

Streaming
Allison Adelle Hedge Coke
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Allison Adelle Hedge Coke



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COFFEE HOUSE PRESS ANNOUNCES

Streaming

BY ALLISON ADELLE HEDGE COKE

An award-winning poet turns to her indigenous background to consider loss, memory, and the fate of the planet.



**LOGLISTED FOR THE PEN-OPEN BOOK AWARD
WINNER OF THE PEN SOUTHWEST BOOK AWARD FOR POETRY**

“Allison Adelle Hedge Coke’s fierce new poetry collection, *Streaming*, takes her always brave and startling sonics into new narrative spaces. These poems are full of needful improvisation and piano runs. Hedge Coke makes music from tornados and glyphs, from cranes spiraling overhead, and from the grumbling stomachs of hungry children. She sings these stories because she has to and because we need her to. And when the speaker in “Sudden Where” says “maybe we’d find something magnificent, give it up to make somebody happy,” it is clear that in these urgent poems, and in this necessary book, we’ve found both the magnificent and the unforgettable.”— **ADRIAN MATEJKA**, author of *THE BIG SMOKE*

“Hedge Coke does not just endeavor to show the world as it is; she encourages readers of diverse backgrounds, to resist its inherent prejudices, and to effect positive change within it. . . . A poet with feet in the river, even as her head rests on a mountain top.”—**LOS ANGELES REVIEW OF BOOKS**

“The poems come toward us from a museum of abundance; but museums are filled with relics and this poetry is purely fluid. Everything is moving, changing, and growing, disintegrating and rejuvenating for its own purposes.”
—**THE WASHINGTON INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF BOOKS**

“A brilliant and brave new collection of poems that irrevocably alters our conventional notion of what constitutes narrative space.”—**THE JOURNAL**

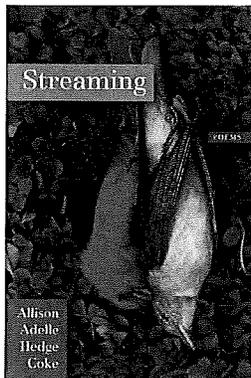
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Allison Hedge Coke is the author of *Dog Road Woman*, *Off-Season City Pipe*, *Blood Run*, and *Burn*, as well as a memoir, *Rock, Ghost, Willow, Deer*. Her honors include an American Book Award, an Independent Publisher Book Award, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from Native Writers’ Circle of the Americas. She is the editor of the anthologies *Sing: Poetry of the Indigenous Americas*, and *Effigies and Effigies II*. Hedge Coke is a founding faculty member of the Vermont College of Fine Arts’ full-residency MFA in Writing and Publishing Program, where she teaches poetry, creative nonfiction, and publishing.



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NEWS FROM COFFEE HOUSE PRESS



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Praise for Allison Adelle Hedge Coke

- AMERICAN BOOK AWARD WINNER
- PATERSON POETRY PRIZE FINALIST
- WORDCRAFT CIRCLE WRITER OF THE YEAR WINNER
- LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FROM THE NATIVE WRITERS CIRCLE OF THE AMERICAS
- 2016 WITTER BYNNER FELLOW

Praise for *Streaming*

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—*Los Angeles Review of Books*

“Song is an essential part of [Hedge Coke’s] collection . . . The layering of Cherokee, Choctaw and Lakota terms adds depth.”

—*Kansas City Star*

“Erudite and complex . . . Reading it, you can feel the rhythmic propulsion of each image as surely as you can feel your own pulse.”

—*The Rumpus*

“Hedge Coke is a poet with a remarkable voice.”

—*The Volta*

“[*Streaming*] reveals to us a mature poet of imagery whose sonics have shifted toward a be-bop poetics, in which rich, complex sound-patterns are essential to the collection’s meaning-making and emotional impact.”

—*World Literature Today*

“A rich collection that speaks to our experiences with the world . . . [A collection] so beautiful that many times it feels as if

the poems are singing.”

—*Dr. TJ Eckleburg Review*

“Allison Adelle Hedge Coke’s new collection *Streaming* is a veritable symphony, her poems embracing musicality and dissonance like the best of modern composers.”

—*Largehearted Boy*

“The poems come toward us from a museum of abundance; but museums are filled with relics and this poetry is purely fluid. Everything is moving, changing,

and growing, disintegrating and rejuvenating for its own purposes.”

—*The Washington Independent Review of Books*

“Allison Adelle Hedge Coke’s fierce new poetry collection, *Streaming*, takes her always brave and startling sonics into new narrative spaces. These poems are full of needful improvisation and piano runs. Hedge Coke makes music from tornados and glyphs, from cranes spiraling overhead, and from the grumbling stomachs of hungry children. She sings these stories because she has to and because we need her to. And when the speaker in “Sudden Where” says “maybe we’d find something magnificent, give it up to make somebody happy,” it is clear that in these urgent poems, and in this necessary book, we’ve found both the magnificent and the unforgettable.”

—ADRIAN MATEJKA, author
The BigSmoke

“Each poem has its own rhythm that meshes into that of the collection overall, a body greater than the sum of its parts, an organism alive with language.”

—*AskMen*

“Her poems beg to be read aloud, a jumble of hard sounds that wind their way into an effortless melody. . . . *Streaming* is truly an accomplishment.”

—*The Summerset Review*

"Streaming, is an elegant collaboration between poetry and music."

—*Hawaii Review*

"A brilliant and brave new collection of poems that irrevocably alters our conventional notion of what constitutes narrative space."

—*The Journal* (West Virginia)



Previous Praise

"Hedge Coke's dense narrative poems are crowded with memorable characters and situations . . . she is welcome new voice in American poetry." —JESSICA HAGEDORN

"Allison Hedge Coke is a skilled, spirited, young poet who is transforming and honing her social and personal experience and reflection to speak with the voice of a whole people." —AMIRI BARAKA

"These are the songs of righteous anger and utter beauty."
—JOY HARJO

"These poems have so much to say that they can't talk fast enough, and this poet is not afraid to speak the dangerous truth."

—LINDA HOGAN

"Though informed by the history of Indian struggle, the poems are set more in the city than on the reservation, in places 'the BIA forgot to watch.' Anyone interested in the often silenced voices of America's working poor will appreciate these poems."
—*Library Journal*



Praise for *Off-Season City Pipe*

"[Hedge Coke] has paid her dues and earned this tough voice, the right to tell it like it is." —*North American Review*

"From North Carolina tobacco fields to Midwest factories—in rusty, rural trailers and on urban streets—Allison Adelle Hedge Coke creates poems of aching muscle and ancient will."
—*Pulse of the Twin Cities*

"[Hedge Coke] does not wallow in sentimental attachments to the spaces of the past. Instead, she emphasizes the land as a place to work, stressing the stark realities of the rural and urban working class . . . *Off-Season City Pipe* demonstrates that, after long searching, Hedge Coke has found a place to work, envisioning the gritty, yet salvageable experience of the working underclass."

—*MultiCultural Review*

"The grit of lived experience textures every page of this collection of poems . . . [Hedge Coke] is a Native American Ginsberg with more dirt under her nails—a Beat poet, but also powerfully connected to the 'relocated and dislocated peoples' from whom she garners identity and sense of connectedness."
—*Altar Magazine*

"[Hedge Coke's] second book of poems, which spans life in San Francisco, Santa Fe and Sioux Falls, is as vast as it is urgently precise."
—*Curve*

"Hedge Coke gives us a glimpse of a rarified world, drawing from her background as a sharecropper, assembly-line packer and practitioner of other 'manual arts' . . . her pieces make music of factory rhythms, or paint portraits of dirt paths and empty shacks. With a cadence that occasionally rises and falls like a preacher's, Hedge Coke lifts her readers' thoughts."
—*Minneapolis Observer*

"The[se] poems bring together many of the ideas, problems, questions, and concerns with which Native American communities continue to wrestle. . . . [Hedge Coke] has acknowledged, and made the reader acknowledge, willingly or unwillingly, other facets of Native people's lives, just as other key authors such as Sherman Alexie, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Joy Harjo have done." —*Cold Mountain Review*

"Long-lined, conversational poems full of southern swing and storytelling zest."
—*Booklist*

"This fine collection of poetry by Allison Adelle Hedge Coke makes a ladder of songs. The ladder balances between the well-grooved symbol of a warrior on horseback running into the wind for battle, to a Native mother feeding her children when there is nothing. She, too, is a warrior. The poem 'The Change' stands out as a classic of contemporary Native literature. What is presented in this evocative poetry is not a 'struggle for dignity,' but a dignity for struggle."
—JOY HARJO

"These are hard-nosed narratives of simple people known

along the way, Hedge Coke can't disguise her simpatico though she bites with tough images and can pack a wallop-ing metaphor onto her natural speech of muscled language which grazes smoothly across varied terrains."

—MAURICE KENNY



Praise for *Rock, Ghost, Willow, Deer*

- NATIVE AMERICA CALLING RADIO BOOK OF THE MONTH AUGUST 2004

"[A] journey that slashes at reader's emotions but also celebrates the ability of the human spirit to battle on and the power of the author to let us share the road with her."

—*Billings Gazette*

"[A] harrowing book . . . [Hedge Coke] writes in a stately, unashamed manner of beatings and binges, always connecting her personal sufferings to the larger questions of how Indian people can reclaim their cultural and personal pride and authority."

—*Booklist*

"Unbearable and gripping, harsh and generous, [Hedge Coke] tells it straight, with neither shame nor self-importance. Her language—warrior speech and woman talk—is as solid as a punch."

—*Poetry Project Newsletter*

"In this memoir Allison Hedge Coke shows how 'story was part of everything' in her troubled childhood and in the adult world she came to write into poetry. Hers was also a 'childhood forged schizophrenically.' But the molten terror of a girl ringed round with her mother's imagined demons hardens into a shining imagination. Hedge Coke's love of land and people rings out as hard as steel and as true."

—HEID E. ERDRICH

"What I've always admired about Allison Hedge Coke's poetry is her astounding courage. And the ability to seamlessly weave the tobacco fields of childhood with the stark plains and hills of South Dakota. And more than all that—the shining spirit of compassion."

—JOY HARJO

"Telling is one thing. That's what we do when we tell stories. But coming to know by experience and telling about it is another. Allison Hedge Coke in *Rock, Ghost, Willow, Deer* shows us 'knowing' in her unique and wonderful way."

—SIMON J. ORTIZ



Praise for *Dog Road Woman*

- AMERICAN BOOK AWARD WINNER
- PATERSON POETRY PRIZE FINALIST

"Hedge Coke gives us strong voices that create dialogues about one's heritage and one's place in the modern world, with special emphasis on Native American rights."

—*Rocky Mountain News*

"There is an intensity to the lines of poet Allison Hedge Coke that suits her subjects: rural life, mixed-blood identity, violence, segregation and female strength . . . [her] poems make their heated points with wit so quick they sear the page."

—HEID E. ERDRICH, *Circle*

"The no-frills writing of *Dog Road Woman* soon acquires the comfortable fit of a familiar story, its elements combined and recombined like the stitching on an irregularly-woven rug: nubby, resistant, yet resilient."

—*Hurricane Alice*

A conversation on *Streaming* between Jan Beatty and Allison Adelle Hedge Coke

Jan Beatty: Allison, after reading your brave new book, *Streaming*, I was stunned by its range and depth. This book is life-changing, a book that opens into other ways of seeing and being—in an alive, breathing way. You have written amazing poems that invent, straddle, report, and document this and other worlds. It feels often that we as readers are hearing voices from these other worlds: the invisible world, the material world, the underground world, the world of ghosts and voices, the world of things gone. Can you talk about accessing these worlds in your poems?

Allison Adelle Hedge Coke: Thank you so much, Jan. I am humbled by you saying this and feel as if maybe the hope and intent I have for the book have been realized in your response. I want the reader to transition, to transform, to visit and query the knowns and unknowns around us. I hope to present work that speaks to larger issues and presences and larger realms of existence. I intend for the work to supply ample throughways for passage to occur and that the ride is one whereas the reader feels driven to continue and to abandon themselves somewhat to the flow.

For me, these movings, that access is essential. It is what makes us human and what brings us closer to every other living thing in our world, and I truly hope beyond. That dust of the stars is out of reach but also made us. The magnitude and the smallness of this truth offers us access, at least in the thinking we do, our input.

JB: The book begins with an elegy for your mother, which is so beautiful. The book opens, then, with great heart and wisdom. When I read the poem, I felt that as a reader, I had already arrived at a remarkable moment of change in the book. Writers often work up to these moments in a book—what made you begin with this poem?

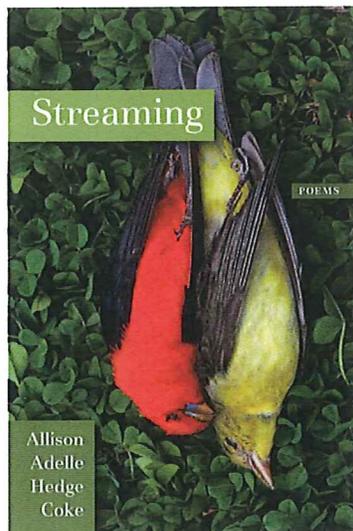
AAHC: With her leaving, her transition/transformation complete, the essence of expected eulogy, finality, presented immediate impetus to explore, to seek, what it is that holds us human, essentializes or counters our emic/etic source-field, our knowns/unknowns, and in this, what is unknown is, for me, the seat of search for reason and our vast and sensitive sensory passion to follow that detail, to begin to know. Here is the opening close death presents, the invocation. Elegy is a motive force in each of my books, in some way, however subtle. Perhaps there is nothing more evocative.

JB: In *Streaming*, you skillfully work with sound, movement, and voice—as you have in previous books. But this usage of compressed sound, expansive movement—this voice feels so different than that of your previous books. It feels even more inhabited, wise, intimate. Would you say that this is true?

AAHC: The deeper the well, the sweeter the water. Maybe we all reach luminous junctures with which flow is more than purge. Maybe this is where poetry revels. Always much more than expression, it is, for me, maybe for us, an attentiveness our intentionalities secure. When one feels secure, whole, maybe the embodiment is second nature. Maybe I am reaching some place of second nature in the work. Maybe. Duende offers such manifestation, as does the meeting of journeys, life, motion and our moving through while others, and our experience with other things, pass through

us. It is the motion which gives us sensibility, maybe. An accord, and challenges to it.

Again, the emic/etic search comes into play. Maybe this is also the source of poetic device, of our need to provide the exactness of what we realize, witness, envision. Hence, metaphor, musicality, intellectual shaping and embodiment—perhaps that which cannot be figured, as well as what is ripe



Streaming Poetry

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to gift. I am still learning and hopefully will continue to attempt to make sense of things, to follow that which leads, gives us measure. I hope this is a just a beginning for me. A new fold/crease in the echo-wrinkle of personal existence. Existence itself. Our fabric.

Also, I am a person who often thinks in music before words materialize. Sometimes the prosody appears and the poem finds success, strict or atypical nonce, or not. Sometimes the freedom that is the heart of music expands to voice, a soulness. One hopes the voice comes into being in this way. One hopes. And, for this, it is my hope to present this as a passage into several worlds ranged through intentional, impromptu, coincidental, accidental entry, purposeful and chaotic, timely and untimely. A gesture.

JB: In the title poem, "Streaming," there are openings of time, space, place, and the body: "Once, we walk long grass into weave . . . Some of us flew them, cicadas . . . Some of us squirmed underworld . . . Here, in the cylindrical and spherical,/in the curvilinear space . . . intuition/memory intersect . . ." This movement between worlds with collisions and intersections seem essential to the heart and "story" of the book. Can you talk about the "idea" of streaming and the shifting of worlds in your book?

AAHC: Streaming is a concept I've employed for much of my life. To detail the idea of momentum, the physics of ceremony, of migration, motion, collective movement, the impetus of reason beyond thinking, consciousness. Inspirational elements include the salient cranes who offer the lean toward direction after the scouts have reported back where the best air currents, feeding places, safety zones are for the work of the day in migration. If trusted, if sentinace delivers trust, the rest will follow, all first leaning the same directional point prior to lifting, then joining into the force, or lack thereof. I was told as a child that migration is a learned thing, within families of other people, beings, animal forms. Luckily, Kristina Gil came to work with cranes in the same place a collective of us had begun to gather, wherein we shared with her our feelings and she followed and proved that crane migration is learned. Of course it is and always has been. I am interested in this factor of trust as much as in the motion itself and feel as though they are linked through belief in and giving into greater forces. I am interested in where trust derives within familial encouragements, cultural nuances as culture nurtures story just as much as story nurtures culture. Equidistant.

I have been working on what became the title poem for this book for a number of years. There are public performances of drafts of the piece, on record, for several. The poem is my salute to a continuum, a momentum we lean toward within the everyday function and its instigative reliance upon mem-

ory and reason, and the songs that call to mind the origins, collective, our stepping from and back into continued longevity nurtured by culture and music, by dance, by all of our singing and immeasurable returns. Streaming as thermal gliding, as collective turning, in migration, in poetic movements, in a memetic encoding postulating itself to carry, to collectively coerce and offer a sense of relaxation within the work. As in field songs, as in working songs, as in rowing songs that permeate traditional musics all over the world.

Having relied upon the concept, having taught the idea of streaming so much over the years, Natalia Trevino, a former graduate student, interviewing Jonathan Frazen, when his book came out, including the term, similar and maybe exactly as to what I had referenced, to what I had envisioned while developing the concept, for myself, and my students, spoke in depth about its construction detailing her learned familiarity with this concept, with my work with migration, with Sandhill Cranes specifically. And, let me add, with their magnificent display of collective orchestration and use of thermals to kettle, for that matter, of murmurations starlings and other blackbirds swell within, of what we do as humans when we exist in narrativising culture, conversation, musical and life harmonics, what both delivers and compels us. I believe her knowledge source came as a surprise to him. I don't know. It is primary to my work, to my thought process and whatever understanding of the world I have come to, thus far. It is both drive toward and release into collective flow. It is aligned with purpose, I believe. It is the reason I sought to mathematically encode the verse-play *Blood Run*, to demonstrate the choreographed geometry and architecture of the mound city, its inherent property, and is directly derived from my familial and personal cultural upbringing and that legacy, something I attempted to speak toward in *Dog Road Woman*, initially. It is present in the labor, and constructions I've contributed, as well, as attributed to in *Off-Season City Pipe*. A book of work, of eco-ethos, of that momentum tha feeds us while we endure. It spoke to me while I was a field laborer, a commercial fisher, a construction worker, a factory worker. When it comes down to it, the unravelings and threadings/mendings I shared in my memoir, *Rock, Ghost, Willow, Deer*, are also a reflection of this thought. It is a way I see, or perceive things, beyond thinking. Something we give ourselves to when we get it. Transformative thinking, as well. Probably the same frame of thinking that led to the term in digital use. It is all around us. The web. Some of that fabric has always been and some is constructed, built, learned.

Of course my mother's death allowed me to visit and exist in a multitude of realms during the course of this year and of our intersections and departures and essentially pulled the book together much in the way that I perceive the action works. Though in each inclusion, this was already in exist-

tence, as well. And, in my own thoughts and experiences of moving through worlds and spiritual junctures, ghosts, leavings, departures, melding, and the incremental motion all of this propels, or repels, to bring us closure, perhaps opening.

JB: As the book continues, there is great eruption and cataclysm in the poems. With enormous skill, you take us through massacre, dust storms, tornadoes, and into fire. These poems are powerful and disturbing, yet we feel always a pattern, a sense of rebirth embedded here. For example, in section three, "May Suite," you present us with four poems of tornadoes. It seems that the sense of inevitability and tragedy is always accompanied by otherworldliness. Can you talk about that?

AAHC: The "May Suite" presents popular music as vessel to ride out the storm infused with the only station still carrying sound, an oldies station, both manifesting and embodying the storm in some ways. Nearby, dozens are losing their lives, catastrophe ensues, and the reasoning to encourage the listener to see through this are a fistful of old songs accompanying the terror of the literal force.

We move through passions, through kinships and cultural manifestations into the natural forces surrounding us and challenging us. The water, wind, and dust of storms, the firestorms in major burns, the shape of the world and what elemental forces are upon us always. And yet, if you are attentive you find they are also what feed us, nurture us, and (again) deliver us into something richer, more knowledgeable, more full, and also less concerned with what we have and more interested in what we have come to, moved through, experienced, and survived. It is the development of soul, of purpose. This is our pattern. It is our orchestration and gives us permanence and release from the need for it. Realms that beguile.

It seems, I have always been intrigued, inspired by these realms. I am fortunate to have been endowed with a life so touched and marked by my mother's musical genius and her formidable madness, chronic schizophrenia. By my father's genius insight and sense of reason and purpose. By both of their natures, steeped in curiosity and follow through. And, surely by their lives in the Depression and Dust Bowl, in war, and knowledge of shifts in climate and change, overall. With parents, that by all rights were well old enough to be my grandparents, and my father's parents age difference, the same for him. Those generations of multitudes of causality, of solution, are with me. The blood memory, the genetic memory, yes, but far more the story and the actualities that played out in my life, thus far, in witnessing the techniques and wisdom demonstrated to me, to us, in mapping and coping with the challenges presented with a mother between worlds.

Additionally, I had lack of air at birth, bad forceps delivery, late term, thus have mild Cerebral Palsy, epilepsy, and various other conditions of being in this life. I was malnourished within the womb (long story) and again several times in my early life. Also, I was, once again, without air from asthma and revived within infancy. My father saw his mother (ghost of) at the foot of the bed and her pointing at him and her face tilted toward where I was sleeping, in a room with my sister. He doesn't remember waking or walking but then found himself, seemingly immediately along with my mother taking turns breathing me back to life from the cold blue, I had become. I then technically died from anaphylactic reaction to anesthetics when my wisdom teeth were impacted at fourteen, and from Penicillin at sixteen, and have crossed many thresholds having survived fifteen years of cancer, and a lifetime with Central Auditory Processing Disorder, synesthesia, maybe some strain of Misophonia, some parasympathetic instances, and who knows whatever else. I suffered back, neck, and brain injury in 2004. Plague, *The Year of the Rat*. Had been through complicated and grossly deliberate assaults and abuse in the hands of partners and community members who claimed to have loved me. And I lost the love of my life, when I was still very young, twenty five years ago this year, and am still processing that sobering event, in some ways. Always surrounded by and impressed by ghosts, ghost images, ideas, sympathies and associative qualities, including poetic leaps.

JB: There is a strong sense of family and ancestry in the book, especially with the mother, father, and grandfathers. It feels as though the ancestors are tangibly present in the poems, walking through them and under them, and also speaking. There are many dreams referred to in the poems also. In the writing of the poems, did you invoke the language of visitations, dreams, and channeling through time?

AAHC: We come from a long line of dreamers and it continues in my family today. We see it present in the youngest ones, regularly. I often write from dreams upon waking after convincing myself before I sleep that there is something to be revealed. As I was taught to as a young child; sleep on it. Sometimes this regards a question, or curiosity I have, sometimes it is the missing of a loved one gone, or other loss. Our minds are worthy instruments when we invoke them and set them to task. The work happens on a streaming level in our sleep. It plays out for us and if we are quick, upon waking, we catch it. I often feel more awake when I am sleeping and tired when awake, strangely enough. Or, maybe it is not strange at all, but that intellectual processing that excites me, us.

The divination of life/death, awake/asleep, bright/dull, dark/light/darkening light, is the line of realization and quickening, defining and finding, that, for me, become remarkable

entrance into figuring out this world and life we are born to, and how much of it we participate in once we are referred to as gone. That essence of us, spark, energy, the apparent and vanished – all intriguing. We exist in parallels and embark upon them as we learn to trust or adhere to. Time plays with us that way, and its creases allow the passage, maybe.

We are who we come from. Our genetic code carries so much. Like it or not, those tracings in the past give us motion today and probably impress our response to it in some way. The same for our children, and theirs. I respect my ancestry and my ascendants. They made me who I am and I owe them everything. I hope I live up to a bit of what they were moving toward. I hope I get it.

JB: Towards the end of the book, in section five, the element of fire becomes primary and alive with relentless language: *burnside tangling, black plumes, scorched, tinder, back into blaze, smolder, waving red, yellow flames, fiery sear, self-immolated, torched up, heat plates, prairie grass ignition, blistered skies, black crusts, first fire*. At one point, you say: “Insides turning out, twisting up like lead turns turning.” This move towards fire at the end of the book and this moment of “Inside turning out” seems to point to transformation and rebirth, salvaging and remaking. Can you discuss the element of fire as a primary choice in the book?

KY: Fire is essential to life. Without the stars, our sun, our cooking fires, our hearths, we would not exist. Sunlight is a purification as well. It sterilizes germs. Fire is also the quickest leveler and devastator. It reclaims us in the pyre and we return to it in crematoriums, or in grass fires, in high-rise arsons, in domestic violence and covering of crimes, in greed. In envelopes us and returns us to the dust from which we emanate. It depicts, portrays passion and all its beautiful and horrendous presentations.

I began this section while my mom had finished treatment for esophageal cancer and her bones were beginning to breakdown with osteoporosis. I was in a Lannan residence at Marfa and in the midst of the worst fire in colonial history in that landscape. Yet, all of that land is a caldera. It came from fire to begin with. It was returned to it. My heart went out to everyone and everything around me affected in the burn and the beginnings of the poem are my homage to that which brings us together in the face of endangerment and in our frailty and resilience in tragedy. This, coupled with my own history with fire and belief in the nature of fire, that brought about the epic nature of this piece and within the book, its significance. I respect fire greatly. The eternal flame is an ever-present notion in my family.

JB: There is great love, intimacy, and mercy in this book, which arises through surprising movement in the poems. As

a speaker who has seen great fires and patterns of disintegration, can you speak to the tenderness, love, and hope that surface in the midst of these patterns?

AAHC: Thank you, again, Jan. I hope to bring those exact measures of humanity through the collation of the poems. I hope to represent a journey into the larger experience of humanity, or our living and transitioning, our transformations and possibly understandings and therefore, mercies. For me, love and that which embraces and challenges love, exists in exact parallels, just as positive and negative energy coexist and have equal measure upon us. This journey runs the divination and the parameters we collide with, soar with, are nourished and damaged by, that generate our beyondness as something more tangible. We realize love through all of it, or we miss it. Sometimes we return and embark upon the many similar journeys just to get it, to know it. For me, journey is the instrumental force that drives that momentum and causes us to find the signature motions that we acclimate to and develop through. Hopefully we mature and come to the deeper aspects of ourselves in this way and then learn to lean in, to lead, to release, to give, beyond the grieving. To find the miraculous in the everyday and relish in it. Repeating this process, directing our loved ones, our students, our friends into the leanings of life, in our work, our creativity, becomes our measure. What we gifted. It is not what you keep, after all. Is it?

I have learned about transporting audience through Quincy Troupe’s running style, through Amiri Baraka’s life journey to speak for a collective voice, through Sonia Sanchez and Nancy Morejon’s stunningly choreographed musicalities in their poems. And, in other incantations, a chapbook of this poem, this journey is illustrated by Dustin Mater, Chickasaw artist, and is being translated by the Beloved Woman, Myrtle Driver. A CD recording with the tremendous musician Kelvyn Bell will contain both “Burn” and “Streaming” (as the title poem) that I trust readers will also be interested in and enjoy the collaborative performance. Kelvyn and I are teaming up on several projects, currently. I’ve also performed this poem with John Carlos Perea and Jimmy Biala, both amazing musicians I feel truly fortunate to work with, and, with Kelvyn and the poet Sherwin Bitsui, whose “Flood Song” runs parallel to “Burn” so together we work to weave them into a Burnsong in live performance. So enjoyable and challenging. I love it.

My mother was cremated, by choice. A part of us in the flames with her. Right now, thinking about it, I long to firegaze, right here this moment. The portals there, dimensions. Fire is the spark of life and of existence in the stars and in our world and it is the deliverance of us as well. Wind brings us here and conditions our turning. Earth gives us base and a form to travel upon. Still, we are water, electri-

fied; the living. It is our essence, our parallel. Fire is the signifier. A fire starter is essential to the survival of a whole and twisted can also be our ruins. Then what springs forth, the phoenix, or in this case the rebirth and knowing.

JB: You end the book with a “Coda” which includes one poem, “Harp Strings,” a palindrome about sweet rain, joy, releasing song. This is a surprising choice after the railing intensity of this collection. Can you discuss the framing aspects of this choice?

AAHC: Realizing the harp, the strings of rain, the music played in our sensory shifting, brings lyric passage to a seal; a sealing that reveals an alternative passage, a resonant reflection and opportunity to exit or return, with the image/impression musical synesthete. Like the rain in Casa Blanca, changes tone and is also the scene change, as in any traditional sense of shift, of lifting, of moving to resolution, to coping, rain both heals and provides further invitation to reimagine. In this, is my invitation to study the intersections, the light/dark, real/surreal, death/life, apparition/embodiment, the full orchestration closing in soft song. Then, followed only by the quiet after the storm, our transformed deliverance, and if we are very lucky, our new way of reasoning, of thinking, of being. Cleansing. Hope.

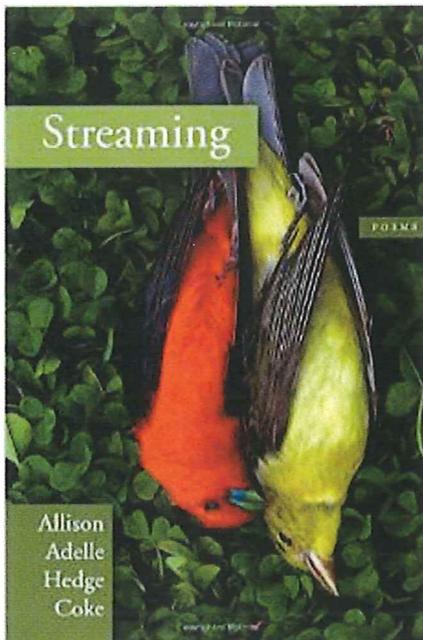
A few months after my mother’s death, Alex Shoumatoff came out to our annual Crane Retreat, in the epicenter of the migration, working on a relevant story for *Smithsonian* magazine. He brought wildlife photographer Melissa Groo with him to chronicle the migratory influence around us. I asked Melissa if I could see some of her recent work. She showed me an array of images in her finder. When the image of the tanagers came up, I was moved on a guttural level and knew it was the cover for this book. I immediately asked her for it, for this, and she told the story of the tanagers, who had both collided with glass and died. How she’d arranged them in the pairing. I thought of the obstacles in our built world and the catastrophe we make and of their beautiful lives and own migratory passages and returns, their patterns, and sudden endings, the loving care given their last impressions, their bodies laid to rest, and was hooked. I am extremely grateful she agreed to bring them to this book. This too is a journey, stunning, remarkable. That it presented in this way, in concert with our shared work in attending to the streaming world, was, for me, necessary.

Jan Beatty is the author of *The Switching Yard* (2013), *Red Sugar* (2008), finalist for the Paterson Prize, *Boneshaker* (2002), and *Mad River* (1994 Agnes Lynch Starrett Prize), all published by the University of Pittsburgh Press. She has toured widely, with appearances at venues such as the Los Angeles Times Book Festival and the Geraldine R. Dodge Festival. For twenty years, Beatty has hosted and produced *Prosody*, a public radio show on NPR affiliate WESA-FM featuring national writers. She directs the creative writing program at Carlow University, where she teaches the Madwomen in the Attic writing workshops and in the MFA program.

Madeleine Kruhly on *Streaming*

The Call to Transmission

March 29th, 2015



LOOK UP THE WORD “streaming,” and you will find it defined as a method of transmitting and receiving data. This has a crisp technological tinge to it that speaks to our reliance on media, and our imbrication within a digitized environment of codes and clicks. But what of the streaming that occurs outside of the computer screen — the streaming passage of seasons, of snow geese, of light before the storm, or even of people united in revolution? In Allison Adelle Hedge Coke’s newest collection these meanings meld together as she depicts a world that transmits and receives in a multitude of ways. And yet Hedge

Coke does not just endeavor to show the world as it is; she encourages readers of diverse backgrounds, to resist its inherent prejudices, and to effect positive change within it.

An award-winning poet who has lived across the country as well as beyond its borders, Hedge Coke is of mixed heritage: Huron, Metis, Cherokee, French Canadian, Portuguese, and Irish — to name a few. She highlights each in these 53 poems, whether through a phrase she slips in like “sur le voyage” or a reference to Ireland’s Magdalene laundries. Her Native American roots, however, seem to hold the deepest attraction for Hedge Coke; she calls upon them in the collection’s opening poem, “A Time.” The language in this elegy for her

mother is simple yet fluid: worries slide into another, as the “night” of death crawls ever closer to its victim. In typical Hedge Coke fashion, the poem also features a moment of clarity, understated yet succinct. Here, the speaker realizes that there is never enough time, putting this quiet epiphany in terms borrowed from Native American legend:

The problem —
it's not been written yet, the omens:
the headless owl, the bobcat struck,
the red wolf where she could not be.
None of it done and yet it's over.
Nothing yet
of night when she called me closer
asked me to bring her crow painting
to stay straight across from her feet
so she could waken into it,
remember her friend.

It is a haunting passage, one that uses poetic techniques such as idiosyncratic spacing and minor repetition without calling attention to them. “A Time” is firm, and precise in its account of omens and its sequence of actions. It also pauses willingly for the unknown: “nothing yet / of night when she called me closer.” The poem frames Hedge Coke’s collection in its awareness of historical erasure, and its persistent hope that what has not yet been written may still come to be. She invites us to understand our own time as one filled with “beautiful things/that lead our thoughts and give us reason.” Like the poet Joy Harjo, Hedge Coke expresses her faith in the “we.” Hers is a communal poetry, one that does not dwell only in the first person speaker, but attempts to speak to its readers as a collective.

Hedge Coke organizes time in her poems as a kind of call and response — a term that she uses explicitly in the collection. The poems move backward and forward; their events ripple out from present to past. The collection itself is divided into four sections, as well a prelude, suite, and coda. This structure recalls the form of a musical composition, a symphonic collocation of movements which, taken together, constitute a “streaming” but formally unified whole. Hedge Coke’s interludes do

change the pace of the collection, but they are not as affecting or hard-hitting as the longer chapters, with the exception of “A Time” as the prelude. One of the most powerful moments comes in the second section, “Breaking Cover,” in which Hedge Coke turns to historical events, such as the Wounded Knee incident. We see her take on the latter in “1973”: “It was war by any fine-toothed measure.” She describes the “bunkers filled with fifteen-year-old horsemen” and the hiding near “Grandma’s belly.” The poem is only eight lines long, but its message is undeniable: government tanks and troops, alongside the Guardians of the Oglala Nation, brought violence to the Oglala Sioux, many of whom were left wounded and voiceless. Here, as elsewhere, Hedge Coke uses her writing to speak for those whom history has silenced.

Hedge Coke does not limit her poems’ subject matter to the United States; her work takes us to other parts of the Americas where Indigenous people have been subject to similarly catastrophic acts of violence. There is a poignant tribute to the victims of the Pando, or El Porvenir, Massacre, a 2008 ambush on Indigenous community members in Bolivia. We are also introduced to the Barrio Tricentenario and the Plaza de Banderas in Colombia — sites of execution and bombing, respectively — in “Barrio Tricentenario, Plaza de Banderas”:

Wading footsteps of murdered
in the barrio Juan calls home
we sing our songs, tell stories,
cry a bit when conquistador
reenactors dance in color.

Botero blasted away refilled
with forty sculpted doves,
in the city where from here
I love you deeply and from
there it was but a night.

Here, Hedge Coke narrates the harmful acts of the “conquistador” or the colonizer. To combat the voicelessness imposed by such regimes, Hedge Coke encourages the practice of oral literature to channel the

spoken roots of the written word. Her poems answer the destruction of the colonizer with songs, and stories, and “forty sculpted doves” — a unique type of call and response. And with this look to South America, Hedge Coke seems to advance what Chadwick Allen would call a “transindigenous” approach to representing the experiences of Indigenous peoples. Rather than consider each Native population’s struggles through isolated and localized readings, Hedge Coke highlights “the similarities between, and possible kinships with, Indigenous peoples in each region.” This viewpoint cannot help but call to mind the work of Leslie Marmon Silko, particularly her *Almanac of the Dead*, which seeks to unite the communities of Indigenous peoples across the Western hemisphere in a shared revolution. Far from advocating a loss of cultural or regional particularity, her transindigenous approach offers the possibility of a shared consciousness among Indigenous populations, a cause to which Hedge Coke’s work is devoted.

Notions of place are central to Hedge Coke’s work; she is a poet with feet in the river, even as her head rests on a mountain top. The first section is suitably titled “Navigation”, setting us among “coarse indigos” and cranes with frozen legs. There is a respect here for the will of nature. At times, we are simply observers, but we are also taken deep into the swarms of the 1934 Black Blizzard and the white ash of the 2011 Marfa fires, the outside world in chaos. “All we know is that we are not alone / and yet we are and everything is subject to fire” says the poet in “Burn.” Hedge Coke forces us to understand that many of these events are the result of human endeavors. She calls for a balance between our own strokes of action and the “streaming” of nature in her poem, “Eddy Lines”:

Sternpaddler, you
call for reason
when sometimes
water just is

The lines are lean and measured, like the cuts of the eddy. The “paddler” is defined by his desire to forge ahead, to map the river’s course. The poem’s tight line breaks foreground the issue of control,

up of words, an almost free-form association (rather like a poetic version of "Flight of the Bumblebees") to slowed-down and stripped-back verse.

So, what does this concept of "stilling," this refusal to meet violence with violence, mean for Silko's transindigenous poetics of revolution? Hedge Coke suggests that relinquishing the gun does not mean forgetting the past. Her poems show how stillness itself may be a form of resistance. Some of the poems, such as the too-sweet "Summer Fruit" or "Hibakusha," which fails to grab the reader's attention due to its abstraction and lack of grounding detail, pale in the light of others. On the whole, though, the clear voice and impressive technical skill demonstrated in Hedge Coke's poems do justice to her subject matter's cultural and historical stakes. Most importantly, she composes "for our world," a world she represents in constant flux, constantly streaming, yet leading us "home into [ourselves] and back to reason."

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Washington Independent

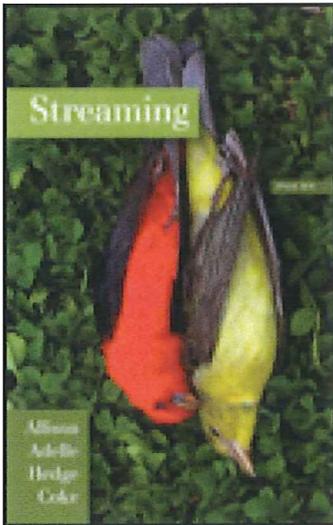
REVIEW OF BOOKS

February 2015 Exemplars: Poetry Reviews by Grace Cavalieri

Grace Cavalieri

February 23, 2015

A monthly feature that looks at books of and about poetry.



***Streaming* by Allison Adelle Hedge Coke.** Coffee House Press. 132 pages.

Allison Adelle Hedge Coke touches dimensions of Native American identity, mixed-race ideology, science, history and political events, botany, zoology, and geology. Where it leads us is to intellectual form where the poet becomes pioneer, noticing the unnoticed, then memorializing cultural connections into rhythm.

Each leaf and branch become a relevant view of America that changes like time, sometimes from culture shock, sometimes from natural events. The poems come toward us from a museum of abundance; but museums are filled with relics and this poetry is purely fluid. Everything is moving, changing, and growing, disintegrating and rejuvenating for its own purposes. The poet chronicles the animation of the natural world and man's unnatural behavior. Here is a life open to the Spirits where the material plane and the invisible become one interrelated in verse. Hedge Coke takes chances with form and presentation and it works for her; the book is a long song to the earth—at times reminiscent of Whitman in tone and scope. Her sweeping lines in Section IV carry thoughts margin-to-margin. AALHC's use of space is an homage to esthetics.

Allison Adelle Hedge Coke is a strong woman. She's always written with great lyricism of the disenfranchised, the worker, the poor, the hard scrabble. In this new book, losses — hers and the world's — become phenomena of the natural world, changed to music.

The Dallas Morning News

Center Stage

Texas writers inscribed on PEN longlist



Michael Merschel Follow @mmerschel Email mmerschel@dallasnews.com

Published: March 17, 2015 11:42 am

The longlist for the 2015 PEN Literary Awards has plenty of names that Dallas readers will recognize.

Local writer Merritt Tierce is listed in the debut fiction category for *Love Me Back*, as is Texas-raised Cynthia Bond, for *Ruby*. That award carries a \$25,000 prize.

S.C. Gwynne, a former *Dallas Morning News* writer, is nominated in biography (a \$5,000 award) for *Rebel Yell*.

And *Texas: The Great Theft*, by Carmen Boullsa, has been nominated for the \$3,000 Pen Translation Prize. That novel, translated by Samantha Schnee, was published by Dallas' Deep Vellum Publishing.

[Update: Other Texans on the list include Bonnie Friedman, who teaches creative writing at the University of North Texas, whose *Surrendering Oz* was nominated in the essay category (a \$10,000 prize), and Austin's Catherine Musemeche, whose *Small: Life and Death on the Front Lines of Pediatric Surgery* is nominated for the science writing award (\$10,000.)]

[Update: Allison Adelle Hedge Coke, whose poetry collection *Streaming* is nominated for the PEN Open Book Award "for an exceptional book-length work of literature by an author of color," notes that she is a native Texan. She's also headed to the Writer's Garret for events April 16-19.]

The full list of nominees can be seen at www.pen.org/literary-awards. Finalists will be announced April 15. Winners will be named May 13 and honored at a ceremony June 8 in New York.

Native American poet reminds us to 'breathe deep'

BY SONJA JAMES
Special to The Journal

"Streaming" by Allison Adelle Hedge Coke (Coffee House Press, 2014, \$16)

□□□

Allison Adelle Hedge Coke's "Streaming" is a brave and brilliant new collection of poems that irreverently alters our conventional notion of what constitutes narrative space. These poems, impressionistic and at times boldly imagistic, reverberate with Hedge Coke's experiences of the private and the public, the personal and the social. As



she espouses a radical individuality rooted in a frank and deliberate dialogue with the collective body of humanity, she transforms

poetry into a "streaming" from one level of consciousness to the next. At the very heart of this process is Hedge Coke's steadfast affirmation of indigenous humanity. Hedge Coke weaves her Native American identity throughout several of the poems.

The volume opens with "A Time," which is an elegy for the poet's recently deceased mother. In this poem, Hedge Coke, besieged with grief, allows the poem to confront the larger issue of ethnic identity. Of her mother she says, "Of Old Chief alongside her

shoulder/still watching over her/just as the mountain had done/throughout her Alberta childhood."

The poem concludes with a tribute to the durability of the earth as well as a lament for the brevity of time allotted to humans perceiving the earth's beauty:

*And all the beautiful things
that lead our thoughts
and give us reason
remain despite the leaving
and
all I know
is what you know
when it is over said and*

*done
it was a time
and there was never
enough of it.*

In "Drunk Butterflies," the speaker attains imagistic brilliance as she describes "butterflies inebriated." This poem combines attention to detail with the emotional intensity engendered by the beauty in the natural world. The speaker thus describes the flight of butterflies that are drunk from drinking from a pool of water filled with fermented foliage:

"The beauty of it all/in sunlightened wing shining,
falling forward and/back, up and down. Prezzy fantasies/color gentle..."

In "Summer Fruit," Hedge Coke provides us with an original and transformative image of summer as she poses the question: "Is summer a box of light?"

The poet turns to political protest in "Swarming," which explores the invasion of Iraq in 2003: "All creatures/cater to whims of man/in chaotic frenzy for battle." She then argues for peace which is "ever present/in just one thoughtful breath." She concludes by exhorting us to "breathe, breathe deep."

Hedge Coke further displays her passion for healing wounded humanity in "Nino de la Calle" or "Boy of the Street." In her author's note to the poem, Hedge Coke explains that "Nino de la Calle" is a term for street

children in Medellin, Colombia. In the poem, she addresses the street child directly, asking not only how she can help him but also expressing love for the hungry child: "A few coins? Can I leave you?/Can I walk by without leaning in/holding you close, telling you/stars' pathway beyond this math?" The poem concludes with a maternal image of our social responsibility and the love we must show each other: "Each boy our son."

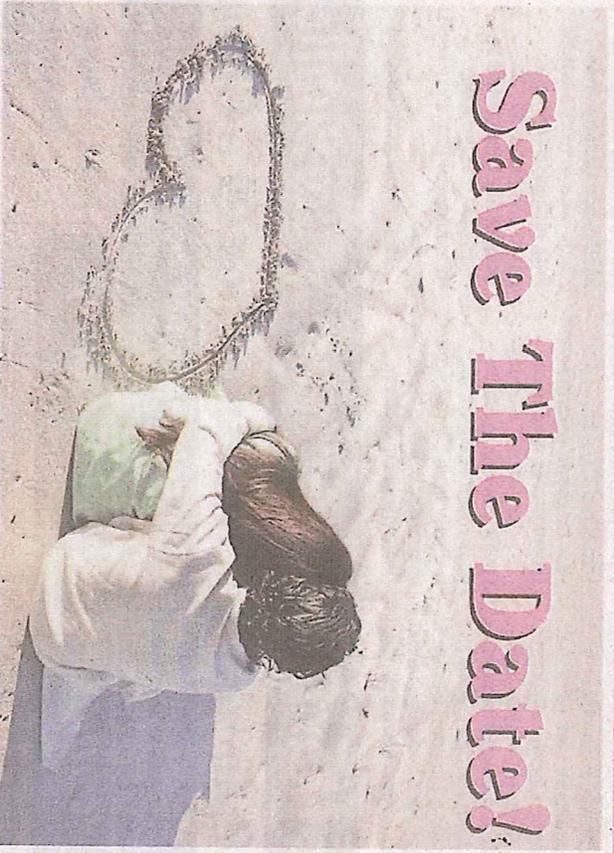
As a whole, Allison Adelle Hedge Coke's "Streaming" offers many lessons on social justice, peace, and our responsibility not only to each other but to the planet we call home. These highly visual poems of lyric beauty present the world both as it is and as it can become — if only we embrace the principles of peace and love. She reminds us that humanity's greatest resource is the human heart engaged fully with the necessary and good: "breathe breathe deep."

□□□

Sonja James is the author of "Baiting the Hook" (the Bunny & the Crocodile Press, 1999), "Children of the Moon" (Argonne House Press, 2004) and "Calling Old Ghosts to Supper" (Finishing Line Press, 2013).

Poets are invited to submit recent books for review consideration. Contact Sonja James at sonja-james@comcast.net.

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