Selections are organized under thematic rubrics—some of which work well ("Image Makers"), others of which don't ("The Crossroads of Culture"?). In fact, the absence of a strong, if only provisional, heuristic scheme for understanding where these works fit in to the literary "mosaic" of the United States marks the book's weakest point. Teachers will probably want (if not need) to devise their own order for teaching these works depending on their own classroom goals. Moreover, teachers will want to be wary of the dangers that a book like *Multicultural Voices* presents. *Multicultural Voices* is far from being anything like an actual literary history of multicultural writing in the United States; such a history would have to reach back to the nineteenth and even eighteenth centuries to include authors such as Phillis Wheatley, William Apess, Frederick Douglass, and Sui Sin Far. With the exception of two representatives of the Harlem Renaissance, this book remains the exclusive domain of post-World War II writers. There are good reasons for such a chronological bias, but the book would be more aptly named "*Contemporary* Multicultural Voices" or "Multicultural Voices *Today*." More important, there would be a danger in an education in English in which students held their "American Literature" textbooks in one hand and their "multicultural" books in the other. The two should not, and cannot, be so easily separated.

These "multicultural" voices, after all, continually speak to more popular, more "mainstream," ones. It is no accident that John Wayne, Fred Astaire, and Johnny Carson all make appearances in this volume. These works engage with our semiotically saturated culture to help us understand what the messages that bombard students (and teachers) daily might mean—and toward learning how to broadcast viable alternatives. They help us, in other words, to learn about the difference between who we are and what others imagine us to be, and about the impossibility of completely disentangling the two. Such goals speak to the import of literature in a media-soaked age—to make students literate enough to read the world around them—and to the necessity of integrating a book like *Multicultural Voices* into the English classroom.

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Peter Eichstaedt. *If You Poison Us: Uranium and Native Americans*. (Santa Fe, NM: Red Crane Books, 1994) 263 pp., $19.95 cloth.

"The history of our nation's relations with American Indians is one of ignorance, indifference, exploitation and broken promises." This statement opens journalist Peter Eichstaedt's book, *If You Poison Us: Uranium and Native Americans*, an examination of this abusive history supplemented with personal interviews, government documents, and a detailed

bibliography. Eichstaedt's account of how America's quest for uranium led to mining on reservation lands, consequently poisoning both the land and the miners, is a useful study for someone working in Native American or justice studies while still remaining accessible to a general audience.

By relating both the mining companies' and the government's abuse and neglect of Native American miners and mill workers, Eichstaedt consistently points out ironies in the sequences of events he describes. For example, evidence that uranium mining was dangerous to mine workers' health had been available by the 1920s, but preliminary safety standards were not established until the 1950s. Moreover, health and safety policies—even when instituted—were not enforced as the states and the federal government each denied responsibility for ensuring miners' health and safety.

Not until 1967 did Congress decide to act. After a series of committee meetings, hearings and debates, mining companies were required to comply with preliminary safety standards immediately and the official regulations by January 1, 1969. But, as Eichstaedt writes, for miners who were suffering and dying from lung cancer, "the regulations had come too late" (93).

The remainder of the book describes the struggle by former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall to obtain monetary compensation for the miners and joint attempts by Native communities and the Department of Energy to institute land reclamation programs. Yet another irony of this chapter in history is that no federal standards exist for uranium mine clean-up projects.

Although Eichstaedt points out numerous injustices in this work, his portrayal of these injustices is neither emotional nor reactionary. Eichstaedt also provides the reader with background information. He describes the complexities of American Indian land and mineral rights policies and also outlines the history of radium use and provides a scientific, yet comprehensible, explanation of how uranium poisoning takes place in the human body. A time-line describing major events and policies, however, would have been a helpful reference tool as it is sometimes difficult to remember all the governmental acts and departments to which Eichstaedt refers, but the book contains an extensive index which helps alleviate this problem.

The story Eichstaedt tells attests to the fact that Anglo stands as a vivid example of a long standing Navajo joke:

> Each time a group of white men arrived, the Navajos asked:
>
> > What are you looking for? In the 1920s the answer was oil; in the late 1930s and the early 1940s it was vanadium; in the 1950s, 1960s, and the 1970s it was uranium. In the 1990s it is spirituality. (41)

Perhaps by the year 2000 the Navajos—and other Native peoples—will not have to ask that question.

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María, Espinosa. *Dark Plums.* (Houston, TX: Arte Público, 1995) 221 pp., $9.95 paper.

María, Espinosa. *Longing.* (Houston, TX: Arte Público, 1995) 298 pp., $9.95 paper.

Published within the same year, *Dark Plums* and *Longing* both delve into the darker side of the human psyche. Similar in topic, the novels explore the complex relationship between love, sexuality, and power. While *Dark Plums* gives its readers a voyeuristic look into the life of Adrianne, a young, insecure Chilean-American woman who seeks to find herself through various sexual encounters with men and women, *Longing* leads them through the painful psychological recovery of American Jew Rosa and the simultaneous mental breakdown of her Chilean husband, Antonio. In addition, each novel focuses around the female protagonists' struggle for inner strength and confidence. Although *Dark Plums* and *Longing* pursue provocative issues and display María Espinosa's flair for capturing the psychological effects of the erotic, the story lines and language in both novels lack originality and ultimately fail in sustaining the reader's interest.

In *Dark Plums*, nineteen-year-old Adrianne leaves her home in Houston and goes to New York where she immediately embarks upon a number of sexual encounters with strangers. At the root of her reasoning for these indiscriminate acts is the belief that she should offer men what she can and attempt to please them because they will reciprocate with love and acceptance. As the novel progresses, the reader learns that much of Adrianne's inadequate feelings about herself are due to an unhappy relationship with her mother and the death of her father. In essence, through sexual relationships, she hopes to gain the "family" she never had. Eventually, two men become prominent figures in Adrianne's life: Alfredo, a Cuban-American artist who cruelly abuses her and turns her into a prostitute in order to support himself, and Max, an aging Jew whose guilt over letting his family die in the Holocaust because of his own lust propels him to court Adrianne and ultimately marry her, making her an heiress to a small but significant fortune. In addition, Adrianne has an on-again/off-again lesbian relationship with Lucille, a wealthy woman who is dying of breast cancer.