

A Cherokee Woman

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WRITER'S COMMENT: This piece, written as a creative but historically accurate piece for American Women and Family, really stretched me. I was a freshman in my first quarter of college and all of a sudden I was expected to write this huge research paper? I didn't even know where to start. Once I started writing, though, I got really excited. I have always loved creative writing, and I had so much fun creating characters in a world that really did exist at one time. I went into office hours several times trying to get everything just right and ended up going way over the page limit. I was really challenged in this course, but it was arguably one of my favorite and I really felt like I engaged with the subject material. I loved being able to demonstrate my knowledge in a creative way and was excited about merging it with something I am really passionate about.

—Amanda Aubrey

INSTRUCTOR'S COMMENT: From the first time she spoke up in discussion section, I could tell that Amanda Aubrey "got it"—that is, she understood how to immerse herself in history. As a student in the course American Women and the Family, she exhibited a profound ability to transport herself out of our modern world and into the lives of the women we studied. This empathy made her perfectly suited to attack the assignment asking students to write a paper in the style of a memoir, using as context historical texts on minority women. Accurate in even the smallest details, "A Cherokee Woman" also effectively highlights the vast transformations in lifestyle and culture her character experienced. Throughout, Amanda deftly uses a typical life to demonstrate the profound and dislocating change that overtook the Cherokee Nation upon their contact with European and Euro-American traders and settlers. Further, a close reading shows a transition in the language and outlook of her character across a lifetime, adding a literary touch to her historical acuity.

—Jeff Port, Department of History

I WAS YOUNG WHEN THE CHANGES STARTED, when the men in my village began to explore the world of whites, leaving the women behind in more ways than one. At first I thought these changes would affect only the men. How very wrong I was.

I remember when I was a little girl, running through the cornfields after my mother. It was 1747, and I was six years old. My mother used to tell me stories as she and the others tended to the corn. I remember that I always liked the colorful corn better than the white corn.¹ I thought it was unique. It looked more like flesh, like Selu.

Mother told me of Selu. She was, as I believed then, the great mother. From her blood sprang our life.

“Aponi,” Mother would say, smiling as she spoke my name, “Never forget what mother Selu has given us.” I would laugh and say I knew the story, but I always liked to hear it again.

Again and again, mother would tell me of Kana’ti and Selu, the first man and woman in the world, and how things used to be. She told me of the harmony of the world, and how it came to be as it is now. She spoke of their son and Wild Boy, and how they set free the game that men now hunt, and how they killed Selu and dragged her body to give us corn. She told me how men and women balanced each other.²

Now, I didn’t tell my mother this, but I always sort of blamed Wild Boy for what happened. Things seemed to be going fine, perfectly in fact, before he came along; however, these feelings may have been more related to other outsiders encroaching on Cherokee land than the story itself.

Later that week, mother left for the special hut, as she did every month. Normally father would take on some of her duties, as mother’s house was small as of late, and work must be taken by whoever could do it.³ We belonged to the Andijiskwa clan, or the bird clan. Those who lived

1. Cherokee women grew hominy and white corn, as well as many other crops such as peas, watermelon, beans, squash, potatoes, pumpkins, sunflowers, and gourds to support the population. They tended crops and personal gardens, producing most of the calories consumed. Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 18–19.

2. Perdue, 13–15.

3. While menstruating, Cherokee women resided in special houses away from the normal Cherokee residences. Non-menstruating women would bring them hominy to eat and they could not engage in their normal activities such as childcare, farming, or cooking. These duties were assumed by the other women of the matrilineal house or even by men. Menstruating women were forbidden from seeing an ill person in

with us—my mother's parents, siblings, and nieces and nephews—had been dwindling in number, as more and more of the men married and went to live in the houses of their wives.⁴ That day was the first that father did not fulfill his obligations, but it was not the last. He had already begun to redefine his exact duties. That day he left with a hunting party. It was not even winter, but the hunt had been poor that year, and people, on both sides of the exchange, were hungry for profit. Deerskins were a precious commodity; the more he could get, the greater his revenue. Trade was my father's duty now.

Things were changing. Mother said that our people were falling out of harmony. On the table was a brass kettle that needed washing. Somehow seeing it there, dirty and uncaring, irked me. My father had brought it home not long ago as part of a trade with some white men. He had traded skins for many goods: kettles, hoes, knives, guns.⁵ Mother told

their house or having sexual intercourse with their husbands. At the end of their period Cherokee women cleansed themselves in running water and changed clothes. These rules resulted from Cherokee beliefs about the spiritual power of blood. Blood symbolized life, change, and danger. There were also rituals for childbearing, hunting, and men coming from and going to war. Perdue, 29–30, 34–36.

4. Cherokee households consisted of blood relatives of the same clan. People were related through the blood of their mother, so that they were considered relatives of their siblings, their mother's siblings, their mother's mother as well as the children of their mother's sisters. Fathers, grandfathers, and other men who married into the household were not considered blood relatives, even of their own children. Entire clans did not live together, but household members all belonged to the same clan. Generally, households were rather large, consisting of several generations of relatives. Small households made the many laborious tasks assigned to women difficult. A man moved from the house of his mother to that of his wife when he married, although he did not assume her clan lineage. Perdue, 42–43.

5. Starting in the early 1700s, trade began to dominate interactions between Cherokees and Europeans. Europeans provided Natives with metal hoes and knives, guns, ammunition, brass kettles, iron hatches and axes, European clothes and jewelry, and more. For these goods Cherokees traded war captives and deer skins. War captives served as forced labor and became a major export to the West Indies as well as slaves owned in Carolina. Around the 1730s, the focus of trade shifted from captives to deerskins, which promised to be more profitable and less risky than slaves. As their traditional roles included hunting, foreign relations, and war, men controlled trade and had the most dealing with the Europeans. While women's roles remained fairly stagnant, men began to compete economically and control the material goods of the household. Perdue, 66, 70, 76.

me that men used to hunt only in the winter when necessity demanded it, and to raid for war captives only to replace the dead or appease crying blood.⁶ That was not our way any more. Things were changing.

By the time I was a teenager, I was no longer surprised by change. Life was constantly changing. In 1757 I was sixteen, and even my mother had given up lecturing about living in harmony. She accepted the gifts given to my father and used them, saying nothing.⁷ She and my father had come to an understanding; she was more patient now, more deferential to him. She understood that he was the head of house now; he brought in the goods we needed for survival. Her power was waning, as traditions, rituals, and the power of things like blood were disregarded.⁸ His power only grew as men explored the world of the white men.

Our house was different now from when it was little. Many of our people had moved north after neighboring villages had been attacked by the Chickasaws. We had narrowly avoided notice ourselves, but it was

6. Before the introduction of commercial hunting, the Cherokee had great respect for animals they needed to kill for food. After killing a deer, for example, the hunter would ask forgiveness and believed, if he did not ask properly, that he would be punished with rheumatism by Little Deer: chief of the deer tribe. When deer began to be killed not out of necessity but for profit, overhunting and waste became serious issues. The relationship between man and nature was shifting from a balance to one in which man's wants ranked above the natural order. Crying blood refers to an old custom in Cherokee society in which, if someone was killed (even accidentally) a clan member would kill the murderer in "eye for an eye" style justice. The debt would then be considered paid. Perdue, 49, 84–85.

7. As men became more involved in European warfare, many things began to change. The Cherokee people began to centralize into a nation in the second half of the eighteenth century, as opposed to before when towns, clans, etc. acted independently of one another. In order to gain the allegiance of Natives, colonists often gave them gifts such as guns, alcohol, sugar, and foodstuffs. They also occasionally gave gifts to the wives of warriors, such as handkerchiefs, trunks, and saddles. The gifts given to the women were given not on their own merit, but due to their relationship with their husbands. Perdue, 94, 101–102.

8. Cherokee rituals began to lose importance in the culture as family became more patrilineal, and as Cherokees began settling in less communal ways, such as by living in log cabins as opposed to towns. This made communal rituals difficult to perform. By the late nineteenth century, many rituals were all but forgotten. Perdue, 107.

clear we would not have for much longer.⁹ We lived less collectively than before, and I missed the closeness of my relatives. When we began living here, I thought it would be as it always was, and all our relatives would be together. Instead, father set up a little house for only himself, mother, and me. I do still see my relatives, as they live in the general town. My older brothers had, by this time, married and moved away with their own wives. Mother and I tended to our personal garden and animals alone, and running free in the corn fields became a distant memory.¹⁰ Father continued to trade and support us, although he was not doing as well in the hunt as before, and Chayton, my eldest brother, was rumored to be a great warrior. I did not see him much. As a young woman I became increasingly concerned with, well, with men.

Compared to when I was a little girl, and members of my mother's household would freely engage in relations with men, I was involved with very few. I remember one cousin in particular who would sleep with a new man nearly every month.¹¹ Of course, back then I didn't really understand what was happening. As I developed to sexual maturity, that sort of freedom seemed a rather distant memory. It is not that it was strictly forbidden to take on several partners, as it was in white culture. It was simply looked at differently than it was before. It was more *Cherokee*, something that, as times went on, increasingly became a stigma. Change

9. War with other native groups, such as the Chickasaws and the Creeks, often caused Cherokee groups to change location due to the danger of attacks. The 1750s were a time of general migration out of lower Cherokee towns. Perdue, 105.

10. As Cherokees moved away from towns, they began to establish individual patrilineal houses. Clans no longer lived together and therefore could not properly protect each other, mourn losses, call help for the sick, etc., and thus lost power. Women farmed individual plots and families were concerned with accumulating individual property, such as livestock, clothing, guns, tools, and slaves. Perdue 104, 107.

11. Women in early Cherokee society enjoyed a great degree of sexual freedom. Partially because they were not subordinate to men, their sexuality was not seen as necessary to control and regulate. As long as they did not engage in sex with members of their own clan or their father's clan (which was considered incest), unmarried women were free to sleep with anyone they wished. Married women also enjoyed considerable sexual freedom and could not be prevented from sleeping with men other than their husbands. Some husbands would become angry and desire revenge against an unfaithful wife, but it was far more common for the husband to ignore the unfaithfulness or simply to take another wife. Perdue, 56–57.

had come, not only for the men. Our entire people were reevaluating their ways, lives, and goals.

I was involved with one Cherokee man, Nibaw, for about six months in 1762. My father hated him. I thought he was daring and exciting; he was never afraid to speak his mind, even if the opinion he held was unpopular. Nibaw was a dying kind: he loathed the white culture and longed for the way things had been before.¹² He still hunted for food. He was passion and rage, and, in the end, too drastic for me. His fire drew me in, but I could not fully comprehend his rhetoric. My family and I were assimilating, and, although it was different, I didn't necessarily see it as a bad thing.

After Nibaw, I became involved with John, a white trader (thankfully Nibaw had moved away by this time—he would have been mortified). It seems like quite a drastic jump, perhaps, but really I was attracted to the same things in him as in Nibaw—he was strong, determined, and passionate. By this time, my father had been teaching me English for some time. He had learned it by interacting with white traders and, although I was by no means fluent, I could communicate fairly well. John was, I believe, drawn to me largely because of my father's status as a prominent trader in town.¹³ He often talked of marriage and of its potential benefits for both of us.¹⁴ I believe that I really did think, for most of our relationship, that we would be together my whole life. However, in the end, things did not work out. I didn't realize that he would judge me so harshly for having sexual relations before marriage, especially because

12. When colonization came in the late eighteenth century, many Cherokee men were suspicious. Assuming it was designed merely to gain influence over them, many ignored it. They suspected a government whose focus had been war and trade suddenly changing their focus to ideals of farming. Perdue, 120.

13. There were many advantages to traders taking native wives. A Cherokee wife could serve the same functions as she would for a Cherokee husband, such as cooking and farming. In addition, she could mind her husband's store while he was away, teach him Cherokee or translate for him if she knew English, and allow him to enter and interact with Cherokee society more easily. If he married into a prominent family, this might also provide him with a degree of protection. Perdue, 81.

14. Cherokee women would sometimes intermarry with European men throughout the eighteenth century. Cherokee women could enhance their status in an increasingly material community through marriage to a European who could support her. These marriages led to wives being increasingly defined by their husbands rather than by their clans, lineage, family, etc. Perdue, 83.

I knew that he had done the same.¹⁵ In John's view, I suppose, he and I were never truly equal.

Finally, in 1766 I met my now-husband Taiomah. He was not like the others. He was kind and gentle, and he always considered my opinions. After everything, he was exactly what I needed. I think I knew he was the one when he accidentally shot a white man's cow for dinner.¹⁶ When the man came out, yelling and distraught, Taiomah dealt with the situation calmly, eventually agreeing to pay for the animal. It was a great contrast to how John or Nibaw would have reacted. He even managed to make it kind of funny.

In 1768, when I was twenty-seven, we married. I moved from my father's house to his, as once he would have moved from his mother's house to mine. I farmed my own little plot there and we lived happily for many years. In 1770 we had our first child, a beautiful little girl named Ayasha, followed by two boys, Nodin in 1772, and Mingan in 1775, and our last girl in 1777, Catori.

I tried to bring up my children without the pressure that I had felt between the Cherokee and American cultures, but I cannot say for certain whether or not I succeeded. As I had grown and as my father had associated more and more with the white culture and value system, he had increasingly disapproved of things I once considered normal, such as sexual intercourse before marriage and lack of dress for both males and females. This tension between what I knew and what he wanted was often a source of argument in the household. I tried to allow my children more freedom. Taiomah had grown up in a household much less influenced by white culture (he had, in fact, been living in his mother's house

15. Sexual promiscuity was tolerated in Cherokee culture to a degree that alarmed Europeans. When missions were established, abstinence was insistently preached to young Cherokee girls. Girls and boys were separated for classes and the missionaries made sure they were never alone together. Nonetheless, many gave themselves up to sexual desires, disappointing their Christian teachers. Perdue, 165–166.

16. Through the beginning and middle of the eighteenth century, Cherokee men often had trouble distinguishing game from livestock. They themselves only domesticated dogs, which were not eaten, and therefore may have had trouble recognizing the difference between animals that belonged to others and free-for-all wild game. Even in the late eighteenth century, when the difference was better known, they often didn't treat livestock as such (for example, barbecuing a milk cow). Men's hunting culture was not very compatible with new roles dealing with and understanding the purpose of livestock. Perdue, 120–121.

with a few of her relatives until our marriage, when he conformed to the more modern patrilineal system) and did not think this odd at all. Our children, like many other native children in the town, played together naked and without shame, as I had in my youth, and, although I prefer not to think about the sexual activities of my children, I know at least the older ones felt more free about it than I did.¹⁷ I kept my daughters' duties traditional: teaching them to farm and look after the home, while my husband taught our sons, as they got older, about his trade.¹⁸

During this period in my life, there was a war and, maybe I should not say this, but it didn't greatly affect me. That is not to say our lives didn't change, and change drastically, after the war. It seemed as if time began to move faster as I got older: I suppose I might joke that I was merely losing my lucidity as I progressed from my forties. I was increasingly expected to obey the cultural and legal practices of a new nation and an old council, which, until now, had held very little power.¹⁹

As our children grew, I became increasingly nervous about the state of the nation. I began to remind myself of my mother. She and my father had both passed away by this time, leaving me and my family some little material things, like jewelry to me and money for my family. I thought it a bit strange that my parents would leave their personal things, like my mother's jewelry, to their descendants, instead of requesting they be

17. Missionaries reported that the conduct of the Cherokee people before they arrived to teach them Christian ways was very loose. They reported that native offspring would bathe and play ball together naked, engage in sexual intercourse, and use suggestive language without a sense of impropriety. Perdue, 165.

18. Women's duties very much remained domestic and centered in the home and male duties remained focused on leaving the home, interacting with outsiders, and providing much of the material goods and profit for the household into the colonization period. Perdue, 172–173.

19. Cherokee national councils were largely ineffectual in enforcing their policies until after the American Revolution. This was largely because, in matters such as war, Cherokees and colonists held themselves to different standards. While the British expected a strong central government which led the nation, Cherokees attacked and retaliated in accordance to blood laws. Even during the American Revolution, Cherokees respected individual decisions. The decision of the nation to go to war with the British was not binding on members of the community. War parties raided the frontier despite contrary pronouncements from chiefs, and women provided intelligence to both armies. Perdue, 99–100.

buried with her. Taiomah and I would do the same, largely due to logistics, but it all seemed a bit impersonal.²⁰

As time went on, I felt as if we were not assimilating, but losing our culture.²¹ Men's duties blended into women's. Often I would see men in the field, a place that should belong to women. Of course, they would often be merely working with the plow, and only for a short time. After the plowing was done, they would, I suppose, return to their natural duties, as women continued to care for the crops in all the usual ways.²²

The desire for individual property and material possessions grew and we began to rely more on ourselves and less on each other. It was not like old times, when we lived off the efforts of many and shared resources, instead of competing for them. In fact, men and women alike became so focused on getting more individual wealth, property, and status that they forgot about the needs of their family members and neighbors. The conversations of men turned to who had what and how to get more—more

20. Private property in Cherokee society, such as clothing, jewelry, and personal items owned by both men and women, were often buried with their bodies when they passed away. However, as they had increasing contact with white settlers and acquired more materially valuable goods, they began to forsake this practice. By the American Revolution, this practice was nearly extinct. Later, Europeans would encourage native men to leave their property not to those whom they considered blood relatives, such as siblings, but to their children. Perdue, 137, 139.

21. As colonization went on, Cherokees began to take on more typical American lifestyles. This was accentuated by the Cherokee council, which increasingly passed laws that chipped away at traditional Cherokee culture. For example the council passed laws weakening clan traditions. They attempted to reorder descent (steering it away from the traditional matrilineal system) and, in 1797, passed a law against blood vengeance, specifically for accidental killings. Cherokees also lost property in the early 1800s, ceding large tracts of land to the United States, despite their initial vows to retain all of their land. Perdue, 141, 155–157.

22. Europeans increasingly attempted to have men perform the traditional agricultural duties of women such as animal husbandry and farming. Livestock was familiar to Cherokee men by the eighteenth century, but it was more often regarded as game than property. They often let the livestock roam rather than penning them in the summer or putting them in a barn in the winter. In response to colonizers' desire for men to contribute to agriculture, they would sometimes lease or rent their land to white families, allowing them to sharecrop on it. Near the end of the eighteenth century, the introduction of the plow may have increased the number of Cherokee men involved in farming, although it is likely that women retained most of their traditional tasks, such as hoeing. Perdue, 120, 122, 125, 127.

stock, more yield from farming, more property, more profit.²³ It was hard to deal with so much change—especially when I did not understand or agree with the values underlying it.

But I will not lie: I was not immune to the temptation of new material things: I too would sometimes get caught up in the opportunities the whites would present. For example, as time went on, I became increasingly accustomed to the white man's woven cloth. In my sixties, old as I was, I mustered up a great deal of excitement when Taiomah agreed to buy me some cotton seeds and a loom to make cloth myself. I invested a great deal of time and had a great deal of pride in the material I turned out.²⁴ I was a little ashamed of myself for giving up my stance against colonization so easily. Of course, it was merely one slip in my overall philosophy. I suppose that deep down I knew even then that there was no stopping change, and I felt it would be silly not to take advantage of the opportunities it offered. It might have gone against my beliefs, but I was not the only one willing to sacrifice tradition for easily acquired material goods.

Again and again I was brought back to memories of my mother, and how she had felt towards her changing world. I suppose my children felt towards me as I did to her, that I was merely stubborn, that one lone rock could not slow an entire river. They were willing and ready to adopt the ways of the white man.

By the early eighteen hundreds I was a grandmother many times over, to many loud little miracles. Some of them—mostly the younger ones—had been given American names, which to be honest I felt didn't hold the same meaning as Cherokee names, but I loved them regardless. Catori, the child who strayed farthest from her Cherokee roots, named her children Nancy, David, and Margaret.

23. During colonization, individual property increasingly became a status symbol, much as war trophies and guns had been in earlier times. Historically, native men would show their status through their bulk and quality of their property. Men's culture and competitive nature found an outlet in the new market economy. This competition fostered substantial economic inequality. Perdue, 132–134.

24. Cherokee women were very excited when presented with the opportunity to make their own clothes. After cards, wheels, and looms were made available to them in 1797, Cherokee women eagerly began making their own clothes. Production and ownership of looms and spinning wheels increased into the early nineteenth century. Perdue, 117, 130.

She was the only one to marry a white citizen: a missionary, in fact, who converted her to Christianity and sent their children to missionary schools. He had been traveling around with the goal of converting natives, specifically women, in order to enhance their status, which he viewed as subservient to men in native culture. He had not met with much success until he came to Catori, as most of the women he met saw nothing wrong with their lives, did not understand his doctrine, and were rather attached to their current habits. Catori, on the other hand, was quite taken by him. She came home weeping after he had explained to her Creation, as he saw it, and her new savior: Jesus Christ. As she was drawn to him, I believe that he was drawn to her. Catori represented all his hopes for his evangelical journey. Her eagerness and capacity to learn brought him often to our house (although the rest of my children often ignored him and poked fun at him, leaving him rather flustered). Catori had also remained sexually pure in a culture of temptation, endearing her to him.²⁵

After they married, Catori changed quite a bit. She had always been a neat little thing, but she became much more concerned with her outward appearance. In addition to taking greater care to dress modestly and in American fashion, she washed more, became more careful with her face and hair, and paid great attention to where she walked to avoid dragging her skirts through the mud.²⁶ I feel as though she worked quite a bit more than necessary, avoiding idleness nearly every moment of the day. Whenever I visited her she was constantly in motion: sweeping, cooking,

25. Some religious reformers focused their evangelical efforts on women. They thought that if native women became Christian it would raise their status within the community, as missionaries saw them more as laborers than partners to men. They also believed that men could be brought to accept Christianity through their newly pious wives. They saw women as easier to reach than men, partly because men were often away from home and involved in business dealings, while women were more restricted to the domestic sphere. Women would also have the power to raise their children as Christians. Perdue, 161.

26. Christian women were expected to pay a good deal of attention to their outward appearance; they were expected to dress modestly and neatly. A general neatness and cleanliness was also expected in regards to their possessions, which was often at odds with how Cherokees lived at home, where they cared less about Western ideals of personal appearance. Perdue, 167.

cleaning, sewing, or doing something else that she viewed as productive.²⁷ When they had children, Catori was baptized with their first.²⁸

I'm not quite sure how to feel about this. Catori seems happy, but the children, specifically her girls, are so pious I fear they do not have time to truly be children. When home they will sometimes confine themselves to their rooms with the intent of praying or writing in their journals. Otherwise they work like their mother, but they do not play or socialize with the other native children often or even at all.²⁹ The concept of Christianity is still hard for me to comprehend, even with Catori working so hard to convert me.³⁰ Many of our neighbors, even our other children, have not been as accepting of this new religion.³¹

Our other children live mostly as Taiomah and I do, in a mix of old and new, Cherokee and American. Some of the others have sent their boys off to school, though for educational much more than religious reasons. They believed that their sons would greatly benefit from an education, while daughters could simply learn their household and farming duties

27. Christian women were expected to be hard workers in the domestic sphere. They were not supposed to provide for the family, like Cherokee women who contributed to the household through farming. Men were supposed to be the leaders of the household, while women were expected to control the domestic sphere. Perdue, 173.

28. Baptizing sects often restricted baptism to the children of converted natives. This sometimes resulted in children leading parents to conversion or families getting baptized together. Perdue, 169.

29. Piety in young woman was a greatly admired and encouraged trait in missionary schools. Many of the girls at these schools expressed feelings of unworthiness and sinfulness. Missionaries encouraged young women to express their faith through submission, silence, modesty, and reserve. Girls in missions had to work hard while there, as missionaries sought to fill their days with productive activities. Perdue, 167, 169, 173.

30. There was not much commonality between native religion and Christianity. Whereas Selu had sacrificed herself to give her people corn and beans, Eve had condemned them with sin. In Cherokee religion men and women lived cooperatively, with equally important roles. In Christian religion, woman was presented as subservient to man. Perdue, 171.

31. Only about one thousand of fifteen thousand Cherokees belonged to a church. Many of those who did attend church ended up suspended from it on account of engaging in illegitimate sex, drinking, fighting, and participating in activities associated with Cherokee religion, such as ball games and all-night dances. Perdue, 171–172.

from their mothers. They did not care much for the religious aspect, but it came with the education, so they tolerated it.³²

Looking back, it's hard to believe so much changed over one lifetime. All lives experience change, but sometimes I wonder how great or small this change would have been without the influence of the white man. They are, after all, so drastically different from us. They influenced us so much: willing us to take women from the field and men from the hunt. Through them our homes changed, as women now live with men and our matrilineal system faded. They encouraged us to forget our culture, labeling our traditions, such as crying blood, as barbaric and our ways of life, such as premarital sex, as uncivilized. They brought men into their world of economic competition and individualism through trade and war and tried to limit women to merely domestic positions within the house, ignoring the fact that we once held power equal and complementary to men's. Somehow, however much we change, it never seems to be enough. They always want more from us. I feel as though no matter what we do, it will never be enough. They will never stop. They will never accept us as part of their world.

You may be wondering I'm telling you this. I'm saying this now, telling my story, because I am sick. I believe I am dying. This story needs to be told, not mine specifically, but the Cherokee story. I'm afraid of what is going to happen; I'm afraid of what will happen to my family and my people. I feel like something is coming, something big; a change. I can feel blood pulsing through my veins, and I remember how I used to think of it. Power, change, danger. I can taste it in my mouth. Power, change, danger.

32. Generally, Cherokees were more likely to send their sons than their daughters to school. Partly this was because female labor was required around the house or the girls did not wish to go to school, but more significantly because men's responsibilities in their gender roles (such as trade and politics) required education, whereas women's duties (such as housekeeping and farming) did not. Perdue, 172–173.