

John Hiatt, Seven Little Indians

There were seven little Indians
Living in a brick house on
Central Avenue
Gathered 'round their daddy
Tellin' stories in the living room
From a slightly unrealistic point of view
Momma was off yonder in the kitchen somewhere
Boiling up some hot water for them to all get up to their necks in
The seven little Indians new
If the rest of the tribe ever scrutinized their household
Somehow it would not pass inspection
The big chief railed on
And spun his tales of brave conquest
About the moving of his little band
Up to Alaska
Where the caribou run free
See he had been there putting in telephone lines
For the army during World War II
Even brought back a picture of a frozen mastodon
For the little Indians to see
And some mukluks and some sealskin gloves
And a coat with beads around the collar
His wife kept them in the mothballs
Underneath the Hudson Bays
And every once and a while he'd get all wound up
With one of his stories, he'd put them all on
And dance around in that blue TV light
Like it was some campfire blazing away
Well he stamped and he hollered
But he could not stay warm in that living room
And even the seven little Indians could feel the chill
And although everything always worked

Out for the better in all of his stories
In that old brick house it always felt like
Something was movin' in for the kill
Blazing like a trail
Shot through the eyes of the seven little Indians
Blazing like the sheets of light dancing up in the sky
Up above Anchorage
Blazing like a star shot down to the ground
Back home again in Indiana
Now it finally got so quiet you could hear a pin drop
They started dropping like flies
The oldest little Indian got sick and vanished
The big chief went two years later
The mother raised the six little Indians up
The best she could
To be housewives, musicians, and insurance salesmen
But they all shared this common denominator
You see, all the characters in the big chief's stories
Were named after the seven little Indians
And like I said, in his stories everything
Always worked out for the better
And now as I'm telling this stuff to my own kids
Dancing around in that blue TV light
Well, I wish I had those mukluks, those sealskin gloves
And that coat with beads around the collar