



Handout 1 - Excerpts from *The Real Indian Leans Against, Chrystos (Menominee)*

Chrystos (1946-) is a two-spirit poet and activist born in San Francisco. Their poetry focuses on issues of social justice, feminism, and Native Rights, and they have released poetry books including Not Vanishing (1988), Dream On (1991), and Fire Power (1995).

the pink neon lit window full of plaster of paris
& resin Indians in beadwork for days with fur trim
turkey feathers dyed to look like eagles
abalone & bones
The fake Indians, if mechanically activated
would look better at the Pow Wow than the real one in plain jeans
For Sale For Sale
with no price tag
On holds a bunch of Cuban rolled cigars
one has a solid red bonnet & bulging eyes ready for war
Another has a headdress from hell
with pained feathers no bird on earth
would be caught dead in
All around them are plastic inflatable
hot pink palm trees grinning skulls
shepherd beer steins chuckling checkbooks

[. . .]

There are certainly more fake Indians
than real ones but this is the u.s.a.
What else can you expect from the land of sell
your grandma sell our land [. . .]
You too could have a fake Indian in your parlor
who never talks back

Fly in the face of it
I want a plastic white man
I can blow up again & again
I want turkeys to keep their feathers
& the non-feathered variety to shut up
I want to bury these Indians dressed like cartoons
of our long dead
I want to live
somewhere
where nobody is sold