

four miles distant
on a windy cemetery hill

where

a stone eagle that marks geronimo's
grave
rises into the night.

The speaker in "we are the people" convincingly assures us that there is no distance between the name

of my race
and the owl calling
nor the badgers gentle plodding
we are a people born under symbols that rise from the dust to
touch us
that pass through the cedars where
our old ones sleep
to tell us of their dreams.

Many of Henson's poems are infused with the yearning to be reunited with the "old ones" and with the wisdom of his race, embodied in the speaker's grandfather, whom he has

heard all night
singing among the summer leaves.

The sense of the past, in the farmhouse where the persona (and the poet) was raised, is inextricably linked with the present:

i have watched a long time from the window of this old house
all that i have lost is here
the world fills with its presence.

Despite the solitariness and loneliness of Henson's personae, however, the collection as a whole resonates with powerful optimistic faith, as in this apostrophe to the forces of nature and of his forefathers:

eagle of fire whose
wings are scented cedar
moon of forever who guards
the sacred seed
keep us strong
to meet the
coming days.

— Abby H. P. Werlock
St. Olaf College

Oscar Hijuelos. *The Mamba Kings Play Songs of Love*. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1989) 407 pp., \$18.95.

Hijuelos' novel, a Pulitzer Prize winner, earns it laurels through the author's craftsmanship. Its unusual flashback structure, its characteriza-

tions of the two Castillo brothers, and its many pages of lyrical prose are praiseworthy. Many readers will enjoy this story of the rise and fall in the careers of two Cuban musicians who flourished in the "Desi Arnaz era."

Hijuelos gets the feel of the times and succeeds in making the two Castillos and the enclaves of the New York City Latino population credible. He does this by a lively narration of their escapades, their successes and their failures. Readers may be "turned off" by Cesar's machismo, but they cannot deny the authenticity of the characterization. The novel may have been well extended to depict strong female characters, instead of making them all appear marginal.

The story covers the years from 1949 through 1980 and is narrated by Cesar to his nephew Nestor in the former's cluttered room in the Hotel Splendour. Main sections are structured as the A and B sides of an LP record. After chapters in the life of the two brothers, the novel ends with Cesar's death.

Although Hijuelos writes at times with brutal realism, many times he writes lyrically of Cesar's and Nestor's musical compositions and of their serious love affairs. He conveys with honesty and "*corazon*" in racy prose the Castillos' pace of life.

— Cortland Auser
Yorktown Heights, NY

Darlene Clark Hine. *Black Women in White*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989) 264 pp., \$25.00.

In recent years nursing history has taken on a new focus. The nursing histories of the first half of the twentieth century chronicled the steady growth and development of the profession and glorified the white nursing leaders who promoted the scientific basis and professionalization of nursing. These early histories, however, ignored or glossed over the many problems of the emerging profession: poorly educated nursing students, nursing school curriculums which were controlled by service administrators rather than educators, the substandard working and living conditions of both student nurses and graduate nurses, the subservience of nurses to physicians which did not serve patient needs, the rapid growth of diploma nursing schools (which were nothing more than diploma mills), the powerlessness of nursing practitioners to control the practice of their own profession, and racism. The publication of Ashley's *Hospitals, Paternalism and the Role of the Nurse* (1976) introduced a new genre of nursing history. Since then a number of revisionist nursing histories have been published. Darlene Hine's book *Black Women in White* follows this revisionist trend, focusing on the particular problem of racism and gender discrimination in the emerging nursing profession. Hine's study, covering the period from