

Louise Erdrich Anishinaabezhibiiaan

Margaret Noori / Giiwedinoodin

If we call ourselves and all we see around us by our original names, will we not continue to be Anishinaabeg? Instead of reconstituted white men, instead of Indian ghosts? Do the rocks here know us, do the trees, do the waters of the lakes? Not unless they are addressed by the names they themselves told us to call them in our dreams. Every feature of the land around us spoke its name to an ancestor. . . . We Anishinaabeg are the keepers of the names of the earth. And unless the earth is called by the names it gave us humans, won't it cease to love us? And isn't it true that if the earth stops loving us, everyone . . . will cease to exist? That is why we all must speak our language, *nindinawemagonidok*, and call everything we see by the name of its spirit. Even the *chimookomanag*, who are trying to destroy us, are depending upon us to remember and to use these words. *Mi'sago'i*. (Erdrich, *The Last Report* 360–61)

Louise Erdrich's characters sometimes speak Anishinaabemowin and sometimes speak about Anishinaabemowin. Nanapush speaks of names found in dreams and ancient memories, words entwined with existence. To know the way words become names relates to finding a permanent place in the firmament. This is the knowledge of words Erdrich includes in her work. She writes specifically of the Anishinaabeg. Sometimes she translates such terms as *nindinawemaganidok*, "relatives," and *chimookomanag*, "long knives" or "Americans." Sometimes she leaves them standing like silent cultural sentinels in the text. Telling stories in any language is an act of hope and memory; for Erdrich, it is an act of survival. Words convey with sound and definition the history and creativity of individuals and communities. Beyond the plot, setting, and characters, readers can choose to focus more closely on Erdrich's choice of words. Within the field of literary criticism, structuralist traditions based on interpreting the symbols words represent can be useful. Sociolinguistic traditions that trace changes in language and

its use reveal another dimension of meaning. This essay uses both of these traditions to show why a nationally significant American, Native American, and Anishinaabe author sometimes reaches beyond English to illustrate connections between language and culture, offering four primary reasons for her use of Anishinaabemowin. One reason is to share the sound and style of the Anishinaabe language. She writes of characters who learned Anishinaabemowin first, “whose English is forever rounded and shaped so that all of the words seem kindlier” (*Painted Drum* 69). A second reason Erdrich uses Anishinaabemowin is to teach readers important definitions and ideas. Third, she demonstrates through the conversation of her characters the importance of language to identity and continuity. Lastly, Erdrich uses Anishinaabemowin to locate bridges and barriers. There are times when two worlds blend, and there are times when they collide. Erdrich’s characters do both as they move between Anishinaabe and English languages and traditions. Language can be a way to broadcast an identity or to guard secrets. Erdrich and the characters she creates do both as they weave lives mixed with Anishinaabemowin and English.

Anishinaabemowin, one of twenty-seven Algonquian languages, is the ancestral language of over two hundred communities in the United States and Canada. Now used as a single term to refer to several closely related dialects, Anishinaabemowin is the language of the Three Fires Confederacy, which consists of the Odawa, Potawatomi, and Ojibwe. The word “Anishinaabe” is sometimes used interchangeably with “Ojibwe” or “Chippewa,” but most speakers today understand Odawa, Potawatomi, and Ojibwe to be ethnic communities, while “Anishinaabe” is a term for the broader cultural community. Each of the ethnic groups has its own linguistic identity and, some say, its own historic role within the confederacy. Odawa stems from the word *adaawe* (to trade). The term “Potawatomi” references the word *boodawaade*, the act of building or keeping a fire. Some say the term “Ojibwe” stems from the word *jibakwe* (to cook or roast) because the people wore moccasins that were puckered at the toe. However, it is

possibly more productive to connect the initial sound of the word *jib* to such other words as *jibwa* (before) and *jiibay* (ghost), which carry implications of the past. In fact, *jibakwe* may also connect back to the concept of putting a plate out for the *jiibayag* (the ghosts), which makes sense because the role of remembering or retelling stories is the Ojibwe community role most often cited by elders. In her travel memoir, *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country*, Erdrich herself extends this analogy connecting the term “ojibwe” to the word *ozhibii’ige*, the verb for “he or she writes” (11). The term “Anishinaabe” is a combination of the term *nishin* (good) and *aabe* (male), interpreted as “the good man” and used as a verb. For example, Erdrich herself might say, “*Nd’Anishinaabe*” (I am Anishinaabe). Adding *mo* to the end of the verb means “to speak as an Anishinaabe.” Adding *win* to the word makes it a noun. This transformation may seem tangled to an English speaker, but it is a window into a world of meaning shaped by action and addition rather than presence and pronouns. *Anishinaabemowin* could be translated as “the language of the Anishinaabe” or “the way we speak as an Anishinaabe,” and the slip of definition between seeing language as a noun and having a way to peel it back to a common verb is the difference between cultures.

Anishinaabemowin was the primary language in the Great Lakes until the early 1600s, when French traders and Jesuits began to explore the St. Lawrence River, seeking furs to sell and souls to save, while British settlers arrived along the Atlantic coast seeking freedom. At that time, the traders and immigrants were forced to learn the language of the natives. Alliances shifted, years passed, and by 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was written, English had become the dominant language, and the desire to speak the language of the indigenous people had dwindled. While reading Erdrich’s novels, it is important to consider the way the history of indigenous people relates to the history of their culture and language. In both Canada and the United States, the relationship with Natives is one of denial and restriction of identity through numerous tactics intended to result in execution,

extinction, or assimilation. Blood, land, and language can be viewed as mediums of continued warfare. As early as 1819, the Civilization Fund Act provided money to societies who would “educate” Indian students. The goal was to “civilize” Indians by getting rid of their traditions and customs, including the very words they used to communicate. The goal was to assimilate the indigenous people by teaching them to read and write English. In 1879, Captain Richard Pratt, noted for his success during the Indian Wars, was given responsibility for Indian education in the United States. Considered a forward-thinking educator willing to give Native students a chance (if they abandoned all traces of their Native roots), he opened the doors of the Carlisle boarding school to continue the work begun by early French, German, and Spanish missionaries. Eventually boarding schools and the myth of the vanishing American Indian took hold, and increasingly fewer people used indigenous languages.

Erdrich’s novels often address the history of government-sponsored boarding schools. In *The Painted Drum*, young Seraphine is struck by a matron at boarding school and “the scar of speaking her language remained across her lips all of her life” (251). In *Love Medicine*, Old Rushes Bear “had let the government put Nector in school but hidden Eli, the one she couldn’t part with, in the root cellar dug beneath her floor. In that way she gained a son on either side of the line. Nector came home from boarding school knowing white reading and writing, while Eli knew the woods” (19). Many years later, the family would speculate on “why or how . . . Great-uncle Eli was still sharp, while Grandpa [Nector]’s mind had left, gone wary and wild” (19). Lulu Larmartine also has memories of boarding school:

I ran away from government school. Once, twice, too many times. I ran away so often that my dress was always the hot-orange shame dress and my furious scrubbing thinned sidewalks beneath my hands and knees to cracked slabs. Punished and alone, I slept in a room of echoing creaks. I made and tore down and remade all the dormitory beds. I lived by bells,

orders, flat voices, rough English. I missed the old language in my mother's mouth. (*Love Medicine* 68)

Through Lulu, Erdrich gives readers an Anishinaabe child's view of boarding school. She is not interested in the adult debate of the politics behind the institution or a sociologist's opinion of its effects—just the heart-wrenching reality of a child being sent away from a family, a familiar home, and a culture. Erdrich's fictional characters sum up the very real loss and anguish Anishinaabe children experienced.

Today, although over two hundred nations recognized by Canada and the United States trace their roots to the Anishinaabeg, very few communities use their ancestral language. Approximately 80 percent of all Anishinaabe speakers are over sixty-five, and no one learns Anishinaabemowin as a first or only language anymore. The language is still in use but could disappear within one generation. Traces of the language in Erdrich's work are part of literary and literal efforts to preserve and protect Anishinaabemowin. Her use of the language is a powerful demonstration of how the words, even when used sparingly or in isolation, can convey real and important differences in cultural perspectives.

A complete biography of Louise Erdrich will tell the story of a woman proud of her many ancestors and interested in their voices. Erdrich's first book, *Jacklight*, published in 1984, tells the stories of runaways, hunters, and immigrant women. She also introduces Old Man Potchikoo, whose name is a blend of the words *boochigo* (a necessary act); Wenabozho, the Anishinaabe hero-clown; and *boozhoo*, a common greeting. Through Potchikoo, she begins to trace necessary connections between stories of the past and contemporary cultural traditions. Many Anishinaabeg recognize the greeting *boozhoo*. Some of those who use the greeting learned it as a reference to Wenabozho, and a few who still know the language might use the phrase *boochigo gi Anishinaabezhibiiaan* to explain that Erdrich “had to write in Anishinaabemowin.”

In her *New York Times* article “Two Languages in Mind, but Just One in the Heart,” Erdrich wrote:

Ojibwemowin [Anishinaabemowin] is one of the few surviving languages that evolved to the present here in North America. The intelligence of this language is adapted as no other to the philosophy bound up in northern land, lakes, rivers, forests [and] arid plains; to the animals and their particular habits; to the shades of meaning in the very placement of stones. As a North American writer it is essential to me that I try to understand our human relationship to place in the deepest way possible, using my favorite tool, language.

Through her life and work, Erdrich reflects her support of Anishinaabemowin. In 2001, she opened Birchbark Books, where the staff greet visitors in Anishinaabemowin, Lakota, and English. According to the “Our Story” note on the website, the small, independent bookstore with an international presence was opened “to nourish and build a community based on books” and is “a locus for Indigirati—literate Indigenous people who have survived over half a millennium on this continent.” To give further presence to her belief in the revitalization of Anishinaabemowin, Erdrich and her sister Heid established Wiigwaas Press in 2008. It is a nonprofit organization created to serve communities engaged in the revitalization of Native American languages for the spiritual and material health of the people. The organization works to go beyond the work of any one author to make Anishinaabemowin part of contemporary culture. This practice of support for the language is an important backdrop to her writing.

One reason Erdrich uses Anishinaabemowin is to share the sound and style of the Anishinaabe language. Basic structural differences result in different sounds. Patterns of vowels and consonants vary from one language to another, and it is easy to forget the way the music of speech varies between communities. Long words are not uncom-

mon in Anishinaabemowin. They are built using strings of morphemes, units of meaning, and new combinations are considered ideal. Anishinaabemowin is also an agglutinative language, in which meanings are added to root words with prefixes and suffixes. For instance, “the second little naughty red bird” becomes *niizhomiiskobineshensish*. Some prefixes repeat, making a word reduplicative. To say you are really waiting a very long time, you might say *nd’baabaabiinchige*. Words have more vowels, uncommon consonant pairs called clusters, and some letters used in English are never used at all in Anishinaabemowin. There are no *r*, *l*, *f*, or *th* sounds in Anishinaabemowin. Elizabeth becomes Ezibet, Margaret is Maaganiit, and oddest of all, Ralph becomes Napa’ii. These are just a few of the structural characteristics that create the sound Erdrich shares through the use of Anishinaabemowin.

Some of the sounds Erdrich uses are Anishinaabe onomatopoeia mimicking their own definition. In *Baptism of Desire*, the poem “Owls” explains the word for “owl” is *gookookoo’oo* and tells us

not
even the smallest child loves the gentle sound
of the word. Because the hairball
of bones and vole teeth can be hidden
under snow, to kill the man who walks over it. (9–13)

Other sounds she communicates are interjections that add flavor to any dialect. Characters commonly say *howah* when they are surprised, and old women say *oh yai* or *aaiai* when they are angry. This adds fuel to the fiery debate about whether they are swears in Anishinaabemowin. While it is true that verbs for body parts and sexual acts are not used as exclamations, there are certainly sounds that communicate surprise, anger, or disgust.

Another word with a wide range of variation is *mi’sago*, *mii sa igo* *i’iw*, or *mii’iw*. Reading Erdrich’s novels, one can learn to recognize

this form of voiced punctuation as the end of a sentence or story. Meaning nothing more than “right here, really,” it is the marker of ending used after prayers, pleas, and speeches.

The sound of Anishinaabemowin can soothe or frighten. It can flow easily from thought to song, or it can be buried in a past too distant to be voiced. Erdrich varies her presentation of the language throughout her work, but always, she is a novelist with an ear for the sounds of a people and a place. One fine example of her skill is the scene in *The Birchbark House* when Omakayas takes a walk after losing her brother. Tuned to the details of her surroundings, she hears the song of the white-throated sparrows of spring:

Drowsily, she whistled along with the tiny sparrows. Ingah beebabee. Ingahbeebabee. Those sweet, tiny, far-reaching notes were so brave. The little birds called out repeatedly in the cold dawn air, and all of a sudden Omakayas heard something new in their voices. She heard Neewo. She heard her little brother as though he still existed in the world. She heard him tell her to cheer up and live. *I'm all right*, his voice was saying, *I'm in a peaceful place. You can depend on me. I'm always here to help you, my sister.* (238–39)

“Ingah beebabee, ingahbeebabee” is a rhythm that could be a riff on the words *n'ga bi bi*, literally, “I will be here, here.” The sounds she chooses convey an impression in Anishinaabemowin that echoes a philosophy of place and presence, an epistemology, or way of seeing the world, which is particular to the people who recognize these speech patterns, this *enewewin* (sound of the language).

A second reason Erdrich uses Anishinaabemowin in her stories is to teach readers important definitions and ideas. Sometimes her lessons are overt, while at other times she allows readers to be lost in the narrative, learning easily through the context.

In *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country*, she explores the term for book itself, *mazina'igan*, which is a recent addition to Anishinaabe-

mowin, related to the noun *mazinapikinigan* (rock painting) and the verb *mazinaadin* (to make an image of someone). Although *Books and Islands* is nonfiction, Erdrich introduces numerous terms in Anishinaabemowin and explains their importance and often the etymology, or history of the word and the way it relates to similar terms, as in the connection between the name for sturgeon, *nameh*, which sounds so like the word for the place that fish hides, *nameh* (underneath). At other times, she clarifies the way names grow long or short, using the example of the name shared by her mother and daughter, Nenaa'ikiizhikok. She explains how it was often shortened to Kiizhikok (Sky woman) or Kiizh, which could mean warmth, sky, or place of the *giiziz* (sun).

In *The Birchbark House*, *The Game of Silence*, and *The Porcupine Year*, Erdrich teaches definitions through context and repetition. Her words are mostly of four types. There are the little in-between words that only use can define: *geget* (sure), *daga* (please), and *ishtay* (wow). She also teaches the verbs that shaped the life of Omakayas, a girl of the 1800s: *aadizookaan* (to tell a story), *bawa'iganakige* (to knock rice), *booni'aa* (leave it alone), *gizhawenimin* (to love someone), and *wiijiw* (to do something with someone). She includes in phrases some of the beginning and end words that can extend and clarify a meaning. At the start of a word, *n* can mean “I or mine,” while *g* means “you or yours.” Using *daa* at the end of a word means “let’s all do it.” Lastly, she uses the old names of places and beings—for instance, *Moningwanaykaning* is the Anishinaabe term for what was once known as the Island of the Golden-Breasted Woodpecker and is now called Madeline Island. The fact that her spellings have changed over time is evidence of changing trends in language revitalization and the author’s own increasing knowledge of Anishinaabemowin. In Erdrich’s life and literature, Anishinaabe is a living language, unlike Latin, which has long been buried in archives and texts and no longer evolves.

Other important definitions include *Gichi Manidoo*, the term for the Creator or Great Mystery, whose name appears in many of her books, including *Jacklight*, where Gichi Manidoo dreams the universe into

existence using *aki* (earth), *nibi* (water), *ishkode* (fire), and *noodin* (wind) (83). By contrast, she also introduces readers to the *wiindigoog*, “greedy ones,” whose name is connected to the word *wiinigad*, “foul.” All cultures create their own demons, and these icy, lake-dwelling western spirits personify the parts of the landscape most frightening to people living in the woodlands surrounding the Great Lakes. By using the Ojibwe words, she transfers these distinctly Anishinaabe concepts to American readers intact, the way they would have been communicated by a native speaker or Anishinaabe storyteller.

In her book *Original Fire*, the poem “Asiniig” introduces two categories of nouns. “Stones are alive,” she explains in the epigraph. “They are addressed as grandmothers and grandfathers. The universe began with a conversation between stones.” In the poem, stones speak to humans, saying:

When the original fire which formed us
subsided,
we thought of you.
We allowed you to occur.
We are still deciding whether that was
wise. (5–10)

This idea, that some “things” treated as inanimate nouns in English could be the object of complex, animate relationships, is one of the cultural differences documented by Erdrich’s use of Anishinaabemowin.

Another important idea related to cultural perspectives is represented by the word *miigwech*. Used fifteen times in three novels, the verb requires the addition of prefixes and suffixes to indicate who is thanking and who is thanked. Most often translated as “thanks,” *miigwech* can also mean “you’re welcome” and sometimes “amen.” To be able to give thanks in Ojibwe implies the knowledge that, in Anishinaabe culture, “you’re welcome” is neither welcome nor necessary. To give thanks is enough and should require no additional exchange.

Another reason Erdrich uses Anishinaabe words is to explain the importance of relations. Nanapush speaks of *nindinawemaganidok*, “relatives,” in *Tracks*, *Four Souls*, and *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*. With this word, he says, “we speak of everything that has existed in time, the known and the unknown, the unseen, the obvious, all that lived before and is living now in the worlds above and below” (*Last Report* 361).

A third reason Erdrich reaches for Anishinaabemowin is to demonstrate through the conversation of her characters the importance of language to identity and continuity. With full phrases and symbolic insertion of one word at a time, Erdrich shows how the language might have worked long ago and how it fits fully or partially into contemporary culture.

Representations of the past are found in the Birchbark House series, and one of the foundational concepts unfolds when Omakayas says: “*Weendamawashin, daga, Nokomis . . .* tell me a story” (*Birchbark House* 132). The ending on the verb *wiendamaw* is *shin*, a reflexive ending that turns any verb back on the speaker. Anishinaabemowin weaves root verbs through phrases just as Erdrich’s characters are woven through time and various narratives. The system of verb conjugation in Anishinaabemowin is as twisted as a strand of DNA, which is perhaps one reason the tangled genealogy of Erdrich’s characters never surprises fluent readers. Like transitive animate prefixes and suffixes, her characters reduplicate and reassemble themselves as easily as a story moving from the past into the present. These are the ancient patterns that cling to the nature of a people, defining entire communities and causing dysfunction when suddenly and intentionally suppressed. Students today dedicate time and attention to becoming as proficient in forming verbs as they are at memorizing prayers. Having this alternate means of processing reality is a survival mechanism central to maintaining identity distinct from dominant society.

When contemporary culture has erased fluency, members of Anishinaabe communities decorate their English with as much

Anishinaabemowin as they can learn. One-word answers are often the easiest. Several of Erdrich's characters frequently use *gaawiin* (no), *enya* (yes), and *gego* (don't), and greetings including *ahneen* and *boozhoo*. The simple commands *piindigen* (come in) and *namadabin* (sit down) are used in several books. In *Shadow Tag*, Irene America, an urban, mixed-blood American Indian Movement (AIM) activist, occasionally struggles with being a contemporary American Indian wife and has forgotten most of the Ojibwe language she had once known. Despite this, she remains connected to her linguistic heritage through random phrases such as *geget igo*. Even this limited use of Anishinaabemowin conveys important information about Anishinaabe social behavior. The implication is that full fluency in the language equates with unquestionable identity. Colonization and assimilation have forced the Anishinaabeg to create these abbreviated markers of identity.

The fourth reason Erdrich uses Anishinaabemowin is to locate bridges and barriers. For hundreds of years, the Anishinaabeg, French, and British built bridges by learning one another's languages. Words were traded along with furs, tools, and techniques, exchanged freely and according to mutually established guidelines.

Language can be used to sort people by levels of cultural competency or, perhaps in the case of some of Erdrich's characters, cultural deviousness. When John James Mauser asks Fleur Pillager, "Anishinaabekwe, na?" (Are you an Anishinaabe woman?), he may or may not fully understand all that his question implies (23). Perhaps he did know the paths a Pillager might lead him to, but on the night she intends to kill him, Fleur tosses him a question of her own and is surprised by his answer. Knowing his life depends on seeing the world through her eyes, he replies, "My spirit is meant to be g'dai, your animal to do with as you wish" (*Four Souls* 46). He uses the Anishinaabe term for pet, which is synonymous with heart. His use of her language demonstrates his willingness to submit his worldview to hers, at least for a time and for a reason.

Stepping carefully across cultural bridges, many of Erdrich's characters use Anishinaabemowin to sort listeners into allies or enemies, both inside and outside the Anishishinaabe community. For example, Erdrich uses the particle *geget* (for sure) in three different novels. It functions as a subtle sound-code to determine the knowledge and perspective of a listener. An elder who answers a question with *geget* is understood as fluent and may go on to say more in the language.

Sometimes the most important questions, the most powerful words, are presented first or only in Anishinaabemowin. Consider Anaquot's innocent question directed at the woman she later learns is her lover's wife. "*Aaniin izhinikaazoyan?*" (What are you called?) takes on extra meaning (*Painted Drum* 124). Anaquot did not say, "*gd'shkitoon ina wiindamawinan gdo'nozwin?*" (Can you tell me your name?). Later, she finds out the woman is known as Ziigwan'aage, a name reminiscent of spring floods and the hunger of wolverines, which tells her a great deal about whether she is an ally or an enemy.

Cultural biases are sometimes revealed in untranslated phrases. Characters in *Four Souls* scorn "hilarious chimookomaanag doings" and the "strange frenzy for zhaaginaash stuff" (74, 76). Succumbing to the behavior and marketing of industrial capitalism is seen as negative and reinforced by using ethnic terminology that is clearly Anishinaabe. Unlike the definition of the term used for themselves, "a good human," *chimookomaan* is a military reference to "long knives," or muskets with spear tips, and *zhaaginaash* relates closely to the words for weak and joking.

While Erdrich is of a generation not given a chance to learn Anishinaabemowin as a child, she creates some characters who exercise their linguistic options with great intention. Perhaps the most vocal of these is Nanapush of the Little No Horse Reservation, who often speaks about the power of Anishinaabemowin to connect the people more accurately and fully to their place on land, in the past, and in the present. Conversely, in *Four Souls*, he explains the power of English:

Friends, relatives, nindinawemaganidok, I am Nanapush, witness of disasters, friend of folly, a man of the turtle clan, a son of old Mirage whose great deeds brought our people back to life. I am one hundred percent pure Anishinaabeg and I speak my language and the English both. But today, that English language tastes foul, tastes rancid in my mouth, for it is the language in which we are, as always, deceived. Lies are manufactured in that English language. All the treaties are written in English, are they not? In its wording our land is stolen. All the labels on the whiskey bottles are in English, do you agree? When we drink from the English bottles we piss away our minds. How can we speak English when the truth lies heavy on our Ojibwe tongues? (154)

In the Birchbark House series, Omakayas and her friends come to understand they will need to learn English if they wish to survive in the world that is changing around them. Voices like Nanapush's warn of the need to preserve the perspective of the original language to preserve Anishinaabe identity.

Louise Erdrich brings the stories of one place and one people to life on the page. In doing so, she touches on pan-tribal, even universal subjects, but her tales are made more powerful by the details. She builds her narratives using a distinctly Anishinaabe style and, by echoing traditional patterns, themes, and conscious and subconscious symbols, she contributes to a body of literature distinctly Anishinaabe. Her use of Anishinaabemowin lends veracity to her text and teaches readers that there was, and still is, a highly developed culture of the Great Lakes that cannot be completely melded into the wider landscape of America.

In her books, as is so often true in life, elders return to the "old language." When she begins to live at the Senior Citizens' home, Marie starts speaking Anishinaabemowin again, "falling back through time to the words that Lazarres had used among themselves, shucking off the Kashpaw pride yet holding to the old strengths Rushes Bear had taught her . . . having known how comfortless words of English sound-

ed in her own ears” (*Love Medicine* 263). Although she abandoned the language in her youth, those were times of linguistic and cultural genocide. With citizenship granted in 1924 and gradual—some would say far too gradual—assertion of civil rights for indigenous North Americans, traditions and words are returning. *G’miigwetchwigo Louise, nitaazhibiigeyin, minoanishinaabezhibiiaayin sa. Chipiitziig miinwaa nijaanisag g’bizindawigoog*. We all thank you, Louise. You write well. Your writing in Anishinaabe is so good. The elders and the children are listening.

Works Cited

- Dippie, Brian. *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy*. Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 1982.
- Erdrich, Louise. *The Antelope Wife*. New York: Harper, 1998.
- _____. *Baptism of Desire*. New York: Harper, 1989.
- _____. *The Beet Queen*. New York: Bantam, 1986.
- _____. *The Bingo Palace*. New York: Harper, 1994.
- _____. *The Birchbark House*. New York: Hyperion, 1999.
- _____. *The Blue Jay’s Dance*. New York: Harper, 1995.
- _____. *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country*. Washington: Natl. Geographic Soc., 2003.
- _____. *Four Souls*. New York: Harper, 2004.
- _____. *The Game of Silence*. New York: Harper, 2005.
- _____. *Jacklight*. New York: Holt, 1984.
- _____. *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*. New York: Harper, 2001.
- _____. *Love Medicine*. New York: Harper, 1993.
- _____. *The Master Butchers Singing Club*. New York: Harper, 2003.
- _____. *Original Fire*. New York: Harper, 2003.
- _____. *The Painted Drum*. New York: Harper, 2005.
- _____. *The Plague of Doves*. New York: Harper, 2008.
- _____. *The Porcupine Year*. New York: Harper, 2008.
- _____. *Shadow Tag*. New York: Harper, 2010.
- _____. *Tales of Burning Love*. New York: Harper, 1996.
- _____. *Tracks*. New York: Holt, 1988.
- _____. “Two Languages in Mind, but Just One in the Heart.” *New York Times* 22 May 2000: E2.
- “Our Story.” *Birchbark Books*. Birchbark Books, 2009. Web. 13 Apr. 2012.