glimpses of their combat experiences, for example, World War II in "Laugh before Breakfast" and "A Handprint in Columbus's Homeland's Dust" and Vietnam in "Hole Soldiers, Madonna and Child." But again, as in *House Made of Dawn*, *Ceremony*, and "Red Convertible," the focus is on the returned veteran, especially on how his reentry impacts (like a bomb) his wife and children (assuming his wife hasn't left him while he was gone—another domestic fallout of war mentioned in Salisbury's "Some Killings, One Accidental"). Like Momaday, Silko, Erdrich, and other Native writers, Salisbury concentrates on World War II and Vietnam, but he greatly expands the scope of the genre by also including World War I, Korea, Iraq, and Afghanistan. A tragic/comic hint of the Civil War exists during a race fight between Vietnam veterans in a veterans' hospital in "A Vanishing American and the War between the States."

The Indian Who Bombed Berlin is also part of a broader American literature genre that attempts to capture the American experience in a genre inhabiting a space between the short-story collection and the novel. Famous examples by non-Indian authors include Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), Ernest Hemingway's *In Our Time* (1925), and William Faulkner's *Go Down Moses* (1942), and examples by Native authors include Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, Greg Sarris's *Grand Avenue* (1994), and Sherman Alexie's *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993). At their best, these books offer a sense of unity and dynamism by including sets of stories with the same characters during different times in their lives and, simultaneously, offer a sense of diversity by including stories about different characters in the same region or from other regions with similar experiences. Again, at their best, the authors deliver these senses of dynamic unity and diversity in the intense bursts that good short stories can deliver.

The "content" of *The Indian Who Bombed Berlin* achieves the dynamic unity-diversity expectations. All the male protagonists are Cherokee, and there is a general progression from childhood and adolescent protagonists (whose grandfathers or fathers are veterans) to mature and older protagonists. In the first story, Silwaya Ross (Seek)—his name and nickname have Cherokee historical and allegorical overtones—is eight; the narrator in the last story is an old World War II veteran in the early years of the twenty-first century. Part 1, "Coming to Manhood: Some Initiations," includes several stories that

capture important moments during the adolescence of Lackey York (Lack) and his family. Part 3, "All in the Family: Some Vanishing American Military Histories," is an even more unified set of stories concentrating on the Dark Cloud family: Dirk (Cherokee/English), the father, a World War II veteran who is caring and rational when sober yet crazy to the point of shooting at his dark-skinned youngest son Juke when drunk; his wife, a conservative German American; and Parm, Ann, and Juke, whom we first meet as children—ages eight, six, and five, respectively. Nine often-moving stories follow this family up through the return of Parm and Juke from Vietnam. Though Salisbury sets many of the stories in areas familiar to him, especially Iowa and Oregon, we meet veterans from Kentucky and even a fifty-six-year-old veteran having a troubled sort-of second honeymoon traveling in Germany ("Silver Mercedes and Big Blue Buick: An Indian War"). In part 2, "Some Struggle for Survival in Battle, Some in Bed," and part 4, "Terrorism and Terrorized," we often encounter an entirely new cast of characters in each story.

The *Indian Who Bombed Berlin* fulfills the dynamic unity-diversity expectation of the short-story collection/novel genre. Furthermore, many of the stories, especially in part 3 and the concluding three stories in part 2 ("A Monster Mosquito Seeking Blood," "A Way Home," and "Some Indian Wars, Some Wounds"), fulfill expectations for the intensity that good stories deliver. But many of the other stories don't deliver. I was distracted many times in parts 1, 2, and 4 by the surplus of "boobs" and "butts" and glimpses of curves exposed below short shorts or when breezes lifted "rippling" short skirts. Some of this body talk obviously was intended to underscore the ways that some veterans and male adolescents objectified women. But the body formulas quickly became "old."

More troubling are the ways in which openings and closings rob the intensity of some of the stories. In too many instances the lead-ins seem unnecessarily convoluted and several of the endings unnecessarily didactic. This becomes especially evident when we compare Salisbury's weak and strong introductions and conclusions. For example, this is the opening to "Silver Mercedes and Big Blue Buick: An Indian War": "Tea McKenzie was driving her college-days' friend's big Buick through narrow Bavarian streets, and half asleep beside his insistently German-American but inescapably part-Sioux Indian wife, Mac McKenzie was memory-tripping through thirty years, to when he'd entered Germany the same way his English great-great-grandpappy had entered the New World, as a conqueror. Though true to his menopausally moody mate . . . Mac was still, by God, Man's Man" (43). This is the opening to "Laugh before Breakfast": "'Laugh before breakfast and you'll cry before supper,' Parm Dark Cloud's mother told him, her bruised cheek all there was to be seen of Parm's dad" (129). Certainly, just cause for complex, even stream-of-consciousness openings exist. Witness the opening to Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* or the first few prose pages of *Ceremony*. But in those cases there were strong narrative or psychological reasons for the complexity: an attempt to capture a century in the former and to reveal a confused mind in the latter. In some of Salisbury's openings the primary justification seems to be to display his ability to pile on modifiers, a tendency that often invades

other parts of the stories. Yes, this does suggest the complexity of characters and situations, but so does the fine opening to “Laugh before Breakfast” that ushers in complexity concisely and intensely.

Unnecessary modifiers aren’t the main problem with several of the closings. Here the problem is the unnecessary explanation and/or the temptation to add on a quick flash forward to the future that adds context but also dilutes the intensity of the story. This is the ending of “A Volga River and a Purple Sea”: “Soon, his nation would betray all who had fought for democracy and equality, their Four Freedoms War lost to racism, religious oppression, imperialistic greed, and nuclear-acceleration toward extinction—humans slow, terribly and seemingly fatally slow, to learn” (36). Compare this to the ending sentences of “Some Killings, One Accidental,” when Parm Dark Cloud will soon be unjustly executed. He looks out his prison cell window and sees: “Birds are flying. Cardinals? Orioles? Doves? I cannot tell. They are all black with distance. But they are flying and my mind is flowing—flowing with the minds of my people, my Indian people and my white people, my thoughts like chunks off ice north of here, floating down a river, floating to the south, to melt, to evaporate into clouds, and to fall, as rain, as snow” (181).

The ending expands the context of the story (my Indian people, my white people), picks up on imagery (the raven mocker witches) and themes (the dire expectation that Indians will vanish and hopes for regeneration) from earlier parts of the book, and does this all in a believable and poetic series of images.

Salisbury knows what he is writing about and how to write. He enlisted in the Air Force in World War II when he was seventeen years old and is a recognized poet. He has made a significant contribution to the returning Indian veteran genre by including World War I, Korea, Iraq, and Afghanistan. But I wish, and here others might justifiably disagree with me, that instead of attempting the challenging short-story collection/novel genre, he had published the powerful stories of the Dark Cloud family as an episodic novella and the three concluding selections in part 2 as separate short stories. I realize this would narrow the scope of his often-moving depictions of returning veterans, but the change of form would still offer a transgenerational dynamism and significant diversity. Moreover, it would maintain the intensity so necessary for the telling of stories that dramatize the infiltrations of global wars into American Indian family life.

Kenneth M. Roemer

University of Texas at Arlington

John Beargrease: Legend of Minnesota’s North Shore. By Daniel Lancaster. Duluth, MN: Holy Cow! Press, 2008. 232 pages. \$14.95 paper.

We Ojibwe know that everyone has a story. Daniel Lancaster, a native of southwest Minnesota and writer of several publications about religious studies and the history of Christianity and Judaism, has collected and organized written