FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

No Borders
Joseph Bruchac
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No Borders is an apt name for the recent collection of new poems by Native American storyteller-poet Joseph Bruchac, who belongs to the Abenaki Nation of New England and whose heritage includes Slovak and English ancestry. Bruchac has provided poems inspired by locations all over the world, each demonstrating a deep understanding and appreciation of the interconnectedness of all life—human, plant, animal, the Earth itself.

The sparse, vivid imagery of Bruchac's vers libre takes us to Lake Champlain on a heart-stopping snowshoe trip; to West Africa to hear the ancient drum beats; to several prisons where "lengthening days span razor wire / and one Lakota prisoner reaches / as if his fingers could measure the sun." In Canada readers learn that the dogsled way of life is passing, and feel "that loneliness echoed / in the long day song / of a mourning dog / at the edge of words… ."

In France, readers experience the relentless drive of human history through a breakneck car ride. Bruchac writes that to many humans, "Earth means no more / than territory owned." Such mapping and charting "blocks their ears to / the heartbeat in the sea. / It dulls their touch / so they cannot / feel with every breath / the benediction on their skin / of the open, circling, un-owned wind."

These poems are interspersed with Abenaki legends in verse. Especially lovely are "Seven Moons," part of a cycle based on Bruchac's Native People's tradition of talking about a year in terms of thirteen cycles of the moon. Each moon has a name associated with what happens in nature during that period. In "Sugar Moon," "The blanket of snow / shrinks back into the soil / as drops of sweet water / form and then fall / from the tips of broken twigs."

Bruchac dedicates this book "For all those who see this earth without maps." His gift to readers of these poems, with their simple beauty and thoughtful passion, will likely cause more people to see the Earth that way: "more gift than we humans / can give."

Karen McCarthy