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 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/