



Kimberly Blaeser

Biography

Kimberly Blaeser, an enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, grew up on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota. She is of Anishinabe and German heritage. She articulates her dual heritage and its significance in the forms of poetry, personal essays, short fiction, journalism, reviews, scholarly articles, and speeches. Her work may be found in a myriad of publications. As a poet, Blaeser celebrates life's common moments. Maintaining that "[n]o voice arises from one person," she speaks with the voices of multiple individuals, as both a single person and a member of something much larger.

In *Trailing You: Poems* (1994), her poetry unites the stranger with the relative, the far-away with the near, the dream with the direction. The collection of voices that speaks in her poetry gathers the reader into the family of human experience. For example, in "The Cocoon," Blaeser's liberating flow of words and images enhance her metaphors that mediate spirit and body. In this poem, butterflies are nature's representatives and perform the spiritual service of bridging gaps, whether of memory, spirituality, or dialogue.

In the title poem, "Trailing You," past memories, experiences, and places are reference points for the speaker. Memories of a spiritual teacher, along with the poetry that marks the path of those memories, unite the teacher with the speaker and the past with the present. This is one of Kim Blaeser's talents; she creates a union of voices that draws readers in. Her book *Trailing You: Poems* earned her the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas' 1993 Diane Decorah First Book Award in Poetry.

Quick Facts

- * Born in 1955
- * Member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe
- * Poet and scholar of Native American studies



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Biography continued

Other awards Blaeser has received include a research award from the University of Wisconsin Institute on Race and Ethnology (1992), a travel grant from the Zahn Research Travel Fund at the University of Notre Dame, and three fellowships: Francis C. Allen; the Newberry Library, D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian (1985); and the Center for Twentieth Century Studies, College of Letters and Science of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (1993-94).

Kim Blaeser earned her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame. For her dissertation, Blaeser produced a reportedly outstanding study on the work of Gerald Vizenor, published as *Gerald Vizenor: Writing in the Oral Tradition* (1998). In addition to her literary accomplishments, Blaeser explores wildlife and nature through photography. This, along with her love of traveling, keeps her creativity flowing -- for her writing, her students, and herself. As an Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, Dr. Blaeser teaches courses in Native American Literature, American Nature Writing, and Creative Writing.



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Selected Bibliography

Works by the author

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- “Fancy Dog Contest” in *Skins: Contemporary Indigenous Writing*, ed. Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm and Josie Douglas (Kegedonce Press, 2000).
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- “‘Interior Dancers’: Transformations of Vizenor’s Poetic Vision” (*Studies in American Indian Literatures: The Journal of the Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures*, 1997).
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- “Learning ‘The Language the Presidents Speak’: Images and Issues of Literacy in American Indian Literature” (*World Literature Today: A Literary Quarterly of the University of Oklahoma*, 1992).
- “The Way to Rainy Mountain: Momaday’s Work in Motion” in *Narrative Chance: Postmodern Discourse on Native American Indian Literature*, ed. Gerald Vizenor. (University of New Mexico Press, 1989).

Works about the author

- Bloom, Harold. *Native American Writers* (Chelsea House Publishers, 1998).
- Gray, James A. “Mediating Narratives of American Indian Identity” (*Contemporary Literature*, 1998).