



The Summer of Black Widows

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Poetry. Native American Studies. THE SUMMER OF BLACK WIDOWS presents poetry that has continued to grow in power, complexity, and vision. According to reviewer James R. Kincaid, "Mr. Alexie's is one of the major lyric voices of our time," and the many honors and an international following of readers from his poems, stories, and novels proves the claim. Chris Faatz from The Nation agrees, calling Alexie "a young writer who is taking the literary world by storm...a superb chronicler of the Native American experience...he is a master of language, writing beautifully, unsparingly and straight to the heart."

The Summer of Black Widows Details

Date : Published January 1st 1996 by Hanging Loose Press

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Author : Sherman Alexie

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From Reader Review The Summer of Black Widows for online ebook

Robert says

I first encountered Sherman Alexie with his "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven" (did I get that title right?) - which has to be one of the better titles ever. But, it was his "The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian" that knocked my socks off. So, I've been collecting signed first editions of his work for a long time. This one, an early book of his poetry, is not my favorite, but it has some haunting moments. READ ALEXIE. You'll be glad you did.

Jen says

I've been hearing a lot about Sherman Alexie lately, so I had to try him out. I haven't read such engaging poetry for a long time, and I enjoyed the balance of simple and complicated. He had both pleasing imagery and thought-provoking stories to tell. Because I heard he writes children and young adult books, some of the topics surprised me. I can't wait to read more by Alexie, and plan to read and then watch The Business of Fancydancing in the next few weeks.

Kayla Vitalia Marcantonio says

Wow. Just wow.

Lesley says

Wow.

Stephanie says

I love Alexie. Two of my favorite poems are in this collection: Capital Punishment and How to write the Great American Indian Novel, both of which I first read in an anthology years ago. Alexie's voice is clear, sarcastic and at times, satisfactorily condescending.

Alisha says

This man, Sherman Alexie, sexually abuses women serially and I will never support his work.

Read the comments section: <http://www.slj.com/2018/01/industry-n...>

Marisela says

Fantastic poems. Really lovely and haunting.

Eva Sanchez says

Older style. Sometimes disjointed. But beautiful either way.

Erin Thomas says

There were poems I liked and which really caused a few moments of reflection, such as "Grand Entry" on pg 66, part 3 of "Tourists" pg 92 and "The Place where Ghosts of Salmon Jump" on pg 19.

Sharp detractors involved poems such as the "Totem Sonets," which were basically 14 lines of names of things and people. To call these lists "poems" is something of a stretch. There was another poem titled as a sonnet which consisted of 14 interconnected prose paragraphs. Another stretch. As what some would call a "neoformalist," you can imagine my reaction.

Other poems, such as "The Sasquatch Poems" and "Father and Farther" had points of real interest--a gem of thought, image or metaphor--but these were interspersed amidst a scattering of dirt and straw. Perhaps the point was to be abstract, but for me these read more like (fairly literate) journal entries than they did like live, engaging poems. This isn't to say that a book of poems should be cohesive, consistent and contiguous--A book of poems is expected to be a collection of random thoughts, stories and ideas. But I think, in general, I would have liked more cohesiveness *within* the boundaries of a given poem. Some poems held this sense of cohesiveness for me, but most of them didn't.

What was probably the most engaging element of this book for me is the fact that this scattering of thoughts offered a view into the life and emotions of modern Native American culture--an area of interest for me, though only being possibly 1/64th Creek Indian myself, whatever that means. Putting aside the question of poetry itself, and whether or not one might call it "good" poetry, I found that some lines, often buried deep in a page of line-spaghetti, resonated with me, especially those thoughts and feelings that connected with the archetypal "father," for I myself am the son of an abusive, disconnected father.

Overall, this was an okay read for me (the tooltip text that pops up under two stars reads "it was ok"), which is probably better than I would rate most books of contemporary poetry. I would rate it between two and three stars, a little better than "ok," but not quite "liked it," but I am only permitted one or the other.

Edith Hope says

Sherman Alexie, if you ever read this, thank you for writing love songs for your wife. Thank you for finding the other side of anger. Thank you for sharing your troubles and ideas with grace and humor.

Daryl says

I'm not always a big fan of poetry - much of it is too esoteric and "high-falutin'" for my tastes -- but I'm a big fan of Alexie's fiction. I really enjoyed this book of poems. It's written in "everyday" language, thus avoiding the making-it-hard-to-follow problem. Alexie writes about subjects that we can all relate to (love, fear, Bigfoot), but comes from his own unique perspective. The poems are organized into sections, each with a particular theme. But it's possible to read a little bit at a time, here & there, and still enjoy them.

Tatyana says

Loved these poems.

Sarah says

Amazing. Seriously. I'm not a huge poetry fan. I really don't enjoy sitting and reading it at all, but this was just incredible. It is almost worth reading the terrible books by Momaday and Vizenor in Native American Literature to stumble on this one. I'm considering which poems I might be able to use in my classroom. Alexie is the kind of poet who makes every other poet want to just give up.

Annie says

Mail box treat!

Jason says

These poems are a pleasure to read. Plus, there's a lot of them. It bothers me when poets put out a collection of 60 pages of poetry for \$16. Alexie has 139 pages here. He continues to use "Indian" images of salmon, rivers, (fancy) dancing, as well as images from his past like basketball. The loss of his sister and brother-in-law surfaces again (And why shouldn't it? I would never get over that either!). Although most of the poems here are free verse, there's an occasional form like the villanelle. Alexie also works in some killer rhymes (regular and near) throughout some of his poems. He sometimes relies on repetition, but that doesn't bother me too much. The repetition is sort of like the pounding of a trivial drum. (I bet Alexie would hate that I made that comparison. Ha!)

My favorite poems:

That Place Where Ghosts of Salmon Jump

Totem Sonnets

Elegies

Sister Fire, Brother Smoke

The Lover of Maps
Drum as Love, Fear, and Prayer
Last Will and Testament
Capital Punishment
The Sasquatch Poems
Inside Dachau

Emily says

It's a fact that I would have Sherman Alexie's babies if he were interested. This book of incandescent, surreal, and painfully honest poetry just makes me ready to procreate even more. The man is a genius.

Kaitlyn says

"but there is no time to wonder.
This is America. We check our hats at the door
and jump into the heated debate."

Sarah says

"Sherman, I'm sorry your sister was killed by a metaphor."

"Fire as Verb and Noun" said things I don't think anyone else has ever thought of before, but everyone can relate to.

Pamela says

What a marvel of a book! My favorite poems were "Totem Sonnets" and "Sonnet: Tattoo Tears" (which is among the greatest sonnets I've read). I wish our poetry group would address these two poems.

I look forward to reading more of his poetry. Alexie's short story, "What You Pawn, I Will Redeem," is also a marvel.

(I don't know if I'd go so far as the prior reviewer to say that I'd have his children, but I'd definitely baby-sit, free of charge).

Judy says

This was the featured book on my favorite nationally-broadcast poetry show 1/22/12, and I am happy it was. Sherman Alexie tells us about so much, and does it so well, with poetic structures and references that are

both familiar and refreshing. Magic is never far away, but no nearer than the day-to-day pain of poverty, diabetes, alcoholism and PTSD. We see the light, smell the fire, feel the blood the characters encounter in these poems, are invited to share myth and mystery, and to see Walt Whitman shoot baskets with a bunch of muscular young men on the res.
