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M. Austin, *The American Rhythm : Studies and Reexpressions of Amerindian Songs*

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M. Austin, *The American Rhythm : Studies and Reexpressions of Amerindian Songs*, Santa Fe-New Mexico, Sunstone Press, 2007, 200 p.

Mary Austin was one of the first to recognize that Native American myths and culture were in danger of being eroded and lost. She then took upon herself the duty of tracking down American Indian songs and poems, saying that she was not giving a translation of the original but what she preferred to call a « re-expression » which she referred to as « reëxpressions. » It was her belief that the life and environment of the person who made up the words was an important part of understanding the rhythm and meaning of the work. She considered tribal dancing an essential part of the sung or spoken words and her extensive research led first to lectures and later to the publication of « *The American Rhythm*. » It was her work in this field that resulted in Austin being named an Associate in Native American Literature by the School of American Research in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Mary Austin (nee Hunter) was born in Carlinville, Illinois in 1868 and died in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1934. After graduation from Blackburn College, she moved with her family to California. She later spent time in New York and eventually settled in Santa Fe. A prolific writer, she wrote novels, short stories, essays, plays and poetry. Austin became an early advocate for environmental issues as well as the rights of women and other minority groups. She was particularly interested in the preservation of American Indian culture. Her books include « *The Land of Little Rain*, » « *Earth Horizon*, » « *The Land of Journeys' Ending*, » and « *The American Rhythm*, » all available in new editions from Sunstone Press.