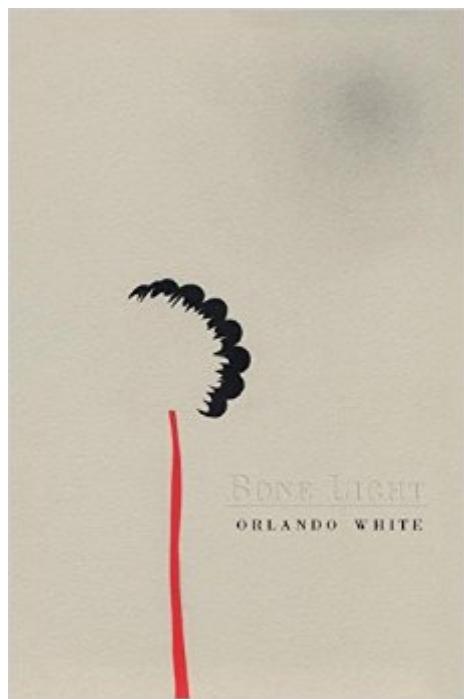


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Bone Light



Synopsis

Orlando White explores language from a DinÃ© (Navajo) perspective. One idea that interests him, inspires him to think and write, is the idea of the English language as a forgotten language. Imagine if we as a people, all people in the United States, are speaking an Indigenous language rather than English; that the English language exists merely as a language of the colonial past. White explores and experiments with this particular colonizing language, because that language remains a kind of cultural/intellectual/social threat to Indigenous thought, as English was imposed to dehumanize Indigenous peoples from their culture, language, and consciousness. White's DinÃ© perspective poetically reveals audience notion of linguistic dehumanization within the *Bone Light* volume. Non-Natives, throughout American history, have documented the Indigenous Americas using the dominant written word of English. Thus, as an artist, White writes what he writes to document as well, but also to create something a bit more beautiful (intriguing) than harmful (erasing). White is not attempting critique of the English language; he is working with it to gain a better understanding of viewpoints, veritably creating a relationship by way of exploring language.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I purchased *Bone Light* by Orlando White as a souvenir of an extraordinary evening in Taos, August 2011, when he read in person with Layli Long Soldier. Poetry is voice-driven, and it seems to me that the reader must see and hear Orlando White in order to get a full experience of the collection that is *Bone Light*. There is something so deeply touching, yet bothersome, about *Bone Light* that I find it challenging to write about. Thankfully, Orlando and the Red Hen Press

staff included âœTo See Lettersâ • at the beginning of this book of poems. Written elegantly, âœTo See Lettersâ • acts as an introduction which suggests that the poetry originated as a response to an emotionally immature parent who threatened or performed violence against the child/poet. As a result of that experience, writing intimate poetry becomes the childâ™s escape and resolution, the act of forgiving the parent who has offended oneâ™s self, oneâ™s very life. In that way, Bone Light is a record of pain, a petroglyph collection recording an unbearable longing for a compassionate family, for friends, community, and a world of love outside the pain--but including the pain. While I love these poems, and the entire family-society-becoming-poet process, something bothers me about Bone Light: The poems are disembodied. By disembodied I mean that there are only body parts. In other words, there is no somebody that has ethnicity, race, culture, gender or walks on the earth. And there is no earth, no politics-of-earth and climate change, no history, no economic struggle, nobodiesâ™ demonstrations against a body-politic whose laws attempt to define and control the race, ethnicity, gender, or economic activity of those bodies. Poet Orlando White focuses on the play of language.

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