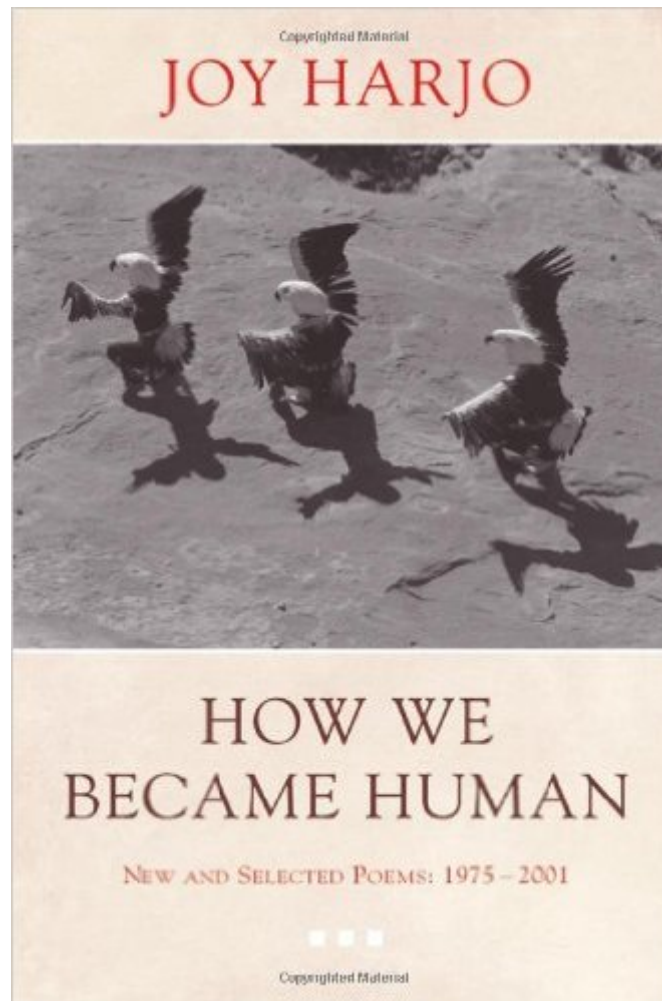


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# How We Became Human: New And Selected Poems 1975-2002



## Synopsis

Over a quarter-century's work from the 2003 winner of the Arrell Gibson Award for Lifetime Achievement. This collection gathers poems from throughout Joy Harjo's twenty-eight-year career, beginning in 1973 in the age marked by the takeover at Wounded Knee and the rejuvenation of indigenous cultures in the world through poetry and music. *How We Became Human* explores its title question in poems of sustaining grace.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have followed Harjo's poetry (and recorded music) for many years, ever since I saw her on PBS reading from "She Had Some Horses". This volume contains selections from her available books: "She Had Some Horses", "Secrets from the Center of the World", "In Mad Love and War", "The Woman Who Fell from the Sky" and "A Map to the Next World". As is frequently the case, the selections for this book are not precisely the poems I would have chosen. It does include the most powerful poems, for example "She Had Some Horses" with its pounding litany rhythms, "Letter from the End of the Twentieth Century" which is the title track of her cd, "The Creation Story" with its exquisite line "I never had the words / to carry a friend from her death / to the stars / correctly." Somewhat to my surprise, the poems from *Secrets from the Center of the World* which fit the photographs so precisely in their original context, also succeed as poetry only in this volume (although I'd still recommend the original). New to me in this volume are the poems from her early chapbooks "The Last Song" and "What Moon Drove Me to This?" as well as new poems from 1999-2001. The chapbook poems are interesting as the beginning of Harjo's development as a poet

as well as being interesting poems in their own right .."Four Horse Songs" and "I Am a Dangerous Woman" stand out. In the new material, "Morning Prayers" has memorable lines "the nothingness / is vast and stunning, / brims with details ..." as does "Faith" with "I might miss / The feet of god / Disguised as trees."Harjo's poetry is strongly political - a Native peoples voice angry at the European invaders/immigrants. More importantly, her voice is one seeking a way to live well in contemporary society where living well requires memory of a time we lived with greater respect for our environment, greater responsibility for our network of relatives.

I love this collection I purchased for a poetry workshop class. Being introduced to Harjo can be a difficult assimilation, but this text represents a great selection to newcomers of her work. Absolutely beautiful, striking, natural, and human poetry is the best way I can describe her work.

Harjo is simply an outstanding poet, a great visionary. This book features the best of the best of her work over the course of her career.

It is profound, inspiring experience to read this collection. These writings are courageous and life-affirming.

Extraordinary writing, from the heart and soul, of a remarkable native american woman. I was again drawn into her world and am grateful that such a voice is 'out there'.

This collect of Native American poetry is excellent. Joy Harjo relates her experience in a way that is accessible and meaningful. Mrs. Harjo is a poet that needs to be read and read again to explore her depth. We discussed several of her poems in a Great Books book club.

Such passion and so much insight, if you're going to read just one Joy Harjo book, make it this one.

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