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# Welcome to the Indigenous Languages Slipstream

*Jenny L. Davis*

Welcome to the Indigenous languages slipstream  
 I imagine this is all a little disorienting—  
 In your universe our languages might as well  
 be wearing invisibility cloaks  
 because the only place you look for them  
     is the past  
       in a museum, and archive  
       on a wax cylinder  
 In your universe you carved our languages  
 small enough to keep them in your pocket  
 to put them on your keychains and hand down to your  
 academic children like the good silverware  
     only to be taken out  
     on special occasions  
       never for general use  
 You can't see what is all around you  
 because your language doesn't have a word for *Indian*  
 in the present tense

But look around you  
     in *this* universe our languages  
       are *everywhere*

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JENNY L. DAVIS is a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation and an associate professor of anthropology and American Indian studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where she directs the American Indian Studies Program and codirects the Center for Indigenous Science. Davis is the author of *Talking Indian: Identity and Language Revitalization in the Chickasaw Renaissance* and *Trickster Academy*, a poetry collection.

Native movies don't star Kevin Costner here  
(but they still star Tantoo Cardinal and Wes Studi).  
Digital Indians speak Iñupiaq and Kanyen'kéha on  
PS5s, memes circulate over social media  
in Ararahih'uripih and Anishinaabemowin, and  
the latest film in the Predator franchise can be watched  
in Numu Tekwapu audio and subtitles.  
Robots speak Chickashanompa' here  
and so do the dogs, but especially  
our children, our adults and our Elders.  
Please keep your hands inside the vehicle and don't take anything.