



Mabel McKay: Weaving the Dream (Portraits of American Genius)

By Greg Sarris

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A world-renowned Pomo basket weaver and medicine woman, Mabel McKay expressed her genius through her celebrated baskets, her Dreams, her cures, and the stories with which she kept her culture alive. She spent her life teaching others how the spirit speaks through the Dream, how the spirit heals, and how the spirit demands to be heard.

Greg Sarris weaves together stories from Mabel McKay's life with an account of how he tried, and she resisted, telling her story straight—the white people's way. Sarris, an Indian of mixed-blood heritage, finds his own story in his search for Mabel McKay's. Beautifully narrated, *Weaving the Dream* initiates the reader into Pomo culture and demonstrates how a woman who worked most of her life in a cannery could become a great healer and an artist whose baskets were collected by the Smithsonian.

Hearing Mabel McKay's life story, we see that distinctions between material and spiritual and between mundane and magical disappear. What remains is a timeless way of healing, of making art, and of being in the world.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

In his endeavor to write about McKay, the celebrated Pomo basket weaver and medicine woman, Sarris (English, UCLA) has been able to find his own identity. Part American Indian, Filipino, and Jewish, he was adopted at birth and is now chief of the Coast Miwok tribe. His bonding with this extraordinary individual and his growth during their relationship is described throughout the book. Sarris's catharsis is reflected on the last page: "I squatted in front of her and repeated my questions. 'Why did you do it for me?' She looked me in the eye and said, plain as day, 'Because you kept coming back.'" McKay's life, simple yet spiritual, is as quintessential as the baskets she wove. Her stories are poignantly collected and captured in this biography. Recommended for public libraries.

Vicki L. Toy Smith, Univ. of Nevada, Reno

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From the Inside Flap

"Wonderful, and urgently needed in these days of confusion over Native American identity and spirituality. . . Vibrant testimony to the survival of American Indians and the power of the old spirits."—Leslie Marmon Silko

"All the lean wit of a Castaneda tale, the lyric spark of the Black Elk translations, *Weaving the Dream* is a modern-day Indian classic."—Kenneth Lincoln, author of *The Good Red Road*

From the Back Cover

"Wonderful, and urgently needed in these days of confusion over Native American identity and spirituality. . . Vibrant testimony to the survival of American Indians and the power of the old spirits." (Leslie Marmon Silko)

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