by white American scientists in the mid-nineteenth century. Riding In explains the processes of recovery undertaken by the Pawnee people today to reclaim Pawnee crania that were seized in the nineteenth century. Riding In declares the symbolic and societal weight of the unburied Pawnee crania, a declaration that serves as the concluding, resounding note of the volume. He enunciates the need for continued Indigenous vigilance in preserving and protecting Indian bodies, languages, land—collectively conceived and deployed by present-day Native historians as history retold and corrected on Native terms.

This volume is a useful one for scholars and students of Native American literature; it is a well-structured companion to texts in literary studies that do related work of textual decolonization. Miller and Riding In's volume collects important studies by leading Indigenous historians from the last three decades. This view informs the reader that the work of decolonization taken on by today's Indigenous historians was formally begun in an academic context decades ago and in home-community contexts more than a century ago via oral resistance to white hegemonic narratives and political incursions. The editors aid readers by opening each chapter with a concise prefatory note that positions the subsequent essays within the broader framework of the collection, a handy tool for those who have not encountered these essays elsewhere. Taken together, these essays are united by a mission, as Miller writes, to privilege "texts by Indigenous historiographers" in the telling of Native history and to prefer "Indigenous testimony" in such work. The proposals offered by this collection resonate with the clarity of their counterhegemonic purpose: the objective of such work is to promote the continuation of historiographic decolonization, which Native and non-Native scholars and Indigenous community members can practice and from which all can benefit.

dg nanouk okpik. *corpse whale*. Sun Tracks: An American Indian Literary Ser. 73. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-8165-2674-1. 101 pp.

Jasmine Johnston, *University of British Columbia, Vancouver*

While I was searching the library stacks for a book on ecological poetics, dg nanouk okpik's *corpse whale* caught my eye. A whale, a corpse?

I took it off the shelf and opened it to a poem named "Drying Magma Near Illiamna." "We lying in the onyx rain by garnet-cloaking icebergs," it asserts, and it mentions watching polar bears and watching puffins "with nests / filled with ruby eggs of egrets." The complexities of clause, lineation, and white space between words and stanzas are almost immediately subsumed by black and red—gemlike rain, bloodied ocean water obscured by green and blue ice, petrified mountain architecture, fluorescing eggs. okpik's film-negative imagery evokes the still-pluming and glacier-covered Mount Iliamna volcano in a region of Alaska that has been a locus for precontact to present-time Indigenous settlements and is now a contested site for open-pit mine development. In between these historical moments the speakers of the poem "lurk and twitch blood gales" as geological time surges and recedes. "Trails of sea cows reach the mountains / with meltwater draining off the peaks," and Alyeska "dissolves in mud" while the speakers "live in earth mounds" that "mutate into slat board" and "quiver into the sea." The poem ends with images that fuse past and present, flesh and stone: "Serpentine / women touch minerals of DNA to gather strength."

As I read through the rest of the collection, I debated whether okpik's imagery is surrealistic or mythopoeic. I found myself looking up information on geology and geography; shamans; whales, polar bears, and sea birds; multiply-named and multiply-souled agents human, animal, and otherwise; features of Inupiatun grammar; environmental rights. So I think the book is both surreal and mythic; it is complex, recondite, knowledgeable, passionate. As I continue to read about historical and spiritual features of Inuit culture, I realize more and more that okpik's poems offer a course in a way of being that is utterly inimitable, steeped as it is in her life experiences and studies. Her epigraphs, glossary, and profoundly vivid vocabulary throughout demonstrate the hard work she puts into her poetry and the hard work required to interpret her poetry.

"The greatest peril of life lies in the fact human food consists entirely of souls," runs the first of two epigraphs (the words are Buster Kailek's). The second, from a shaman named Orpingalik, concludes, "When the words we want to use shoot up of themselves—we get a new song." Although okpik's poems are densely learned solutions to complex problems, they are also instantly compelling songs. As I read over the pages, ocean and ice, pharynx and marmot, skin boat and meteor, whalebone and cyberspace, squid poison and tundra, Gilgamesh and Sarah Palin, fireweed and

frog precipitate in the mind and insinuate themselves into the mouth. The poems, which combine Inuit with Euro-American bodies of knowledge, are punctuated by the twelve months of the Roman calendar translated into Inupiatun moons; each of these moon-poems transmits and transmutes lore. "*Suvluravik Tatqiq*," for example, is the "May / Moon When the Rivers Flow"; the month evokes the "Edible Ice Worm / Moon when fawns are born" in a way that mimics "her/my plasma made of stag beetles lily flowers." The "her/my" construction is common in many of okpik's poems; the poet-speaker's voice is often tandem, operating in both the first person and third person to uncanny effect.

She and I, I and she: the greater one's body of awareness, the more apparent the visionary and deeply analogical sense of okpik's poems becomes. For example, in one of the major poems in okpik's collection, "For the Spirits-Who-Have-Not-Yet-Rounded-the-Bend," the poet-speaker is "dancing in the midnight sun not for law, or man, but for whale and blood." Whales and blood have their own rationalities, their own dynamic syllogisms, their own positions of articulation, their own worlds. Reading these poems, I think of belugas caught in icepack and narwhals whose left teeth spell sex and rank and perhaps serve to sense changes in temperature, water pressure, and salinity, indications of freezing ice (ever a danger). I think of lore concerning the origin of narwhals in the body of a woman hunting who was dragged under the surface of the ocean. Her hair twisted together in the water to form the narwhal's tusk—a transformation that must have involved tortuous spiraling in sea currents and subzero freezing of filamentous keratin into a bony (toothy) spear. I think, too, of polar bears in their maternity dens, tunneled in and enclosed for months until the mother breaks through the snow to venture miles more to the edge of the ice for seal meat. Life takes life.

By putting the names of every living thing in northern life—obsidian and persimmon, bulldozers and eclipses, I and she—in the mouth of the speaker, the poet becomes more than human and also less. This transhuman glory, so vivid on the page, so visceral in the mind, is an encompassing and etiolating ecological vision. Ecological in all the senses of what is within and without, large and small, hidden and bare, underneath and overhead, past and present and future. It is a work never finished and, I would think, a work difficult to begin. Like the originary hunter-turned-narwhal, the poet-speaker in the central poem of the collection, "Her/My Arctic: Corpse Whale," paddles past a "narwhal,"

past a "purple octopus grabbing the rearview mirrors," past "flouncing caribou," until "she/I witness/es in triple thick permafrost of sea and land" a "merging" between the "sinew back" and "threaded / bones of the land." So okpik's poetics are always a merging.

Writing in this mode is always to be becoming; writing and reading in such a mode demands attention to the mutual influence between the form of the text and the content it evokes. It seems to me that okpik's poetics are, in addition to transhuman, focused on language. Her practice of code switching between Inuit and English requires the reader to pay close attention to the orthographical and aural textures of the poems as well as the cultural idioms she intercalates—spirits as well as *inua* (animated yet mortal animals), song as well as *sila* (soul that is breath and breath that is the direction of one's life). I think of the morphological structure of Inuit language; words are formed by adding a number of morphemes to a root to produce many new and unique lexical options. Each of these potentially unique words commands, in turn, unique polysemies upon examining each constituent suffix in relation to all the other suffixes and to the root. Thus the context of each word may often help to form the word, so that the occasion for each utterance may well be coextensive with everything leading up to and away from the moment of word-making. I think, too, of how time—variation in tense—is expressed in terms of proximal and distal moments: a thing occurs only a short while ago or in a short while to come or a longer while ago or in a longer while to come, so that position is the key to temporal subjectivity. Finally, I think of the shifting boundaries embraced by transhumanist art and the way that subjects and objects function in relation to verbs in Inuit languages. Nonspecific verbs (verbs with indefinite objects) construe subjects the same way that objects of specific verbs (verbs with definite objects) are construed, while specific verbs construe subjects the same way that objects of nonspecific verbs are construed. The intransitive subject and the transitive object look or sound the same, while the transitive subject and the intransitive object look or sound the same. Thus okpik's poet-speaker, as she enunciates in the I/her voice conjugated with verbs dually first and third, is tracing and traversing the boundaries between subject and object, self and other, now and then (and long ago and long yet to be).

The precept that the "greatest peril of life lies in the fact human food consists entirely of souls" is quite clearly a sacred as well as a practical truth for the poet-speaker; okpik writes in "Moon of the Returning

Sun" that "I as wolf girl became weary of the light"; she (I as wolf) is waiting "for the universe to turn / around again" and make possible a "recovery/extraction" not unlike the transmigration of aspects of the human soul or souls described by some Inuit elders. Until then, "wolf girl rewrites tundra." The last poem in the collection, "An Anatkuq's Marionette of Death," ends with "Her/my scream shrill and piercing" and "echoes between bats and bugs." In these reverberations are "Inuit mastodons" and "musk oxen," "blue jays," and always "ravens," more "ravens / ravens." Life takes life. In these cosmic yet personal recoveries and extractions between bodies and beings, okpik expands the poet-speaker's consciousness far beyond the boundaries of subject and object, of body and language, of whale flesh and blood and human flesh and blood—and of ravens and ravens and ravens.

Ralph Salisbury. *Like the Sun in Storm*. Portland: Habits of Rainy Night P, 2012. ISBN: 978-0974668376. 92 pp.

James Mackay, *European University Cyprus*

Ralph Salisbury is a poet unjustly neglected, whose publishing history in major outlets far predates that of N. Scott Momaday, and whose compacted, imagistic verse holds simple truths that speak nonetheless of a lifetime's thought. His poems glow with tender reverence for the natural world and a fierce, sometimes overwhelming, indignation at humanity's destructive warmongering in the midst of such beauty. His recent collection of selected and new poems, *Light from a Bullet Hole* (2009), revealed just how powerful his facility for tightly compressed images has remained over a long career, and this new collection, *Like the Sun in Storm*, contains several pieces that can comfortably sit alongside that lifetime's achievement.

Salisbury's vision has always been palimpsestic. Certain identifiable and recurring layers of memory and experience again and again are seen peeking through evanescent moments of present experience. Sometimes it is the atrocity of his Cherokee-Shawnee ancestors' loss and the way that it undermines foundational American mythologies that is uppermost, as in the opening poem of this collection, "An Indian Blows Up Mt Rushmore and Indianizes What Cannot Be Resanctified" (4). Here the great ecocide of the national memorial crumbles under imagi-

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