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First Indian On The Moon



Synopsis

Poetry. Native American Studies. FIRST INDIAN ON THE MOON opens with the section "Influences": "where I have been/ most of my lives/ is where I'm going/--Lucille Clifton". The stories and poems of Sherman Alexie, an enrolled Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian from Wellpint, Washington, have appeared widely, in such publications as Caliban, Esquire, The World, Beloit Poetry Journal, Red Dirt, Zyzzyva and Story. Alexie has won a National Endowment for the Arts Writing Fellowship, and lives in Spokane. "These elegiac poems and stories will break your heart. Watch this guy. He's making myth"--Joy Harjo.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sherman Alexi is an in-your-face poet, there's no doubt about it. He has a voice that demands to be heard, and you will listen, even unwillingly. His style is unique, mixing short, terse lines of verse alternating with long lines of prose that carry contrasts of charged emotion against the calming voice of reason. It is not an easy read. There are harsh truths, but truths that need to be addressed and heeded. His voice is the voice of many and the voice of few, but all demand you hear them. Powerful and moving. When I finished reading it, I felt as if I'd been shot in the back with many arrows and was left carrying around holes in my heart.

A very sad collection of pieces by Alexie, covering all manner of topics of res life. More impressive, however, is his use of style and technique in these works. Sometimes in traditional poem format,

sometimes in prose writing, flirting with fiction storytelling. Around every page is a new experience. This is a great collection.

Sorry if that sounded gushy, but throughout the pathos and humor, I couldn't help but marvel at this man's spirit-- and his literary skills. I've seen his interviews and featured bios on television and reading his work brings it all to life. I wish I had his ability to draw verbal pictures. Thank you for being you!

I wish all the pieces in this book ended like the piece "Split Decision". "When the bell rang at the end of the fight after Joe Frazier had floored Ali with a left hook you must remember that Muhammad Ali was still standing he stood up." There was some hope in that ending, but not in a lot of the others. This book made me very sad and angry about the past and what we as a people continue to do today. How much we have destroyed and how much we have missed by always wanting to stick to who and what we know and surround ourselves with possessions. Each essay or poem is sharp and clear and vivid. Each scene that is described can easily be pictured but the emotions can only be imagined. It would be wonderful if many, many readers were to be exposed to Sherman Alexie's work.

First Indian on the Moon is a great introduction to the poetry of Sherman Alexie. Originally published in 1993, Alexie challenges boundaries of race, identity, and issues with substance abuse, through beautifully detailed and brilliantly delivered streams of literary consciousness. I feel the haunting connection between his life in Wellpenit, Washington, as an enrolled member of the Spokane/Couer d'Alene tribes, as well as the struggle to find place and sense of self in the urban world. The passages evoke in me feelings of heartbreak, justified anger and great catharsis. This book is great medicine, for me, at a time when things are not right with the world, and many are searching just to be heard. Thank you, Sherman Alexie, for naming the pain and giving a voice to people who do not always have enough words to speak up, or have had the words drummed out of them by highly oppressive circumstances. So powerful.

With a voice that begs contemplation and makes you want to find the everyday magic in your own life, Alexie gives us a heart-filled and heart-breaking collection of tale-like poems about Amerindian life in the 20th century and beyond. Stunning.

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