



First Person, First Peoples: Native American College Graduates Tell Their Life Stories

Colleen Larimore

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Native American students entering college often experience a dramatic confrontation of cultures. As one of the writers in this remarkable collective memoir remarks, "When I was a child, I was taught certain things: don't stand up to your elders; don't question authority; life is precious; the earth is precious; take it slowly; enjoy it. And then you go to college and you learn all these other things that never fit." Making things fit, finding that elusive balance between tribal values and the demands of campus life is a recurring theme in this landmark collection of personal essays.

Navajo or Choctaw, Tlingit or Sioux, each of the essayists (all graduates of Dartmouth College) gives a heartfelt account of struggle and adjustment. The result is a compelling portrait of the anguish Native American students feel justifying the existence of their own cultures not only to other students but also throughout the predominantly white institutions they have joined. Among the contributors are a tribal court judge and a professional baseball player, the first Navajo woman surgeon, and the former executive director of a Native American preparatory school. Their memories and insights are unparalleled.

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