



Honor the Grandmothers

Sarah Penman

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In this poignant collection of oral histories, four Indian elders recount their life stories in their own quiet but uncompromising words. Growing up and living in Minnesota and the Dakotas, Stella Pretty Sounding Flute and Iola Columbus (Dakota) and Celane Not Help Him and Cecelia Hernandez Montgomery (Lakota) share recollections of early family life interrupted by years at government boarding schools designed to eradicate tribal culture. Recounting their complex lives, the grandmothers reveal how they survived difficult circumstances to become activists in Indian politics, reconciling urban with reservation life and Christianity with native spirituality. Particularly memorable is one grandmother's detailed family account of the tragic events and consequences of the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890. Defying stereotypes, these clear and forthright voices are unforgettable. As the traditional teachers and bearers of culture, the grandmothers also share their concern for future generations.

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