

1976

# What the Young Canadian Indian Said

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## Recommended Citation

Hiroshi, Osada and Takako Uthino Lento. "What the Young Canadian Indian Said." *The Iowa Review* 7.2 (1976): 26-27. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2012>

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## Double Bed

Like a blacksmith  
who can strike no more

finding our way from separate distances  
we hear in a heartbeat the long day's journey

and a message of stone congealed even more passionate  
than our brief encounter in that green place

which reached to the northland station  
half-way around the globe we fire

the mass with each other until it melts to a new horizon  
though we both are travelers different in nature

*Translated by the author with Stephen Hogan and Daniel Webb*

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OSADA HIROSHI / JAPAN

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## What the Young Canadian Indian Said

We aren't the children of the golden age.  
We cannot live chasing buffalo.

Wild berries, horses and shadows disappeared.  
No maps show our country.

The world was simple a long time ago.  
The River Saskatchewan, Lake Winnipeg—that was all.

It was the time of good youths.  
One day it all turned to dust, as did the prairies.

Do not say you miss what's lost.

It is coming to crush me with its unseen weight.

If there's a train bound for Heaven  
on the Canadian National Railway I'll take it sometime.

Now I hold my knees and sit in the doorway.  
It's a long time from morning till night. Life is short.

Fear is my enemy.  
I don't see reconciliation as wisdom.

Alcohol can't remove stains on the soul.

Not a prayer, but fire; give me instead a cold fire.

*Translated by Takako Uthino Lento*

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AGNES GERGELY / HUNGARY

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## The Biographer

And I had no shoes.

My father was a porter and he had no shoes;  
my father's father had been herding the baron's  
sheep from barnyard to barnyard,  
in his dreams, and he had none either;  
my love was a tubercular chorus girl,  
oh, *chant macabre!* the war;  
the reconstruction; sure, I made mistakes;  
however, on a certain October morning  
I had seen it all; ever since  
I've kept on telling myself "I had no shoes"

besides, I gave some Jews a hiding place  
and Attila József the poet was my friend