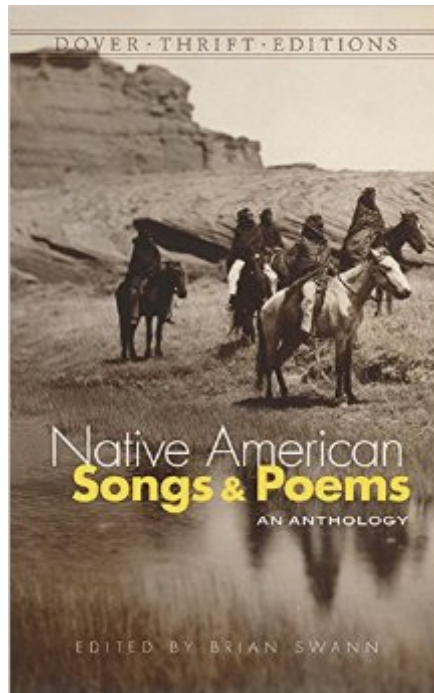


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Native American Songs And Poems: An Anthology (Dover Thrift Editions)



Synopsis

In this carefully chosen collection, encompassing traditional songs and contemporary Native American poetry, readers will find a treasury of lyrics verse composed by Seminole, Hopi, Navajo, Pima, Havasupai, Arapaho, Paiute, Nootka, and other Indian writers and poets. Selections range from the beautiful, traditional Seminole "Song for Bringing a Child into the World" to the cynical, knowing "How to Write the Great American Indian Novel." Permeated by the Indian's deep awareness and appreciation of nature's beauty and rhythms, these poems deal with themes of tradition and continuity, the Indians' place in contemporary society, love, loss, memory, alienation, and many other topics. Taken together, these poems offer an intimate, revealing record of the Native American response to the world, from time-honored chants and songs to the musings of urban Indian poets coming to grips with twentieth-century America.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Native American Songs and Poems: An Anthology," edited by Brian Swann, is an impressive volume overall. At 56 pages, it is a concise but rich anthology. The book can basically be broken down into two sections: (1) traditional ethnic songs from various cultures, and (2) poems by contemporary Native American authors, again representing many cultures. The traditional material includes the Seminole "Song for Bringing a Child into the World," the Navajo "Hymn of the Horse," the Pima "Quail Song," and more. Contemporary authors included are Beth Brant (of the Mohawk

people), Joy Harjo (Muscogee), Simon J. Ortiz (Acoma Pueblo), and others. The book contains a useful bibliography. However, there is almost no biographical data on each contemporary author, and very little data on the various nations represented. The book would have been stronger if such data had been included. Still, this is a beautiful and enriching anthology. Topics covered include spirituality, animal and plant life, conflict with Eurocentric culture, Native language loss, and more. Some of the best poems include Joseph Bruchac's moving "Geese Flying over a Prison Sweat Lodge"; Maurice Kenny's sensuous, mystical "Sky Woman"; and Carter Revard's deeply spiritual "What the Eagle Fan Says." I recommend this book both for classroom use and for general reading.

...but I have to ask how 50 pages can possibly be considered to constitute an anthology. I'll admit it was the poetry (which is mostly if not completely modern) rather than the traditional songs which attracted my attention. In particular, I quite liked "This Is No Movie of Noble Savages" by Adrian Louis and the poems by Sherman Alexie. One thing in particular that annoyed me with this book, however, was what would seem to be an anachronism perpetuated by the translator(s). Namely, several traditional Native American songs in the book from different tribes refer to 'the Milky Way'. Now, I don't know what the words are that these were translated from, but I'm fairly sure that there weren't any Native Americans (or anybody else at the time) that were calling anything a Milky Way.

This collection is a nice cross-section of Native American songs and poetry. It includes everything from traditional lullabies to works by prominent modern Native American authors. Male and female authors are both well represented. This is a good introduction for readers unacquainted with this facet of Native American literature.

This collection is ok. good for the price! missing some writings from well known scribes. The price makes up for lack of quality

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