

Smith, C. W. Buffalo Nickel. Aug. 1989. 397p. Poseidon, \$19.95 (0-671-62447-4). Galley. (BOOKLIST)

[OCLC] 89-3683

The destruction of native American cultures might be considered by some readers to be a literary dry hole. But this novel, about a Kiowa man who inadvertently becomes an Oklahoma oil millionaire, is a rich gusher of a novel—and consequently disproves any such notions. The man, born with the name Went on a Journey but renamed David Copperfield in a missionary school, is old enough to know tribal lore but sees his first live buffalo imported from the Bronx Zoo. Not white but unable to be a true Kiowa, David wrestles with cultural isolation in addition to things that everyone wrestles with—love, money, and living a decent and meaningful life. This is a big novel, in all senses—the characters and the incidents of their lives made memorably real. —*Thomas Gaughan*

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