

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

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

Informal/Office  
method of communication  
for important information  
'Memorandum No. 6'

Public's perception of Birth name ← Stephanie Joanne Germanotta, V Magazine  
Pop-stars attempting to be more accessible

More formal publicized her beliefs than a typical memo

Plan to making her of herself makes her seem more like a "real person"

Wants article to be accessible  
able to escape public identity  
to make her relatable  
lends weight to ideas  
Sees positive connotations in competition

Again - internal division - dual identity

She has questions  
not just answers  
Also questions  
What "the game" is (music industry, baseball, life)  
Pearls are different but natural and untainted by society (you could almost say they were "born this way")

informal diction

gifts, like revelations, must be shared  
shared experiences are more meaningful

"Nobody likes the game that they've won over and over again to change." engage audience  
So for the Sports Issue of V, I suppose some of you wondered if I would vacation for the month. Perhaps I would come up with some benign excuse, or feign some sort of city-girl confusion: write about sportswear? Or sports where? When, in fact, I grew up a huge baseball fan. Google now "Lady Gaga at the Mets game," and you will find a photograph of a not-so-sober version of myself giving the Bronx cheer with my friends. Which was deemed problematic, as we weren't actually in the Bronx. It was the first time in nearly two years that I was actually being scolded by my father - partly for misbehaving in public and partly for attending a Mets game. But that's the beauty of baseball, isn't it? I was able to drown myself in so much beer and Italian sausage that after two years of touring the world I: (A) completely forgot that I am famous, (B) was wearing my costume from the "Telephone" video, and (C) am still confused as to how the paparazzi spotted me. What a lady! sarcasm - humble  
Different types of "lady" throughout article

is an anecdote  
this issue and I thought, What a revelation! What a challenge I could rise to and truly show my appreciation for this thing we call "the game." So, ladies and gentlemen, this is a theory on competition. The integrity of ambition. A Winner's Verité. Look out fashionistas, in this issue when talking about sports, even you may catch a few home runs. Yes, I said that, home runs. Let me just put on my sports... where? pun  
2011 was one of the most exciting and difficult years of my life. I made this internal pact with myself when I put out "Born This Way." This time, when I win, I want it to mean something. How can every "win" be a force? Not a tiara, a pat on the back, or the cashing of a check, but how can I look out into the sea of fans and know that our "win" changed the industry and changed each other? self-discovery  
location of pearls  
Also cliché

I wonder how many thousands of years ago the first pearl was discovered. In fact, I wonder who discovered it. Was it a fisherman? Or did Cleopatra, on her yacht, summon a mollusk? Did her fabulous male makeup artist hang it on a tiny spear and say, "Oh dahhhling, on your ears!" I thought of the pearl during my exploration of "the game" because as an accessory, pearls are the most game-changing and timeless of them all. There's no crime or conflict surrounding them, they are natural and perfect, and they are gifted as a gesture of elegance and womanhood. For thousands of years they've never gone out of style (and to this day no one knows when or how they were discovered. They have no sense of time or beginning) They are cyclical in nature and in existence. Opposition: change v. cycle (nature)

Christmas this year was the first time I really bought myself anything nice. I don't equate money with style, nor do I equate it with happiness. I'm often content hiding in the back of places like Claire's, schlooping costume jewelry into a basket. Often clothes herself in literal metaphorical costume  
However, it just so happened I was in Japan, and I decided to buy myself a strand of Mikimoto pearls. Why wait for a lover to buy you jewelry, lover yourself! After the year Japan had, and the experiences I'd shared with the people there, I thought it would make for a beautiful memory. The staff from Mikimoto arrived, we cracked open some champagne, and my buddy Brandon and I tried pearls on and swooned. I quickly decided that I couldn't only buy one for myself. I would feel terrible. So I made it about the girls: one for my mother, my gorgeous and talented sister, and Bo, my best friend. It was to be a sign of our womanhood, a thank you for oyster opens for inner worth symbol  
beautiful pearls - natural - mother nature  
passed down timeless "ladylike" - elegant  
heartloom no change society  
shared inner worth/value

not decided by society

not decided by society

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

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

pearls symbolize different things for different people

fostering mine, for my sister a sign of things to come, and for my mother a strand of pearls to represent each of the blessings she had cultured for our family over the years.

Girls have the same romantic feelings about jewelry as boys do sports. I lay down on the airplane back from Japan, tossing around some dashi, fondling my pearls. I watched the movie Moneyball for the first time. I began to laugh and smile as [Brad] Pitt talked romantically about the game. I suddenly imagined that my pearls were teeny-tiny baseballs. When a player hits a home run, the baseball is flung into an abyss of epigonia and screams so great. It travels so far that only rarely is one caught in the bleachers. Where do these balls go? Where do all these wins get encased? Are they in a heavenly baseball land floating around for players who pass to acknowledge? Or do they disappear? By the end of the film, we discover the "truth" about "winning" from our "hero." It only matters if you've changed the game. Being kicked in the teeth is par for the course for this kind of win, a win that not only pisses off the team you've beat, but every other team, their coaches, owners, and even some of the greatest baseball players of all time. You've made your own set of rules and gone so far on your own talent, no one can possibly crack the truth behind your wins. You were either lucky or were cheating. Nobody likes the game that they've won over and over again to change.

Pitt expresses this as the central objective to his life, as we see a flashback to an old Oaks game. Batter hits and runs, doing what he does normally, running past first to take second, but trips, falls, and scurries back to first. He's so focused on the game, so focused on the team winning, head so down into the dirt of the stadium, he doesn't even realize he's got a home run. The crowd roars, and he's not sure why.

In this moment I looked down at my pearls, and I saw all the teeny-tiny home runs I'd hit over the past year. I knew some of them were more perfect than others, but I knew only an eye trained in pearls would notice. The thing about music is you're not in competition with anyone else. You're in competition with the psychology of the industry as a whole. You're in competition with you. You must delve deeper and deeper into your creativity, history, and modernity to change not just this moment, but every moment that came before it. How can I hit a home run that will make every player question every run that was ever scored? How can I round third to home plate and bewilder some of the greatest players of all time? How can I change the game, until 30 years goes by and someone changes it again?

Sometimes my face is buried so deep in the work I forget to look up. Sometimes I don't even realize I've won, because the stadium is either cheering or screaming so loud it doesn't even matter. So this season, in the spirit of the Super Bowl and all things sporty, wear your pearls. Wild, cultured, real, or fake, wear them proudly. And look up, or rather down, at all of your home runs. (Unless you've made them into a crown with a glue gun.) Then look up! In fashion and in life we all deserve more pearls, please. A moment of revelation to remember that we are timeless, we all matter, and every win like this is as important as the next. When you are changing the way people think, your life achievements are working toward the greatest accessory of all time: nerve. So collect your tiny baseballs, string your pearls, and remember that you are as timeless as the pearls on your neck. (And if you forgot to be a lady and wear them, then shame on you.)

Timeless v. changing  
every win as important as the next  
all matter

equal but (another individual opposition)

judgement of things like "manners" (pearls as a "thank you" to gentlemen)

Societal expectations contrast with "What a lady" you define what it means to be a lady → term is very socially dependant

Use of questions, and scientific & contract terminology to try to define, explain, and quantify the abstract and give clear and definite meaning to life

bridging gender gap even though pearls were for "the girls"

non pearls = winning female equivalent

pearls representative of success in "the game" of life

metaphor

spectators - society

displayed - others recognition important

Rhetorical questions

previous desire to find meaning

golf - ball games are the same

you v. they

Indiv. v. society

without meaning

redefining "win" and "the game"

metaphor: successes that add up to win

integrity of ambition

oppositions: history v. modernity; past v. present

do you do the impossible?

opposition: sporty v. pearls

back system make your self royalty important

combining - break - genesis

on display, intentional

change in tone

unchanged by society

also judgemental

slightly sarcastic

but also judgemental

contrast with

"What a lady"

you define what it means to be a lady → term is very socially dependant

theory, rules, facts, membranes

and scientific & contract terminology to try to define, explain, and quantify the abstract and give clear and definite meaning to life

## Los Angeles Times

ARTICLE COLLECTIONS

— Back to Original Article

The Joy of Reading and Writing

## Superman and Me

## Immediate partnership &amp; comparison

April 19, 1998 | SHERMAN ALEXIE | Sherman Alexie is the author, most recently, of "Indian Killer."

Editor's Note: The following essays by Sherman Alexie, J.D. McClatchy, Robert Pinsky, Mona Simpson and Ted Kooser are included in a recent anthology published by Milkweed Editions, entitled "The Most Wonderful Books: writers on Discovering the Pleasures of Reading." They are reprinted here with the kind permission of the publisher and the authors.

## ① symbol - Hero - Savior

p uneducated and unsophisticated source reflects author's life

I learned to read with a Superman comic book. Simple enough, I suppose. I cannot recall which particular Superman comic book I read, nor can I remember which villain he fought in that issue. I cannot remember the plot, nor the means by which I obtained the comic book. What I can remember is this: I was 3 years old, a Spokane Indian boy living with his family on the Spokane Indian Reservation in eastern Washington state. We were poor by most standards, but one of my parents usually managed to find some minimum-wage job or another, which made us middle-class by reservation standards. I had a brother and three sisters. We lived on a combination of irregular paychecks, hope, fear and government surplus food.

My father, who is one of the few Indians who went to Catholic school on purpose, was an avid reader of westerns, spy thrillers, murder mysteries, gangster epics, basketball player biographies and anything else he could find. He bought his books by the pound at Dutch's Pawn Shop, Goodwill, Salvation Army and Value Village. When he had extra money, he bought new novels at supermarkets, convenience stores and hospital gift shops. Our house was filled with books. They were stacked in crazy piles in the bathroom, bedrooms and living room. In a fit of unemployment-inspired creative energy, my father built a set of bookshelves and soon filled them with a random assortment of books about the Kennedy assassination, Watergate, the Vietnam War and the entire 23-book series of the Apache westerns. My father loved books, and since I loved my father with an aching devotion, I decided to love books as well.

I can remember picking up my father's books before I could read. The words themselves were mostly foreign, but I still remember the exact moment when I first understood, with a sudden clarity, the purpose of a paragraph. I didn't have the vocabulary to say "paragraph," but I realized that a paragraph was a fence that held words. The words inside a paragraph worked together for a common purpose. They had some specific reason for being inside the same fence. This knowledge delighted me. I began to think of everything in terms of paragraphs. Our reservation was a small paragraph within the United States. My family's house was a paragraph, distinct from the other paragraphs of the LeBrets to the north, the Fords to our south and the Tribal School to the west. Inside our house, each family member existed as a separate paragraph but still had genetics and common experiences to link us. Now, using this logic, I can see my changed family as an essay of seven paragraphs: mother, father, older brother, the deceased sister, my younger twin sisters and our adopted little brother.

At the same time I was seeing the world in paragraphs, I also picked up that Superman comic book. Each panel, complete with picture, dialogue and narrative was a three-dimensional paragraph. In one panel, Superman breaks through a door. His suit is red, blue and yellow. The brown door shatters into many pieces. I look at the narrative above the picture. I cannot read the words, but I assume it tells me that "Superman is breaking down the door." Aloud, I pretend to read the words and say, "Superman is breaking down the door." Words, dialogue, also float out of Superman's mouth. Because he is breaking down the door, I assume he says, "I am breaking down the door." Once again, I pretend to read the words and say aloud, "I am breaking down the door." In this way, I learned to read.

This might be an interesting story all by itself. A little Indian boy teaches himself to read at an early age and advances quickly. He reads "Grapes of Wrath" in kindergarten when other children are struggling through "Dick and Jane." If he'd been anything but an Indian boy living on the reservation, he might have been called a prodigy. But he is an Indian boy living on the reservation and is simply an oddity. He grows into a man who often speaks of his childhood in the third-person, as if it will somehow dull the pain and make him sound more modest about his talents.

A smart Indian is a dangerous person, widely feared and ridiculed by Indians and non-Indians alike. I fought with my classmates on a daily basis. They wanted me to stay quiet when the non-Indian teacher asked for answers, for volunteers, for help. We were Indian children who were expected to be stupid. Most lived up to those expectations inside the classroom but subverted them on the outside. They struggled with basic reading in school but could remember how to sing a few dozen powwow songs. They were monosyllabic in front of their non-Indian teachers but could tell complicated stories and jokes at the dinner table. They submissively ducked their heads when confronted by a non-Indian adult but would slug it out with the Indian bully who was 10 years older. As Indian children, we were expected to fail in the non-Indian world. Those who failed were ceremonially accepted by other Indians and appropriately pitied by non-Indians.

I refused to fail. I was smart. I was arrogant. I was lucky. I read books late into the night, until I could barely keep my eyes open. I read books at recess, then during lunch, and in the few minutes left after I had finished my classroom assignments. I read books in the car when my family traveled to powwows or basketball games. In shopping malls, I ran to the bookstores and read bits and pieces of as many books as I could. I read the books my father brought home from the pawnshops and secondhand. I read the books I borrowed from the library. I

Repetition again. Try, try again. Reads books - Down; family's; borrowed - locations / the world - words and paragraphs

Cannot v. Can  
repeated negatives v. single positive - parallels life  
no actual book stores  
unconventional  
Fences not things  
in NA sections  
gives purpose to living situation  
bad & good  
paraphrases - larger purpose for indiv.  
Paragraph is his

primary colors: v. red, white & blue  
books = fence  
Also metaphor - you buy by the pounds - hyperbole  
Repetition again - success  
Lo tactic in paragraph  
rhyme of "prodigy" and "oddity" creates pathos  
opposition leads to par. 8  
purpose

read the backs of cereal boxes. I read the newspaper. I read the bulletins posted on the walls of the school, the clinic, the tribal offices, the post office. I read junk mail. I read auto-repair manuals. I read magazines. I read anything that had words and paragraphs. I read with equal parts joy and desperation. I loved those books, but I also knew that love had only one purpose. I was trying to save my life. I compare to "I loved my father with an aching devotion. I decided to love books as well." doctor who saves kids lives  
 Despite all the books I read, I am still surprised I became a writer. I was going to be a pediatrician. These days, I write novels, short stories, and poems. I visit schools and teach creative writing to Indian kids. In all my years in the reservation school system, I was never taught how to write poetry, short stories or novels. I was certainly never taught that Indians wrote poetry, short stories and novels. Writing was something beyond Indians. I cannot recall a single time that a guest teacher visited the reservation. There must have been visiting teachers. Who were they? Where are they now? Do they exist? I visit the schools as often as possible. The Indian kids crowd the classroom. Many are writing their own poems, short stories and novels. They have read my books. They have read many other books. They look at me with bright eyes and arrogant wonder. They are trying to save their lives. Then there are the sullen and already defeated Indian kids who sit in the back rows and ignore me with theatrical precision. The pages of their notebooks are empty. They carry neither pencil nor pen. They stare out the window. They refuse and resist. "Books," I say to them. "Books," I say. I throw my weight against their locked doors. The door holds. I am smart. I am arrogant. I am lucky. I am trying to save our lives.

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