

***I'm not the Indian you had in mind, by Thomas King***

I'm not the Indian you had in mind  
I've seen him, I've seen him ride  
Rush of wind, darkening tide  
With wolf and eagle by his side  
His buttocks firm and well defined  
My God, he looks good from behind  
But I'm not the Indian you had in mind  
I'm not the Indian you had in mind  
I've heard him, heard him roar  
The warrior wild in the video store  
The movies that we all adore  
The clichés that we can't rewind  
But I'm not the Indian you had in mind  
I'm not the Indian you had in mind  
I've known him, oh I've known him well  
The bear greased hair,  
The pungent smell  
The piercing eye  
The startling yell  
Thank God he's the friendly kind  
But I'm not the Indian you had in mind  
I'm that other Indian  
The one who lives just down the street  
The one you're disinclined to meet  
The Oka guy, remember me?  
Hipper Wash, Wounded Knee?  
That other one  
The one who runs the local bar  
The CEO, the movie star

The elder with her bingo tails  
The activist alone in jail  
That other Indian  
The doctor  
The homeless bum  
The boys who sing around the drum  
The relative I cannot bear  
My father who was never there  
He must have hated me I guess  
My best friend's kid with FAS  
the single mom who drives the bus  
I'm all of these  
and they are us  
so damn you for the lies you told  
and damn me for not being bold enough  
to stand my ground and say  
that what you've done is not our way  
but in the end the land won't care  
which one was rabbit  
which was bear  
who did the deed and who did not  
who did the shooting and who got shot  
who told the truth who told the lie  
who drained the lakes and rivers dry  
who made us laugh, who made us sad  
who made the world Monsanto mad  
whose appetites consumed the earth  
wasn't me  
wasn't me  
wasn't me  
for what it's worth

or maybe it was  
but hey let's not get too distressed  
it's not as bad as it may sound  
hell we didn't make this mess  
it was given us and when we're gone,  
as our parents did, we'll pass it on  
you see we've learned your lessons well  
what to buy and what to sell  
what's commodity, what's trash  
what discount you can get for cash  
and Indians, well, we'll still be here  
the real one and the rest of us  
we've got no other place to go  
don't worry we won't make a fuss  
well not much  
still, sometimes,  
sometimes late at night  
when all the world is warm and dead  
I wonder how things might have been  
had you followed, had we led  
so consider  
as you live your days  
that we live ours under the gaze  
of generations watching us  
of generations still in tact  
of generations still to be  
seven forward  
seven back  
yeah it's not easy  
course you can always ask this buck you like so much  
this Indian you idolize

perhaps that's wisdom on his face  
compassion sparkling in his eyes  
he may well have a secret song  
a dance he'll share  
a long lost chant  
ask him to help you save the world  
to save yourselves  
Don't look at me  
I'm not the Indian you had in mind  
I can't,  
I can't.



Thomas King says:

*I'm Not the Indian You Had in Mind* challenges the stereotypical portrayal First Nations peoples in the media. This spoken word short offers an insight of how First Nations people today are changing old ideas and empowering themselves in the greater community.

The actors, in business suits, jeans, and typical urban attire are juxtaposed against the loincloth-wearing, tomahawk wielding Natives of yesterday's spaghetti westerns.

Through the use of stock footage, language, and common artifacts like a cigar store Indian, the viewer is encouraged to examine the profound role that these one-dimensional media representations have played in shaping their perspectives of an entire group of people. The man living next door, the woman working in the next cubicle, or the stoic wood carving in front of the cigar store – which Indian did you have in mind?

<http://www.nsi-canada.ca/2012/03/im-not-the-indian-you-had-in-mind/>