

In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, the windigo is described as a monster of greed and hunger, but to me it feels more like a warning. When I think about a windigo, I don't picture a big scary creature in the woods. I picture a person who is so focused on taking that they forget about the people and the world around them. A windigo is someone who never feels like they have enough, no matter how much they get. They keep wanting more, and that hunger makes them dangerous. To me, the windigo represents what can happen when someone lets selfishness control them.

When I connect this idea to my own religion as an African-American Muslim, the closest thing to a windigo is the idea of a "nafs" (the self) a term I'm learning more about it's a person that gets out of control. I learned that every person has desires and temptations, but we are supposed to control them instead of letting them control us. When someone's nafs takes over, they can become greedy, unfair, or harmful to others. That's very similar to what the windigo represents a person who loses balance and lets their desires grow too big.

Another idea from my culture that reminds me of the windigo is how elders talk about people who "forget where they come from." Sometimes when people get money, power, or success, they start thinking only about themselves. They forget their community and the values they were raised with, like sharing, helping, and staying humble. That is a kind of "modern windigo" to me.

My favorite phrase from *Braiding Sweetgrass* is "gift economy." It appears in the chapter "The Gift of Strawberries." I like this phrase because it helped me see nature in a different way. A gift economy means things are shared out of kindness and respect, not bought or sold for money. In the book, Kimmerer explains that when the Earth gives us things like berries, plants, or even clean water those are gifts, not products.

This idea reminds me of the teachings where we learn that everything we have comes from Allah and we should be grateful and not wasteful. It also connects to African-American culture, where sharing and looking out for each other has always been important. The phrase "gift economy" helped me understand why giving back to the Earth matters. It taught me that when you receive a gift, you should respond with kindness, care, and responsibility.