Trickster Academy

Jenny L. Davis
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With wry humor moistening the margins of her poems, Jenny Davis showcases how her Indigenous people have become experts in sorrow and seethe. Director of the American Indian Studies Program and a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation, Davis is the author of Talking Indian: Identity and Language Revitalization in the Chickasaw Renaissance.

Inside Each of Us Are Two Tricksters

An old man was teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside me,” he said to the boy. “It is a terrible fight, and it is between two tricksters. The same fight is going on inside you—and inside every other person, too.”

The boy thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which trickster will win?”

The old man simply replied, “The one you feed.”

“But the most important rule, the rule you can never forget: no matter how much it cries, no matter how much it begs, never feed it after midnight. Keep it out of the light, especially sunlight, and don’t give it any water, not even to drink.”

MATT SUTHERLAND (March / April 2022)

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