

## Meet Teresa Peterson

teresapetersonwords.com

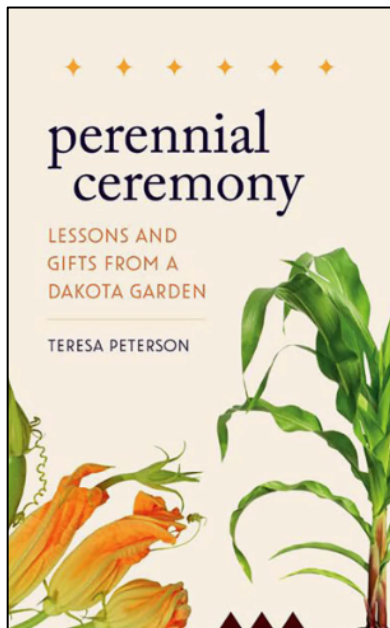


Teresa Peterson, Utuhu Cistinna Win, is Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota and a member of the Upper Sioux Community. She comes from a long line of storytellers. “I have come to understand that we all have story. Our story shapes our sense of belonging and place in the world. When we know our story, we belong—no matter where we go, where we are.”

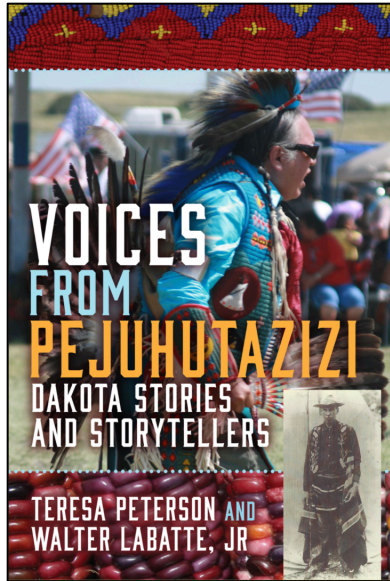
Peterson earned a doctoral degree from the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Her dissertation was titled “Exploring a Cultural Intervention’s Influence on Sense of Belonging: Bringing Dakota Story into 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies Classrooms.” For her writing, she has received awards from the Minnesota State Arts Board and Southwest Minnesota Arts Council.

Teresa’s true passion is digging in her garden that overlooks the Mni Sota River valley and feeding friends and family.

## Books by Teresa Peterson



***Perennial Ceremony: Lessons and Gifts from a Dakota Garden*** (2024). Teresa shares prose, poetry, and recipes guiding us through the Dakota seasons to impart lessons from her life as a gardener, gatherer, and lover of the land. From the publisher, University of Minnesota Press, “In this intimate seasonal cycle, we learn how the garden becomes a healing balm. Peterson teaches us how ceremony may be found there: how in the vegetables and flowers, the woods, the hillsides, the river valley—even in the feeding of friends and family—we can reclaim and honor our relationship with Mother Earth. She encourages us to bring perennial ceremony into our own lives, inviting us on a journey that brings us full circle to makoce kin mitakuye: the land is my relative.”



***Voices from Pejuhutazizi: Dakota Stories and Storytellers*** (2022), written with her uncle, Walter “Super” LaBatte Jr.

Through five generations at Pejuhutazizi (the place where they dig the yellow medicine), Teresa’s family members have listened to and told stories: stories of events, migrations, and relationships in Dakota history, and stories that carry Dakota culture through tales, legends, and myths.

In the 1910s, Waŋbdiška (Fred Pearsall) made notes on stories he heard from Dakota elders at the Upper Sioux Community. In the 1950s, when he wrote them down in a letter to his daughters, his young grandson Wašicuŋhdinažin (Walter "Super" LaBatte Jr.) was already listening and learning from his family's elders and other members of the community. And then that grandson grew up to become a storyteller. In this book, Teresa has worked with her uncle to present their family's stories.

Selected as the Native American One Read by the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community’s Understand Native Minnesota campaign.



***Grasshopper Girl*** (2022), originally published by Black Bears and Blueberries.

An outgrowth of Teresa’s research on storytelling, this story includes a Dakota tale of Uŋktomi (spider), one of the trickster stories her mother heard growing up. It is embedded within story, weaving aspects of her childhood experiences with storytelling in a contemporary format.

***Grasshopper Girl*** demonstrates the importance of storytelling and teaches and celebrates Dakota language.

***Grasshopper Girl*** was reviewed by American Indians in Children's Literature (AICL), and received a review status of *highly recommended*. It was also featured as one of Nick Jr.'s children’s books to celebrate Native American Heritage Month!