

Aurelia: A Crow Creek Trilogy

Elizabeth Cook-Lynn

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A collection of three novellas spanning several decades, Aurelia tells of the invasion of Indian lands, the destruction of a river--the Missouri, or Mni Sosa--in the twentieth century, the continued failure of the people of the Northern Plains (both Indian and white) to refute historical fraud, and the grief and joy of an American Indian family.

The first novella in this collection, From the River's Edge (first published as a single volume by Arcade Publishing, 1991), is the story of John Tatekeya's (tah-tAY-kee-ya) efforts to obtain reparation in a white man's court for forty-five head of stolen cattle. Even as Tatekeya's trial is proceeding, his people are suffering from the flooding of the Missouri River, an event precipitated by the construction of new

hydropower dams upriver from the Crow Creek Reservation.

In Circle of Dancers, Cook-Lynn follows Aurelia Blue, John Tatekeya's lover of nearly ten years. She is pregnant and must decide about both the baby and the father, Jason Big Pipe, even as she struggles with her own identity as a Dakota Sioux woman. As the story progresses, she and Jason fight for survival in the face of the further political and economic consequences of the destruction of the Mni Sosa, one of the greatest environmental disasters to strike the Northern Plains.

In the final volume, In the Presence of River Gods, Aurelia, now the mother of two, leaves Jason and moves with her dying grandmother to Eagle Butte on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, two hundred miles away from Crow Creek. Aurelia has been witness to events from 1930 to 1990--including the birth of the American

Indian Movement and the uprising at Wounded Knee in 1974--and, like the Corn Wife from Sioux mythology, she carries the history of the people with her into an uncertain future.

Elizabeth Cook-Lynn is a critic, professor emerita, and member of the Crow Creek Sioux tribe of Fort Thompson, SD. Her other books include "Then Badger Said This", "Seek The House of Relatives", "The Power of Horses And Other Stories", "Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner And Other Essays: A Tribal Voice", And "The Politics of Hallowed Ground", "A Hundred Years of Struggle for Sovereignty" (with Mario Gonzalez). Her new collection of poetry, "I Remember The Fallen Trees", is available from Eastern Washington University.



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