

Questions for “Flight Patterns” by Sherman Alexie:

1. How do the themes of family and self-purpose conflict for Fekadu? How does he express concern for his family? How do William’s doubts about Fekadu’s truthfulness affect your thinking about Fekadu’s story and its connection to William’s story?
2. How does Alexie infuse his ordinary characters with extraordinary traits? Does this create a more or less realistic picture of humanity?
3. In what ways does William transcend the stereotype of a Native American male? What thoughts does he have on issues such as feminism, diversity and class distinctions?
4. What types of discrimination or stereotyping does William endure and what is his reaction to it? How does he view those outside his race?
5. What is the significance of the title “Flight Patterns”? Whose flight? What patterns?
6. Why is William so fearful at the end of the story? How has his conversation with Fekadu sparked that fear?