

**POETRY FOUNDATION**

## Abecedarian Requiring Further Examination of Anglikan Seraphym Subjugation of a Wild Indian Rezervation

BY NATALIE DIAZ

Angels don't come to the reservation.  
Bats, maybe, or owls, boxy mottled things.  
Coyotes, too. They all mean the same thing—  
death. And death  
eats angels, I guess, because I haven't seen an angel  
fly through this valley ever.  
Gabriel? Never heard of him. Know a guy named Gabe though—  
he came through here one powwow and stayed, typical  
Indian. Sure he had wings,  
jailbird that he was. He flies around in stolen cars. Wherever he stops,  
kids grow like gourds from women's bellies.  
Like I said, no Indian I've ever heard of has ever been or seen an angel.  
Maybe in a Christmas pageant or something—  
Nazarene church holds one every December,  
organized by Pastor John's wife. It's no wonder  
Pastor John's son is the angel—everyone knows angels are white.  
Quit bothering with angels, I say. They're no good for Indians.  
Remember what happened last time  
some white god came floating across the ocean?  
Truth is, there may be angels, but if there are angels  
up there, living on clouds or sitting on thrones across the sea wearing  
velvet robes and golden rings, drinking whiskey from silver cups,  
we're better off if they stay rich and fat and ugly and  
'xactly where they are—in their own distant heavens.  
You better hope you never see angels on the rez. If you do, they'll be marching you off to  
Zion or Oklahoma, or some other hell they've mapped out for us.

Natalie Diaz, "Abecedarian Requiring Further Examination of Anglikan Seraphym Subjugation of a Wild Indian Rezervation" from *When My Brother Was an Aztec*. Copyright © 2012 by Natalie Diaz. Reprinted by permission of Copper Canyon Press.

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61 West Superior Street,  
Chicago, IL 60654

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