

## Meet Rafael Gonzalez, also known as Tufawon

Tufawon (2 for 1) is a Dakota/Boricua hip hop artist from Minneapolis. His name is a representation of his mixed identity and his music reflects many things—his life experiences, his hopes and dreams for the future, spirituality and connectedness to the land, love, and the realities of the world we live in.

With a socially aware approach, he touches on topics such as Indigenous resiliency, politics, health, defending Mother Earth, and fighting against oppressive systems. Another common vibe in his music is humor and lighthearted, fun and catchy songs that are intended to bring a level of happiness to the listener. The underlying message in Tufawon’s music is always connected to freedom.



The past few years have been incredibly active for Tufawon, hip hop artist AND activist. In 2019, he was awarded the Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship in support of his innovative new work. Tufawon has spoken at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland and recorded with Indigenous artists from around the world. He also completed his first headlining hip hop tour in Europe. Even with his world-travels, Tufawon stays active in his community, from fighting the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock to organizing efforts to Stop Line 3.

[tufawon.com/bio](http://tufawon.com/bio)



The music video “Sagepatch Kid” is mostly set outdoors, and for Tufawon, the outdoors is essential. Having spent time in Sisseton, South Dakota and Puerto Rico growing up, he has a spiritual connection to the land. One reason for that connection is the sage that helps name the song. “I want to burn the same sage I picked when I was a kid,” Tufawon raps, “So it can bring me guidance.”

Later, the Tufawon explained, “Sage has always been very popular in Native American cultures, but it also has been used in other cultures globally. The most common use for burning white sage is to cleanse a space, a person or group. It’s known to clear away negative energy. Part of the reason why the song has such a positive feel.”

Evan Frost, “ChangeMakers: Tufawon, music as an art of resistance,” MPRNews Nov 23, 2020

Cecilia Johnson, “Tufawon drops ‘Sagepatch Kid’ music video,” The Current blog Oct 27, 2016

Names \_\_\_\_\_

**I can explain ways music is used to represent cultural identity.**

**“Sagepatch Kid” by Tufawon**

- A. Work alone or with a partner. Read the lyrics (below) and underline references Tufawon makes to his culture, either Native American or Puerto Rican.
- B. View this video of Debra Courchene and her granddaughter talking about their smudging traditions on CBC Radio-Canada: <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1439709763565/> (3:21)
- C. Small group discussion: If you created a hip hop song, what references would you make to your own culture?
- D. View one of these performances of “Sagepatch Kid.” Or, watch them both and discuss differences between the music video and studio performance. For example: Is the scratching a good addition? What else do you notice?

<https://youtu.be/aGas0THSbqs> (4:45)  
“Sagepatch Kid” (Official Music Video)

<https://youtu.be/5iyTDuwnLyc> (4:50)  
Tufawon performing “Sagepatch Kid” in Studio with DJ Ganzobean

Lyrics

Early morning let the sunrise, crusty eyes  
You can feel my vibe

When I see the tallest trees I believe I’m  
looking at my living ancestors allowing me  
to breathe  
Although they can’t see,  
It’s senses are probably far beyond you and me  
The plants have a spirit energy we will feed on  
the seeds and  
If they are not quite edible we will turn them  
into beads and wear jewelry  
That gives us protection

You can wear my necklace think I got it at a powwow in Texas I can’t remember  
No wait it was Denver at the Coliseum peace to the Navajo tribe my native brothers and sisters  
I came from Minnesota  
Minneap-Dakota and Spirit Lake is the reservation that I’m enrolled in a family of survivors  
I can’t believe I’m here and I’m still alive and well, baby, and private  
Had to cut the fry bread and wanna make some wild rice together later on and we wild foot and I first



Chorus:

Can you teach me how to garden? Can you teach me how our ancestors harvest?  
Can you show me how to put life back in a yard in the soil of the earth that we walk?  
Is it really hard?

I'm like a hippie with a fade  
Get lifted in different ways on my path of enlightenment  
Would you like a hit or hit me on a different day unless you're trying to ride this wave unless you're trying to make this feel like your favorite holiday  
I'm gonna take my shoes off and prance around laughin' in the yard while we dancin' to some magic sounds waggin' out  
Pickin' raspberries and mulberries and strawberries  
Grandma used to send us to the woods to pick choke cherries  
It wasn't so scary really those were happy days she sent us down the hill when there was a massive patch of sage  
I'm a sagepatch kid ya dig,  
Eating hotdish and it was delish I almost burned my lip  
She had an apple orchard it was just too early to pick  
We had to wait for fall but by then we'd be gone  
So we sang songs played with dogs in the lawn or the pasture  
Gravel roads kicking up dust with cattails tall grass in the back you heard the laughter, a sweet laughter

Chorus

Can you teach me how to garden? Can you teach me how our ancestors harvest?  
Can you show me how to put life back in a yard in the soil of the earth that we walk?  
Is it really hard?

Can you teach me the importance of growing my own food  
Can you teach me how to put love in everything I do?  
Teach me what it means to forgive and give gifts without expecting anything in return I'm just ready to learn  
I want to burn the same sage I picked when I was just a kid so it can bring me guidance

I want to tap into what my great grandparents provided on the island of \_\_\_\_\_  
Live off the land and go completely off the grid with a tiny house apply the land and starfruit trees,  
Plantains, bananas, avocados, all that  
And we can make juice and cherry blossom green tea and while I'm playing chords you can sing to me deep into the night as the coqui sing back to us peacefully  
Those little beautiful island frogs while the stray dogs fall asleep  
We all start nodding off we pass out in the hammock and I have the same dream of you

Chorus

Teaching me how to garden, You teaching me how our ancestors harvest  
You showing me how to put life back in a yard in the soil of the earth that we walk  
It's not hard...



*Tufawon's music can be accessed through MNspin, a new online collection of Minnesota artists curated by local experts and supported by Friends of the Hennepin County Library.*