

The Song and the Silence: Sitting Wind, by Peter Jonker. Edmonton: Lone Pine Publishing, 1988. Pp. 218.

The author's foreword spells it out: this work is "docu-fiction" or a "true romantic tale." The bases for the chapters are actual events but the memories of those events are subjective, and conversations are produced for continuity and readability rather than historical accuracy. With that in mind, the reader can settle back for an enjoyable and enlightening view of the life of a living Stoney Indian, Silent Wind (Frank Kaquitts). The tale is told by Peter Jonker, an environmental consultant and writer who started work on the Stoney reserve (between Calgary and Banff) in 1976, and who became a friend of the subject.

Sitting Wind was born a Cree on the Hobemma reserve (near Wetaskiwin, Alberta) in 1926. A log hut in the midst of a blizzard was the nativity scene. The feverish babe seemed near death so a medicine man was called in. He told the mother to take the infant out into the storm to break the fever. The cure was successful, and the child was given a power song from the winter wind by the medicine man. Ever since then Silent Wind has tried fruitlessly to recall that song, or have it come again, in order to use its power—hence the title of the book.

The boy's mother died soon after his birth and he spent his early years with his grandmother and her Stoney husband, Ben Kaquitts, on the Stoney reserve. Those were good years: hunting, trapping, and occasional day labour for whites allowed them to live relatively independently. But the new residential school soon beckoned and, despite the grandmother's wishes, the boy was deposited there. School days brought him into the white man's world, and his curiosity seems to have overridden the trauma that many Indian children experienced in this situation. But then there was always the next summer to look forward to when he would be back in the bush with his adoptive parents and a favourite uncle. While in school in his early teens, he began to contemplate the white man's way of making a living through ranching, farming and planning for the future.

A world war started and Silent Wind joined the army at the age of seventeen. Barroom adventures, military training, and an enemy to fight taught him more about the white man. He also became a proficient boxer and won a title during those years. However, an accident with an axe kept him from going overseas. Once out of the army, he went back to trapping and hunting around the reserve. A young Stoney lady caught his eye, and apparently vice versa. One of the highlights of this book is how the elders arranged a traditional marriage for an unsure groom.

The remainder of the book moves quickly, mentioning events but giving little detail, and this will disappoint some readers. Silent Wind became involved in a guitar band, was elected to council, took up sketching and oil painting, and

fathered nine children over twenty years. Artistic ability earned him two scholarships to the Banff School of Fine Arts, and in later years he got good payment for his oil paintings. Politics started for him in 1961 when he was elected chief of the Bearpaw band, one of three on the Stoney reserve. In 1973 he was elected chief of all three bands, a remarkable accomplishment since the three bands are very independent. He represented the tribe in Ottawa and met with then Minister of Indian Affairs Jean Chretien and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. The problems of three bands under one chief were extreme, however, and in 1975 the Stoney went back to one chief per band. In that year Silent Wind played the part of Sitting Bull in the movie *Buffalo Bill: Wild West Show*.

The final chapter depicts a typical meeting between Jonker and Silent Wind. They go to a room in the basement of Silent Wind's house where there is an incredible collection of memorabilia. As Silent Wind explains, "this is *my* place." Here the reader is given an indication as to how creating a biography of a living person works and does not work; it is an excellent way to end the story.

There can be criticisms made about any book, but there are few to be made here. Typos are rare. Certain events could use more elaboration, but this may not have been possible for a variety of reasons. The imagery is refreshing; only a few images seem forced, leaving the reader mildly perplexed. Most disturbing are two anachronisms: the use of the word "melding," a recent buzzword from big business—it is not only misplaced in time but is also out of character for the story; similarly, using "turkey" as a disparaging term for a human does not date back to the 1940s (at least not in western Canada). The map that indicates the points of interest in and around the Stoney reserve chops off that reserve's easternmost end. There are no heroic personal struggles revealed here (even Silent Wind's longing for his song is rarely mentioned after its introduction), but it is definitely a read for those interested in recent western Indian history. Academics might decry the occasional stylistic departure from "hard" data, but they should still find this a refreshing, sensitive and informative "docu-fiction." Everyone can enjoy and learn from this one.

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Hoofbeats and Society: Studies of Human-Horse Interactions, by Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985. Pp. 202.

Hoofbeats and Society is a study of the role of the horse in human culture. It treats Crow Indian horses, the legend of the White Mustang on the Prairies, rodeo horses, mounted police horses, and concludes with a miscellaneous chapter on horses in human experience.