

Orthodox priests, biologists, and merchants. He interviews developer millionaires and witnesses Linda's quiet conversations with elderly Indians who are dying of liver cancer in remote cabins far from medical care, but with a view of the tundra and the northern lights.

Hoagland doesn't so much follow a narrative line, though the love affair threads tenderly through this book, as he layers image and story, roughly sorting this dense prose into chapters with titles such as "Salmon and Dogs."

The result is painterly, rich, a multisensory awareness of a culture's varied historical and cultural components. It's not a static portrait; Hoagland is alert to the impacts of change and the vortex of oil boom money on people, animals, and landscape. He records it close up, recounting the desperate jailbreak, flight, and eventual rescue of an eighteen-year-old Indian named Amos, and at a societal level, noting the epidemic of suicide among young native men caught between old ways and their probable failures in the new economic landscape.

Everywhere are the "entrenched savageries" of the north—drunken beatings, clinics shot up in local feuds, men seeking out confrontations with bears. Violence is as common as the animal carcasses stored under cabin rooftop tarps for winter food supply. Alaska, after all, is both "a destination created out of anger and quests," and home to the "collateral damage of a culture's collapse." Hoagland captures its crazy mix of abundance and scarcity, brutality and warmth, energy and despair. In a brief and poignant closing, he reflects on how as a nation we've become inured to natural and cultural destruction and the costs of reinvention. "But what invention," he asks, "will equal Alaska's rodeoing salmon runs and ducks like pigeons on the Yukon?"

Hoagland is a necessary part of every public library, and the private libraries of lovers of travel, nature writing, and stimulating prose. (May) TERESA SCOLLON

The Chalk Circle: Intercultural Prizewinning Essays

Tara L. Masih, editor
Wyatt-MacKenzie
Softcover \$14.95 (220pp)
978-1-936214-71-6

America has long been revered as a melting pot or a salad bowl, a nearly fabled place where almost everyone has come from somewhere else. As David Mura says in *The Chalk Circle's* introduction, "America is and always has been centered on the intercultural."

The voices of the essays in *The Chalk Circle* tell of the tensions and beauties that come about as a result of intersecting, intertwined, and diverging cultures. The book gathers a variety of stark, honest, and well-rendered first person narratives. Each is unique, but readers will find commonality in their questions and quests.

The origin of the book's unique title, according to the foreword, is this: "In 1845, Jane Carlyle wrote to her husband, essayist Thomas Carlyle, 'Instead of boiling up individuals into the species—I would draw a chalk circle round every individuality and preach to it to keep within that, and preserve and cultivate its identity at the expense of ever so much lost gilltacker of other people's isms.' Jane was ahead of her time. We in this collection also believe in preserving and cultivating identity within a chalk circle, a medium that is common and permeable and allows for some migration across the individual boundaries."

The collection's editor, Tara Masih, is a writer with many accolades. Her Indian-American heritage and her literary credentials make her an astute editor for this collection. David Mura—an author who is, among other cultural descriptions, a sansei, the Japanese-American term for third generation—crafts a fitting and compelling introduction.

The final section of the book presents intercultural connections between the essays and discussion questions, highlighting one of the book's main goals—dialogue. The twenty essayists included in the collection examine all aspects of the intercultural experience: guilt, responsibility, racial identity (including the complexities of being part of the dominant white culture), religion, family, the idea of home, and travel. They ponder identity through the filters of what I am and what I am not. From Li Miao Lovett, who probes the value of aristocracy in her largely peasant ancestry to Samuel Autman, who first faced opposition as a black man when he moved to Utah to join the staff of the *Salt Lake Tribune* to M. Garrett Bauman, who contemplates culture through photos sent by his middle-aged father-in-law serving with the Peace Corps in Botswana to Bonnie J. Morris, who finds the "sorrow and sweetness" of the ten Egyptian plagues cast in chocolate candy an interesting reflection on Passover—the contributions lead readers through the rough and rewarding search for truth in our intercultural world.

(April) MELISSA ANNE WUSKE

• ESSAYS

A Journey with Two Maps: Becoming a Woman Poet

Eavan Boland
W.W. Norton & Co.
Softcover \$15.95 (274pp)
978-0-393-34232-1

"There is hardly anything so elusive," writes the celebrated Irish poet Eavan Boland, "as the way in which a poetic inheritance is sifted and rearranged from one generation to the next." This collection of essays tracks and illuminates poetic inheritance, specifically the legacy of women poets and poetry that transcends or speaks back to poetic convention.

Boland shares her own poetic development freely, and her open tone makes it easy for the reader to accompany her as she explores poet after poet, excavating the intersections of personal and cultural history that created both the poet and her place in the canon. She translates a poem by the German poet Elizabeth Langgässer, for example, and in the process tracks down the searing experiences that inform the poem's leaps. Her reexamination of the work and historical treatment of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Eibhlín Ní Chonaill results in a richer understanding of the poets, their work, and the process of translation that can hide poets from modern view.

In the second half of the book, the essays focus on particular poets, including those who

