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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

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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

and oral records of the life of John Beargrease, an Ojibwe man who carried mail up Minnesota's north shore of Lake Superior during the decades that followed the establishment of reservations in northeastern Minnesota and the settlement of north-shore communities by non-Indian pioneers and entrepreneurs. Lancaster's research and what he has learned along the way have now interwoven his story with that of the north-shore settlements and, through his writing and less directly, with that of Beargrease and the Ojibwe people, those who lived long ago and their descendants who live today.

The book is organized and written in a style that is interesting and readable: the background of historical events is helpful in understanding the story, and the photographs of Ojibwe and pioneer communities and people, particularly the Beargrease family, bridge days past to the present. While reading this book I found myself turning to the back from time to time in search of points of reference as well as a sense of place and relationships. Content and narrative as well as the reading experience would be enhanced by the inclusion of an index, timeline, and maps.

The life of Beargrease can certainly be viewed as a metaphor for the life of Native people of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; his and his family's stories parallel our own family histories. Beargrease as an Anishinaabe Everyman experienced an upheaval of the world the way it had been created by the Great Spirit: loss of land and family, relocation, and the political and social difficulties that were the result of the federal and state governments' Indian policies. Anishinaabeg who read this story will connect the Beargrease family's tribulations, determination to carry on, and basic human decency to their own.

Lancaster's interest in the Beargrease story began, he writes, with his children and with visits to the north shore, where he eventually became a part-time resident. He has combined a love of the lake and north shore with research of the pioneer and Ojibwe communities along the star (contract) rural mail-delivery route that served them. He explains in the preface and acknowledgments that he has included spoken-word historical accounts, and that although "an abundance of apocryphal information has sprung up over the years" he is attempting to tell an accurate and "real" story of the life of a Native mail carrier, family, and community (vii). (The passing of knowledge and history by way of the oral tradition, though a time-honored foundation of Ojibwe education and worldview, is relatively new outside of Indian country.) Further, he explains that his perspectives are twofold: one from the non-Indian pioneers and settlers of the north-shore towns and rural communities, the other from the Beargrease family's "difficult transition from the traditional ways of their people into the modern world" (vii). Lancaster dedicates the book to Beargrease; Lancaster's brother David, a mail carrier in southwestern Minnesota who lost his life while delivering the mail; and the descendants of both men.

For the past quarter century the John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon has been held nearly every January, the coldest month of northeastern Minnesota's long winter season. For three or four days, competing mushers and dog teams from the United States, Canada, and Europe experience

firsthand the challenges of rough terrain and unpredictable weather as each attempts to be the first to complete a course that is the longest and most brutal in the lower forty-eight states. The race commemorates Beargrease's stalwart and steady delivery of mail along the four-hundred-mile round-trip route between Duluth and Grand Marais between 1880 and 1910; it follows roughly the winter overland route. In honor of Beargrease, the registration and race number for the first team is always reserved and held in his name.

In writing the life story of a Native man about whom recorded history is limited, Lancaster has included the oral history that exists in Ojibwe and majority worlds as well as anthropological and historical research of Ojibwe life and cultural practices during Beargrease's lifetime. He has constructed this dual-perspective biography from historical and anthropological publications, census records, recorded interviews, conversations, periodical archives, and several historical society archives that include interview transcripts. He begins with the land cessions of the 1854 treaty that established the three Arrowhead-region Ojibwe reservations (Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, and Grand Portage), physically positioning the story by the blending of geography and history. The bibliography and the endnotes are interesting and eclectic, and they provide direction for an interested reader to explore and consider Lancaster's research journey.

This book has been well received in the Upper Midwest, and especially in the areas of its geographical setting, the communities of the north shore of Lake Superior as well as the Arrowhead region of northeastern Minnesota. References to pioneer families and homesteads and historical events, names, and places resonate with descendants and those who enjoy the glimpse into the human past of today's northeastern Minnesota.

Because of the scarcity of hard-copy records and data that pertain directly to Beargrease's life, Lancaster has filled out existing information with material from other resources that are indirectly and not bibliographically related, a commonly accepted technique in historical research. This works well with much of the book, particularly the background of historical events as the setting for the tale, a chronology communicated in vernacular language. He uses the works of nineteenth-century German traveler and writer Johann Kohl as well as those of Frances Densmore, the early-twentieth-century anthropologist from Red Wing, Minnesota, to fill out the everyday Ojibwe life and cultural practices of the time. However, this emphasis on Kohl and Densmore, although included in an effort to provide parallels and symmetry between Native and non-Native lifestyles, can lead the reader to assumptions that might be incomplete or inaccurate. In writing the story of Beargrease as well as that of the everyday life of the Ojibwe people of that geographical area and time, Lancaster explains Ojibwe epistemology and cultural practices by using the research and impressions of his sources, particularly those of Densmore, whose recording of physical and tangible aspects of Ojibwe life is of historical and anthropological value, but whose interpretations are at times uninformed, simplistic, and even skewed. That information base has led to explanatory asides in Lancaster's work that might lead the reader to conclude that all Ojibwe during Beargrease's

lifetime (and, following the same logic, today) held and practiced identical religious, cultural, and societal beliefs as observed and recorded by Densmore and Kohl. The vast and populous Ojibwe Nation extends across at least five northern states and into Canada; those practices as well as societal and spiritual views and teachings can vary from community to community, and even from family and to family.

To this Ojibwe reader and reviewer, the outstanding feature of this book is the struggle and endurance of the north-shore Ojibwe against the backdrop of federal Indian policy, Indian-white relations, and regional history of the time. The collective story of Beargrease's life, as well as that of the community, reservation, and tribal entity, is told in a series of linked vignettes that, although in written form, bring to this reviewer's mind the shapes and patterns of the oral tradition that is the gift and legacy of our grandparents. We hear (read) in Lancaster's unobtrusive and considerate (written) voice those parts of the story that many non-Indian readers may not: the wrenching stress of the times; choices and compromises; maintenance of the language, culture, and worldview; and sheer courage and dignity of a people surviving while reeling from tremendous loss.

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Listening to the Land: Native American Literary Responses to the Landscape.

By Lee Schweninger. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008. 256 pages. \$59.95 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

Lee Schweninger's *Listening to the Land* is a welcome addition to the growing body of criticism taking as its premise that, in Native American worldviews generally, place matters, and that in the story of Native survival and survivance there is, as Linda Hogan puts it, "always the land."

Chapter 1 is devoted to defending the proposition that "mainstream America continues to stereotype American Indians as symbols of environmentalism" and ecological rectitude (19). His argument is reasonable enough: New Age romanticism holds up the Indian as the model of ecological wisdom and ethical relationship to the land and, in so doing, requires all Indians to exist for no other purpose than to serve as role models for non-Indians, a sort of spiritual colonialism no less genocidal than the other varieties of colonialism practiced by these romantics' forefathers. To his credit, Schweninger candidly acknowledges that his argument is in its way every bit as reductive as the one he opposes because he too deploys the categorical (and hence essentializing) terms *Indian*, *Native American*, and *American Indian* interchangeably in order to imply a distinctive quality not shared by non-Natives—his argument proceeds from a stereotype of non-Natives as sorely in need of the "American Indian Wisdom" they seek in such works as T. C. McLuhan's *Touch the Earth: Self-Portrait of an Indian Existence* (1988), Joseph Bruchac's *Native Wisdom* (1994), and Running Press's *Native American Wisdom* (1994). But on the strengths of