



Indian Giver

John Smelcer

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"Poetry at its most satirical and courageous. A tremendous book."—Seamus Heaney

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These poems tell harsh truths of hopelessness and genocide. The confusion of children whose religion is forbidden; the ironic poverty of a lottery winner; an alternate American history in which Columbus turns and sails away—in deceptively simple language, we hear the protest of survivors. "'Indian' is not a derogatory word. It's what we call ourselves."

AFTER A SERMON AT THE CHURCH OF INFINITE CONFUSION

*At ten, Mary Caught-in-Between
came home from sunday school,
told every animal and bird and fish
they couldn't talk anymore,
told her drum it couldn't sing anymore,
told her feet they couldn't dance anymore,
told her words they weren't words anymore,
told Raven and Coyote they weren't gods anymore,
said god was a starving white man
with long hair and blue eyes and a beard
who no one loved enough to save
when they nailed him to a totem pole.*

John Smelcer has written over forty books of poetry and prose. He is a member of the Alaskan Ahtna tribe.

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