



Handout 2 - Excerpts from *Sure You Can Ask Me a Personal Question*, Diane Burns (Anishinaabe-Lac Courte Oreilles and Chemehuevi)

Diane Burns (1957-2006) was the daughter of teachers at Native boarding schools. After moving to New York City, she became well-known member of the Lower East Side poetry scene in the 1980s. Her book, Riding the One-Eyed Ford, was published in 1981.

How do you do?

No, I am not Chinese.

No, not Spanish.

No, I am American Indian, Native American.

No, not from India.

No, not Apache.

No, not Navajo.

No, not Sioux.

No, we are not extinct.

Yes, Indian.

Oh?

So that's where you got those high cheekbones.

Your great grandmother, huh?

An Indian Princess, huh?

Hair down to there?

Let me guess. Cherokee?

[. . .]

Thank you. I like your hair too.

I don't know if anyone know whether or not Cher is really Indian.

No, I didn't make it rain tonight.

Yeah. Uh-huh. Spirituality.

Uh-huh. Yeah. Spirituality. Uh-huh. Mother

Earth. Yeah. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Spirituality

[. . .]

This ain't no stoic look.

This is my face.