



Indian Singing

Gail Tremblay

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In this collection of poems, Gail Tremblay startles us with her accuracy. Her voice strikes home again and again, as she addresses the malaise that accompanies the dominant culture, which appears to be “victorious” yet lost. She expresses where she fits in to this mosaic of worlds she has inherited, and how to function in the face of the inherent evil in acts of grave robbing, relocation and residential schooling.

The strong poem “Owning Difference” is a love poem for mixed-bloods. Some of the work can leave you unsettled and pensive, while other poems are celebrations, full of natural images, rich and fluid, rejoicing in the varied expressions of the Creator. Celebration and humor, as in “Comparing Sockeye and King Salmon,” where she says... “In the end, it’s all desire.”

The presence of Indian words is a gift in language. It may be, as some say, too little too late, but it does, at least, continue a tenuous existence. It is a relief to see or hear Native words at any time, a testimony to the enduring status of our indigenous peoples. Gail Tremblay speaks to the miraculous, the unexplainable in moments that transcend the mundane, where singing as corn is being ground is an act of reverence.

In addition to being a poet, the author is a widely exhibited visual artist, photos of her textile art and paintings are included in the book. Gail Tremblay has published two other books of poetry, *Night Gives Woman The Word* and *Talking To The Grandmothers* and also has appeared in several anthologies. She teaches at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington.

GABRIELLE SHAW (January / February 1999)

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