Far more than just a dance, the dynamic choreography of the Yup'ik provides an illuminating window into the morality, social organization, and colonial history of this indigenous people. Anthropologist Ann Fienup-Riordan begins with a brief historical overview of the colonization and development of Alaska from the Yup'ik point of view. Then, armed with oral history testimony spanning thirty years, she shows how singing and dancing are interconnected and imbued with meaning in this complex ritual. Accompanied by one hundred original photographs, this volume marks the first in-depth look at the Yup’ik people through the lens of interpretive dance.

Ann Fienup-Riordan is a cultural anthropologist and recipient of the Alaska Federation of Natives President’s Award for her work with Alaska Natives.

James H. Barker is a documentary photographer and the author of Always Getting Ready: Yup’ik Eskimo Subsistence in Southwest Alaska.

Theresa Arevgaq John has taught at the University of Alaska for over two decades, and received her PhD in 2010 for work on Yup’ik dance traditions and their meanings.