

Wade Fernandez at the 2024 Smithsonian Folklife Festival Audio Transcription + Lyric Translation

Wade Fernandez: I was going to start speaking in German in just a second. I'm going to be in Germany next week. Well, if there's any people from Germany, *eins, zwei, drei, vier, fünf, sechs*. In Menominee, *nekot, nīs, naeqniw, nīw, nianan, nekūtusetah*.

I have six children, and I want to sing for them. And this is called "Sawaenemiyah." Can you say *sawaenemiyah*? [Audience repeats, while electric guitar solo intro begins]

It means "we are blessed." Sawaenemiyah. Yeah, and children are quite a blessing. But we also have to think about all those other children—not just the human babies. What about all those little insect babies down there? Or those little—lot of nests going up, you know, from the birds back at home, and I'm sure over here too. All those babies, all that life that continues to grow, continues to go. So, just thinking about all of them right now.

[Wade begins singing in Menominee language over melancholy guitar]

Nicianosaeh Whapi-Mahwaewsah, Maecewatok somekoh
Nicianosaeh Waqsepaেকেcewin, Penesew mesek wahkamiw Kemewenukiw
Pon kekatow kipackiyaenemem, Kespentaeh
[Speaking] Here we go! Sawaenemiyah. [Slow drums join in]
Sawaenemiyah
[Speaking] One more time! Practice.
Sawaenemiyah

Nicianosaeh Awaesaeh Oskas, Maecewatok kemenen kaekoh
Nicianosaeh Awaesaeh Nepowaew, Kaec menikew Kemewenukiw
Pon kekatow kipackiyaenemem, Kespentaeh,
Sawaehnemiyah

Naqsnīw anahkok waqnenam menipaniw
Mesek Noweqnan kewehnow
Naqsnēw kesoq kenatamowim kewaeqsaehkosem
Anah Keskehsekoh waqsahkonawaew

[Guitar solo]

Wahkamiw Pamenan, Nisaehcoq piw mesek mahchi

Pameq niyah, enahkah enes

Kemenen eyom, kakenaha wapehtum,

Mesek kitahpahonen

Kemewenukiw

Pon kekatow kipackiyaenemem, Kespentaeh

Sawaehnemiyah

[Speaking] Let's do it again!

Sawaehnemiyah

[Speaking] Little bit louder!

Sawaehnemiyah

[Speaking] Sing it for our relatives—all of our relatives!

Sawaehnemiyah

Sawaehnemiyah

[Applause]

Wade: Thank you so much! *Wāēwāēnen*. Appreciate that.

Translation

My child, Little White Wolf

Creator smiles on you

My child, Clear Pure Sparkling Water

Pure and clear water

Rain Woman we should never have to wonder

If we are blessed

My child Bear Claw

Creator gave a gift

My child Standing Bear

This beauty grows and grows

Rain Woman we should never have to wonder

If we are blessed

May the stars light your way

And the wind cry your name

May the moon make you shine

And the stars twinkle in your eyes

As clear waters flow and tears come and go
We fly our own ways
Take these seeds and sow; let them nourish your souls
And plant them everywhere you go
Rain Woman we should never have to wonder
If we are blessed
We are blessed
We are blessed
(My child Rain) We are blessed

Source: pbswisconsineducation.org