FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Father Meme
Gerald Vizenor
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Told from the difficult and rarely employed second-person point of view, Vizenor's story is one of altar boy abuse on a Native American reservation at the hands of the Catholic clergy. The narrator, a retired journalist and former altar boy, offers a captivating account of his rejection of victimization, a rejection which ends in the eventual killing of a priest.

Vizenor employs explicit prose and salient detailing not unlike creative nonfiction, and his is a story worthy of staunch attention, a story too arresting to ignore. From the arrival of Father Meme on the reservation to the planning and staging of the resistance known as the Fourteen Torments, the altar boys draw the reader in with a sense of shared suffering and outrage. Entangled with the universality of boyhood mischievousness are graphic tales of sexual abuse and unanswered cries for help. "The wicked priest was invulnerable, madame, and forever saved from criminal prosecution. Only some saints, demons, stray priests, cer-tain spies, and presidents enjoy such aegis, patronage, and absolute immunity. Surely you can appreciate that sacrifice was the only remedy." It is this notion, that of the invulnerability of the priest, that causes the altar boys to seize the reins of destiny and unequivocally end their abuse.

And yet, there is an ominous sense of doom surrounding the priest. His "coldness" is reiterated through descriptions such as his like-ness to a "winter cannibal" and the inclusion of tales of masturbation over an icy fish hole. Winter is often used to suggest death, as in Robert Frost's "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening" or to suggest a lack of hope, like in C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*. Father Meme symbolizes both the element of death and the hopelessness of the altar boys, a hopelessness doomed to continue as long as he is alive. "Father Meme is dead," declares the narrator, "deservedly beaten and pushed under the ice." It is a fitting end to a decidedly icy figure.

Gerald Vizenor, a Native American writer and member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, has more than twenty-five books to his credit, including *Griever: An American Monkey King in China*. He is a recipient of the New York Fiction Collective Prize and an American Book Award. Vizenor is a Distinguished Professor of American Studies at the University of

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