

Class – U.G Sem IV

Paper – MJC 05 (English)

Alexie Shermom

- Shermom Alexie (b. Oct. 07, 1966, at Washington , U.S) is an American writer whose poetry, short stories, novels and films about the lives of American Indian have won him international following.
- Alexie’s father, Sherman Sr., was a citizen of the Coeur D’Alene Tribe, and his mother, Lilian Agnes Cox, was of Spokane ancestry. One of his paternal great grandfathers was of Russian decent.
- Alexie was born with hydrocephalus, a condition that occurs when there is an abnormally large amount of cerebral fluid in the brain’s ventricular system. He had to have brain surgery at the age of six months and was at high risk of death or mental disabilities if he survived. Alexie’s surgery was successful; he did not experience mental damage but had other side effects.
- Alexie has described his life at the reservation school as challenging, as he was constantly teased by other kids and endured abuse he described as “torture” from white nuns who taught there. They called Alexie “The Globe” because his head was larger than usual , due to his hydrocephalus as an infant.
- He got his early education from Reardan High School and won a scholarship for further study in Gonzaga University, a Jesuit University in Spokane.
- In 1987, Alexie dropped out of Gonzaga and enrolled in Washington State University, where he took a creative writing course taught by Alex Kuo, a respected poet of Chinese-American background. Kuo encouraged Alexie to begin writing.
- In 1992 Alexie published his first collection of poetry, The Business of Fancydancing: Stories and Poems through Hanging Loose press.
- Alexie’s poetry, short stories, and novels explore themes of despair, poverty, violence, and alcoholism in the lives of Native American people, both on and off the reservation. They are lightened by wit and humor. According to Sarah A.Quirk from the Dictionary of Library Biography, Alexie asks three questions across all of his works : “What does it mean to live as an Indian in this time ? what does it mean to be an Indian man. Finally, what does it mean to live on an Indian reservation ?
- **Notable works of Alexie**
 - **Poetry :**
 - The Business of Fancydancing: Stories and Poems (1992)
 - Old Shirts and New Skins (1993)

- First Indian on the Moon (1993)
- Seven Mourning Songs For the Cedar Flute I have Yet to Learn to Play (1994)
- Water Flowing Home (1996)
- The Summer of Black Windows (1996)
- The Man who loves Salmon (1998)

Short Stories

- The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven (1993))
- Superman and Me (1997)
- The Toughest Indian in the World (2000)
- What You Pawn I will Redeem (2003)
- Ten Little Indians (2004)
- War Dances (2010)
- Blasphemy: New and Selected Stories (2012)

Novels:

- Reservation Blues (1995)
- Indian Killer (1996)
- The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian (2007)
- Flight (2007)

Awards

American Book Award 1996

National Book Award 2007

PEN / Faulkner 2010

Alexie has been recipient of numerous awards and grants, including the 2009 Mason Award, the 2008 Stranger Genius Award, a Pushcart Prize etc.

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Source : Wikipedia ; Britannica,