

## Excerpt from “The Native American Broadcasting System,” *First Indian on the Moon* by Sherman Alexie

I am the essence of powwow, I am  
toilets without paper, I am fry bread  
in sawdust, I am bull dung  
on rodeo grounds at the All-Indian  
Rodeo and Horse Show, I am

the essence of powwow, I am  
video games with braids, I am spit  
from toothless mouths, I am turquoise  
and bootleg whiskey, both selling  
for twenty bucks a swallow, I am

the essence of powwow, I am  
fancydancers in flannel, I am host drum  
amplified, I am *Fuck you*  
*don't come back* and *Leave me*  
*the last hard drink*. I am

the essence of powwow, I am the dream  
you lace your shoes with, I am  
the lust between your toes, I am  
the memory you feel across the bottom  
of your feet whenever you walk too close.

**Golden Line:** *Why did you choose the line that you chose?*

**Personal Response:** *What do you think the poem is about? What do you think it means?*

### Second Read:

1. Before rereading, each group member should share their golden line and why they chose it.
2. Reread the poem with your group. Take turns reading each stanza aloud to the group.
3. After you read each stanza, discuss the positive and negative aspects of his identity. Underline this and add a (+) for positive and (-) for negative.

**Discussion:** *Discuss the following questions with your group. You may take notes if you wish.*

1. Why does Alexie include contrasting images that show both negative and positive aspects of his culture? What does it tell us about his attitude toward his culture?
2. What does Alexie mean by the line “video games with braids”? What does this tell us about his life and/or culture?
3. Reread the last stanza. What differences do you notice between this stanza and the previous three? What does this stanza ultimately convey about Alexie's attitude towards his culture?
4. Thinking about all of the images, metaphors, etc. in the poem, which line do you think best captures the “essence” of the poem's meaning? Why?

**HOMEWORK:** See back of page for homework, due WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY (next class)

**Homework—Reflection (on this paper or a separate sheet, 1-2 paragraphs; 15 CP points):** Revisit your initial response. After rereading the poem and discussing it with your group, how did your understanding change? What do you understand about the poem now that you didn't before? What is the essential meaning of the poem? What is Alexie's attitude toward his culture? Be sure to use specific details from the poem to support your ideas. You may also want to include group members' names and ideas from the discussion.

Sentence starters you can use in your reflection:

- When I first read “The Native American Broadcasting System,” I thought...
- However, after I reread the poem/discussed with my group, I learned...
- What I now understand about the poem is...
- The poem's essential meaning is... because... /We can see this in the line...
- Overall, it seems like Alexie's attitude toward his culture is... because.../ We can see this in the line...

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Per: \_\_\_\_\_