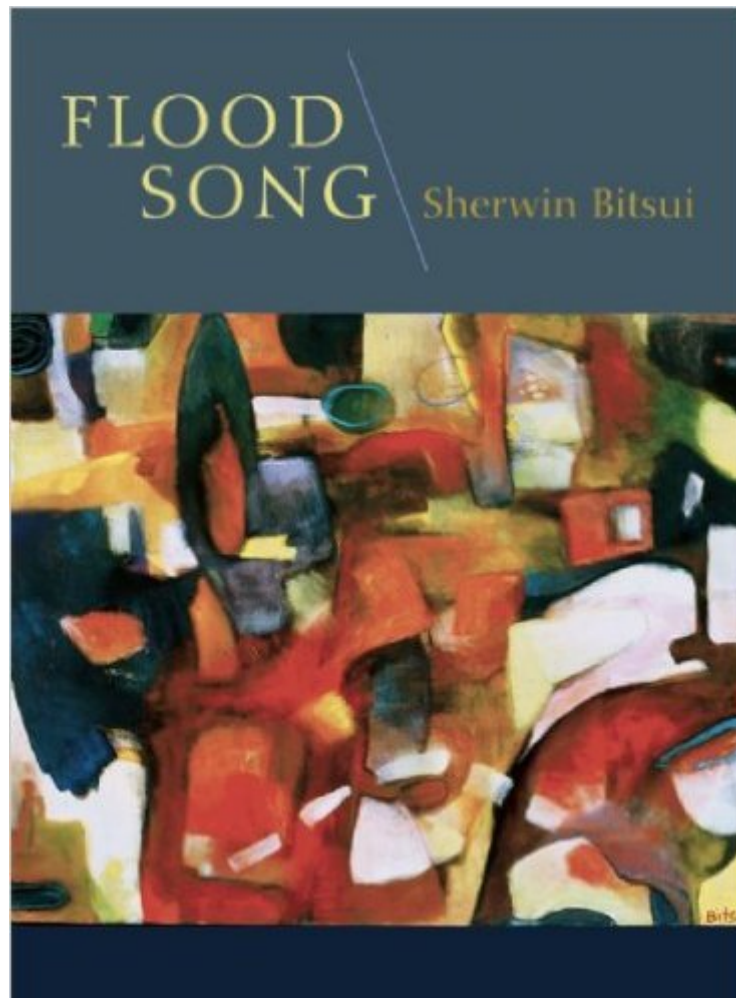


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# Flood Song



## Synopsis

"Sherwin Bitsui's new poetry collection, *Flood Song* is a sprawling, panoramic journey through landscape, time, and cultures that is well worth the ride." Poets & Writers Bitsui's poetry is elegant, probative, and original. His vision connects worlds. New Mexico Magazine His images can tilt on the side of surrealism, yet his work can be compellingly accessible. Arizona Daily Star Sherwin Bitsui sees violent beauty in the American landscape. There are junipers, black ants, axes, and cities dragging their bridges. I can hear Whitman's drums in these poems and I can see Ginsberg's supermarkets. But above all else, there is an indigenous eccentricity, a cornfield at the bottom of a sandstone canyon, that you will not find anywhere else. Sherman Alexie Native traditions scrape against contemporary urban life in *Flood Song*, an interweaving painterly sequence populated with wrens and reeds, bricks and gasoline. Poet Sherwin Bitsui is at the forefront of a new generation of Native writers who resist being identified solely by race. At the same time, he comes from a traditional indigenous family and *Flood Song* is filled with allusions to Dine (Navajo) myths, customs, and traditions. Highly imagistic and constantly in motion, his poems draw variously upon medicine song and contemporary language and poetics. I map a shrinking map, he writes, and I bite my eyes shut between these songs. An astonishing, elemental volume. I retrace and trace over my fingerprints Here: magma, there: shore, and on the peninsula of his finger pointing west a bell rope woven from optic nerves is tethered to mustangs galloping from a nation lifting its first page through the man hole burn marks in the saddle horn, static in the ear that cannot sever cries from wailing. Sherwin Bitsui's acclaimed first book of poems, *Shapeshift*, appeared in 2003. He has earned many honors for his work, including fellowships from the Witter Bynner Foundation and Lannan Foundation, and he is frequently invited to poetry festivals throughout the world. He lives in Tucson, Arizona.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I picked this book up from library, when I came across it while doing research on Navajo. Turns out that this is some my favorite writing style for poetry. Powerful confusing lines, Not sure the meaning but metaphor surreal. Bitsui non-titled poems touches on myth, living and lifestyle of the Navajo. He writes with imaginative lines. Flood Song is a typhoon of words that over-powers your mind with amazement. You will be reading the lines over and over again. Nodding your head at the beauty of junipers, black ants, axes, sweat and tears behind this cover. SEE MY QUOTES!!! "The storm lying outside its fetal shell folds back its antelope ears and hears its heart pounding through powdery earth underneath dancers flecking dust from their ankles to thunder into rain." "Seeing into those eyes you uncoil their telephone wires, gather their inaudible lions with plastic forks, tongue their salty ribbons, and untie their weedy stems from your prickly fingers." I could quote so much more from Flood Song, but read the words yourself. Listen to beauty in your head as you re-read each line that Bitsui scribbles.

Sherwin Bitsui's voice is so beautiful and strong force not only among current Native American writers, but among the national collection of active poets. I would recommend this book to anyone with a Native American background or anyone who is interested in the perspective.

A stunning book. A selection from this book was featured on Poetry Daily and I was intrigued by the economy, compression and use of language. Still, you don't imagine that anyone could maintain such virtuosity for seventy pages. Wrong. I am a voracious reader of modern poetry; this book stunned me. Surprising nouns and verbs juxtaposed in surprising ways at every turn. The commonplace constantly elevated to the extraordinary. The everyday brutality of fact, as it presents itself in nature, appreciated for its kaleidoscopic thusness. And I read the whole book (in one sitting) before I discovered that the cover illustration was painted by the poet as well. Rarely have I seen a better marriage of cover and content. The painting tells you everything you need to know in terms of form, color and energy--and all the rest--about the poetry. The people at Copper Canyon have come through again, bless them. All that and, if the title (Flood Song) and the arrangement of the work

throughout the book (such intoxicating celebration of negative space) mean anything, it is one poem. No titles. No numbers. No pretension whatsoever. The words working closely with the space to create a single arc of meaning. One poem. It is a rare thing for a poet to be so comfortable with telling you all there is to know about himself. Sherwin Bitsui does that here. Ultimately, that's poetry.

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