



Walking with Ghosts: Poems

Qwo-Li Driskill

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Written from a contemporary Cherokee, Queer and mixed-race experience, these poems confront a legacy of land-theft, genocide, and forced removal, and resist ongoing attacks on both Indigenous and Gay/ Lesbian/ Bisexual /Transgender communities. Tender, startling, confrontational and erotic, this book honors the dead and brings the survivors back home.

Walking with Ghosts: Poems Details

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Author : Qwo-Li Driskill

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From Reader Review Walking with Ghosts: Poems for online ebook

Julie says

This is not an easy book to read, and it shouldn't be. It took me months. One tear-filled poem at a time. There is a ring of beauty and joy hemming each poem in like a ring of salt to keep out despair. I loved the imagery and the heart and the life found here, even in the face of overwhelming odds.

Jay says

Vivid imagery intertwined with experiences both unique and shared.

I read through on a long bus ride, but anticipate many more years of listening and learning.

Ching-In says

I really appreciated this book for the fierce history & survival stories. Think that many of these pieces would be amazing performed live!

Julene says

This is a book of strong poems, it brings the reader through many emotions: anger, love, fear, sadness. He uses his words to educate, mourn, heal and take back power. He gives us his native language and traditions.

My favorite poem is his long one written after Reagan's death, "Eulogy for the 40th," he reminds us there are many in America who, "We don't care if Ronnie was a gentleman or looked good in/cowboy boots. Please, don't talk about the smile flashing/in his eyes.//Murdered nuns flashed in his eyes. Granada. Nicaragua, El Salvador. AIDS flashed in his eyes." Indeed, through out this book he brings up AIDS, rape, murder of gays and drag queens. He rises their memory in elegies and remembrances.

He speaks in first person in some of these and we feel the fear it is to live a life as outsider. In the one story in the book, named "Story," this fear is bracing.

This is a book to take back stolen territory, in the poem "Song of Removal" he addresses Columbus, AIDS, and all the removals that have taken place through time, he writes, "And this white college student says to me/I hate it when Hispanics won't speak English/This is our country//But it is not your country/Never will be your country/and the Xicano and the Xicana/shall speak whatever they choose/shall keep alive their ancestors/shall keep living/and I wonder why you don't speak Cheyenne" —punch in the belly writing on nearly every page.

My second favorite poem is "Evening With Andrew Jackson," who shows up at his door trailing "blood like

satin ribbons." These days Andrew, "is writing a New Age book./He is making a dream catcher./He is mining minerals from the Black Hills./He is leaving trails across the continent."

And, another favorite, short poem is, "To Your Rude Question, What's your Pedigree? A Response." I would love it if this book were widely read, schools should teach it!

Naori says

Incredibly raw and powerful collection that maintained its lyrical quality while tackling issues of HIV/AIDS in the gay community, hate crimes, the refugee-making of Native Americans, violence towards/in indigenous communities, and the author's own struggles as a two-spirited individual in a society that likes to check boxes. I loved this and would definitely recommend reading it; ultimately we're all interconnected, share the same hearts and the same wounds - this author has a deep understanding of this.

Connie says

Beautiful and Powerful Poetry

yarrow says

In Seattle, 100 lit candles
(I wanted the city to burn.)

In San Francisco, a rainbow flag hung half-mast/
(I wanted the earth to split open)

In DC, the president finally spoke.
(I wanted screams to shatter glass.)

In Laramie, they wore armbands.
(I wanted revolution.)

Sydney says

Qwo-Li Driskill has a way of describing tragedy with a beautiful usage of language. Each poem I felt deeply. Beautiful book.

Tallon Kennedy says

A magnificent poetry collection by a Two-Spirit Native American. The poems in this book are just consistently tight and haunting. 8.5/10
