



## *Red Bird Sings: The Story of Zitkala-Sa, Native American, Author, Musician and Activist*

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### **Book Description**

*Elementary/Middle School | Biography*

This picture book biography tells the story of Zitkala-Sa (also known as Gertrude Simmons), an accomplished woman who navigates two worlds—the American Indian world and the white world. She discovers and develops her musical and writing talents, and uses them to make a difference for her culture and people. The authors weave together Zitkala-Sa’s own words and provide a thorough afterword and reading list.

### **Discussion Questions**

- What are some of the struggles Zitkala-Sa experienced in trying to live and adapt to a different culture?
- Zitkala-Sa used her strong feelings and emotions to propel her to action. What do you feel passionately about?
- What talents do you have or do you want to develop? How can you use these talents to make a difference in your community?

### **Utah Connection**

In 1902, Zitkala-Sa married Captain Raymond Bonnin, and they moved to Utah, where Captain Bonnin was assigned to the Uintah-Ouray Reservation. The couple worked and lived among the Ute people for the next fourteen years. In Utah, Zitkala-Sa met William F. Hanson, a composer and music professor at Brigham Young University. Together they composed *The Sun Dance Opera*. Also during her time in Utah, she joined the Society of American Indians and wrote for national publications calling for the preservation of the Native way of life and their right to full American citizenship.



*Zitkala-Sa*