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NOTE

ALICE SHEPHERD, *In my own words: Stories, songs, and memories of Grace McKibbin, Wintu*. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1997. Pp. 240. Pb $16.00.

The Wintu language was once spoken by around 12,000 people in the northern Sacramento Valley of California; now there are perhaps two fluent speakers left. Grace McKibbin, who lived from 1884 to 1987, worked with the Berkeley linguist Alice Shepherd to tape-record, transcribe, and translate some hundred songs and a similar number of spoken texts, a selection of which are here presented in bilingual format. Shepherd has previously published a *Wintu dictionary* (Berkeley: Dept. of Linguistics, 1981), and *Wintu texts* (U. of Calif. Press, 1989); these works, along with Harvey Pitkin's *Wintu grammar* (U. of Calif. Press, 1984) and *Wintu dictionary* (U. of Calif. Press, 1985), make Wintu one of the best documented among the vanishing Indian languages of California.

Shepherd's book begins with an introduction describing her fieldwork, the life of Grace McKibbin, and the cultural background of the Wintu. This is followed by a pronunciation guide, a brief sketch of Wintu grammar, and a concise but informative ethnopoetic characterization of Wintu traditional texts. The texts themselves – analyzed into lines, stanzas, scenes, and acts, following the work of Dell Hymes – consist of fourteen traditional stories, two song texts, two ethnographic texts, and a personal reminiscence; all are given both with interlinear word glosses and with running English translation.

This exceptionally appealing volume, written in clear and informal style, will appeal to both scholars and general readers. The information on Wintu language, culture, and oral traditions that it offers is of guaranteed authenticity – as the title says, it is in Grace McKibbin's own Wintu words. This is the second volume of bilingual texts from Californian native languages that has been published by Heyday; the first was Julian Lang's *Ararapíkva, Creation stories of the people: Traditional Karauk Indian literature from northwestern California* (1994). Malcolm Margolin, the proprietor of Heyday Books, is to be congratulated for his dedication in publishing these materials: The languages and oral traditions that they represent are, from one viewpoint, "dying," but they will nevertheless retain their distinctive flavor and fascination for generations to come. [WB]

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