



Follow the Blackbirds (American Indian Studies)

Gwen Nell Westerman

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In language as perceptive as it is poignant, poet Gwen Nell Westerman builds a world in words that reflects the past, present, and future of the Dakota people. An intricate balance between the singularity of personal experience and the unity of collective longing, *Follow the Blackbirds* speaks to the affection and appreciation a contemporary poet feels for her family, community, and environment. With touches of humor and the occasional sharp cultural criticism, the voice that emerges from these poems is that of a Dakota woman rooted in her world and her words. In this moving collection, Westerman reflects on history and family from a unique perspective, one that connects the painful past and the hard-fought future of her Dakota homeland. Grounded in vivid story and memory, Westerman draws on both English and the Dakota language to celebrate the long journey along sunflower-lined highways of the tallgrass prairies of the Great Plains that returns her to a place filled with “more than history.” An intense homage to the power of place, this book tells a masterful story of cultural survival and the power of language.

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