

IDENTITY-THEFT BY SHAINA A. NEZ

(A poem inspired by this so-called 'native-trend' happening)

My identity can be bought for less than seven bucks

'Tribal'-inspired arrowhead necklace

Yes, it looks appealing to the eye

But that was used to wear for protection

Of course you wouldn't know that.

Just that you have enough money to purchase and want to look 'trendy'

Since when is being 'native' or 'tribally-inspired' considered cool?

When I was in the first grade, I was mocked and laughed at by obscene children's books that displayed brown figures in cloth-like coverings; most times they weren't even wearing anything at all.

Being called a 'naked' Indian made me not want to go to school and face the eyes that question, why am I a Native American?

My 23 years of living in conflicted worlds of tradition and modern times still continue.

I, up to this day, cannot fully summarize what it means to be Dine/Navajo

But I know that seven bucks will never be enough to make amends for a stolen identity.

Identity theft is not a crime

Not in terms of my brothers and sisters and the purpose of our regalia

We were assimilated and forced to become a part of you

Now you want to become a part of us?

I am not a trend.