

# Sherman Alexie

## Quotes

*Book, Thinking, People, Writing, Mean, Kids, White, World, Two, Country,  
Native American, Dream, Years, Parent, Children, Men, Reading, Pain,  
Beautiful, Father*

Everybody likes to have a place to think, to meditate, to eat a burrito.

~Sherman Alexie

If you let people into your life a little bit, they can be pretty damn amazing.

~Sherman Alexie

Life is a constant struggle between being an individual and being a member of the community.

~Sherman Alexie

He loved her, of course, but better than that, he chose her, day after day. Choice: that was the thing.

~Sherman Alexie

If you teach kids how to tell stories, they have a better chance at everything.

~Sherman Alexie

Don't live up to your stereotypes.

~Sherman Alexie

What kind of life can you have in a house without books?

~Sherman Alexie

When you resort to violence to prove a point, you've just experienced a profound failure of imagination.

~Sherman Alexie

If one reads enough books one has a fighting chance. Or better, one's chances of survival increase with each book one reads.

~Sherman Alexie

Do you know why the Indian rain dances always worked? Because the

Indians would keep dancing until it rained.

~Sherman Alexie

Well, I think the worst part about tribalism is its tendency to fundamentalize, and if I can fight fundamentalism in any of its forms I'm happy.

~Sherman Alexie

If you're good at it, and you love it, and it helps you navigate the river of the world, then it can't be wrong.

~Sherman Alexie

The world, even the smallest parts of it, is filled with things you don't know.

~Sherman Alexie

He made me realize that hard work--that the act of finishing, of completing, of accomplishing a task--is joyous

~Sherman Alexie

My only purpose is to teach children to rebel against authority figures.

~Sherman Alexie

I don't have to participate in another culture's ceremonies in order to respect that culture.

~Sherman Alexie

Books and beer are the best and worst defense.

~Sherman Alexie

We all know the Indians were colonized by the Europeans, but every colonized Indian has been colonized by the Indian reaction to colonization.

~Sherman Alexie

I thought I'd been condescended to as an Indian - that was nothing compared to the condescension for writing Y.A.

~Sherman Alexie

You have to love somebody that much to also hate them that much, too. (191)

~Sherman Alexie

If I wasn't writing poems I'd be washing my hands all the time.

~Sherman Alexie

Since Jesus was human then he most assuredly farted and burped. And if God did create us in God's image then God must fart and burp as well.

~Sherman Alexie

Every movie is a road movie. Every novel is a mystery. Every tortilla chip is sacred.

~Sherman Alexie

If one reads enough books, one has a fighting chance.

~Sherman Alexie

Nervous means you want to play. Scared means you don't want to play.

~Sherman Alexie

If it's fiction, then it better be true.

~Sherman Alexie

You want the good life? You live where white people live, you go to school where white people go to school, and you shop where white people shop.

~Sherman Alexie

[F]rank knew he was guilty of arrogance and misanthropy, but he compensated by being kind to strangers and tipping really well at restaurants.

~Sherman Alexie

Read. Read 1000 pages for every 1 page that you write.

~Sherman Alexie

Humor was an antiseptic that cleaned the deepest of personal wounds.

~Sherman Alexie

I'm quite aware of my differences. I wouldn't classify them as weird

~Sherman Alexie

That's the whole point of life, you know? To meet new people.

~Sherman Alexie

I was studying the sky like I was an astronomer, except it was daytime and I didn't have a telescope, so I was just an idiot.

~Sherman Alexie

It was so quiet, a reservation kind of quiet, where you can hear somebody drinking whiskey on the rocks three miles away.

~Sherman Alexie

Well, as a native, as a colonized people you do live in the in between. The thing is I'm native. But necessarily because I'm a member of the country, I'm also a White American.

~Sherman Alexie

I write in blood because I remember what it felt like to bleed.

~Sherman Alexie

The dream he needed most was the dream that frightened him more.

~Sherman Alexie

You know, people speak in poetry all the time. They just don't realize it.

~Sherman Alexie

If you care about something enough, it's going to make you cry. But you have to use it. Use your tears. Use your pain. Use your fear. Get mad. Arnold, get mad.

~Sherman Alexie

I'm a method writer. In order to write about the emotion, I have to experience it. I get physically tired and exhausted, devoting hours and hours and hours to it.

~Sherman Alexie

The ordinary can be like medicine.

~Sherman Alexie

My wife was the first romantic partner who understood both American and native parts of me - not so much the positive stuff, but the damage.

~Sherman Alexie

If a parent doesn't want his/her child to read a book then there is always an alternative text to read. But the book banners want to control what every child reads.

~Sherman Alexie

Most of my heroes are just decent people. Decency is rare and underrated.

~Sherman Alexie

All art is exploitation.

~Sherman Alexie

I got hundreds of emails insulting me, accusing me of being some caveman. I am by no means a Luddite. I have two iPods. I have a cell phone. I have cable TV, HDTV!

~Sherman Alexie

When you read a piece of writing that you admire, send a note of thanks to the author.

~Sherman Alexie

Yep, my daddy was an undependable drunk. But he'd never missed any of my organized games, concerts, plays, or picnics. He may not have loved me perfectly, but he loved me as well as he could. (189)

~Sherman Alexie

There are all kinds of addicts, I guess. We all have pain. And we all look for ways to make the pain go away. (107)

~Sherman Alexie

I was a controversial figure on my reservation when I was a kid. I was mouthy and opinionated and arrogant. Nothing has changed.

~Sherman Alexie

The poetry, if you will, of life is reduced to this sort of dry, scientific, you know, it's the worst sort of precis of who we are.

~Sherman Alexie

I guess a witness is all I am. I think as a writer, you're pretty removed. Writing is a very selfish, individualistic pursuit. So in that sense I'm a witness because I'm not participating.

~Sherman Alexie

Writing is a lonely business.

~Sherman Alexie

I hear poetry whenever I turn on the radio. Eminem is a better poet than just about everybody. He's better than Billy Collins; he's better than Richard Wilbur; he's better than me.

~Sherman Alexie

I've come to the point in my life where I encourage young Native Americans to become much more selfish about their personal needs and wants.

~Sherman Alexie

Unlike landed white men, she didn't need to climb mountains to experience mystic panic. All she needed was to set her alarm dock for the next morning, wake when it rang, and go to class.

~Sherman Alexie

When it comes to death, we know that laughter and tears are pretty much the same thing.

~Sherman Alexie

I don't know what any individual should do about crossing her own borders. I only know that I live a happier, more adventurous life, by crossing borders.

~Sherman Alexie

White Americans have a short memory.

~Sherman Alexie

My father was always depressed. When he was home and sober, he was mostly in his room.

~Sherman Alexie

Poverty doesn't give you strength or teach you lessons about perseverance. No, poverty only teaches you how to be poor.

~Sherman Alexie



They put me in a holding cell with a black kid and a white kid and a Chinese kid. We're the United Nations of juvenile delinquents.

~Sherman Alexie

A really good stand-up comic is a poet; it's about the use of language. It can be really poetic. And I like politically conscious comedy.

~Sherman Alexie

Facebook and Twitter and these other social sites bring every, I mean, 140 characters. I mean, I'm on Twitter and I have fun. But I don't think anybody learns anything about me as a person.

~Sherman Alexie

My career means, if you're a non-Indian writing about Indians, at least there's one Indian in your rearview mirror.

~Sherman Alexie

Religious fundamentalists are unaware that freedom of religion necessarily brings with it the freedom to mock religion.

~Sherman Alexie

I realized that I might be a lonely Indian boy, but I was not alone in the loneliness. There were millions of other Americans who had left their birthplaces in search of a dream. (217)

~Sherman Alexie

Poetry = Anger x Imagination

~Sherman Alexie

And believe me, a good piece of chicken can make anybody believe in the existence of God.

~Sherman Alexie

When a glass sits on a table here, people don't wonder if it's half filled

or half empty. They just hope it's good beer.

~Sherman Alexie

Sometimes it's called passing out and sometimes it's just pretending to be asleep

~Sherman Alexie

That's one more thing people don't know about Indians: We love to talk dirty.

~Sherman Alexie

All I owe the world is my art.

~Sherman Alexie

Is God a man or a woman? God could be an armadillo. I have no idea.

~Sherman Alexie

Let us now celebrate the literary allusion.

~Sherman Alexie

she braided my sister's hair with hands that smelled deep roots buried in the earth she told me the old stories how time never mattered when she died they gave me her clock

~Sherman Alexie

We're all travelling heavy with illusions.

~Sherman Alexie

I feel like a carton of eggs holding up an elephant.

~Sherman Alexie

I know a lot about being white - because I have to, I live in the white world. A white person doesn't live in the Indian world. I have to be white every day.

~Sherman Alexie

Certainly I'm angry at the way Indians have been treated and continue to be treated. But I don't think it's a helpless emotion.

~Sherman Alexie

I look more Indian when I'm serious.

~Sherman Alexie

Only in rock music and the literary world you see so many ugly white guys with beautiful women. That says a lot about the women, their character. They're attracted to more than surface.

~Sherman Alexie

and then she asks me how many sexual partners I've had and I say one or two depending on your definition of what I did to Custer . . .

~Sherman Alexie

...And nostalgia is a cancer. Nostalgia will fill your heart up with tumors. Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's what you are. You're just an old fart dying of terminal nostalgia.

~Sherman Alexie

My name is Sherman J. Alexie Jr., and I am an insomniac.

~Sherman Alexie

I recognize now that the conditions that Indians are living in are the conditions that poor people everywhere are living in.

~Sherman Alexie

I learned how to stop crying. I learned how to hide inside of myself. I learned how to be somebody else. I learned how to be cold and numb.

~Sherman Alexie

There have been players with Indian heritage, but there hasn't been a Native-American professional basketball player who became a regular for all sorts of social and political reasons.

~Sherman Alexie

I'm not a pacifist by any measure, but I'm also fully aware that the reasons I might go to war could be very dubious.

~Sherman Alexie

Because I'm an American, I know there's all sorts of international folks who would gladly kidnap and behead me.

~Sherman Alexie

I don't think the revisionist historians are accurate. I think their agendas are clouded by selfishness and anger and rage.

~Sherman Alexie

Pain is never added to pain. It multiplies.

~Sherman Alexie

Listen you have to read a book three times before you know it.

~Sherman Alexie

Like any good shaman, professional baseball player, or politician, my mother always answered questions with questions.

~Sherman Alexie

I think I was born with a suitcase.

~Sherman Alexie

The problem for me with liberals is that we've abdicated our moral responsibility to the universe.

~Sherman Alexie

A lot of people have no idea that right now Y.A. (young adult). is the Garden of Eden of literature.

~Sherman Alexie

If I were a doctor nobody would be inviting me to talk to reservations. I'd be a different person. Writers can influence more people.

~Sherman Alexie

But we danced, under wigs and between unfinished walls, through broken promises and around empty cupboards.

~Sherman Alexie

I think a lot of Indians want Indian artists to be cultural cheerleaders rather than cultural investigators.

~Sherman Alexie

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