

**Mary Dougherty Bartlett. *The New Native American Novel: Works in Progress*. (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1986) vii, 132 pp., \$22.50; \$9.95 paper.**

This volume collects work-in-progress of nine contemporary Native American authors, some already widely published and some less well-known as writers of fiction, although all have published poetry, journalism, or scholarship.

Louise Erdrich and Gerald Vizenor both return to important themes, characters, and places which had appeared in previous work. Erdrich continues her saga of Dakota small-town and reservation life in one excerpt from *The Beet Queen*. Vizenor's "Monsignor Missalwait's Interstate" takes its title from the character who previously appeared in his novel, *Darkness in St. Louis Bearheart*; the story elaborates in yet another vein Vizenor's longstanding fascination with language and language theory, and with the traditional figure of the trickster.

N. Scott Momaday's "Set," a tantalizing fragment from a longer work-in-progress, gives a mere glimpse of a complex, introspective artist. The setting appears to be urban, and the author experiments with non-chronological time sequence and multiple points of view. (Bonus: Besides reproductions of two surreal paintings by Sam English, the book contains a haunting pen sketch by Momaday.) Paula Gunn Allen, on the other hand, in this passage from *Raven's Road*, moves from the experimental form of her earlier novel toward realism with controversial subject matter—erotic love between women and nuclear bomb tests. The prose, pervasively self-conscious, does not achieve in this excerpt the candid, matter-of-fact approach aimed for. In *A Report of the Proceedings*, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn also experiments, in this case with a fusion of fictional and factual material. The book is based on a trial (reminiscent of *House Made of Dawn*), and this excerpt contains material from the court records.

The selections from Linda Hogan's *The Grace of Wooden Birds* and Glen Martin's *The Shooter* stand at extremes of "feminine" and "masculine" points of view. Hogan's "Making Do" is a poignant narrative of Roberta, carver of wooden birds who loses lover and children and becomes "one of the silent people"; the story is marred, unfortunately, by the appendage of a second part with a thinly realized narrator who functions primarily as an editorializing voice. Peter Orr is The Shooter, a man in the Hemingway tradition, a forest-fire-fighter consumed with rage and loneliness. Martin's prose is spare, vivid and colloquial. Louis Owens's Cole and Hoey McCurtain, son and father narrating portions of the excerpt from *The Sharpest Sight*, are also men testing themselves against the elements—hunting, fence-building, against each other, and against the world around them. The verbal as well as physical environment is dense with complex meaning and mystery and references to Jonathan Edwards and Andrew Jackson, as the McCurtains seek to

make sense of their tangled world.

Finally, Michael Dorris gives us the utterly charming part-black, part-Indian Raymond, thirteen-year-old narrator of *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*, whose encounter with lonely pedophilic Father Tom holds out a promise of wonderful adventures to come. Remember, you heard it here first (in case the title passed you by): Raymond will be to the eighties what Holden Caulfield was to the fifties: the necessary reincarnation of Huckleberry Finn, that quintessential mirror for our national folly.

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**Edward D. Beechert. *Working in Hawaii: A Labor History*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985) ix, 401 pp., \$30.00.**

For those interested in ethnic experience, the history of Hawaii offers unique insight. Initially a Polynesian island group, with a population related culturally to inhabitants of islands as far afield as Easter Island, New Zealand and Tahiti, Hawaii from the late eighteenth century onwards became the home of Americans, Europeans, Portuguese, Filipinos, Chinese and Japanese, all drawn there for differing reasons. When to this ethnic and racial variation, the complex permutations of class and gender are added, observers of Hawaii's past are witness to a rich range of inter-cultural encounters. In *Working in Hawaii*, Edward Beechert's particular focus is the experience of ordinary workers, whom he claims have appeared in the histories of Hawaii "as exotic figures known primarily by racial labels and stereotypes, while it has been the political leadership of the country, and broad political change, which have previously received predominant attention."

"Work" is a very broad category, and Beechert's study concentrates largely on one central area. He addresses primarily the labor conditions of what became the basic economic enterprise in Hawaii, the sugar plantations: how the plantation economy emerged from the earlier indigenous subsistence economy, the political conditions which shaped its growth, the working lives of the plantation laborers drawn from many nationalities, and the development in the twentieth century of the union movement which improved the lot of workers to a considerable degree, both within agriculture land and in the related urban industrial and service industries. Beechert covers his large brief in a manner which is scholarly, detailed and impressive. An unashamed advocate for the workers in their century-long battle for a dignified livelihood, he offers at the same time a comprehensive overview of the relationships of the unusually varied workforce itself. The workers' grievously disadvantaged