

**Smokii Sumac. *you are enough: love poems for the end of the world*. Kegedonce, 2018. 107pp, ISBN: 9781928120162.**

<https://kegedonce.com/bookstore/item/122-you-are-enough-love-poems-for-the-end-of-the-world.html>

In a recent interview, Cindy Blackstock (Gitxsan), an activist for the rights of Indigenous children, emphasized that “you have to build a movement of justice on love” (qtd. in Souffrant). The idea of a justice movement built on love encapsulates the heart and soul of “queer bright / ktunaxa and proud / two spirit” Smokii Sumac’s debut poetry book *you are enough: love poems for the end of the world*, published by Kegedonce Press at the close of 2018 (Sumac 14). *you are enough* can be seen as a justice movement and call-to-action built on, through, and with decolonial love. Sumac’s story-poems fill the page and the soul with “(big) / little” moments of world-transforming and world-building revolution through kisses, cuddles, intimate scenes of kind and gentle solitude with the self, the body, and the land, as well as ongoing and embodied territorial acknowledgements, and decolonial love-making (11). These “(big) / little” storytellings stretch across six interconnected sections and are presented in a rich array of ways, including: the “(big) / little” form of the haiku; the paratextual photo collage that is the central cover image; the Ktunaxa language, which Sumac speaks in moments throughout the collection; and through thank you’s, dedications, and Sumac’s sharing of “things our women have taught” him (11; 51).

Sumac’s collection engages with the complexities, potentialities, grief, and hopefulness woven into its titular concept of “the end of the world.” On the one hand, the term “the end of the world” may conjure ideas of an apocalypse. Various Indigenous literary works—including *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction* (2012) edited by Grace L. Dillon (Anishinaabe), *Love Beyond Body, Space, & Time: An Indigenous LGBT Sci-fi Anthology* (2016) edited by Hope Nicholson, and the masterpiece novel *The Marrow Thieves* (2017) by Cherie Dimaline (Métis)—recognize that the apocalypse is not a potential phenomenon of the near-future but, rather, is an ongoing reality for Indigenous peoples which Indigenous peoples have been living through for far too long. The apocalypse is the violent and ongoing structure of colonialism, which has forced—among other atrocities—fallacious notions of the so-called gender binary, heteronormativity, and heteropatriarchy, and which has attempted to obliterate Indigenous cultures, identities, languages, epistemologies, and lives. Indeed, the onslaught of ongoing colonialism that Indigenous peoples fight and resist every day is, to quote from Sumac’s collection, “a constant state of grief” (39). In *Walking the Clouds*, Dillon writes that “Native apocalyptic storytelling [...] shows the ruptures, the scars, and the trauma” of colonialism “in its effort ultimately to provide healing and a return to bimaadiziwin,” an Anishinaabe concept that translates roughly to “the state of balance” (9). *you are enough* honestly recognizes various contemporary and ongoing apocalyptic, world-rupturing, and world-destroying realities through story-poems that honour, remember, and bear witness to the exhaustion and hurt of traversing white heteronormative spaces as a two-spirit trans Indigenous person, the atrocity of “brown children scream[ing] / their parents locked in a cell / god knows how far / away,” and the unspeakable and unbearable pain that is the loss of Colten Boushie (Cree), Barbara Kentner (Anishinaabe), and Tina Fontaine (Anishinaabe) who, “for the Indigenous person in your life,” are family since “when you survive genocide / everyone left / is family” (Sumac 41; 43).

Importantly, *you are enough* is also filled with the recognition and assertion that, despite ongoing colonial attempts at destroying Indigenous lands and livelihoods, Indigenous peoples “keep going / keep on” surviving, resisting, loving, laughing, and caring (74). “Meditating on the Elsewhere,” Episode 26 of the Indigenous-Black solidarities podcast *The Henceforward*, posits that elsewheres are “lived and created everyday, but also [are] realms of unknown possibilities” (Habtom); elsewheres are the “places we yearn for,” the decolonial worlds that Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour communities dream, live, breathe, and act into being. While *you are enough* importantly speaks truths about and bears witness to the wrongs and pains of colonialism, Sumac’s storytelling also creates radical elsewheres. In these elsewheres, he provides and witnesses journeys of healing and returns to bimaadiziwin. *you are enough*’s poems celebrate decolonial world-building and radical elsewhere-creation, in scenes containing the everyday acts of love that Indigenous people experience, offer, receive, live, and breathe: from moments of “*self-love*[, which] *is a revolution for an NDN*,” to erotic scenes that celebrate the decolonizing potentials of Indigenous love-making, so beautifully embodied, for instance, in a piece wherein Sumac and his lover “take the Cadillac for a ride” (Sumac 36). Indeed, such scenes are examples of the elsewhere-building potentials and realities of the “sovereign erotic,” a concept coined by Cherokee scholar Qwo-Li Driskill in hir’s “Stolen from Our Bodies” (2004), and which acknowledges “the decolonial potential of Native two-spirit/queer people healing from heteropatriarchal gender regimes” (qtd by Driskill *et al* 3). Perhaps “the end of the world” that the title of Sumac’s poetry collection ultimately refers to is the end of the apocalypse, the end of the settler colonial regime, and the living into being of decolonial elsewheres.

In *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (2018), Cherokee scholar Daniel Heath Justice recognizes that Indigenous literatures guide readers in how to be better relations. Justice writes:

*relationship* is the driving impetus behind the vast majority of texts by Indigenous writers—relationship to the land, to human community, to self, to the other-than-human world, to the ancestors and our descendants, to our histories and our futures, as well as to colonizers and their literal and ideological heirs” (2018a, xix, italics in original).

Relatedly, *you are enough* provides calls-to-action for settler, white, cisgender, and heterosexual readers, which guide these readers to be better relations. Everyone has the responsibility to aid in dismantling and ending the colonial apocalypse, and in helping to restore and ensure the radically decolonial balance that is necessary for the well-being of this earth and all its creation. Through poems that tell readers that “instead of fearing / always the wrong thing / just act out of love” and “you ask what to do / and i’m telling you now,” as well as poems that say “how to support me today *after Orlando*,” *you are enough* guides its settler, white, cisgender, and heterosexual readers in how to support Indigenous and LGBTQ2IA+ communities and respectfully and responsibly aid in the process of ending the apocalyptic destruction of colonialism (Sumac 45; 48; 56, italics in original).

Above all, and most importantly, this collection is a love song and thanksgiving “for the love of all / that is queer and” Indigenous—for Indigenous LGBTQ2IA+ peoples and selfhoods (13). Justice writes, “Our trans, nonbinary, genderqueer kin enliven this world’s magic” while Anishinaabe scholar-storyteller-activist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson writes of “[t]he powerful relationships queer bodies house—consent, diversity, variance, spiritual power, community, respect, reciprocity, love, attachment” (Justice 2018b; Simpson 126). Sumac’s collection

celebrates this lived and embodied magic, as he honours “this body i am in and the power it can hold” (Sumac 24). Sumac’s collection recognizes—vulnerably, honestly, and sometimes painfully—the ongoing colonial struggles that particularly oppress and strive to silence and erase those who do not conform to white heteropatriarchal expectations. But Sumac emphasizes that Indigenous LGBTQ2IA+ people will “keep on fighting” (64). This poetry collection gives thanks for Indigenous LGBTQ2IA+ existence and celebrates that Indigenous LGBTQ2IA+ people are so much more than enough; as Sumac writes, “some days I can see that being here is the / most incredible miracle and it is enough. It is so much enough. simply / being here” (73).

The field of Indigenous literatures is rich and always growing, containing an ever-increasing and vibrant diversity of Indigenous LGBTQ2IA+ publications, including the writings of Beth Brant (Mohawk), Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee), Gwen Benaway (Anishinaabe & Métis), Arielle Twist (Cree), Lindsay Nixon (Cree-Métis-Saulteaux), Billy-Ray Belcourt (Driftpile Cree), and Joshua Whitehead (Oji-Cree). Maraming salamat—many thanks—to Smokii Sumac for this important and beautiful addition. The Introduction to *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature* (2011) says that two-spirit literatures can be seen as “maps and stories for those” Indigenous LGBTQ2IA+ people “who come after and for those who may already be on their journey, but who have journeyed without guides or fellow travelers” (Driskill *et al* 1). Smokii Sumac’s *you are enough: love poems for the end of the world* is indeed filled with maps and stories of love-filled guidance for Indigenous LGBTQ2IA+ readers, which position the collection as one for and of the past, present, and future. It is a great privilege for the world to be gifted with this book, and we have the responsibility to read this collection, and, most importantly, to listen to and carry forward into the world the decolonial teachings, transformative potentialities, and deep deep love that Sumac’s debut poetry book so generously and honestly provides.

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@justicedanielh. "More beauty, courage, & love have been gifted to the world by trans & nonbinary people than by all their incurious, unimaginative, & insecure persecutors. Our trans, nonbinary, genderqueer kin enliven this world's magic; their haters understand only ruinous shame & suffering." *Twitter*, 17 November 2018, 10:47 P.M. [twitter.com/justicedanielh/status/1064047537739317248](https://twitter.com/justicedanielh/status/1064047537739317248). Accessed 9 Feb. 2019.

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