

## BRAIDING SWEETGRASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS<sup>1</sup>

### DISCUSSION FEBRUARY 18, 2022

Part 2: Tending Sweetgrass (pp. 64 - 117 in Milkweed Editions, 2013)

Read chapters seven through eleven and write reflections on each of the following

Through illustrative, indigenous stories, and personal memoirs, Kimmerer expands on the need to nurture reciprocal relationships between humans and plants. She asserts that these relationships are required if we are to assure the habitats' survival, e.g., "weeding and care for the habitat and neighboring plants strengthens its growth." (p. 60) The themes of reciprocity and gratitude are continued in stories about the gifts we receive from nature and, in turn, our responsibility to return those gifts by, at a minimum, recognition of the gifts and expressions of thanksgiving.

1. In the story 'Maple Sugar Moon' (pp. 63-71), Nanabozho finds that people have grown lazy due to the bounty of the first Maple trees. Nanabozho removes this culture of plenty by diluting the sap and teaching the people to honor and respect the gift of the Maple tree. Can you draw any parallels from this story and our consumer-driven economy? In what ways are we wasting earth's gifts - its non-renewable, natural resources?

2. In 'Allegiance to Gratitude' (pp. 103-117), Kimmerer introduces the Thanksgiving Address used by the indigenous people to give thanks to the land. She states, "...it is the credo for a culture of gratitude." (p. 115) How does the Thanksgiving Address support the concept of "our mutual allegiance as human delegates to the democracy of the species"? (p. 116) What does that mean to you?

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<sup>1</sup> From the Longwood Gardens Discussion and Question Guide for [Community Read 2015](https://longwoodgardens.org/education/community-read/community-read-2015) (<https://longwoodgardens.org/education/community-read/community-read-2015>) in Kennett Square, PA