

EPISODE # 1

Native Voices

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Time Code	Audio
01:00:00:01	A/CPB ANNOUNCER
01:00:20:20	GREG SARRIS: What you have in the oral tradition among American Indian people is a profound respect for the word, for the power of the word.
01:00:31:14	SILKO READER: <i>I will tell you something about stories They aren't just entertainment. Don't be fooled. They are all we have, you see, All we have to fight off Illness and death. You don't have anything if you don't have the stories.</i>
01:00:49:14	NARRATOR: ANCIENT STORIES ARE STILL BEING TOLD TODAY, AND HAVE BEEN JOINED BY NEW NATIVE VOICES—CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS DRAWING ON THEIR OWN HISTORICAL ROOTS.
01:01:02:00	OPEN
01:01:24:22	ORTIZ READER: <i>(native) ... Pick up the dirt. (native) ... Pick up the land. (native) ... Dirt, you are holding. (native) ... Land, you are carrying.</i> <i>You are holding your life. You are carrying your life. This is what I am showing and telling you. This is</i>

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	<i>what I am telling and showing you.</i>
01:02.13.00	<p>NARRATOR: FOR MILLENIA, THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST HAS BEEN THE CROSSROAD OF CULTURES, HOME OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS—ZUNI, HOPI, NAVAJO, PUEBLO... THEN LATER TO CONQUISTADORS, COWBOYS, STRIP MINERS, NUCLEAR SCIENTISTS...</p> <p>FROM THIS LANDSCAPE WERE BORN STORIES AND STORYTELLERS OF AN ANCIENT ORAL TRADITION....</p> <p>NOW, THREE WRITERS RAISED IN NEIGHBORING SOUTHWEST INDIAN NATIONS—LESLIE MARMON SILKO, SIMON ORTIZ, AND LUCI TAPAHANSO—ARE PART OF A NEW NATIVE VOICE, COMBINING CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN INDIAN EXPERIENCE WITH ANCIENT CONNECTION TO THE LAND, CULTURE, AND STORYTELLING . . . THEY WEAVE THEIR ORAL TRADITIONS INTO COMPLEX CONTEMPORARY LITERARY WORKS. THESE NEW STORIES, LIKE THE OLD, BEGIN WITH THE LAND...</p>
01:03:26:08	<p>REX LEE JIM: Our very existence, the stories about, says that we emerged from the earth and that we are of the earth, and so we are strongly connected to place. In order to know ourselves at any level, at any depth, we need to return to the earth and the stories associated</p>

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	with that.
01:03:48:16	<p>PAULA GUNN ALLEN: The oral tradition tells the stories of the land. Nobody made them up. The land told us the stories and then we got them into human articulation and the dance as best we could.</p> <p>You have to understand the oral tradition is not just spoken word. It's dances, ceremonies, the objects that you use in the ceremonies, for example, Navajo sand paintings or a pueblo drum and the dance form itself, what you wear—these kinds of things. These are all messages. They're all content-laden information that you can read.</p>
01:04:29:08	<p>JOY HARJO: Most literature of the world, most songs, most poetry, stories of the world are not to be found in books. You won't find them in books. You'll find them as oral traditions. Yet in this country when literacy is talked about, it is talked about totally in terms of writing and reading in English.</p>
01:04:50:16	<p>PAULA GUNN ALLEN: When we say oral tradition, it tends to sound dismissive and it tends to sound like we're kind of dumb. Homer was an oral poet. What does that mean? It means he didn't use orthographic script to write down the <i>Odyssey</i>. What did he do? He sang it.</p>
01::49:00	<p>NARRATOR: THE SONGS AND STORIES HAVE BEEN CARRIED ON FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION TO GENERATION...</p>

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01:05:15:30	<p>REX LEE JIM: If the people do not remember or if the people no longer speak the language, that tradition, the stories and the principles and values inherent in those stories will be gone next generation. And knowing that that cycle may end, you think more about those stories that are important and that's what you pass on.</p>
01:05:48:14	<p>NARRATOR: INSPIRED AND INFLUENCED BY ORAL TRADITION, MANY CONTEMPORARY NATIVE WRITERS WEAVE TIME AND EVENTS IN A NON-LINEAR WAY, MERGING PAST AND PRESENT, AND DRAWING CONNECTIONS TO THE MYTHIC WORLD.</p>
01:06:03:14	<p>N. SCOTT MOMADAY: The voices are all around us, the three voices. You have the mythic and the historical and the personal and then they become a wheel, they revolve, they alternate and I think that's... You know that's the way it happens. Myth becomes history becomes memoir becomes myth.</p>
01:06.25.00	<p>NARRATOR: AS WITH THE ORAL TRADITION THEY DRAW FROM, TODAY'S NATIVE WRITERS ASCRIBE A DEEP POWER TO THE STORY'S TELLING... AS WE HEAR IN THE OPENING OF LESLIE MARION SILKO'S NOVEL CEREMONY. . .</p>
01:06.38.28	<p>SILKO READER: <i>Thought Woman is sitting in her room and whatever she thinks about appears. She thought of her sisters and together they created the universe, this world, and the four worlds below. Thought Woman, the spider named things.</i></p>

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	<i>As she named them, they appeared. She is sitting in her room thinking of a story now. 'I am telling you the story,' she is thinking.</i>
01:07:08:00	<p>GREG SARRIS: So the storyteller becomes simultaneously the mythical or god-like figure, but is also saying, "It is only me." They are talking about their own subjectivity, "Now you're going to get my spin on this. Right? I am Thought Woman, but I am simultaneously a subjective teller. I am not a representative of a fixed god and a fixed text. I'm part of the process and I'm passing that on to you."</p>
01:07.34.28	<p>NARRATOR: CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS FROM MANY TRIBAL BACKGROUNDS, INCLUDING N. SCOTT MOMODAY, LOUISE ERDRICH AND JOY HARJO, CONTINUE THEIR TRADITIONS OF STORYTELLING. TODAY'S NATIVE WRITERS CREATE NEW STORIES ADDRESSING CONTEMPORARY ISSUES OF INTEGRATION, ASSIMILATION AND IDENTITY. TO TELL THEM, THEY BORROW LITERARY CONVENTIONS AND THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE OF ENGLISH.</p>
01:08.00.00	<p>GREG SARRIS: These texts themselves, because they are written in English, remember, and because of the fact that they're written is—are themselves instances of cultural contact. They are, in fact, bicultural text. So what we're having here is constantly instances of cultural contact and the message is. . . what are you going to learn about contact, you as a reader? Are you going to impose your values on this text or are you going to stand back</p>

Time Code	Audio
	and say, "Wow, wait a minute. I'm being interrogated here. I've got to listen."
01:08.36.00	NARRATOR: ALTERING, ADAPTING AND DRAWING FROM THEIR VARIOUS ORAL TRADITIONS, THEY CARVE OUT SPACE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE FOR A DIVERSE, YET DISTINCTIVELY NATIVE VOICE.
01:08:49:04	GREG SARRIS: One of the things that happens is you get emergent forms, new forms, and one of the things that Silko, Ortiz, and Luci Tapahonso are doing, are recreating their traditions for a literary or textual format. They are recreating them on the page. And in doing so, they will always be varying something, but you'll see many of the aspects of the oral tradition still at work.
01:09:17:14	NARRATOR: ONE OF THE CLEAREST VOICES COMES FROM NAVAJO COUNTRY, HOME OF THE DINE, AND POET LUCI TAPAHONSO
01:09.25.06	LUCI TAPAHANSONO: Ya'a't'ééh. Luci Táb__há'sóh yíniishye'. Tódi_o'zhi nish_i dóó Tódich'íinii baashishchíí. Deeshchííni dah shichei dóó Kin_ichíí'ní dah shinaí. Nat'aanii Nééz dínaashaa. Ákót'áo ásdzáá nish_ii.
01:09.40.00	LUCI TAPAHANSONO: <i>"Someone is having a sing near here," she says. "We can hear the drums all night long. Your father and I are all alone here." Her voice is the language of my dreams.</i>

01:09.52.22	<p>NARRATOR: FROM HER POEM THEY ARE SILENT AND QUICK, POET LUCI TAPAHANSO WEAVES ENGLISH AND DINE (de' NAY), THE NAVAHO LANGUAGE.</p>
01:10:02:00	<p>LUCI TAPAHANSO: <i>In the woods below, teenagers are laughing and the whine of the cicadas rises loudly. "What is it?" she says. "What's wrong?" There are no English words to describe this feeling. "T'áá 'iighisíí binihaa shil hóyéé," I say.</i></p> <p><i>Because of it, I am overshadowed by aching. It is a heaviness that surrounds me completely. "Áko ayóó shil hoyóéé."</i> <i>We are silent</i></p>
01:10:30:16	<p>PAULA GUNN ALLEN: The...thing about the oral tradition in its ceremonial or central literary traditional canon sense like the "yabi chí" of the Navajo, the chant ways, for example. It's the best example I can think of. Okay, there's the tradition from which everything else is springing.</p>
01:10.46.07	<p>GREG SARRIS: Luci Tapahonso always works in poems, but she'll use poems and she'll tell stories. She'll retell us stories, almost complete stories, in the poem. She'll actually use some of the narrative, some of the tribal narratives, as entire text for her poems.</p>
01:11.06.06	<p>NARRATOR: IN HER POEM A BREEZE SWEPT THROUGH, TAPAHONSO BORROWS FROM THE NAVAJO CREATION MYTH TO TELL THE STORY OF HER RELATIONSHIP TO HER DAUGHTERS.</p>
01:11:15:28	<p>LUCI TAPAHANSO: <i>The first born of dawn woman slid out amid crimson fluid streaked with stratus</i></p>

	<p>clouds her body glistening August sunset pink light steam rising from her like rain on warm rocks (A sudden cool breeze swept through the kitchen and Grandpa smiled then sang quietly, knowing the moment).</p>
01:11:40:15	<p>NARRATOR: THE POET'S BIRTHING OF HER DAUGHTERS IS RETOLD AS PART OF A SACRED NARRATIVE, A STORY ABOUT THE BIRTH OF THE WORLD. LIKE A CHANTWAY, THE POEM REPEATS, "SHE IS BORN" FOUR TIMES, CONNECTING THE BIRTH TO THE NAVAJO VALUE OF HARMONY AND COMPLETION.</p>
01:12.00.03	<p>LUCI TAPAHONSO: <i>(East of Acoma, a sandstone boulder split in two--a sharp, clean crack.)</i></p> <p><i>She is born of damp mist and early sun. She is born again woman of dawn. She is born knowing the warm smoothness of rock. She is born knowing her own morning strength.</i></p>
01:12.21.00	<p>LUCI TAPAHONSO:</p> <p>It's a poem that acknowledges, um, first woman. It acknowledge... It begins by acknowledging, ah...a holy person and idea of dawn but it also acknowledges the beginning of my daughter's lives which is a very sacred thing —the way to properly come out of that would be to repeat things four times and then to acknowledge not only in the end the holy people but how one...one's connection with that exists.</p>
01:12.28.26	<p>NARRATOR: TAPAHONSO ALSO GROUNDS THE NARRATIVE IN PLACE WITH A SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO AN IMPORTANT</p>

	<p>SOUTHWEST LANDMARK—ACOMA-- HOMELAND OF THE NAVAJO'S NEIGHBORS TO THE EAST, THE PUEBLO.</p>
	<p>THE ACOMA PUEBLO, OR "SKY CITY", IS THE OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY INHABITED CITY IN THE UNITED STATES. BUILT ATOP A MESA, THE PUEBLO SITS 367 FEET ABOVE THE VALLEY; ITS LOCATION DEFENDED IT WELL AGAINST THE PUEBLO'S ENEMIES.</p> <p>WHEN THE CONQUISTADOR CORONADO ENTERED THE CITY HE SAID, "THE ASCENT WAS SO DIFFICULT THAT WE REPENTED CLIMBING TO THE TOP". THIS IS THE PLACE ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIFE OF POET SIMON ORTIZ.</p>
01:13:50:27	<p>SIMON ORTIZ: <i>My oldest sister wears thick glasses because she can't see very well. She makes beautifully formed pottery. That's the thing about making dune. It has more to do with a sense of touching than with seeing because fingers have to know the texture of clay and how the pottery is formed from lines of shale, strata and earth movements.</i></p>
01:14:21:00	<p>NARRATOR: ORTIZ WAS BORN IN THE ACOMA PUEBLO COMMUNITY NEAR ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO IN 1941. IT HAS REMAINED HIS TOUCHSTONE AND REPRESENTS THE LARGER METAPHOR OF THE NATIVE WAY OF LIFE.</p>
01;14.35.10	<p>SIMON ORTIZ: <i>The pottery she makes is thin-walled and has a fragile but definite balance. In other words, her pottery has a true ring when it is tapped with a finger knuckle. Here, you try it. You will know</i></p>

	<i>what I mean.</i>
01:14.56.10	GREG SARRIS: What he is doing is documenting, is remembering texturally those stories and that culture and he's doing it in a way that in many ways mimics the oral tradition.
01:15.10.10	SIMON ORTIZ: You are remembering for a purpose, you know. You're not just remembering just for the sake of having something — like nostalgia, but rather to keep a responsibility intact and active.
01:15.22.18	NARRATOR: HIS POEMS DRAMATIZE A DISORIENTATION IN AMERICA, WHERE INDIANS ARE REDUCED TO SPORTS MASCOTS, SACRED LANDSCAPES ARE MARED BY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND INDIAN WARRIORS ARE BROKEN BY THREE AMERICAN WARS. IN HIS SERIES OF POEMS FROM THE VETERANS HOSPITAL, ORTIZ USES THE IMAGE OF A HORSE TO SUGGEST THE FRACTURE OF IDENTITY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF REINTEGRATION.
01:15.54.10	SIMON ORTIZ: <i>They wheel from the west. First the unfamiliar sounds, and then the memory recalls ancient songs.</i> <i>Sky is gray and thick. Sometimes it is the horizon and the sky weighs less.</i> <i>The Wisconsin horse cranes his neck. The geese veer out of sight past the edge of a building.</i>

	<p><i>The building is not old, built in 1937. Contains men broken from three American wars.</i></p> <p><i>Less and less, the sound, and it becomes the immense sky.</i></p>
01:16:45:10	<p>NARRATOR: IN WRITING ABOUT NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS, ORTIZ SPEAKS TO A SHARED AMERICAN EXPERIENCE. BUT FOR NATIVE WRITERS, WORLD WAR II TAKES ON A SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE...</p>
01:17:14:12	<p>GREG SARRIS: World War II was essentially the first time that so many Indian men were taken away or chose to go away from their homes. They joined the service. They went to fight, and it's the first time so many of us were dislocated, that is taken out of our social context, put into an ugly battle and war, and fought, and did things that often are antithetical to so many of our values, killing other people.</p>
01:17:42:00	<p>N. SCOTT MOMADAY: The older people, of course, were very glad to have their young...their young men coming back, they welcomed them into the community, without knowing what the experience of war, the experience of having been uprooted and taken across the world in many instances and exposed to things that they had never seen or heard before. They had no idea what that toll was, what it cost these kids.</p>
01:18:11:00	<p>NARRATOR: N. SCOTT MOMADAY'S NOVEL HOUSE MADE OF DAWN TELLS THE STORY OF A PUEBLO WAR VETERAN RETURNING TO HIS RESERVATION. LESLIE MARMON SILKO'S</p>

	NOVEL, CEREMONY TELLS A SIMILAR STORY.
01:18.25.28	GREG SARRIS: In Leslie Marmon Silko's <i>Ceremony</i> it's the same story about a vet who returns and is disoriented as a result of his displacement, not just in a foreign culture, but in a foreign culture's war, and their hatred and their violence.
01:18.42.07	NARRATOR: IN CEREMONY SILKO PORTRAYS THE LAGUNA PUEBLO RESERVATION FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II. THE LAND HAS BEEN DAMAGED BY URANIUM MINES AND ITS YOUNG MEN HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BY THE WAR. TAYO, A HALF-WHITE LAGUNA INDIAN HAS BEEN SHATTERED BY HIS EXPERIENCE AS A JAPANESE PRISONER OF WAR. HE TURNS TO CEREMONIES TO DISCOVER HIS CONNECTION TO THE LAND AND TO FIND HEALING.
01:19.11.08	GREG SARRIS: When Tayo comes back from World War II and they take him to a very traditional medicine man, that medicine man doesn't have World War II songs, songs to deal with this new problem.
01:19.22.29	SILKO READER: <i>At one time, the ceremonies as they had been performed were enough for the way the world was then. But after the white people came, elements in this world began to shift; and it became necessary to create new ceremonies. I have made changes in the rituals. The people mistrust this greatly, but only the growth keeps the ceremonies strong.</i>
01:19:46:14	JO HARJO: Well you see also in <i>Ceremony</i> that he realizes too, that he's in the ceremony. He's in the song. He's in the story. It's not just handed to

	<p>him like a closed book, but it's something. It's like, "Here, these words or this ceremony will help give you direction. The song will lead you in the direction you need to go. It will lead you, the story. You are part of the story."</p>
01:20:13:21	<p>NARRATOR: IN CEREMONY, SILKO INTEGRATES LITERARY FORMS— SHE SHIFTS FROM NARRATIVE PROSE TO SECTIONS OF POERY, SONG, AND PRAYER—THE BOOK ITSELF CAN BE SEEN AS BOTH A STORY ABOUT A CEREMONY AND A CEREMONY ITSELF.</p>
01:20:28:28	<p>GREG SARRIS: Many people, after World War I or after World War II, their faith in God, their faith in justice, their faith in a sensible world was shattered. Silko and Momaday as well were writing about that. Here is a way to reintegrate, to not deny that experience that it happened, but to put it in context of a larger battle between good and evil, disconnection and connection. And in recognizing it as such, it becomes another illness, and we've always had illnesses, but now it's a new illness that we can heal with ceremony, with song, with story.</p>
01:21:11:14	<p>NARRATOR: JUST AS SIMON ORTIZ AND LUCI TAPAHONSO CONNECT TO THEIR NATIVE MYTHS AND LANGUAGE, SILKO USES THE ANCIENT CEREMONIES AND STORIES OF HER CULTURE TO HEAL ILLS OF THE MODERN WORLD.</p>
01:21:32:18	<p>SILKO READER: <i>She taught me this above all else: things which don't shift and grow are dead things. They are things the witchery people want. Witchery works to scare people to make them fear growth, but it has always been necessary, and more than ever now it is necessary. Otherwise, we won't make it, we won't survive.</i></p>

	<i>That is what witchery is counting on, that we will cling to the ceremonies the way they were, and their power will triumph, the witcheries' power, that is, and the people will be no more."</i>
01:22:06:14	GREG SARRIS: In other words, for something to be stuck and people to be stuck in a specific tradition and not be able to be flexible and adapt at changing situations, will ultimately result in the people's demise.
01:22:21:06	NARRATOR: OUT OF ANCIENT MYTHS, SILKO HAS CREATED NEW MYTHS. LESLIE MARMON SILKO WAS BORN IN 1948 IN ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO AND GREW UP ON THE LAGUNA PUEBLO RESERVATION. SHE WENT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO AND WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1969. CEREMONY WAS SILKO'S FIRST NOVEL. IN HER BOOK STORYTELLER, SILKO RECREATES STORIES ABOUT HER OWN FAMILY OUT OF STORIES GENERATIONS OLD.
01:22:58.10	SILKO READER: <i>White ethnologists have reported that the oral tradition has died out but I grew up at Laguna listening, and I hear the ancient stories, I hear them very clearly in the stories we are telling now. Most important, I feel the power which the stories still have to bring us together.</i>
01:23:19.23	PAULA GUNN ALLEN: We're changing but not that much, some things remain the same. You put on Levis and take off buckskins. But, does that mean that you're not Indian. No, it means you changed your clothes. Well that's about what's going on here.

01:23:33:10	JO HARJO: Often I've seen oral tradition listed as the past, like this is oral tradition and we'll include a few oral tradition texts, and then we'll get into the present. But oral tradition, you know, it's not static. It's not something that just happened long ago or is part—it's something that's ongoing.
01:23:50:10	REX LEE JIM: Myths are important and I think the connections are there, and we need to retell them in the present, because they are happening in the present.
01:24.03.00	LUCI TAPAHONSO: By acknowledging our historical past then, it enables us to be able to move into the future, um, with a real strong sense of identity.
01:24.17.07	NARRATOR: NATIVE WRITERS WHO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR RENEWING ORAL TRADITIONS TURN TO STORIES TO HEAL TRIBAL CULTURES IN A MODERN WORLD.
01:24.26.28	GREG SARRIS: The stories can't help you in the way that Leslie, and Luci, and Simon envision, unless you believe in the power of the word. I think they want you to read this and let it get under your skin. Let it have the power of the word in the ways in which they understand the power of the word, that is as something that can affect change in the world.
01:24.55.00	JO HARJO: There's power in the speaking of a word, or even the thinking of a word. That there is actual energy and actual life in it that's perceptible, and that these words, these sounds have power and they go out and interact with the world.

01:25:13.00	NARRATOR: NATIVE AMERICAN WRITERS EMBRACE CHANGE AS SOMETHING HEALTHY AND EMPOWERING. IT DOES NOT HAVE TO MEAN ASSIMILATION OR LOSS. LUCI TAPAHONSO, SIMON ORTIZ, AND LESLIE MARMON SILKO TELL NEW STORIES THAT ARE OLD IN THAT THEY ARE THE SAME STORY. NEW GENERATIONS OF WRITERS ALREADY FOLLOW THEIR LEAD.
01:25:35:24	JO HARJO: We all kind of came together around a similar time and place. It's like we were given this task to do together to take those spirits to help move them along into this new literature we're doing, into these new forms that some of us are making, which really aren't really new forms at all.
01:25:54:15	LUCI TAPAHONSO: I hope that it gives people a sense of their own histories, whether they are Navajo or not, and the kinds of struggles that all cultures have gone through, because that shows us the way to our future. And shows us that we don't have to give up anything, that we can be strong the way that we are.
01:26:14.00	SIMON ORTIZ: We are not just telling stories that are just out of our tradition of any native ethnic community, but, actually, the story is a story that has to do with this nation and the identity of nationhood, you know, as this America.
01:26:31:22	PAULA GUNN ALLEN: Native American modern literature, poetry, fiction, short fiction, and novels speaks to the heart of the American experience. Because it's always about: here's the land,

	here's my tradition, and here's the world I'm supposed to be in that doesn't make any sense to me, now what do I do? And that is America.
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