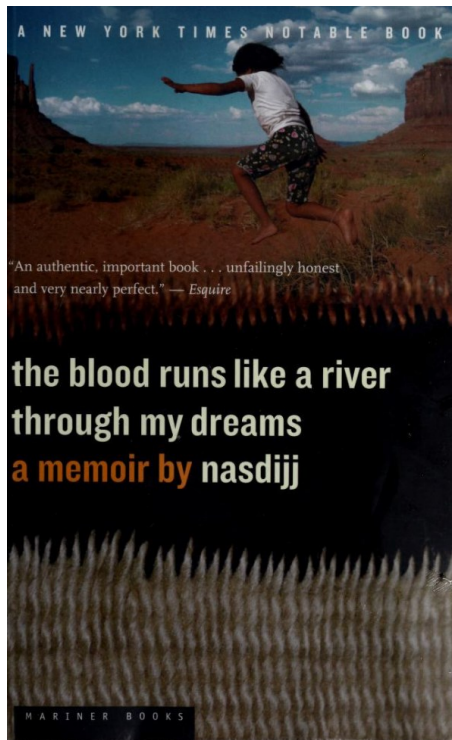


# THE BLOOD RUNS LIKE A RIVER THROUGH MY DREAMS



*Adult*

**By Nasdijj**

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## Book Summary:

A half-Native American half-Caucasian man describes his life off and on an Indian reservation.

## Summary of Concerns:

This book contains sexual activities; violence including child abuse; nudity; alternate sexualities; alternate gender ideologies; mild/infrequent profanity and derogatory terms; references to sexual assault, racism, adult and child prostitution, and fetal alcohol syndrome, and AIDS; illegal drug use by minors; violence including child abuse; and controversial religious, historical, cultural, and political commentary.

**3** /5

**Minor Restricted**  
BookLooks Review Rating

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2	My Indian wife and I took Tom into our hearts and into our home when he was brand spanking new. The particulars are irrelevant. Infants are like freight trains. We did not know Tommy had fetal alcohol syndrome.
3	My policy was to ignore drunks who wanted money. ..."You're white," she said to me one day in the city park. ..."My folks were immigrant workers, and we worked ranches all around here," I tried to explain. I loathe explaining it. White folks particularly always have to know the exact spot you are from.
4	But the fields I knew Mary Potato worked were mainly plowed in bars and saloons in Gallup, New Mexico, watering holes of gin and sin.
6	"I didn't mean to have him," Mary Potato said. ...At first, I had thought she was just another town drunk. ...People needed booze and change. ..."I had a boy who would be his age but they took him from me," Mary Potato said. ..."I don't want him back," she said.
7	I was angry she had to be a drunk. I was angry she had done this to a kid, some other kid with FAS. ...I was angry she was a hooker.
8	My mother was a hopeless drunk. I would use the word "alcoholic," but it's too polite. It's a white people word. Alcoholic. In the migrant life, what we knew was falling-down Jezus drunk and puked again. There's nothing polite about cleaning up your mother in her vomit and dragging her unconscious carcass back to the migrant housing trailer you lived in. Daddy, too. ...Mary Potato was a whore who had been kicked off the reservation and lived in a shack made of toothpicks and tarpaper and magazines out by the railroad tracks. Mama had it worse. My dad would sell my mom to other migrant men for five bucks. The life Mary Potato lived was a walk in the park and a ride on the teeter-totter compared to the life my mother lived. ..."I didn't mean to have him, but these things happen," Mary Potato said.
9	Somewhere around the late 1940s, my mom and dad met in a bar in Gallup. I think they died somewhere in one, too. Bit by bit. In fragments. In tequila shots. In some vast midnight whiskey mist my parents seemed to simply slip away. ...I have seen my share of the insides of those Gallup bars. Even as a kid, my dad, the cowboy, brought me to enough of them. Those strong Indian men laughing and putting me up on the pool table where I could spin around like entertainment.
10	I live with fetal alcohol syndrome, too. I saw my mother go through whole bottles of vodka while she was pregnant, and she was a heavy drinker when she had me. I saw her lose babies. At least they were lucky enough not to be born alive.
11	I became a writer to piss on all the many white teachers and white editors out the (everywhere) who insisted it could not be down. Not by the stupid mongrel likes of me.
12	I was there in hospitals in White People Town with medical specialists who knew nothing.
13	The house smells of swamp tea and old underwear and boiled roots and dark rooms. Faded Jesus yellow on the wall. Gin.

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22	I went to country-western dances in the cafeteria, held at night while various Navajo would covertly drink beer in the parking lot.
23	White people find a solidarity among the Indians that only exists to prop up already established stereotypical expectations.
26	He had been hit by a vehicle, probably on the road at night. It was a possibility. Drunks are always hitting someone's sheep, but why you would let your sheep out onto the road was another question entirely.
28	Mama in her rooms candlelit with her illuminated folktales and her whiskey glass.
31	It was a life tossed about all the nice arrangements, where Daddy comes home from work to eat his dinner cooked by Mom with the family and the Tater Tots. His hands could pick you apart, your insect wings, reducing you to the blackbird status of a bag of bones. You lived between the waves, or at least you learned to gup for breath between the rages sent your way by an angry god with his workboots and his whiskey. It was a life of being beaten again and again, the bite of a belt buckle slashing against the flesh of your naked back as you stood there and took it, bending now, bleeding where the buckle flays the flesh and skin. Me never really knowing why, because knowing why never made it any better.
33	We were the white people who lived with the brown people who lived with the red people who were all mixed up with the brown people who were surrounded by the white people (who always called the shots) who lived next to the black people who lived near the half-brown people who all had relatives in prison. It was just a fact that our world was a half-breed place of many colors and shades, and you accepted that, because there were no other options. ...You never questioned the fact that you were a mongrel.
34	It was a shock to learn that other children saw you as either white or brown or black or whatever. You could not be a mix because mixing wasn't done.
36	I don't want to focus on my dad beating me. It's not a vacuum I care to dwell in. I don't want to focus on my dad walking out. ...I don't want to think about rape or hear about it on the news.
38	Emergencies were everywhere. Like rape.
50	"The difference," Bobby maintained, "is that young white people aren't losing their culture, and young Navajo kids are losing their culture in alarming ways." Image: the face of gang graffiti up and down the cultures of northern New Mexico. The scrawled symbols of rape. ...But what Bobby doesn't understand is that white culture isn't a culture at all. It's an unculture, and as such it isn't in any danger of disappearing. There's nothing there to disappear. Go poof. White culture is ephemeral. It is intolerant.
53	Navajo who could not keep up were shot. Navajo who attempted to escape with shot. Navajo who refused to worship the white man's god were hanged as an example to the others.
55	To this day, there is still much stigma attached to a Navajo who comes into contact with white men. Navajo who come into contact with white men must be cleansed. ...I am constantly being told that I cannot be both white and Navajo. Trust me. I can be both. I am a migrant. A mongrel.

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58	<p>There are ruins of a mission (I do not know the name of this mission or if it even had a name, but I do remember the heat) where the Navajo were forced, many of them for the first time, to worship the Christian god, who is male.</p> <p>...You got down on your knees or you were shot.</p>
63	<p>As I write this it is night, but Jones Street is crowded with hookers, pimps, Marin County businessmen in slowly passing cars, screaming junkies with their blackened empty eyes, the homeless with their newspaper shoes and shopping carts, Vietnamese children playing on the sidewalk, Chicano gang boys drifting in and out of apartment buildings, drag queens in their lipstick and heels, thick blue smoke from a Korean steak house, belching buses pulling up, the squeal of brakes, the steam-cover smell of sewage fog dancing in the gutters.</p>
64	<p>For without our sacred eagle's battle cries, our awkward Indian timidities- our sad politeness- give the light that spills a hideous blindness, and no emphasis is put on the strangulating rope that whites have slipped around our supple throats.</p>
65	<p>How many Sioux adolescent boys could there be in the Polk Street sex scene? How many Indian hustlers do you know?</p>
67	<p>They have become somewhat popular among white me who prefer Asian hustlers, but a Sioux seventeen-year-old is seen as more exotic. The boys work the phones- to even have a phone here is a sign of prosperity- which is a step up from working the street. They have sex ads in San Francisco's gay paper, the Bay Area Reporter. You could call the two of them lovers, but since everything about their lives is dysfunctional, I'm not sure the term "lovers" would be accurate. They are indeed affectionate with each other, but I don't think they have sex together because sex is seen as something you do for money to survive. I think they're really straight.</p> <p>..."Fine," I tell them. They scrutinize me closely. "Fine" probably means drunk as usual. Their moms were never sober. Their dads were always beating them.</p> <p>...Now both of them are heroin addicts.</p>
68	<p>You wouldn't know this on your knees, having oral sex with Sioux boys- which they get thirty bucks for- because it's not a part of them you would ever be allowed to see. It gets deep and scary out there alone without any of your own people. The men who pay them to have sex, their regulars, who think they know them, do not know anything about them, such as the fact that both boys are extremely depressed.</p> <p>...They are also high. It is the only way they can get through doing what they do.</p> <p>...Except for the fact that heroin addiction is neither a morality nor a judgement.</p> <p>...They shoot up in a toilet stall in the bathroom. Go back to work the phones.</p>
69	<p>Apparently he went out on a call in the middle of the night and was robbed and assaulted. I hesitate to use the term "rape," because the stereotype of the hustler at work is that he wants to get raped, which is hardly ever true. How difficult can it be to rape a seventeen-year-old whose only other urban experience was a visit to a mall in Sioux Falls? I buy the two Sioux boys breakfast at a small place on the corner of Jones and Sutter. They smoke Camels and try to look older than they are.</p>
71	<p>Misfits and junkies. Hookers. Pimps. Businessmen from Marin in slowly passing cars.</p> <p>...Drag queens in their lipstick and heels.</p>
73	<p>White people often think the purpose of Indian dancing is to entertain white people.</p>
75	<p>The Hopi Snake Dance would never receive the official seal of approval from the White People's Family Values Council. Do not bring white children to see it. Republicans should stay</p>

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	<p>home. Christians should stay away.            ...Here nakedness is a symbolic prayer. No one on the Hopi Reservation is shocked to see the nakedness of men.</p>
81	<p>I was more than a little amused to note the participation of a Catholic priest at the Blessing Way. No one asked the priest to explain himself.            ...Question: Why would a Catholic priest participate in a pagan ritual with the savages?            Answer: It adds something to that which is missing, a wholeness, an acceptance that there is more here than what we see.</p>
82	<p>Wel, I am passing through, but I resent being seen as pure white. Or pure anything. Purity is a fetish.</p>
83	<p>Writing is a white people thing.</p>
90	<p>White people are no longer to adopt Indian children. In their wisdom, the tribes attempt to prevent these adoptions.            ...The Bureau of Indian Affairs school down the dirt road from my hogan held a Western Dance Night, a fundraiser, which turned into a drunken brawl. Drunk Navajo and beer cans all over the parking lot of an elementary school.            ...When I talk to my Navajo friends about how such drinking is inappropriate- not in a bar, but in an elementary school- they sincerely, honestly look at me as if they have no idea what I'm talking about.</p>
91	<p>When you drive through White People Town there's a big sign downtown that encourages Navajo to drink "desert wine."            ...Not long ago, another Navajo drunk was found underneath this sign, frozen to death in a ditch.</p>
104	<p>There were worse people to live next to. It wasn't like she was going to be playing loud rock late in to the night and having wild sex with bikers on the picnic table.</p>
112	<p>I have sold a lot of junk lately. Pornography, which is not immune to rules and is enormously depressing to write. So I stopped writing it.</p>
131	<p>He had recently told a judge to suck his Indian dick.            ...It's a passive sort of racism that unconsciously equates failure with the darker color of the kid. It's a passive sort of racism that trains kids to pass the state's standardized tests as it assumes that really teaching them the fundamentals of anything is more than they can do.</p>
137	<p>I know that if you combine all the voices of all the Indians, you would have stories and storytellers that white people would neither recognize nor care about in any way. White people regard much of what Indians create as primitive, and Michif's stories would be consigned to this category.</p>
143	<p>There are more than a few drive-up liquor stores. Buy your bottle and never have to leave the car.</p>
146	<p>What's interesting about this graffiti is that it's not too far from other, older images etched into the same rock. Images of Kakopelli with his penis and his flute. In some of these humorous drawings, Kokopellie's penis is his flute.</p>
148	<p>Cutting off the feet of the Acoma Indians is only one of the cruelties that were perpetrated against them. The women were raped. Pregnant women were disemboweled. Young men were publicly castrated. Old people and children were put in cages and fed to vicious dogs. Babies had their brains bashed in with rocks. Medicine men were burned at the stack. The</p>

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	<p>"discoverers" of New Mexico conducted a systematic campaign of terror against the people and the cultures they "discovered."            It was not a good time for native peoples. Then, as now.            ...Today the war against the Indians continues as a cultural experiment to be celebrated.            It is a history that is ignored. It is a history never published. It is a story that cannot be told.            White people will not allow.</p>
150	<p>Our romanticized machismo is our alcoholism and our addictions and our tattoos and our prison cells and our concrete prison yards and the violence of the gang.</p>
154	<p>"...That night the world was saturated with the screaming of our people. The beheading of our children. The beheading of the Elders. The raping of our women. Don Juan de Onate ordered as many Acoma as possible to be hanged. The wars against us would continue for a very long time. This is how the battle of Acoma begins."</p>
176	<p>White people don't think of the reservation as a place of AIDS because such notions don't neatly fit the stereotypes.</p>
177	<p>I have known many heterosexual men who have taken comfort in the stereotypes that are presented to them by a white media determined to put everyone and everything into one box or another.            ...AIDS is not confined to racial minorities who shoot drugs (which most Indians cannot afford). AIDS is not confined to the neat definitions the mainstream media would have us believe.</p>
181	<p>Sexuality is irrelevant.            The reservation is not a place where the nearly invisible can transform themselves opaque- and not have to worry about things like wearing condoms- because the ravages of the earth are far away and do not apply to them.</p>
183	<p>Only gay men who live in cities get AIDS. Only IV drug users get AIDS.            ...There are still many Indian men who couldn't tell you what safe sex is. Such a subject could acutely embarrass them and make them scoff.</p>
193	<p>At least Bad Nell had tits and this could define her as a woman.</p>
199	<p>I hated white people, and the fact that I was one, slurred and mixed, did not prevent me from hating them. White people had hurt me time and time again. I hated white people because I couldn't understand what it was they wanted, and found that a big, big part of life consisted of giving white people what they wanted. I hated white people, and the fact that hating white people was not going to help me understand them in the least did not dissuade me from hating them at all. I wanted to become a writer because it was the only form of revenge I would ever have.            ...I wanted to be James Baldwin. His books were not allowed in our school library. I didn't understand that people like James Baldwin had enemies too, real enemies, people who hated him for what he thought and wrote. And then, of course, there was the color of his skin. I wanted to be James Baldwin because his books had been banned by our schools, and I could not think of anything more delicious than to be banned.</p>
200	<p>I wanted to create worlds like the worlds found in Indian myths, and I wanted to kidnap white people into his world and not let them out. Bad Nell and Frankie hated white people, too. We three would bitch about white people while we did our laundry in the bathroom tub.            ...For our part, we like the initial impact of appearances, and we went out of our way to leave the impression that it could have been sexual, not realizing that what we were was simply</p>



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	<p>odd and strange.            ...We took pains to be suggestive.            Three very, very out-of-place fifteen-year-olds dancing the dirty dance together at high school dances in their knee-high moccasins with the flying fringe.</p>
201	Bad Nell could tell who owned what jockstrap just by sniffing it. "White boys have a very distinct smell to them," she claimed, nostrils flared.
202	"Ever notice how white people are shocked at their own racism?" Bad Nell would say. "But Indians know and just say 'hmmm.'" Racism was ordinary.
205	<p>I was greeted at the door with the swinging of the belt. I am left bewildered by this contempt and know better than to say anything about the airports and the flying lessons. And the blackness lifts me out unrepaired and wet with blood which must soak his belt, and I cannot fathom how he wears these stains of me around his waist like a badge of masculinity finds its sacredness transfixed in the blur of these stupefied performances.            ...My eyes are closed and there is no vanishing point at which all the sweat and whipping me must stop. Each small act of defiance a false claim against him and one more reason to whip my back as if strolling through the asylum grounds. I did prefer his belt to his touching me, though.</p>
206	"I look white to you and to everyone else but for the life of me I still do not understand what it is white people want. I can't figure out the conventions, and when I do it's like a noose around my neck. I look white to you, but the people I write about aren't white and so what I do gets assigned to the niche where we're all familiar with the edges. The literary world is very, very white. It's left me savoring my bitterness over twenty years of complete failure."
207	It's like being touched by your dad but in the bad ways.
209	<p>There were the beatings that produced visible bruises. Then there were beatings of another kind. The beatings of diminishment. One form is bad enough. Combine the two and you have done a terrible thing to a person. You have raped him.            ..."We survived those times," she tells me. "I think it was something of an accomplishment."            Sometimes I am not so sure. The music from the belt still rips me from the hinges. The music from his touch still sings and sings.</p>
215	I was going back to the world of white people with vast amounts of visceral apprehension. White people make me nervous.

Profanity/Derogatory Term	Count
Ass	1
Bitch	2
Dick	1
Fiuck	2
Goddamn	2
Mongrel	7
Piss	1
Shit	5