

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

---

Fall 2002

## Review of *The Woman Who Watches Over the World: A Native Memoir* By Linda Hogan

Diane Quantic

Wichita State University, [diane.quantica@wichita.edu](mailto:diane.quantica@wichita.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

---

Quantic, Diane, "Review of *The Woman Who Watches Over the World: A Native Memoir* By Linda Hogan" (2002). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 2302.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/2302>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

*The Woman Who Watches Over the World: A Native Memoir.* By Linda Hogan. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2001. 207 pp. \$24.95.

Linda Hogan's memoir is centered in stories, beginning with the story of the book's title. In a museum shop Hogan bought a clay woman, "her stomach attached to an orange-globe earth," that she had mailed to her home. The figurine arrived with broken legs and, Hogan reports, "she began to fall apart in other ways." Like the clay woman, Hogan has fallen apart in many ways, yet she is also watching over her own world and, by association, the wider world of those who share her heritage, her experiences, or her geography.

Hogan comments, "I sat down to write about pain and ended up writing about love," but until the story is complete the love is hard to discover. Hogan examines the events of her "unremembered, broken life," probing the way each event and person has affected her understanding of the world. As the stories accumulate, the past seems less horrific against the ultimate wholeness Hogan gathers from the broken pieces.

The earliest event occurred when, at the age of twelve, Hogan entered into a common-law relationship with an older man. Subsequent chapters are built around teenage

drinking to "lose the memory of everyday"; the Chickasaw history of the Trail of Tears; the painful effort to break through the silence of her mother and later of her adopted daughters who, separated from their Sioux society, suffered the "soul loss" of extreme detachment. Throughout her account Hogan links her own experiences with Chickasaw history, attaching her daughters' story, for example, to that of children lost in the Indian boarding school system. In other chapters she focuses on a trip she takes with her father to their ancestral Oklahoma home and on her own struggle to deal with the affects of fibromyalgia, a debilitating neuromuscular disease. She suffers the most devastating physical and psychological trauma after a fall from a horse that apparently dragged her. In the process of recovery, Hogan finds she has gained more than she lost.

The reader who struggles to justify the muddle of events of a life will find inspiration and guidance in Hogan's work. Although the book moves from Germany across much of the United States, Hogan's life has been centered in her ancestral Oklahoma home and her present physical house in Colorado. The reader familiar with the history and literature of the region will find numerous points of connection in *The Woman Who Watches Over the World*.

DIANE QUANTIC  
Department of English  
Wichita State University