

Kessler, L. (2021) *Curious Stories of Diverse Places: The Cod's Earring, The Click of The Reindeer, and Other Adventures and Even Some Poems*, by Richard Reichbart, IPBooks, 2019, 252 pp., \$19.95. *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 38:237

This collection is so personal, and so intimate in some poems, that writing a review of it feels like a trespassing. In fact, knowing that the writer is a colleague psychoanalyst makes reviewing it for readers of a psychoanalytic journal feel like a breach of an unspoken covenant of collegial confidentiality. Rather than writing a review, I would so prefer to recommend that they read the stories and poems for themselves, and thus partake in my experience of them, while absolving me of my transgressive telltale. But perhaps one is set free by Reichbart's own freedom at weaving his identity as a psychoanalyst with the other strong interests of his being. *In Martin's House* tells an affecting story of his work as a civil rights worker in the South as a young man, a theme gently and musically reprised in the poem *Song of a White Civil Rights Worker*. *The Power of Berry Soup* tells about his work as an attorney on the Navajo and Hopi Reservations. Becoming a psychoanalyst as a chosen second profession was to be a different manifestation of the quest for giving voice to stories of righting the wrongs, of liberation and justice. The poem *The Lawyer* tells us something about how that transition came about. But the stories also bring us closer to the richness of life such engagements allowed, as in *Ya-ta-Hey*, *John Yazzie*, or *The Richest Indian in Fort Defiance*. An occasional story or a poem set in a land of other, foreign, travel adds color to the writing, but it is always the true emotional connectedness to the natural world and the others in it that illuminates what he writes.

How does being a psychoanalyst inform being a writer of fiction and poetry? Isn't there a special kinship between the two pursuits? Would the stories read differently if the identity of the author as a psychoanalyst were not known? And if so, why would that be? What is the relationship between the storytelling of a writer and the narrative (re)construction in psychoanalysis? How is a short story like a psychoanalytic vignette bringing out a particular theme, memory, emotion? How is a poem like a dream that pulls the exquisite patterns out of the kaleidoscope of the lived experience? And why are we quenched as readers when a story or a poem touches a tender string in us or when as analysts and patients we restore the interrupted lifelines of existence?