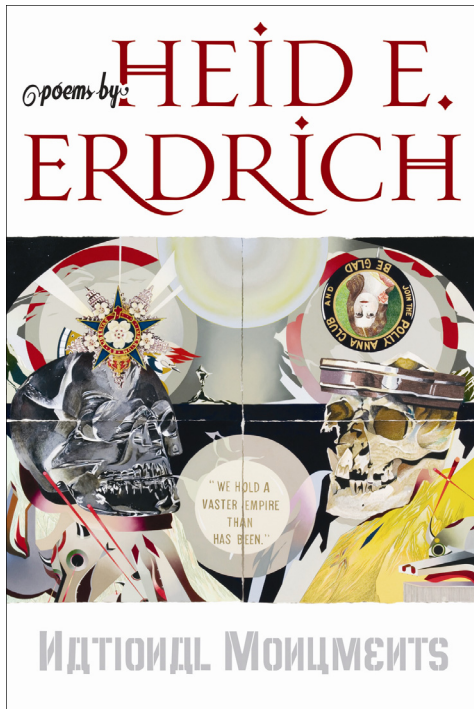


National Monuments

Poems by Heid E. Erdrich



Deeply observant poems from a Native American poet with a wry sense of humor

Many of the poems in *National Monuments* explore bodies, particularly the bodies of indigenous women worldwide, as monuments — in life, in photos, in graves, in traveling exhibitions, and in plastic representations at the airport. Erdrich sometimes imagines what ancient bones would say if they could speak. Her poems remind us that we make monuments out of what remains — monuments are actually our own imaginings of the meaning or significance of things that are, in themselves, silent.

As Erdrich moves from the expectedly "poetic" to the voice of a newspaper headline or popular culture, we are jarred into wondering how we make our own meanings when the present is so immediately confronted by the past (or vice versa). The language of the scientists that Erdrich sometimes quotes in epigraphs seems reductive in comparison to the richness of tone and meaning that these poems — filled with puns, allusions, and wordplay — provide.

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Erdrich's poetry is literary in the best sense of the word, infused with an awareness of the poetic canon. Her revisions of and replies to poems by William Carlos Williams, Robert Frost, and others offer an indigenous perspective quite different from the monuments of American literature they address.

Heid E. Erdrich, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibway, won a Minnesota Voices award for her first poetry collection *Fishing for Myth*. She also authored *The Mother's Tongue* and co-edited *Sister Nations: Native American Women Writers on Community*. Erdrich gives writing workshops and serves as visiting writer at colleges and universities across the country. Heid E. Erdrich has received two Minnesota Arts Board fellowships, awards from The Loft Literary Center and Bush Foundation, and three nominations for the Minnesota Book Award. She and Louise Erdrich have co-founded a non-profit clearinghouse for indigenous language literature called Birchbark House.

Erdrich's poems are beautiful and brave explorations of the depths of national identities and the realm people who live them...these are poems I loved reading.
— Robert Warrior, Director, University of Illinois American Indian Studies and the Native American House

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