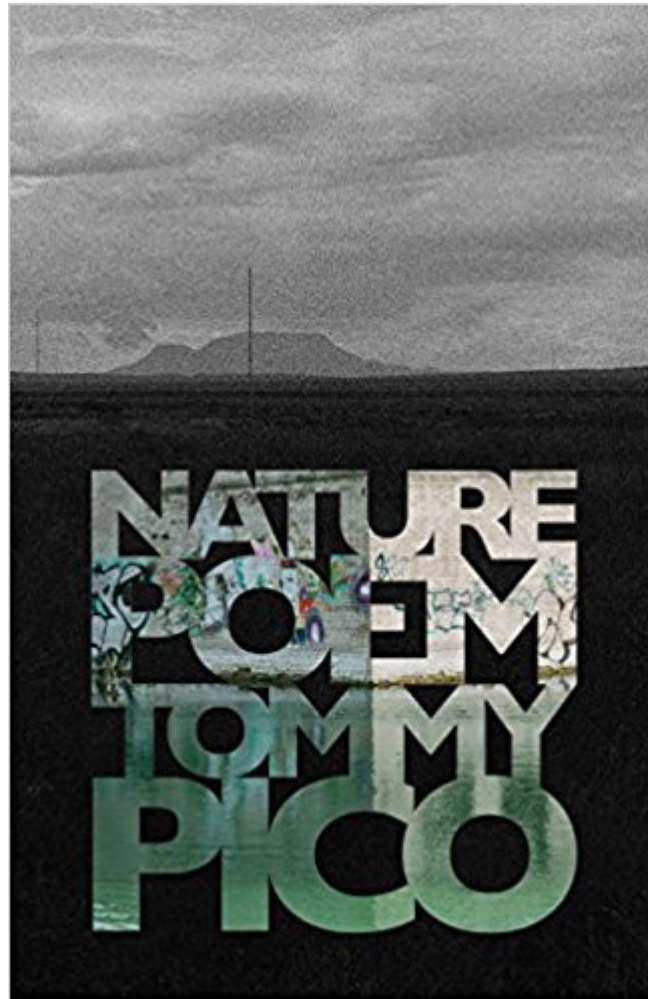




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Nature Poem



Synopsis

Most Anticipated Book of 2017 at Publishers Weekly, BuzzFeed, and more. A book-length poem about how an American Indian writer can't bring himself to write about nature, but is forced to reckon with colonial-white stereotypes, manifest destiny, and his own identity as a young, queer, urban-dwelling poet. *A Nature Poem* follows Teebs, a young, queer, American Indian (or NDN) poet who can't bring himself to write a nature poem. For the reservation-born, urban-dwelling hipster, the exercise feels stereotypical, reductive, and boring. He hates nature. He prefers city lights to the night sky. He'd slap a tree across the face. He'd rather write a mountain of hashtag punchlines about death and give head in a pizza-parlor bathroom; he'd rather write odes to Aretha Franklin and Hole. While he's adamant he's not bratty, even about his distaste for the word "natural," over the course of the book we see him confronting the assimilationist, historical, colonial-white ideas that collude NDN people with nature. The closer his people were identified with the "natural world," he figures, the easier it was to mow them down like the underbrush. But Teebs gradually learns how to interpret constellations through his own lens, along with human nature, sexuality, language, music, and Twitter. Even while he reckons with manifest destiny and genocide and centuries of disenfranchisement, he learns how to have faith in his own voice.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“A thrilling punk rock epic that is a tour of all we know and can’t admit to. Pico is a poet of canny instincts, his lyric is somehow so casual and so so serious at the same time. He is determined to blow your mind apart, and . . . you should let him.” - Alexander Chee

“Mix of hey that’s poetry (uncanny resistance) with hey that’s a text and smashing goals & fulfilling them along the way & saying my parents fulfilled them. Doing it differently being alive & an artist. I love this work. Unpredictable & sweet & strong to continue.” - Eileen Myles

“The self-conscious labor of these poems explores a culture of asides, stutters, stammers, and media glitches. It’s no wonder Tommy Pico manages to name and claim identity while also reminding us of his (and our!) limitlessness.” - Nature Poem

“is a book about our true nature.” - Jericho Brown

“A poet who will not hesitate calling out winter as a death threat from nature, Tommy Pico hears the wild frequencies in the mountains and rivers of cities. The marriage of extraordinary sharp writing with the most astute commentary on almost every possible thing a human will feel, think, do, dance like, or smell like. Then, suddenly, he asks, “What if I really do feel connected to the land?” I read this book in one sitting. Then I read it in one sitting again the next day. The staying power of this poem I will blatantly say is without doubt!” - CAConrad

“Pico centers his second book-length poem on the trap of conforming to identity stereotypes as he ponders his reluctance to write about nature as a Native American . . . In making the subliminal overt, Pico reclaims power by calling out microaggressions and drawing attention to himself in the face of oppression.” - Publishers Weekly, Starred Review

“[Nature Poem] finds Pico incorporating or indirectly referencing his surroundings in freewheeling, intimate verse, while turning a humorous lens on life as a queer man.” - OUT Magazine

“Humor lays the groundwork for a hard truth and, for poet Tommy Pico, that hard truth is about living as an indigenous person in occupied America. . . . Pico’s poetry builds a contemporary Native American persona, one that occupies multiple spaces simultaneously: New York City, the internet, pop music, and Grindr. It’s an identity that’s determined to be heard by the culture at large.” - The Organist/KCRW

“Instead of following the conventions of the pastoral tradition, in which nature is revered, Pico adopts a tragicomic view. On the one hand, the land of his native people can be described with great reverence, desert nights that “chill and sparkle and swoon with metal/ lighting up the dark universe.” On the other, that same landscape carries and extends legacies of racism and genocide that Pico is determined not to forget.” - The San Francisco Chronicle

“Pico has pulled me out of a poetry slump. His poems make me want to live with more poetry, to read, write and revel in poetry as a form that does not have to be a

container. - Brooklyn Magazine - “Few people capture New York, queerness, and the artful use of hashtags in a poem quite like Tommy Pico. - NYLON - “Through text messages, Gchats, snippets of dialogue, and critical theory shorthand, Pico builds a wisecracking dialectic between the speaker-self and nature. . . . At once flippant and furious, Pico turns conversations into punchlines into accusations. - Ploughshares - “Exciting . . . in its central examination of one contemporary Native man’s relationship with nature, Nature Poem shows Pico deconstructing a persistent archetype. - Pacific Standard

Tommy - “Teebs - Pico is the author of Nature Poem, IRL (Birds LLC, 2016) and the zine series Hey, Teebs. He was a Queer/Art/Mentors inaugural fellow, 2013 Lambda Literary fellow in poetry, and his poems have appeared in BOMB, Guernica, Tin House, and the Offing. Originally from the Viejas Indian reservation of the Kumeyaay nation, he now lives in Brooklyn and co-curates the reading series Poets With Attitude (PWA) with Morgan Parker.

I recently saw Tommy Pico read this poem... let’s just say I would build a weekend around seeing him read (perform) again. In person, his poetry comes alive - and then some.

I read this book in one sitting, and then read it again the next morning. It’s at once heartbreaking, irreverent, genuinely funny, and so gut-punchingly profound that basically every other page of my copy has a line I’ve underlined, or exclamation marks I’ve jotted in the margins. Buy it, read it!

Brilliant. I’ve read it in bits and pieces. Re-read. Shared my copy. Just bought another. Ready to read it again. I’m entranced.

A genius and a legend in the making and we’re all here to witness it.

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