

Book Review

By Wally Olson

**Through Yup'ik Eyes/Yup'it lingitgun
Poems and Photographs by Yup'ik Eskimos
Van Cleve Printing Co., Anchorage 1976**

Students from St. Mary's High School have produced a gem of Eskimo culture which catches your eyes and your mind as you return to look at it in new ways. In just one hundred and thirty pages, they have captured something of what it means to be Eskimo — Yup'ik.

The first thing this book does is to show the creative ability of the students and how they can express their ideas and feelings in their Native tongue. The translations prove that they also know how to weave their thoughts into English.

Secondly, this is a book on Eskimo culture. Too often people think of culture in terms of basket-making, carving and dance. A people's culture is more than this. Their culture is a way of living, a way of sharing life with others, a set of ideals and values; it is a way of looking at life. The combination of poetry and photographs starts to give a person a feeling for what it means to be an Eskimo and live in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. Their world is one of wind and rain, of snow and flowers, of people old and young. What is pictured is the world of today with all of its good times and bad, its problems and satisfactions, its loneliness and sharing with others. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but in this book the poetry adds a whole new dimension to the photographs. Poems such as "Nothing", "Flow" and "Nina" each give a new facet of the Eskimo view of people and life.

Traditionally, the Eskimos have been a very proud people. The closing lines of the final poem shows how this pride is still alive in the hearts of these people—

Picugtua yupiullemnek,	I am proud for I am an Eskimo
Quyarpaglua-llu piullemnek	And my pride of being
Yuugurciqua-llu ilamkun	Will live on and on among my people.
(by Richard Tuluk, translated by Priscilla Hooper, Allen Joseph & Rosalie Moses)	

Many times visitors to Alaska want something that truly represents the Native cultures. More than any basket or ivory carving could ever do, this book truly lets one glimpse life "through Yup'ik eyes." Highly recommended!