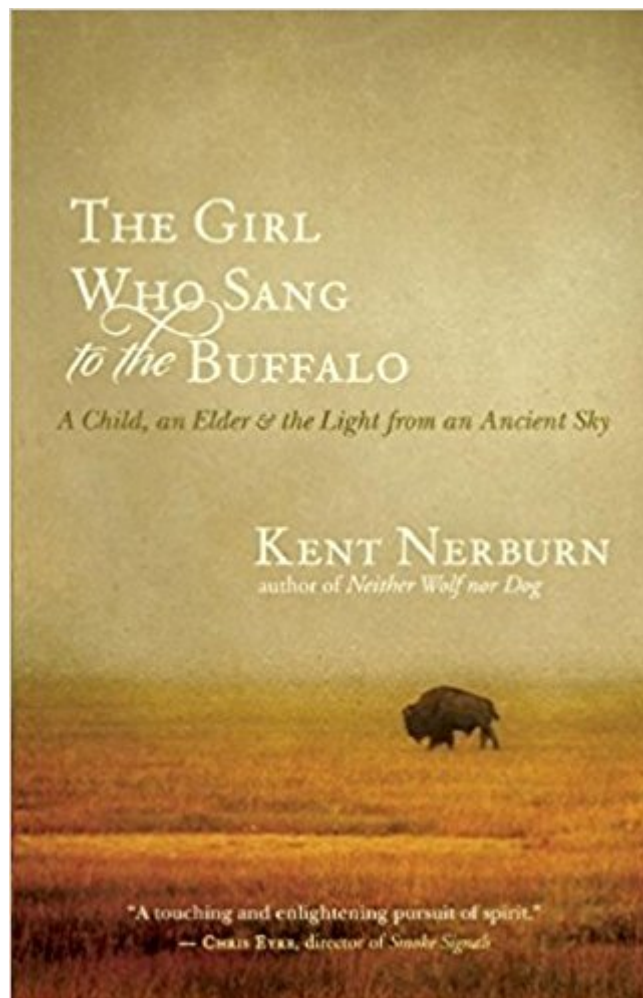




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# **The Girl Who Sang To The Buffalo: A Child, An Elder, And The Light From An Ancient Sky**



## Synopsis

A haunting dream that will not relent pulls author Kent Nerburn back into the hidden world of Native America, where dreams have meaning, animals are teachers, and the "old ones" still have powers beyond our understanding. In this moving narrative, we travel through the lands of the Lakota and the Ojibwe, where we encounter a strange little girl with an unnerving connection to the past, a forgotten asylum that history has tried to hide, and the complex, unforgettable characters we have come to know from *Neither Wolf nor Dog* and *The Wolf at Twilight*. Part history, part mystery, part spiritual journey and teaching story, *The Girl Who Sang to the Buffalo* is filled with the profound insight into humanity and Native American culture we have come to expect from Nerburn's journeys. As the American Indian College Fund has stated, once you have encountered Nerburn's stirring evocations of America's high plains and incisive insights into the human heart, "you can never look at the world, or at people, the same way again."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Nerburn is haunted by a recurring dream about Yellow Bird, the long-missing little sister of his friend, Lakota elder Dan. When he cannot shake the dream, Nerburn goes in search of Dan but first encounters others who pass along mysterious messages for Dan that will reopen memories of the loss of his beloved sister. Nerburn's timing is auspicious as Dan is near death and has taken up mentoring a four-year-old girl with an uncanny resemblance to Yellow Bird, including her spiritual

gifts, communing with animals, and singing more than talking. Because whites perceive her behavior to be odd, the girl is threatened with medication or placement in a white foster home, reminiscent of earlier Indian reeducation efforts. Worried that she represents yet another case of the Indian being driven out from them, Dan and an assortment of allies (not all of them as trusting of Nerburn as he) marshal their forces to protect the girl and her connection to the spirit world. Nerburn takes up his masterful storytelling (Neither Wolf nor Dog, 1994; The Wolf at Twilight, 2009) to convey the longing of modern Native Americans to stay connected to their culture, the suspicion of outsiders, and the fate of one young girl caught in the balance. --Vanessa Bush

“A touching and enlightening pursuit of spirit.” Chris Eyre, director of Smoke Signals  
“With poignant prose and a compelling story, *The Girl Who Sang to the Buffalo* demonstrates Kent Nerburn’s gift: not just to build bridges between the Native and non-Native world, but to transcend those differences with a narrative that speaks to the heart of the human experience.” Anton Treuer, executive director of the Bemidji State University American Indian Resource Center  
“Simply riveting. Kent Nerburn has the very rare ability to gently and compassionately teach in a respectful way. I love this book. And so does the rest of our staff.” Susan White, manager of Birchbark Books  
Praise for Kent Nerburn’s books:  
“This is storytelling with a greatness of heart.” Louise Erdrich, National Book Award winner and author of *The Round House*  
“Offers a sensitive, insightful glimpse into a Lakota soul, a feat unattainable by most non-Native writers.” Joseph M. Marshall III, author of *The Lakota Way* and *The Journey of Crazy Horse*  
“Perhaps the most significant and insightful work on Native Americans since the writings of Vine Deloria Jr.” Roger Jourdain, former tribal chairman of the Red Lake Ojibwe nation

Of the three books in this series this is my favorite. I could hardly put it down. A great addition to the already great series of books. I am grateful to Mr. Nerburn for sharing his experiences, and to the native people in these books who allow their knowledge and ways of being to be shown to the world. This is another wonderful gift from people who have given so much and receive so little. Mr. Nerburn doesn’t an excellent job of presenting these events somewhere between doubt and full understanding/belief which is simply acceptance of the forces he knows he, and his white readers, can never fully comprehend. As a white person I am still struggling to wrap my head around the events of this book. Raised in a scientific white society I struggle to believe there are any supernatural forces at play beyond the spark of life present in all living things on this planet. My

upbringing has lead Mr to believe we are individual animated sacks of carbon wandering a silent, harsh, and apathetic rock with our only reason for existing being virus like reproduction in accordance with evolutionary theory. These books provide an antidote to this bleak worldview. It is good to know ways of experiencing the world other than those distilled from modern white "reason" still exists on this planet.

I must say- this has easily become my favorite book I have ever read. I am an avid reader and although the first part of this is dark due to its very real and disturbing nature (Indian oppression and mistreatment) this book really was worth every heart aching moment I endured in the beginning (I am a true empath, so I really feel emotions of others). Kent has a way with words that makes truly magical stories. He negates the issue of being an "outsider" in a different culture in a truly respectful, honorable, and beautiful way. The story of Yellow Bird, Dan and Zi is iinspiring and makes me hope that every person in the world will read this book. It's a life changing read that I want to share with every single person I know and selfishly want to keep as my own wonderful secret! Kent, you are a master of words and a genius.

The final story of the trilogy. Each time I have finished one of these three books I have thought he could not have told his story in a more affecting way. Then I start the next book and before long I realize that Dan, Grover, Jumbo and the reincarnated friend of four legs has stolen my heart again. This book opens the world to me in a brand new way again and I cannot recommend it more. After reading The Girl Who Sang to the Buffalo I realized how badly I want these stories to be true. Please give these books a chance and allow Dan and Yellow Bird to dance with your soul for as long as you can.

This book centers on a white man, Kent Nerburn, who is helping an elderly Native American find out what happened to his young sister many years ago after being removed from her home, and being placed into a Catholic Boarding School. Tracking this little girl's path leads Nerburn to the last place the girl was seen, the Hiawatha Asylum for Insane Indians. She was placed their for her inability to acclimate from the old was. It also brings Nerburn into contact with the culture of the Obijwe Tribe, and their ancient knowledge and beliefs, effectively rending the protective covering of the author's bounds of reality in this world. Forcing him to expand his mind, and realizing that true knowledge is much bigger, and very different from previously thought. Truly, one of the best books I have read all year.

There is a wealth of wisdom inside this book. The truth about our persistently damaging relationship with the native cultures of this country is shown in all its discomfort. Yet the wisdom and depth of knowing that we "civilized" americans have passed up through our ignorance is introduced well. Thanks Kent for the apparently realistic insight into current native culture and the pleasure of feeling the heart of some of the people.

Kent Nerburn walks the walk as well as talking the talk. This book is a love poem filled with a story that transcends our sense and understanding of reality while opening new doors of perception. Mr. Nerburn's ability to travel in two worlds and come back to tell us what it was like is unparalleled.

Thank you for sharing this book. I enjoyed Nerburn's voice and style, this was the first book I have read of his and will definitely look at others. I appreciate that this book is very straightforward and shared direct insights and experiences without a lot of extraneous interpretation. In addition to learning a lot, I found myself reflecting on my own thoughts and beliefs throughout this story and it offered a great opportunity to explore my own world views and relationships.

This book not only introduces the reader with Native American culture and history(a bit) but also touches important issues like our interconnectedness with the Earth and all living creatures. It makes us also understand the difficult path that Native Americans have passed through while being robbed from their land and means to survive by becoming dependant on the American goverment for food and supplies. The book gives us a good picture of the discrimination and assimilation that Native Americans were subjected to and the effects of these on the societty and culture.It opens also a window towards a mysterious world that most people never suspected existed, a world where everything happens on purpose, where spirits never lose touch with the living, where even the stones have spirit and can talk. ...And much more.Wonderful book, wonderfully written and most of all it is showing the unique way of Native Americans of looking at and understanding the world.

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