



## Birchbark Blog

### Everything You Know About Indians Is Wrong

Louise Erdrich - Monday, October 19, 2009

*Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong*, a satisfyingly complex book by Paul Chaat Smith, who maintains that although we are considered somehow primitive and simple we are actually oceans of terrifying complexity. I have been called this by men, with no regard to my Turtle Mountain heritage. Just . . . an ocean of complexity. And this book, too, is so complicated that I found my emotions were all mixed up. Irony, laughter, rage, weariness. A mixture -- a complex character trait but as one of my character flaws is a vague obscurity I appreciated the harsh wit and intelligence in these essays. A recommendation with many stars after it.

I'll be taking this book along on my next trip along with Chitra Divarakuni's *One Amazing Thing*, covering Indians -- East to West.

And some favorite post snow fall reading -- *Homer and Langely* by E.L.Doctorow. I loved this novel for its quirky, mild mannered fidelity, for its courtly reserve, and at last for the gentle horror of its ending. I thought it beautifully imagined and restrained. A perfect work. The portrait of a consciousness cut off from even the world of music, floating in soundless space, the last 10 pages were extraordinarily moving to me.



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