The summer reading for English III is an examination of some important ideas that make America what it is. Instead of a single novel, students will read/analyze a collection of short stories, poem, articles, and visual art that together create a collage of what lies within American Literature.

Each item listed is required. They are grouped by theme statements.

1. **The bonds caused by love define and connect us as humans.**
   - Short Story: “The Magic Barrel” by Bernard Malamud
   - Poem: “somewhere i have never traveled, gladly beyond” by E. E. Cummings
   - Picture: *Migrant Mother* by Dorthea Lange
   - Informational Text: “Only You: Shattering the Myth of a Soul Mate” by Christine B. Whelan

2. **When we listen to the creative spirit within us, we can be led to experience life in new and beautiful ways we didn’t imagine were possible before.**
   - Poems: “Tell all the Truth but tell it slant” by Emily Dickenson, “In a Station of a Metro” by Ezra Pound, and “The Great Figure” by William Carlos Williams
   - Picture: *I saw a Figure 5 in Gold* by Charles Demuth
   - Informational Text: “Superman and Me” by Sherman Alexie

3. **Society is made up of individuals, but sometimes the individual has trouble connecting to this larger group.**
   - Short Story: “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner
   - Poems: “The Garden” by Ezra Pound, and “Alone” by Maya Angelou
   - Picture: *Homeless – American Flag* by C.G.P. Grey
   - Informational Text: “The Me Me Me Generation” by Joel Stein

4. **It can be difficult to find our own identity amid the identities of others and the tumult of our experiences.**
   - Short Story: “Speaking of Courage” by Tim O’Brien
   - Poems: “Young” by Anne Sexton, and “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” by Langston Hughes,
   - Picture: *Self-Portrait* by Dorthea Tanning
   - Informational Text: “Choose Your Own Identity” by Bonnie Tsui

5. **Looking back, we can see that each former chapter in our life shapes who we are today.**
   - Short Story: “The Life You Save May Be Your Own” by Flannery O’Connor
   - Poem: “Testimonial” by Rita Dove
   - Picture: *When the Plains Were His* by Charles Marion Russell
   - Informational Text: “One Writer’s Beginning” by Eudora Welty
In contemporary literary studies, a theme is the central topic a text treats. Themes can be divided into two categories: a work's thematic concept is what readers "think the work is about" and its thematic statement being "what the work says about the subject."

Assignment:

Print your own documents from the PDF files on the SJA website.

Read, analyze, and annotate all these pieces in each of the 5 thematic collections.

Complete the 5 Round Table worksheets (one for each collection) and write a paragraph for each one.

***Annotate each piece for:

-ways the given theme statement is present
-literary devices, such as characterization, mood, tone, rhyme, imagery, motifs, and symbols
-ways that the literature connects to your understanding of the Catholic faith.

***Come to class with the Round Table Compare/Contrast worksheet filled out for each of the 5 theme statements. Be ready to enter into class discussion about the literature.

Annotations are due on the first full day of English class.

The Summer Reading Theme Unit will entail assessments of the following forms: Classroom activities and discussions, short writing assignments, a longer essay, a class presentation, and a short test.
Theme Statement: The bonds caused by love define and connect us as humans.

2. Poem: “somewhere i have never traveled, gladly beyond” by E. E. Cummings
3. Picture: Migrant Mother by Dorthea Lange
4. Informational Text: “Only You: Shattering the Myth of a Soul Mate” by Christine B. Whelan

The Magic Barrel
by Bernard Malamud

Not long ago there lived in uptown New York, in a small, almost meager room, though crowded with books, Leo Finkle, a rabbinical student in the Yeshivah University. Finkle, after six years of study, was to be ordained in June and had been advised by an acquaintance that he might find it easier to win himself a congregation if he were married. Since he had no present prospects of marriage, after two tormented days of turning it over in his mind, he called in Pinye Salzman, a marriage broker whose two-line advertisement he had read in the Forward.

The matchmaker appeared one night out of the dark fourth-floor hallway of the graystone rooming house where Finkle lived, grasping a black, strapped portfolio that had been worn thin with use. Salzman, who had been long in the business, was of slight but dignified build, wearing an old hat, and an overcoat too short and tight for him. He smelled frankly of fish, which he loved to eat, and although he was missing a few teeth, his presence was not displeasing, because of an amiable manner curiously contrasted with mournful eyes. His voice, his lips, his wisp of beard, his bony fingers were animated, but give him a moment of repose and his mild blue eyes revealed a depth of sadness, a characteristic that put Leo a little at ease although the situation, for him, was inherently tense.

He at once informed Salzman why he had asked him to come, explaining that his home was in Cleveland, and that but for his parents, who had married comparatively late in life, he was alone in the world. He had for six years devoted himself almost entirely to his studies, as a result of which, understandably, he had found himself without time for a social life and the company of young women. Therefore he thought it the better part of trial and error--of embarrassing fumbling--to call in an experienced person to advise him on these matters. He remarked in passing that the function of the marriage broker was ancient and honorable, highly approved in the Jewish community, because it made practical the necessary without hindering joy. Moreover, his own parents had been brought together by a matchmaker. They had made, if not a financially profitable marriage--since neither had possessed any worldly goods to speak of--at least a successful one in the sense of their everlasting devotion to each other. Salzman listened in embarrassed surprise, sensing a sort of apology. Later, however, he experienced a glow of pride in his work, an emotion that had left him years ago, and he heartily approved of Finkle.

The two went to their business. Leo had led Salzman to the only clear place in the room, a table near a window that overlooked the lamp-lit city. He seated himself at the matchmaker's side but facing him, attempting by an act of will to suppress the unpleasant tickle in his throat. Salzman
eagerly unstrapped his portfolio and removed a loose rubber band from a thin packet of much-handled cards. As he flipped through them, a gesture and sound that physically hurt Leo, the student pretended not to see and gazed steadfastly out the window. Although it was still February, winter was on its last legs, signs of which he had for the first time in years begun to notice. He now observed the round white moon, moving high in the sky through a cloud menagerie, and watched with half-open mouth as it penetrated a huge hen, and dropped out of her like an egg laying itself. Salzman, though pretending through eye-glasses he had just slipped on, to be engaged in scanning the writing on the cards, stole occasional glances at the young man's distinguished face, noting with pleasure the long, severe scholar's nose, brown eyes heavy with learning, sensitive yet ascetic lips, and a certain, almost hollow quality of the dark cheeks.

He gazed around at shelves upon shelves of books and let out a soft, contented sigh. When Leo's eyes fell upon the cards, he counted six spread out in Salzman's hand. "So few?" he asked in disappointment.

"You wouldn't believe me how much cards I got in my office," Salzman replied. "The drawers are already filled to the top, but is every girl good for a new rabbi?"

Leo blushed at this, regretting all he had revealed of himself in a curriculum vitae he had sent to Salzman. He had thought it best to acquaint him with his strict standards and specifications, but in having done so, felt he had told the marriage broker more than was absolutely necessary. He hesitantly inquired, "Do you keep photographs of your clients on file?"

"First comes family, amount of dowry, also what kind of promises," Salzman replied, unbuttoning his tight coat and settling himself in the chair. "After comes pictures, rabbi."

"Call me Mr. Finkle. I'm not yet a rabbi."

Salzman said he would, but instead called him doctor, which he changed to rabbi when Leo was not listening too attentively. Salzman adjusted his horn-rimmed spectacles, gently cleared his throat and read in an eager voice the contents of the top card:

"Sophie P. Twenty-four years. Widow one year. No children. Educated high school and two years college. Father promises eight thousand dollars. Has wonderful wholesale business. Also real estate. On the mother's side comes teachers, also one actor. Well known on Second Avenue."

Leo gazed up in surprise. "Did you say a widow?"

"A widow don't mean spoiled, rabbi. She lived with her husband maybe four months. He was a sick boy she made a mistake to marry him."

"Marrying a widow has never entered my mind."

"This is because you have no experience. A widow, especially if she is young and healthy like this girl, is a wonderful person to marry. She will be thankful to you the rest of her life. Believe me, if I was looking now for a bride, I would marry a widow."

Leo reflected, then shook his head.

Salzman hunched his shoulders in an almost imperceptible gesture of disappointment. He placed the card down on the wooden table and began to read another:


"I knew her personally," said Salzman. "I wish you could see this girl. She is a doll. Also very
intelligent. All day you could talk to her about books and the theater and what not. She also knows current events."

"I don't believe you mentioned her age?"

"Her age?" Salzman said, raising his brows. "Her age is thirty-two years." "Leo said after a while, "I'm afraid that seems a little too old."

Salzman let out a laugh. "So how old are you, rabbi?" "Twenty-seven."

"So what is the difference, tell me, between twenty-seven and thirty-two? My own wife is seven years older than me. So what did I suffer?--Nothing. If Rothschild's daughter wants to marry you, would you say on account her age, no?"

"Yes," Leo said dryly.

Salzman shook off the no in the eyes. "Five years don't mean a thing. I give you my word that when you will live with her for one week you will forget her age. What does it mean five years--that she lived more and knows more than somebody who is younger? On this girl, God bless her, years are not wasted. Each one that it comes makes better the bargain."

"What subject does she teach in high school?"

"Languages. If you heard the way she speaks French, you will think it is music. I am in the business twenty-five years, and I recommend her with my whole heart. Believe me, I know what I'm talking, rabbi."

"What's on the next card?" Leo said abruptly. Salzman reluctantly turned up the third card: "Ruth K. Nineteen years. Honor student. Father offers thirteen thousand cash to the right bridegroom. He is a medical doctor. Stomach specialist with marvelous practice. Brother in law owns garment business. Particular people."

Salzman looked as if he had read his trump card.

"Did you say nineteen?" Leo asked with interest.

"On the dot."

"Is she attractive?" He blushed. "Pretty?"

Salzman kissed his finger tips. "A little doll. On this I give you my word. Let me call the father tonight and you will see what means pretty."

But Leo was troubled. "You're sure she's that young?"

"This I am positive. The father will show you the birth certificate."

"Are you positive there isn't something wrong with her?" Leo insisted.

"Who says there is wrong?"

"I don't understand why an American girl her age should go to a marriage broker." A smile spread over Salzman's face.

"So for the same reason you went, she comes."

Leo flushed. "I am passed for time."

Salzman, realizing he had been tactless, quickly explained. "The father came, not her. He wants she should have the best, so he looks around himself. When we will locate the right boy he will introduce him and encourage. This makes a better marriage than if a young girl without experience takes for herself. I don't have to tell you this."

"But don't you think this young girl believes in love?" Leo spoke uneasily.

Salzman was about was about to guffaw but caught himself and said soberly, "Love comes with the right person, not before."

Leo parted dry lips but did not speak. Noticing that Salzman had snatched a glance at the next card, he cleverly asked, "How is her health?"
"Perfect," Salzman said, breathing with difficulty. "Of course, she is a little lame on her right foot from an auto accident that it happened to her when she was twelve years, but nobody notices on account she is so brilliant and also beautiful."

Leo got up heavily and went to the window. He felt curiously bitter and upbraided himself for having called in the marriage broker. Finally, he shook his head.

"Why not?" Salzman persisted, the pitch of his voice rising.

"Because I detest stomach specialists."

"So what do you care what is his business? After you marry her do you need him? Who says he must come every Friday night in your house?"

Ashamed of the way the talk was going, Leo dismissed Salzman, who went home with heavy, melancholy eyes.

Though he had felt only relief at the marriage broker's departure, Leo was in low spirits the next day. He explained it as rising from Salzman's failure to produce a suitable bride for him. He did not care for his type of clientele. But when Leo found himself hesitating whether to seek out another matchmaker, one more polished than Pinye, he wondered if it could be--protestations to the contrary, and although he honored his father and mother--that he did not, in essence, care for the matchmaking institution? This thought he quickly put out of mind yet found himself still upset. All day he ran around the woods--missed an important appointment, forgot to give out his laundry, walked out of a Broadway cafeteria without paying and had to run back with the ticket in his hand; had even not recognized his landlady in the street when she passed with a friend and courteously called out, "A good evening to you, Doctor Finkle." By nightfall, however, he had regained sufficient calm to sink his nose into a book and there found peace from his thoughts.

Almost at once there came a knock on the door. Before Leo could say enter, Salzman, commercial cupid, was standing in the room. His face was gray and meager, his expression hungry, and he looked as if he would expire on his feet. Yet the marriage broker managed, by some trick of the muscles to display a broad smile.

"So good evening. I am invited?"

Leo nodded, disturbed to see him again, yet unwilling to ask the man to leave.

Beaming still, Salzman laid his portfolio on the table. "Rabbi, I got for you tonight good news."

"I've asked you not to call me rabbi. I'm still a student."

"Your worries are finished. I have for you a first-class bride."

"Leave me in peace concerning this subject." Leo pretended lack of interest.

"The world will dance at your wedding."

"Please, Mr. Salzman, no more."

"But first must come back my strength," Salzman said weakly. He fumbled with the portfolio straps and took out of the leather case an oily paper bag, from which he extracted a hard, seeded roll and a small, smoked white fish. With a quick emotion of his hand he stripped the fish out of its skin and began ravenously to chew. "All day in a rush," he muttered.

Leo watched him eat.

"A sliced tomato you have maybe?" Salzman hesitantly inquired. "No."

The marriage broker shut his eyes and ate. When he had finished he carefully cleaned up the crumbs and rolled up the remains of the fish, in the paper bag. His spectacled eyes roamed the room until he discovered, amid some piles of books, a one-burner gas stove. Lifting his hat he humbly asked, "A glass of tea you got, rabbi?"

Conscience-stricken, Leo rose and brewed the tea. He served it with a chunk of lemon and two cubes of lump sugar, delighting Salzman.
After he had drunk his tea, Salzman's strength and good spirits were restored.
"So tell me rabbi," he said amiably, "you considered some more the three clients I mentioned yesterday?"
"There was no need to consider."
"Why not?"
"None of them suits me."
"What then suits you?"
Leo let it pass because he could give only a confused answer. Without waiting for a reply, Salzman asked, "You remember this girl I talked to you--the high school teacher?"
"Age thirty-two?"
But surprisingly, Salzman's face lit in a smile. "Age twenty-nine." Leo shot him a look.
"Reduced from thirty-two?"
"A mistake," Salzman avowed. "I talked today with the dentist. He took me to his safety deposit box and showed me the birth certificate. She was twenty-nine years last August. They made her a party in the mountains where she went for her vacation. When her father spoke to me the first time I forgot to write the age and I told you thirty-two, but now I remember this was a different client, a widow."
"The same one you told me about? I thought she was twenty-four?"
"A different. Am I responsible that the world is filled with widows?"
"No, but I'm not interested in them, nor for that matter, in school teachers."
Salzman pulled his clasped hand to his breast. Looking at the ceiling he devoutly exclaimed, "Yiddishe kinder, what can I say to somebody that he is not interested in high school teachers? So what then you are interested?"
Leo flushed but controlled himself.
"In what else will you be interested," Salzman went on, "if you not interested in this fine girl that she speaks four languages and has personally in the bank ten thousand dollars? Also her father guarantees further twelve thousand. Also she has a new car, wonderful clothes, talks on all subjects, and she will give you a first-class home and children. How near do we come in our life to paradise?"
If she's so wonderful, why wasn't she married ten years ago?"
"Why?" said Salzman with a heavy laugh. "--Why? Because she is partikiler. This is why. She wants the best."
Leo was silent, amused at how he had entangled himself. But Salzman had arouse his interest in Lily H., and he began seriously to consider calling on her. When the marriage broker observed how intently Leo's mind was at work on the facts he had supplied, he felt certain they would soon come to an agreement.
Late Saturday afternoon, conscious of Salzman, Leo Finkle walked with Lily Hirschorn along Riverside Drive. He walked briskly and erectly, wearing with distinction the black fedora he had that morning taken with trepidation out of the dusty hat box on his closet shelf, and the heavy black Saturday coat he had throughly whisked clean. Leo also owned a walking stick, a present from a distant relative, but quickly put temptation aside and did not use it. Lily, petite and not unpretty, had on something signifying the approach of spring. She was au courant, animatedly, with all sorts of subjects, and he weighed her words and found her surprisingly sound--score another for Salzman, whom he uneasily sensed to be somewhere around, hiding perhaps high in a tree along the street, flashing the lady signals with a pocket mirror; or perhaps a cloven-hoofed
Pan, piping nuptial ditties as he danced his invisible way before them, strewing wild buds on the 
walk and purple grapes in their path, symbolizing fruit of a union, though there was of course 
still none.
Lily startled Leo by remarking, "I was thinking of Mr. Salzman, a curious figure, wouldn't you 
say?"
Not certain what to answer, he nodded.
She bravely went on, blushing, "I for one am grateful for his introducing us. Aren't you?"
He courteously replied, "I am."
"I mean," she said with a little laugh--and it was all in good taste, to at least gave the effect of 
being not in bad--"do you mind that we came together so?"
He was not displeased with her honesty, recognizing that she meant to set the relationship aright, 
and understanding that it took a certain amount of experience in life, and courage, to want to do 
it quite that way. One had to have some sort of past to make that kind of beginning.
He said that he did not mind. Salzman's function was traditional and honorable--valuable for 
what it might achieve, which, he pointed out, was frequently nothing.
Lily agreed with a sigh. They walked on for a while and she said after a long silence, again with 
a nervous laugh, "Would you mind if I asked you something a little bit personal? Frankly, I find 
the subject fascinating." Although Leo shrugged, she went on half embarrassedly, "How was it 
that you came to your calling? I mean was it a sudden passionate inspiration?"
Leo, after a time, slowly replied, "I was always interested in the Law."
"You saw revealed in it the presence of the Highest?"
He nodded and changed the subject. "I understand that you spent a little time in Paris, Miss 
Hirschorn?"
"Oh, did Mr. Salzman tell you, Rabbi Finkle?" Leo winced but she went on, "It was ages ago and 
almost forgotten. I remember I had to return for my sister's wedding."
And Lily would not be put off. "When," she asked in a trembly voice, "did you become 
enamored of God?"
He stared at her. Then it came to him that she was talking not about Leo Finkle, but of a total 
stranger, some mystical figure, perhaps even passionate prophet that Salzman had dreamed up 
for her--no relation to the living or dead. Leo trembled with rage and weakness. The trickster had 
obviously sold her a bill of goods, just as he had him, who'd expected to become acquainted with 
a young lady of twenty-nine, only to behold, the moment he laid eyes upon her strained and 
anxious face, a woman past thirty-five and aging rapidly. Only his self control had kept him this 
long in her presence.
"I am not," he said gravely, "a talented religious person." and in seeking words to go on, found 
himself possessed by shame and fear. "I think," he said in a strained manner, "that I came to God 
not because I love Him, but because I did not."
This confession he spoke harshly because its unexpectedness shook him.
Lily wilted. Leo saw a profusion of loaves of bread go flying like ducks high over his head, not 
unlike the winged loaves by which he had counted himself to sleep last night. Mercifully, then, it 
snowed, which he would not put past Salzman's machinations.
He was infuriated with the marriage broker and swore he would throw him out of the room the 
minute he reappeared. But Salzman did not come that night, and when Leo's anger had subsided, 
an unaccountable despair grew in its place. At first he thought this was caused by his 
disappointment in Lily, but before long it became evident that he had involved himself with 
Salzman without a true knowledge of his own intent. He gradually realized--with an emptiness
that seized him with six hands—that he had called in the broker to find him a bride because he was incapable of doing it himself. This terrifying insight he had derived as a result of his meeting and conversation with Lily Hirschorn. Her probing questions had somehow irritated him into revealing—to himself more than to her—the true nature of his relationship to God, and from that it had come upon him, with shocking force, that apart from his parents, he had never loved anyone. Or perhaps it went the other way, that he did not love God so well as he might, because he had not loved man. It seemed to Leo that his whole life stood starkly revealed and he saw himself for the first time as he truly was—unloved and loveless. This bitter but somehow not fully unexpected revelation brought him to a point to panic, controlled only by extraordinary effort. He covered his face with his hands and cried.

The week that followed was the worst of his life. He did not eat and lost weight. His beard darkened and grew ragged. He stopped attending seminars and almost never opened a book. He seriously considered leaving the Yeshiva, although he was deeply troubled at the thought of the loss of all his years of study—saw them like pages torn from a book, strewn over the city—and at the devastating effect of this decision upon his parents. But he had lived without knowledge of himself, and never in the Five Books and all the Commentaries—mea culpa—had the truth been revealed to him. He did not know where to turn, and in all this desolating loneliness there was no to whom, although he often thought of Lily but not once could bring himself to go downstairs and make the call. He became touchy and irritable, especially with his landlady, who asked him all manner of personal questions; on the other hand sensing his own disagreeableness, he waylaid her on the stairs and apologized abjectly, until mortified, she ran from him. Out of this, however, he drew the consolation that he was a Jew and that a Jew suffered. But generally, as the long and terrible week drew to a close, he regained his composure and some idea of purpose in life to go on as planned. Although he was imperfect, the ideal was not. As for his quest of a bride, the thought of continuing afflicted him with anxiety and heartburn, yet perhaps with this new knowledge of himself he would be more successful than in the past. Perhaps love would now come to him and a bride to that love.

And for this sanctified seeking who needed a Salzman?
The marriage broker, a skeleton with haunted eyes, returned that very night. He looked, withal, the picture of frustrated expectancy—as if he had steadfastly waited the week at Miss Lily Hirschorn's side for a telephone call that never came.
Casually coughing, Salzman came immediately to the point: "So how did you like her?"
Leo's anger rose and he could not refrain from chiding the matchmaker: "Why did you lie to me, Salzman?"
Salzman's pale face went dead white, the world had snowed on him. "Did you not state that she was twenty-nine?" Leo insisted.
"I give you my word—"
"She was thirty-five, if a day. At least thirty-five."
"Of this don't be too sure. Her father told me—"
"Never mind. The worst of it was that you lied to her."
"How did I lie to her, tell me?"
"You told her things about me that weren't true. You made out to be more, consequently less than I am. She had in mind a totally different person, a sort of semi-mystical Wonder Rabbi."
"All I said, you was a religious man."
"I can imagine."
Salzman sighed. "This is my weakness that I have," he confessed. "My wife says to me I shouldn't be a salesman, but when I have two fine people that they would be wonderful to be married, I am so happy that I talk too much." He smiled wanly. "This is why Salzman is a poor man."
Leo's anger left him. "Well, Salzman, I'm afraid that's all." The marriage broker fastened hungry eyes on him.
"You don't want any more a bride?"
"I do," said Leo, "but I have decided to seek her in a different way. I am no longer interested in an arranged marriage. To be frank, I now admit the necessity of premarital love. That is, I want to be in love with the one I marry."
"Love?" said Salzman, astounded. After a moment he remarked "For us, our love is our life, not for the ladies. In the ghetto they--"
"I know, I know," said Leo. "I've thought of it often. Love, I have said to myself, should be a by-product of living and worship rather than its own end. Yet for myself I find it necessary to establish the level of my need and fulfill it."
Salzman shrugged but answered, "Listen, rabbi, if you want love, this I can find for you also. I have such beautiful clients that you will love them the minute your eyes will see them."
Leo smiled unhappily. "I'm afraid you don't understand."
But Salzman hastily unstrapped his portfolio and withdrew a manila packet from it. "Pictures," he said, quickly laying the envelope on the table.
Leo called after him to take the pictures away, but as if on the wings of the wind, Salzman had disappeared.
March came. Leo had returned to his regular routine. Although he felt not quite himself yet--lacked energy--he was making plans for a more active social life. Of course it would cost something, but he was an expert in cutting corners; and when there were no corners left he would make circles rounder. All the while Salzman's pictures had lain on the table, gathering dust. Occasionally as Leo sat studying, or enjoying a cup of tea, his eyes fell on the manila envelope, but he never opened it.
The days went by and no social life to speak of developed with a member of the opposite sex--it was difficult, given the circumstances of his situation. One morning Leo toiled up the stairs to his room and stared out the window at the city. Although the day was bright his view of it was dark. For some time he watched the people in the street below hurrying along and then turned with a heavy heart to his little room. On the table was the packet. With a sudden relentless gesture he tore it open. For a half-hour he stood by the table in a state of excitement, examining the photographs of the ladies Salzman had included. Finally, with a deep sigh he put them down.
There were six, of varying degree of attractiveness, but look at them along enough and they all became Lily Hirschorn: all past their prime, all starved behind bright smiles, not a true personality in the lot. Life, despite their frantic yoohooings, had passed them by; they were pictures in a brief case that stank of fish. After a while, however, as Leo attempted to return the photographs into the envelope, he found in it another, a snapshot of the type taken by a machine for a quarter. He gazed at it a moment and let out a cry.
Her face deeply moved him. Why, he could at first not say. It gave him the impression of youth--spring flowers, yet age--a sense of having been used to the bone, wasted; this came from the eyes, which were hauntingly familiar, yet absolutely strange. He had a vivid impression that he had met her before, but try as he might he could not place her although he could almost recall her name, as he had read it in her own handwriting. No, this couldn't be; he would have remembered
her. It was not, he affirmed, that she had an extraordinary beauty—no, though her face was attractive enough; it was that something about her moved him. Feature for feature, even some of the ladies of the photographs could do better; but she lapsed forth to this heart—had lived, or wanted to—more than just wanted, perhaps regretted how she had lived—had somehow deeply suffered: it could be seen in the depths of those reluctant eyes, and from the way the light enclosed and shone from her, and within her, opening realms of possibility: this was her own. Her he desired. His head ached and eyes narrowed with the intensity of his gazing, then as if an obscure fog had blown up in the mind, he experienced fear of her and was aware that he had received an impression, somehow, of evil. He shuddered, saying softly, it is thus with us all. Leo brewed some tea in a small pot and sat sipping it without sugar, to calm himself. But before he had finished drinking, again with excitement he examined the face and found it good: good for Leo Finkle. Only such a one could understand him and help him seek whatever he was seeking. She might, perhaps, love him. How she had happened to be among the discards in Salzman's barrel he could never guess, but he knew he must urgently go find her.

Leo rushed downstairs, grabbed up the Bronx telephone book, and searched for Salzman's home address. He was not listed, nor was his office. Neither was he in the Manhattan book. But Leo remembered having written down the address on a slip of paper after he had read Salzman's advertisement in the "personals" column of the Forward. He ran up to his room and tore through his papers, without luck. It was exasperating. Just when he needed the matchmaker he was nowhere to be found. Fortunately Leo remembered to look in his wallet. There on a card he found his name written and a Bronx address. No phone number was listed, the reason—Leo now recalled—

he had originally communicated with Salzman by letter. He got on his coat, put a hat on over his skull cap and hurried to the subway station. All the way to the far end of the Bronx he sat on the edge of his seat. He was more than once tempted to take out the picture and see if the girl's face was as he remembered it, but he refrained, allowing the snapshot to remain in his inside coat pocket, content to have her so close. When the train pulled into the station he was waiting at the door and bolted out. He quickly located the street Salzman had advertised. The building he sought was less than a block from the subway, but it was not an office building, nor even a loft, nor a store in which one could rent office space. It was a very old tenement house. Leo found Salzman's name in pencil on a soiled tag under the bell and climbed three dark flights to his apartment. When he knocked, the door was opened by a thin, asthmatic, gray-haired woman in felt slippers.
"Yes?" she said, expecting nothing. She listened without listening. He could have sworn he had seen her, too, before but knew it was an illusion.
"Salzman--does he live here? Pinye Salzman," he said, "the matchmaker?" She stared at him a long minute. "Of course."
He felt embarrassed. "Is he in?"
"No." Her mouth, thought left open, offered nothing more.
"The matter is urgent. Can you tell me where his office is?" "In the air." She pointed upward.
"You mean he has no office?" Leo asked.
"In his socks."
He peered into the apartment. It was sunless and dingy, one large room divided by a half-open curtain, beyond which he could see a sagging metal bed. The near side of the room was crowded with rickety chairs, old bureaus, a three-legged table, racks of cooking utensils, and all the
apparatus of a kitchen. But there was no sign of Salzman or his magic barrel, probably also a figment of the imagination. An odor of frying fish made weak to the knees. "Where is he?" he insisted. "I've got to see your husband."

At length she answered, "So who knows where he is? Every time he thinks a new thought he runs to a different place. Go home, he will find you." "Tell him Leo Finkle."

She gave no sign she had heard. He walked downstairs, depressed. But Salzman, breathless, stood waiting at his door. Leo was astounded and overjoyed. "How did you get here before me?"

"I rushed."

"Come inside."

They entered. Leo fixed tea, and a sardine sandwich for Salzman. As they were drinking he reached behind him for the packet of pictures and handed them to the marriage broker. Salzman put down his glass and said expectantly, "You found somebody you like?" "Not among these."

The marriage broker turned away. "Here is the one I want." Leo held forth the snapshot. Salzman slipped on his glasses and took the picture into his trembling hand. He turned ghastly and let out a groan.

"What's the matter?" cried Leo.

"Excuse me. Was an accident this picture. She isn't for you?"

Salzman frantically shoved the manila packet into his portfolio. He thrust the snapshot into his pocket and fled down the stairs. Leo, after momentary paralysis, gave chase and cornered the marriage broker in the vestibule. The landlady made hysterical outcries but neither of them listened.

"Give me back the picture, Salzman." "No." The pain in his eyes was terrible. "Tell me who she is then."

"This I can't tell you. Excuse me."

He made to depart, but Leo, forgetting himself, seized the matchmaker by his tight coat and shook him frenziedly.

"Please," sighed Salzman. "Please."

Leo ashamedly let him go. "Tell me who she is," he begged. "It's very important to me to know."

"She is not for you. She is a wild one--wild, without shame. This is not a bride for a rabbi."

"What do you mean wild?"

"Like an animal. Like a dog. For her to be poor was a sin. This is why to me she is dead now."

"In God's name, what do you mean?"

"Her I can't introduce to you," Salzman cried.

"Why are you so excited?"

"Why, he asks," Salzman said, bursting into tear. "This is my baby, my Stella, she should burn in hell."

Leo hurried up to bed and hid under the covers. Under the covers he thought his life through. Although he soon fell asleep he could not sleep her out of his mind. He woke, beating his breast. Though he prayed to be rid of her, his prayers went unanswered. Through days of torment he endlessly struggled not to love her; fearing success, he escaped it. He then concluded to convert her to goodness, himself to God. The idea alternately nauseated and exalted him.
He perhaps did not know that he had come to a final decision until he encountered Salzman in a Broadway cafeteria. He was sitting alone at a rear table, sucking the bony remains of a fish. The marriage broker appeared haggard, and transparent to the point of vanishing. Salzman looked up at first without recognizing him. Leo had grown a pointed beard and his eyes were weighted with wisdom.

"Salzman," he said, "love has at last come to my heart."

"Who can love from a picture?" mocked the marriage broker.

"It is not impossible."

"If you can love her, then you can love anybody. Let me show you some new clients that they just sent me their photographs. One is a little doll."

"Just her I want," Leo murmured.

"Don't be a fool, doctor. Don't bother with her."

"Put me in touch with her, Salzman," Leo said humbly. "Perhaps I can be of service." Salzman had stopped eating and Leo understood with emotion that it was now arranged. Leaving the cafeteria, he was, however, afflicted by a tormenting suspicion that Salzman had planned it all to happen this way.

Leo was informed by better that she would meet him on a certain corner, and she was there one spring night, waiting under a street lamp. He appeared carrying a small bouquet of violets and rosebuds. Stella stood by the lamp post, smoking. She wore white with red shoes, which fitted his expectations, although in a troubled moment he had imagined the dress red, and only the shoes white. She waited uneasily and shyly. From afar he saw that her eyes--clearly her father's--were filled with desperate innocence. He pictured, in her, his own redemption. Violins and lit candles revolved in the sky. Leo ran forward with flowers out-thrust.

Around the corner, Salzman, leaning against a wall, chanted prayers for the dead.
somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
E. E. Cummings, 1894 – 1962

somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence:
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

your slightest look easily will unclose me
though i have closed myself as fingers,
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens
(touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and
my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,
as when the heart of this flower imagines
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals
the power of your intense fragility: whose texture
compels me with the colour of its countries,
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens; only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands
Migrant Mother by Dorthea Lange
Recently my friend Angela called me in tears. Angela, 31, and her husband have been married for three years, and they are very well-suited: They can spend hours talking and laughing, are attracted to each other, get along with each other's friends and families, and agree on faith, politics, and financial matters. But recently, she told me, the "glow" had worn off. They were busy with their careers, and in moments of exhaustion each said some hurtful things to the other.

"He was supposed to be my best friend. He was the one who said he could never hurt me, but he has. I thought he was my soul mate, my everything, but now I'm worried I made a mistake," she said, sobbing.

"That's why you have friends and family, too," I said. "He should be your husband, not your everything."

Angela's fears are increasingly common: When young Catholics marry today, some 88 percent say they want their spouse to be their soul mate first and foremost, according to a recent survey by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University. The quest for a soul-mate marriage is a modern trend: Young Catholics 50 years ago had a very different perspective. Indeed, the CARA survey found that older Catholics are less likely to say marrying a soul mate is a top priority.

It's very romantic, really, and the stuff love songs are made of: You live as best you can alone, and then one day you meet your other half, the person who completes you in every way. This person always knows how to make you laugh, how to make you feel cherished, and will never hurt you.

But looking for a soul mate—and believing your significant other or spouse is your soul mate—can be a recipe for disaster in modern relationships. Some 20 percent of American couples file for divorce before their fifth anniversary. Could we be setting ourselves up for disappointment after the first blush of passion fades?
Yes, finding a true friend-someone you click with, someone with whom you can share your emotions and communicate well-is central to making a good match. But the idea that there is one person who will fulfill all our needs, one soul mate out there for each of us, is a childish idea that should be put aside with the tooth fairy.

When Americans talk about soul mates, they mean someone whom they love and who loves them, who will make them as happy as they can possibly be for all time. Everything will be easy with your soul mate. With this person by your side, there's nothing you can't do. The inverse of this, of course, is that if you make the wrong choice, you will be less happy, things will be less easy, and you will accomplish less than you could have had you found your real soul mate.

On average Americans are getting married later in life. This means we meet a lot of different people, and most of us date a fair bit before we marry. There are all sorts of benefits to later marriage-we're older and wiser-but there's one troubling theme I hear from so many men and women: The longer we wait for marriage, the more convinced we are that we deserve a soul mate, a perfect match in every way.

The quest for a soul mate makes it hard to find a spouse and puts unnecessary pressure on your relationship once married. Here's why:

First, in this search for our supposed soul mate, we don't know what to look for. Are you looking for someone who has similar taste in music? Who makes you go weak-kneed? Are you looking for someone just like you? Are we sure we are prioritizing the right things on our list of characteristics for Mr. or Ms. Perfect?

While the vast majority of singles say they are looking for a soul mate, nearly half (43 percent) of unmarried Catholics say it is "not at all" important that their spouse be Catholic, according to the recent CARA report. Perhaps our priorities are out of whack. If we are confused about what a "perfect match" should look like, we're likely to overlook some perfectly wonderful people for very silly reasons and are inclined to prioritize more superficial aspects of someone's personality or interests more than issues of shared faith. {C}
Second, we've put far too much emphasis on one person to provide all our happiness and fulfillment. It's wonderful to share your life with someone, and the closeness a couple can foster through marriage is a powerful and precious bond. But few successful relationships exist in a vacuum: Our individual happiness and fulfillment come from all sorts of interpersonal interactions with friends, family, coworkers, and community.

We set the bar too high when we say that our spouses must be our soul mates, meeting our every emotional need. It's perfectly healthy to shop with girlfriends, watch sports with the guys, and complain about your parents to your best friend from high school-instead of your spouse.

In fact, a strong social network is crucial to keeping your intimate relationship in working order past that first blush of love. If you have isolated yourself with your soul mate to the exclusion of your friends and family, to whom will you turn when you have a fight with your spouse? Disagreements and hard times are normal-and often necessary-within a growing relationship. Since a marriage is made up of two fallible human beings, we all need some help along the way.

Finally, mature love is more valuable-and more enduring. The search for a soul mate is a symptom of the consumer culture, says William J. Doherty, a professor of family social science at the University of Minnesota: We are looking to acquire a person who will complete us in the same way we acquire an iPhone to make us feel cool. "Of course, once inevitable tension and conflict arises, I might conclude that in fact this was not my soul mate-and I can justify leaving and setting out on a new quest," he says.

Two people don't need to be soul mates to have a fulfilling relationship. "When the soul-mate glow wears off, the real marriage can start-based on mature love that is sustained by daily practices of kindness and connection and tested by conflict and struggle," says Doherty, who wrote Take Back Your Wedding (BookSurge) with daughter Elizabeth Thomas.

For Catholics marriage is a sacrament and a vocation. Married life (ideally) is a visible image of the love that God has for us and the bond that God has with us. While words like sacrament and vocation are increasingly unpopular ways to think about marriage among young people, these traditional teachings may
be the better bet to make your relationship last. The idea that your spouse is your soul mate is a very individual-focused way of looking at marriage. Thinking of your marriage as a vocation within the Catholic community may offer the community support that a long-term relationship needs.

"We've been swamped by messages of romantic individualism," says Mark Regnerus, associate professor of sociology at the University of Texas at Austin, who studies the religious and sexual attitudes of young adults. "Those ideas can lead people to marry but can lead you out of the marriage just as fast when things get tough."

So if we let go of the soul mate notion, are we simply settling for second-best and making do in life and in love? Doherty advises singles not to settle but to be more thoughtful about what characteristics make a great mate. "Look for someone you admire, someone whose values you respect, someone who treats you lovingly, someone who appreciates family life and lasting commitment, someone who shares similar life goals, someone who communicates well especially in conflict, and of course someone you feel an attraction and spark with."

He encourages couples to be more realistic about marriage through premarital counseling. "Marriage is not a magical state," says Doherty. "It's a relationship that requires commitment, intentionality, and skills in interpersonal relations to reap those special rewards of closeness and love."

Letting go of the idea of soul mates allows us to build the skills necessary to create that powerful bond of love in a long-lasting, stable relationship.

Or, as my father-in-law frequently quips, "I can be right, or I can be married."

*This article appeared in the July 2008 issue of U.S. Catholic (Vol. 73, No. 7, pages 12-14).*
In the graphic organizer below, include some of the more important observations you made about the literature in the collection. It is separated by genre.

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Look over the information present and the theme statement to which these works connect. Then, write a paragraph (on the back) showing how the different works all connect. In other words, answer these questions: Why does each item connect to each other? and How does this show that the theme statement is accurate?
Theme Statement: When we listen to the creative spirit within us, we can be led to experience life in new and beautiful ways we didn’t imagine were possible before.

1. Poems: “Tell all the Truth but tell it slant” by Emily Dickenson, “In a Station of a Metro” by Ezra Pound, and “The Great Figure” by William Carlos Williams
2. Picture: I saw a Figure 5 in Gold by Charles Demuth
3. Informational Text: “Superman and Me” by Sherman Alexie

Tell all the truth but tell it slant — (1263)

BY EMILY DICKINSON

Tell all the truth but tell it slant —
Success in Circuit lies
Too bright for our infirm Delight
The Truth's superb surprise
As Lightning to the Children eased
With explanation kind
The Truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind —

In a Station of the Metro

BY EZRA POUND

The apparition of these faces in the crowd:
Petals on a wet, black bough.
The Great Figure
BY William Carlos Williams

Among the rain
and lights
I saw the figure 5
in gold
on a red
firetruck
moving
tense
unheeded
to gong clangs
siren howls
and wheels rumbling
through the dark city.
I saw a Figure 5 in Gold by Charles Demuth
I learned to read with a Superman comic book. Simple enough, I suppose. I cannot recall which particular Superman comic book I read, nor can I remember which villain he fought in that issue. I cannot remember the plot, nor the means by which I obtained the comic book. What I can remember is this: I was 3 years old, a Spokane Indian boy living with his family on the Spokane Indian Reservation in eastern Washington state. We were poor by most standards, but one of my parents usually managed to find some minimum-wage job or another, which made us middle-class by reservation standards. I had a brother and three sisters. We lived on a combination of irregular paychecks, hope, fear and government surplus food.

My father, who is one of the few Indians who went to Catholic school on purpose, was an avid reader of westerns, spy thrillers, murder mysteries, gangster epics, basketball player biographies and anything else he could find. He bought his books by the pound at Dutch's Pawn Shop, Goodwill, Salvation Army and Value Village. When he had extra money, he bought new novels at supermarkets, convenience stores and hospital gift shops. Our house was filled with books. They were stacked in crazy piles in the bathroom, bedrooms and living room. In a fit of unemployment-inspired creative energy, my father built a set of bookshelves and soon filled them with a random assortment of books about the Kennedy assassination, Watergate, the Vietnam War and the entire 23-book series of the Apache westerns. My father loved books, and since I loved my father with an aching devotion, I decided to love books as well.

I can remember picking up my father's books before I could read. The words themselves were mostly foreign, but I still remember the exact moment when I first understood, with a sudden clarity, the purpose of a paragraph. I didn't have the vocabulary to say "paragraph," but I realized that a paragraph was a fence that held words. The words inside a paragraph worked together for a common purpose. They had some specific reason for being inside the same fence. This knowledge delighted me. I began to think of everything in terms of paragraphs. Our reservation was a small paragraph within the United States. My family's house was a logic, I can see my changed family as an essay of seven paragraphs: mother, father, older brother, the deceased sister, my younger twin sisters and our adopted little brother.

At the same time I was seeing the world in paragraphs, I also picked up that Superman comic book. Each panel, complete with picture, dialogue and narrative was a three-dimensional paragraph. In one panel, Superman breaks through a door. His suit is red, blue and yellow. The brown door shatters into many pieces. I look at the narrative above the picture. I cannot read the words, but I assume it tells me that "Superman is breaking down the door." Aloud, I pretend to read the words and say, "Superman is breaking down the door." Words, dialogue, also float out of Superman's mouth. Because he is breaking down the door, I assume he says, "I am breaking down the door." Once again, I pretend to read the words and say aloud, "I am breaking down the door." In this way, I learned to read.

This might be an interesting story all by itself. A little Indian boy teaches himself to read at an early age and advances quickly. He reads "Grapes of Wrath" in kindergarten when other children are struggling through "Dick and Jane." If he'd been anything but an Indian boy living on the reservation, he might have been called a prodigy. But he is an Indian boy living on the reservation and is simply an oddity. He grows into a man who often speaks of his childhood in the third-person, as if it will somehow dull the pain and make him sound more modest about his talents.
A smart Indian is a dangerous person, widely feared and ridiculed by Indians and non-Indians alike. I fought with my classmates on a daily basis. They wanted me to stay quiet when the non-Indian teacher asked for answers, for volunteers, for help. We were Indian children who were expected to be stupid. Most lived up to those expectations inside the classroom but subverted them on the outside. They struggled with basic reading in school but could remember how to sing a few dozen powwow songs. They were monosyllabic in front of their non-Indian teachers but could tell complicated stories and jokes at the dinner table. They submissively ducked their heads when confronted by a non-Indian adult but would slug it out with the Indian bully who was 10 years older. As Indian children, we were expected to fail in the non-Indian world. Those who failed were ceremonially accepted by other Indians and appropriately pitied by non-Indians.

I refused to fail. I was smart. I was arrogant. I was lucky. I read books late into the night, until I could barely keep my eyes open. I read books at recess, then during lunch, and in the few minutes left after I had finished my classroom assignments. I read books in the car when my family traveled to powwows or basketball games. In shopping malls, I ran to the bookstores and read bits and pieces of as many books as I could. I read the books my father brought home from the pawnshops and secondhand. I read the books I borrowed from the library. I read the backs of cereal boxes. I read the newspaper. I read the bulletins posted on the walls of the school, the clinic, the tribal offices, the post office. I read junk mail. I read auto-repair manuals. I read magazines. I read anything that had words and paragraphs. I read with equal parts joy and desperation. I loved those books, but I also knew that love had only one purpose. I was trying to save my life.

Despite all the books I read, I am still surprised I became a writer. I was going to be a pediatrician. These days, I write novels, short stories, and poems. I visit schools and teach creative writing to Indian kids. In all my years in the reservation school system, I was never taught how to write poetry, short stories or novels. I was certainly never taught that Indians wrote poetry, short stories and novels. Writing was something beyond Indians. I cannot recall a single time that a guest teacher visited the reservation. There must have been visiting teachers. Who were they? Where are they now? Do they exist? I visit the schools as often as possible. The Indian kids crowd the classroom. Many are writing their own poems, short stories and novels. They have read my books. They have read many other books. They look at me with bright eyes and arrogant wonder. They are trying to save their lives. Then there are the sullen and already defeated Indian kids who sit in the back rows and ignore me with theatrical precision. The pages of their notebooks are empty. They carry neither pencil nor pen. They stare out the window. They refuse and resist. "Books," I say to them. "Books," I say. I throw my weight against their locked doors. The door holds. I am smart. I am arrogant. I am lucky. I am trying to save our lives.
Round Table Discussion Graphic Organizer

Theme Statement

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

In the graphic organizer below, include some of the more important observations you made about the literature in the collection. It is separated by genre.

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Theme Statement: Society is made up of individuals, but sometimes the individual has trouble connecting to this larger group.

1. Short Story: “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner
2. Poems: “The Garden” by Ezra Pound, and “Alone” by Maya Angelou
3. Picture: *Homeless – American Flag* by C.G.P. Grey
4. Informational Text: “The Me Me Me Generation” by Joel Stein

**The Garden**  
By Ezra Pound

En robe de parade. Samain

Like a skein of loose silk blown against a wall  
She walks by the railing of a path in Kensington Gardens,  
And she is dying piece-meal  
    To a sort of emotional anaemia.

And round about there is a rabble  
Of the filthy, sturdy, unkillable infants of the very poor.  
They shall inherit the earth.

In her is the end of breeding.  
Her boredom is exquisite and excessive.  
She would like some one to speak to her,  
And is almost afraid that I  
    Twill commit that indiscretion.
Alone
Maya Angelou, 1928 - 2014

Lying, thinking
Last night
How to find my soul a home
Where water is not thirsty
And bread loaf is not stone
I came up with one thing
And I don’t believe I’m wrong
That nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone.

There are some millionaires
With money they can’t use
Their wives run round like banshees
Their children sing the blues
They’ve got expensive doctors
To cure their hearts of stone.
But nobody
No, nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Now if you listen closely
I’ll tell you what I know
Storm clouds are gathering
The wind is gonna blow
The race of man is suffering
And I can hear the moan,
‘Cause nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone.
I am about to do what old people have done throughout history: call those younger than me lazy, entitled, selfish and shallow. But I have studies! I have statistics! I have quotes from respected academics! Unlike my parents, my grandparents and my great-grandparents, I have proof.

Here’s the cold, hard data: The incidence of narcissistic personality disorder is nearly three times as high for people in their 20s as for the generation that’s now 65 or older, according to the National Institutes of Health; 58% more college students scored higher on a narcissism scale in 2009 than in 1982. Millennials got so many participation trophies growing up that a recent study showed that 40% believe they should be promoted every two years, regardless of performance. They are fame-obsessed: three times as many middle school girls want to grow up to be a personal assistant to a famous person as want to be a Senator, according to a 2007 survey; four times as many would pick the assistant job over CEO of a major corporation. They’re so convinced of their own greatness that the National Study of Youth and Religion found the guiding morality of 60% of millennials in any situation is that they’ll just be able to feel what’s right. Their development is stunted: more people ages 18 to 29 live with their parents than with a spouse, according to the 2012 Clark University Poll of Emerging Adults. And they are lazy. In 1992, the nonprofit Families and Work Institute reported that 80% of people under 23 wanted to one day have a job with greater responsibility; 10 years later, only 60% did.

Millennials consist, depending on whom you ask, of people born from 1980 to 2000. To put it more simply for them, since they grew up not having to do a lot of math in their heads, thanks to computers, the group is made up mostly of teens and 20-somethings. At 80 million strong, they are the biggest age grouping in American history. Each country’s millennials are different, but because of globalization, social media, the exporting of Western culture and the speed of change, millennials worldwide are more similar to one another than to older generations within their nations. Even in China, where family history is more important than any individual, the Internet, urbanization and the one-child policy have created a generation as overconfident and self-involved as the Western one. And these aren’t just rich-kid problems: poor millennials have even higher rates of narcissism, materialism and technology addiction in their ghetto-fabulous lives.
They are the most threatening and exciting generation since the baby boomers brought about social revolution, not because they’re trying to take over the Establishment but because they’re growing up without one. The Industrial Revolution made individuals far more powerful—they could move to a city, start a business, read and form organizations. The information revolution has further empowered individuals by handing them the technology to compete against huge organizations: hackers vs. corporations, bloggers vs. newspapers, terrorists vs. nation-states, YouTube directors vs. studios, app-makers vs. entire industries. Millennials don’t need us. That’s why we’re scared of them.

In the U.S., millennials are the children of baby boomers, who are also known as the Me Generation, who then produced the Me Me Me Generation, whose selfishness technology has only exacerbated. Whereas in the 1950s families displayed a wedding photo, a school photo and maybe a military photo in their homes, the average middle-class American family today walks amid 85 pictures of themselves and their pets. Millennials have come of age in the era of the quantified self, recording their daily steps on FitBit, their whereabouts every hour of every day on PlaceMe and their genetic data on 23 and Me. They have less civic engagement and lower political participation than any previous group. This is a generation that would have made Walt Whitman wonder if maybe they should try singing a song of someone else.

They got this way partly because, in the 1970s, people wanted to improve kids’ chances of success by instilling self-esteem. It turns out that self-esteem is great for getting a job or hooking up at a bar but not so great for keeping a job or a relationship. “It was an honest mistake,” says Roy Baumeister, a psychology professor at Florida State University and the editor of Self-Esteem: The Puzzle of Low Self-Regard. “The early findings showed that, indeed, kids with high self-esteem did better in school and were less likely to be in various kinds of trouble. It’s just that we’ve learned later that self-esteem is a result, not a cause.” The problem is that when people try to boost self-esteem, they accidentally boost narcissism instead. “Just tell your kids you love them. It’s a better message,” says Jean Twenge, a psychology professor at San Diego State University, who wrote Generation Me and The Narcissism Epidemic. “When they’re little it seems cute to tell them they’re special or a princess or a rock star or whatever their T-shirt says. When they’re 14 it’s no longer cute.” All that self-esteem leads them to be disappointed when the world refuses to affirm how great they know they are.

“This generation has the highest likelihood of having unmet expectations with respect to their careers and the lowest levels of satisfaction with their careers at the stage that they’re at,” says Sean Lyons, co-editor of Managing the New Workforce: International Perspectives on the Millennial Generation. “It is sort of a crisis of unmet expectations.”

What millennials are most famous for besides narcissism is its effect: entitlement. If you want to sell seminars to middle managers, make them about how to deal with young employees who e-mail the CEO directly and beg off projects they find boring. English teacher David McCullough Jr.’s address last year to Wellesley High
School’s graduating class, a 12-minute reality check titled “You Are Not Special,” has nearly 2 million hits on YouTube. “Climb the mountain so you can see the world, not so the world can see you,” McCullough told the graduates. He says nearly all the response to the video has been positive, especially from millennials themselves; the video has 57 likes for every dislike.

Though they’re cocky about their place in the world, millennials are also stunted, having prolonged a life stage between teenager and adult that this magazine once called twisters and will now use once again in an attempt to get that term to catch on. The idea of the teenager started in the 1920s; in 1910, only a tiny percentage of kids went to high school, so most people’s social interactions were with adults in their family or in the workplace. Now that cell phones allow kids to socialize at every hour—they send and receive an average of 88 texts a day, according to Pew—they’re living under the constant influence of their friends. “Peer pressure is anti-intellectual. It is anti-historical. It is anti-eloquence,” says Mark Bauerlein, an English professor at Emory, who wrote The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future (Or, Don’t Trust Anyone Under 30). “Never before in history have people been able to grow up and reach age 23 so dominated by peers. To develop intellectually you’ve got to relate to older people, older things: 17-year-olds never grow up if they’re just hanging around other 17-year-olds.” Of all the objections to Obamacare, not a lot of people argued against parents’ need to cover their kids’ health insurance until they’re 26.

Millennials are interacting all day but almost entirely through a screen. You’ve seen them at bars, sitting next to one another and texting. They might look calm, but they’re deeply anxious about missing out on something better. Seventy percent of them check their phones every hour, and many experience phantom pocket-vibration syndrome. “They’re doing a behavior to reduce their anxiety,” says Larry Rosen, a psychology professor at California State University at Dominguez Hills and the author of iDisorder. That constant search for a hit of dopamine (“Someone liked my status update!”) reduces creativity. From 1966, when the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking were first administered, through the mid-1980s, creativity scores in children increased. Then they dropped, falling sharply in 1998. Scores on tests of empathy similarly fell sharply, starting in 2000, likely because of both a lack of face-to-face time and higher degrees of narcissism. Not only do millennials lack the kind of empathy that allows them to feel concerned for others, but they also have trouble even intellectually understanding others’ points of view.

What they do understand is how to turn themselves into brands, with “friend” and “follower” tallies that serve as sales figures. As with most sales, positivity and confidence work best. “People are inflating themselves like balloons on Facebook,” says W. Keith Campbell, a psychology professor at the University of Georgia, who has written three books about generational increases in narcissism (including When You Love a Man Who Loves Himself). When everyone is telling you about their vacations,
parties and promotions, you start to embellish your own life to keep up. If you do this well enough on Instagram, YouTube and Twitter, you can become a microcelebrity.

Millennials grew up watching reality-TV shows, most of which are basically documentaries about narcissists. Now they have trained themselves to be reality-TV-ready. “Most people never define who they are as a personality type until their 50s. So for people to be defining who they are at the age of 14 is almost a huge evolutionary jump,” says casting director Doron Ofir, who auditioned participants for Jersey Shore, Millionaire Matchmaker, A Shot at Love and RuPaul’s Drag Race, among other shows.

“Do you follow me on Twitter?” he asks at the end of the interview. “Oh, you should. I’m fun. I hope that one day they provide an Emmy for casting of reality shows—because, you know, I’d assume I’m a shoo-in. I would like that gold statue. And then I will take a photo of it, and then I will Instagram it.” Ofir is 41, but he has clearly spent a lot of time around millennials.

I have gone just about as far as I can in an article without talking about myself. So first, yes, I’m aware that I started this piece—in which I complain about millennials’ narcissism—with the word I. I know that this magazine, which for decades did not print bylines, started putting authors’ names on the cover regularly in 2004 and that one of the first names was mine. As I mocked reality shows in the previous paragraph, I kept thinking about the fact that I got to the final round for 1995’s Real World: London. I know my number of Twitter followers far better than the tally on my car’s odometer; although Facebook has a strictly enforced limit of 5,000 friends, I somehow have 5,079. It was impossible not to remember, the whole time I was accusing millennials of being lazy, that I was supposed to finish this article nearly a year ago.

I moved home for the first six months after college. When I got hired at Time, my co-workers hated me for cozying up to the editor of the magazine. I talk to one of my parents every other day and depend on my dad for financial advice. It’s highly possible that I’m a particularly lame 41-year-old, but still, none of these traits are new to millennials; they’ve been around at least since the Reformation, when Martin Luther told Christians they didn’t need the church to talk to God, and became more pronounced at the end of the 18th century in the Romantic period, when artists stopped using their work to celebrate God and started using it to express themselves. In 1979, Christopher Lasch wrote in The Culture of Narcissism, "The media give substance to, and thus intensify, narcissistic dreams of fame and glory, encourage common people to identify themselves with the stars and to hate the 'herd,' and make it more and more difficult for them to accept the banality of everyday existence." I checked my e-mail three times during that sentence.

So while the entire first half of this article is absolutely true (I had data!), millennials' self-involvement is more a continuation of a trend than a revolutionary break from previous generations. They’re not a new species; they’ve just mutated to adapt to their environment.
For example, millennials' perceived entitlement isn't a result of overprotection but an adaptation to a world of abundance. "For almost all of human history, almost everyone was a small-scale farmer. And then people were farmers and factory workers. Nobody gets very much fulfillment from either of those things," says Jeffrey Arnett, a psychology professor at Clark University, who invented the phrase emerging adulthood, which people foolishly use instead of the catchy twixters. Twixters put off life choices because they can choose from a huge array of career options, some of which, like jobs in social media, didn't exist 10 years ago. What idiot would try to work her way up at a company when she's going to have an average of seven jobs before age 26? Because of online dating, Facebook circles and the ability to connect with people internationally, they no longer have to marry someone from their high school class or even their home country. Because life expectancy is increasing so rapidly and technology allows women to get pregnant in their 40s, they're more free to postpone big decisions. The median age for an American woman's first marriage went from 20.6 in 1967 to 26.9 in 2011.

And while all that choice might end in disappointment, it's a lottery worth playing. "I had one grandfather fight in the Pacific and one in the Atlantic theater. One became a pilot; one became a doctor. When you grow up during the Great Depression and fight off the Nazis, you want safety and stability," says Tucker Max, 37, who set an example for millennials when instead of using his Duke law degree to practice law, he took his blog rants about his drunken, lecherous adventures and turned them into a mega-best-selling book, I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell, that he got an independent publisher to print. "Everyone told you that everyone above you had to s--- on you before you got to s--- on people below you. And millennials didn't want to do that."

In fact, a lot of what counts as typical millennial behavior is how rich kids have always behaved. The Internet has democratized opportunity for many young people, giving them access and information that once belonged mostly to the wealthy. When I was growing up in the 1980s, I thought I would be a lawyer, since that was the best option I knew about for people who sucked at math in my middle-class suburb, but I saw a lot more options once I got to Stanford. "Previously if you wanted to be a writer but didn't know anyone who is in publishing, it was just, Well, I won't write. But now it's, Wait, I know someone who knows someone," says Jane Buckingham, who studies workplace changes as founder of Trendera, a consumer-insights firm. "I hear story after story of people high up in an organization saying, 'Well, this person just e-mailed me and asked me for an hour of my time, and for whatever reason I gave it to them.' So the great thing is that they do feel entitled to all of this, so they'll be more innovative and more willing to try new things and they'll do all this cool stuff."

Because millennials don't respect authority, they also don't resent it. That's why they're the first teens who aren't rebelling. They're not even sullen. "I grew up watching Peanuts, where you didn't even see the parents. They were that 'Wah-wah' voice. And MTV was always a parent-free zone," says MTV president Stephen Friedman, 43, who now includes parents in nearly all the channel's reality shows. "One of our research
studies early on said that a lot of this audience outsources their superego to their parents. The most simple decision of should I do this or should I do that--our audience will check in with their parents." A 2012 Google Chrome ad shows a college student video-chatting all the details of her life to her dad. "I am very used to seeing things where the cliché is the parent doesn’t understand. Most of my friends, their parents are on social and they’re following them or sharing stuff with them," says Jessica Brillhart, a filmmaker at Google’s Creative Lab, who worked on the commercial. It’s hard to hate your parents when they also listen to rap and watch Jon Stewart.

In fact, many parents of millennials would proudly call their child-rearing style peer-enting. "I negotiate daily with my son who is 13. Maybe all that coddling has paid off in these parent-child relationships," says Jon Murray, who created The Real World and other reality shows, including Keeping Up With the Kardashians. He says that seeing regular people celebrated on TV gives millennials confidence: "They’re going after what they want. It can be a little irritating that they want to be on the next rung so quickly. Maybe I’m partly responsible for it. I like this generation, so I have no issues with that."

Kim Kardashian, who represents to nonmillennials all that is wrong with her generation, readily admits that she has no particular talent. But she also knows why she appeals to her peers. "They like that I share a lot of myself and that I’ve always been honest about the way I live my life," she says. "They want relationships with businesses and celebrities. Gen X was kept at arm’s length from businesses and celebrity." When you’re no longer cowed by power, you are going to like what a friend tells you about far more than what an ad campaign does, even if that friend is a celebrity trying to make money and that friendship is just a reply to one tweet.

While every millennial might seem like an oversharing Kardashian, posting vacation photos on Facebook is actually less obnoxious than 1960s couples’ trapping friends in their houses to watch their terrible vacation slide shows. "Can you imagine if the boomers had YouTube, how narcissistic they would’ve seemed?" asks Scott Hess, senior vice president of human intelligence for SparkSMG, whose TedX speech, "Millennials: Who They Are and Why We Hate Them," advised companies on marketing to youth. "Can you imagine how many frickin' Instagrams of people playing in the mud during Woodstock we would’ve seen? I think in many ways you’re blaming millennials for the technology that happens to exist right now." Yes, they check their phones during class, but think about how long you can stand in line without looking at your phone. Now imagine being used to that technology your whole life and having to sit through algebra.

Companies are starting to adjust not just to millennials’ habits but also to their atmospheric expectations. Nearly a quarter of DreamWorks’ 2,200 employees are under 30, and the studio has a 96% retention rate. Dan Satterthwaite, who runs the studio’s human-relations department and has been in the field for about 23 years, says Maslow's hierarchy of needs makes it clear that a company can’t just provide money anymore but
also has to deliver self-actualization. During work hours at DreamWorks, you can take classes in photography, sculpting, painting, cinematography and karate. When one employee explained that jujitsu is totally different from karate, Satterthwaite was shocked at his boldness, then added a jujitsu class.

Millennials are able to use their leverage to negotiate much better contracts with the traditional institutions they do still join. Although the armed forces had to lower the physical standards for recruits and make boot camp less intensive, Gary Stiteler, who has been an Army recruiter for about 15 years, is otherwise more impressed with millennials than any other group he’s worked with. “The generation that we enlisted when I first started recruiting was sort of do, do, do. This generation is think, think about it before you do it,” he says. "This generation is three to four steps ahead. They're coming in saying, 'I want to do this, then when I'm done with this, I want to do this.'"

Here's something even all the psychologists who fret over their narcissism studies agree about: millennials are nice. They have none of that David Letterman irony and Gen X ennui. "The positivism has surprised me. The Internet was always 50-50 positive and negative. And now it's 90-10," says Shane Smith, the 43-year-old CEO of Vice, which adjusted from being a Gen X company in print to a millennial company once it started posting videos online, which are viewed by a much younger audience. Millennials are more accepting of differences, not just among gays, women and minorities but in everyone. "There are many, many subcultures, and you can dip into them and search around. I prefer that to you're either supermainstream or a riot grrrl," says Tavi Gevinson, a 17-year-old who runs Rookie, an online fashion magazine, from her bedroom when she's not at school. It's hard, in other words, to join the counterculture when there's no culture. "There's not this us-vs.-them thing now. Maybe that's why millennials don't rebel," she says.

There may even be the beginning of a reaction against all the constant self-promotion. Evan Spiegel, 22, co-founder of Snapchat, an app that allows people to send photos, video and text that are permanently erased after 10 seconds or less, argues that it's become too exhausting for millennials to front a perfect life on social media. "We're trying to create a place where you can be in sweatpants, sitting eating cereal on a Friday night, and that's O.K.,” he says.

But if you need the ultimate proof that millennials could be a great force for positive change, know this: Tom Brokaw, champion of the Greatest Generation, loves millennials. He calls them the Wary Generation, and he thinks their cautiousness in life decisions is a smart response to their world. "Their great mantra has been: Challenge convention. Find new and better ways of doing things. And so that ethos transcends the wonky people who are inventing new apps and embraces the whole economy," he says.

The generation that experienced Monica Lewinsky's dress, 9/11, the longest wars in U.S. history, the Great Recession and an Arab Spring that looks at best like a late winter is nevertheless optimistic about its own personal chances of success. Sure, that might
be delusional, but it’s got to lead to better results than wearing flannel, complaining and making indie movies about it.

So here’s a more rounded picture of millennials than the one I started with. All of which I also have data for. They’re earnest and optimistic. They embrace the system. They are pragmatic idealists, tinkerers more than dreamers, life hackers. Their world is so flat that they have no leaders, which is why revolutions from Occupy Wall Street to Tahrir Square have even less chance than previous rebellions. They want constant approval—they post photos from the dressing room as they try on clothes. They have massive fear of missing out and have an acronym for everything (including FOMO). They’re celebrity obsessed but don’t respectfully idolize celebrities from a distance. (Thus Us magazine’s “They’re just like us!” which consists of paparazzi shots of famous people doing everyday things.) They’re not into going to church, even though they believe in God, because they don’t identify with big institutions; one-third of adults under 30, the highest percentage ever, are religiously unaffiliated. They want new experiences, which are more important to them than material goods. They are cool and reserved and not all that passionate. They are informed but inactive: they hate Joseph Kony but aren’t going to do anything about Joseph Kony. They are probusiness. They’re financially responsible; although student loans have hit record highs, they have less household and credit-card debt than any previous generation on record—which, admittedly, isn’t that hard when you’re living at home and using your parents’ credit card. They love their phones but hate talking on them.

They are not only the biggest generation we’ve ever known but maybe the last large birth grouping that will be easy to generalize about. There are already microgenerations within the millennial group, launching as often as new iPhones, depending on whether you learned to type before Facebook, Twitter, iPads or Snapchat. Those rising microgenerations are all horrifying the ones right above them, who are their siblings. And the group after millennials is likely to be even more empowered. They’re already so comfortable in front of the camera that the average American 1-year-old has more images of himself than a 17th century French king.

So, yes, we have all that data about narcissism and laziness and entitlement. But a generation’s greatness isn’t determined by data; it’s determined by how they react to the challenges that befall them. And, just as important, by how we react to them. Whether you think millennials are the new greatest generation of optimistic entrepreneurs or a group of 80 million people about to implode in a dwarf star of tears when their expectations are unmet depends largely on how you view change. Me, I choose to believe in the children. God knows they do.
A Rose for Emily
by William Faulkner

I

WHEN Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument, the women mostly out of curiosity to see the inside of her house, which no one save an old man-servant--a combined gardener and cook--had seen in at least ten years.

It was a big, squarish frame house that had once been white, decorated with cupolas and spires and scrolled balconies in the heavily lightsome style of the seventies, set on what had once been our most select street. But garages and cotton gins had encroached and obliterated even the august names of that neighborhood; only Miss Emily's house was left, lifting its stubborn and coquetish decay above the cotton wagons and the gasoline pumps-an eyesore among eyesores. And now Miss Emily had gone to join the representatives of those august names where they lay in the cedar-bemused cemetery among the ranked and anonymous graves of Union and Confederate soldiers who fell at the battle of Jefferson.

Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town, dating from that day in 1894 when Colonel Sartoris, the mayor--he who fathered the edict that no Negro woman should appear on the streets without an apron--remitted her taxes, the dispensation dating from the death of her father on into perpetuity. Not that Miss Emily would have accepted charity. Colonel Sartoris invented an involved tale to the effect that Miss Emily's father had loaned money to the town, which the town, as a matter of business, preferred this way of repaying. Only a man of Colonel Sartoris' generation and thought could have invented it, and only a woman could have believed it.

When the next generation, with its more modern ideas, became mayors and aldermen, this arrangement created some little dissatisfaction. On the first of the year they mailed her a tax notice. February came, and there was no reply. They wrote her a formal letter, asking her to call at the sheriff's office at her convenience. A week later the mayor wrote her himself, offering to call or to send his car for her, and received in reply a note on paper of an archaic shape, in a thin, flowing calligraphy in faded ink, to the effect that she no longer went out at all. The tax notice was also enclosed, without comment.

They called a special meeting of the Board of Aldermen. A deputation waited upon her, knocked at the door through which no visitor had passed since she ceased giving china-painting lessons eight or ten years earlier. They were admitted by the old Negro into a dim hall from which a stairway mounted into still more shadow. It smelled of dust and disuse--a close, dank smell. The Negro led them into the parlor. It was furnished in heavy, leather-covered furniture. When the Negro opened the blinds of one window, they could see that the leather was cracked; and when they sat down, a faint dust rose sluggishly about their thighs, spinning with slow motes in the single sun-ray. On a tarnished gilt easel before the fireplace stood a crayon portrait of Miss Emily's father.
They rose when she entered—a small, fat woman in black, with a thin gold chain descending to her waist and vanishing into her belt, leaning on an ebony cane with a tarnished gold head. Her skeleton was small and spare; perhaps that was why what would have been merely plumpness in another was obesity in her. She looked bloated, like a body long submerged in motionless water, and of that pallid hue. Her eyes, lost in the fatty ridges of her face, looked like two small pieces of coal pressed into a lump of dough as they moved from one face to another while the visitors stated their errand.

She did not ask them to sit. She just stood in the door and listened quietly until the spokesman came to a stumbling halt. Then they could hear the invisible watch ticking at the end of the gold chain.

Her voice was dry and cold. "I have no taxes in Jefferson. Colonel Sartoris explained it to me. Perhaps one of you can gain access to the city records and satisfy yourselves."

"But we have. We are the city authorities, Miss Emily. Didn't you get a notice from the sheriff, signed by him?"

"I received a paper, yes," Miss Emily said. "Perhaps he considers himself the sheriff... I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But there is nothing on the books to show that, you see We must go by the--"

"See Colonel Sartoris. I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But, Miss Emily--"

"See Colonel Sartoris." (Colonel Sartoris had been dead almost ten years.) "I have no taxes in Jefferson. Tobe!" The Negro appeared. "Show these gentlemen out."

II

So SHE vanquished them, horse and foot, just as she had vanquished their fathers thirty years before about the smell.

That was two years after her father's death and a short time after her sweetheart—the one we believed would marry her—had deserted her. After her father's death she went out very little; after her sweetheart went away, people hardly saw her at all. A few of the ladies had the temerity to call, but were not received, and the only sign of life about the place was the Negro man—a young man then—going in and out with a market basket.

"Just as if a man—any man—could keep a kitchen properly, "the ladies said; so they were not surprised when the smell developed. It was another link between the gross, teeming world and the high and mighty Griersons.

A neighbor, a woman, complained to the mayor, Judge Stevens, eighty years old.
"But what will you have me do about it, madam?" he said.

"Why, send her word to stop it," the woman said. "Isn't there a law?"

"I'm sure that won't be necessary," Judge Stevens said. "It's probably just a snake or a rat that nigger of hers killed in the yard. I'll speak to him about it."

The next day he received two more complaints, one from a man who came in diffident deprecation. "We really must do something about it, Judge. I'd be the last one in the world to bother Miss Emily, but we've got to do something."

That night the Board of Aldermen met—three graybeards and one younger man, a member of the rising generation.

"It's simple enough," he said. "Send her word to have her place cleaned up. Give her a certain time to do it in, and if she don't. .."

"Dammit, sir," Judge Stevens said, "will you accuse a lady to her face of smelling bad?"

So the next night, after midnight, four men crossed Miss Emily's lawn and slunk about the house like burglars, sniffing along the base of the brickwork and at the cellar openings while one of them performed a regular sowing motion with his hand out of a sack slung from his shoulder.

They broke open the cellar door and sprinkled lime there, and in all the outbuildings. As they recrossed the lawn, a window that had been dark was lighted and Miss Emily sat in it, the light behind her, and her upright torso motionless as that of an idol. They crept quietly across the lawn and into the shadow of the locusts that lined the street. After a week or two the smell went away.

That was when people had begun to feel really sorry for her. People in our town, remembering how old lady Wyatt, her great-aunt, had gone completely crazy at last, believed that the Griersons held themselves a little too high for what they really were. None of the young men were quite good enough for Miss Emily and such. We had long thought of them as a tableau, Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a sprawled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door. So when she got to be thirty and was still single, we were not pleased exactly, but vindicated; even with insanity in the family she wouldn't have turned down all of her chances if they had really materialized.

When her father died, it got about that the house was all that was left to her; and in a way, people were glad. At last they could pity Miss Emily. Being left alone, and a pauper, she had become humanized. Now she too would know the old thrill and the old despair of a penny more or less.

The day after his death all the ladies prepared to call at the house and offer condolence and aid, as is our custom Miss Emily met them at the door, dressed as usual and with no trace of grief on her face. She told them that her father was not dead. She did that for three days, with the ministers calling on her, and the doctors, trying to persuade her to let them dispose of the body. Just as they were about to resort to law and force, she broke down, and they buried her father quickly.
We did not say she was crazy then. We believed she had to do that. We remembered all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will.

III

SHE WAS SICK for a long time. When we saw her again, her hair was cut short, making her look like a girl, with a vague resemblance to those angels in colored church windows--sort of tragic and serene.

The town had just let the contracts for paving the sidewalks, and in the summer after her father's death they began the work. The construction company came with niggers and mules and machinery, and a foreman named Homer Barron, a Yankee--a big, dark, ready man, with a big voice and eyes lighter than his face. The little boys would follow in groups to hear him cuss the niggers, and the niggers singing in time to the rise and fall of picks. Pretty soon he knew everybody in town. Whenever you heard a lot of laughing anywhere about the square, Homer Barron would be in the center of the group. Presently we began to see him and Miss Emily on Sunday afternoons driving in the yellow-wheeled buggy and the matched team of bays from the livery stable.

At first we were glad that Miss Emily would have an interest, because the ladies all said, "Of course a Grierson would not think seriously of a Northerner, a day laborer." But there were still others, older people, who said that even grief could not cause a real lady to forget noblesse oblige--without calling it noblesse oblige. They just said, "Poor Emily. Her kinsfolk should come to her." She had some kin in Alabama; but years ago her father had fallen out with them over the estate of old lady Wyatt, the crazy woman, and there was no communication between the two families. They had not even been represented at the funeral.

And as soon as the old people said, "Poor Emily," the whispering began. "Do you suppose it's really so?" they said to one another. "Of course it is. What else could . . ." This behind their hands; rustling of craned silk and satin behind jalousies closed upon the sun of Sunday afternoon as the thin, swift clop-clop-clop of the matched team passed: "Poor Emily."

She carried her head high enough--even when we believed that she was fallen. It was as if she demanded more than ever the recognition of her dignity as the last Grierson; as if it had wanted that touch of earthiness to reaffirm her imperviousness. Like when she bought the rat poison, the arsenic. That was over a year after they had begun to say "Poor Emily," and while the two female cousins were visiting her.

"I want some poison," she said to the druggist. She was over thirty then, still a slight woman, though thinner than usual, with cold, haughty black eyes in a face the flesh of which was strained across the temples and about the eyesockets as you imagine a lighthouse-keeper's face ought to look. "I want some poison," she said.
"Yes, Miss Emily. What kind? For rats and such? I'd recom--"

"I want the best you have. I don't care what kind."

The druggist named several. "They'll kill anything up to an elephant. But what you want is--"

"Arsenic," Miss Emily said. "Is that a good one?"

"Is . . . arsenic? Yes, ma'am. But what you want--"

"I want arsenic."

The druggist looked down at her. She looked back at him, erect, her face like a strained flag. "Why, of course," the druggist said. "If that's what you want. But the law requires you to tell what you are going to use it for."

Miss Emily just stared at him, her head tilted back in order to look him eye for eye, until he looked away and went and got the arsenic and wrapped it up. The Negro delivery boy brought her the package; the druggist didn't come back. When she opened the package at home there was written on the box, under the skull and bones: "For rats."

IV

So THE NEXT day we all said, "She will kill herself"; and we said it would be the best thing. When she had first begun to be seen with Homer Barron, we had said, "She will marry him." Then we said, "She will persuade him yet," because Homer himself had remarked--he liked men, and it was known that he drank with the younger men in the Elks' Club--that he was not a marrying man. Later we said, "Poor Emily" behind the jalousies as they passed on Sunday afternoon in the glittering buggy, Miss Emily with her head high and Homer Barron with his hat cocked and a cigar in his teeth, reins and whip in a yellow glove.

Then some of the ladies began to say that it was a disgrace to the town and a bad example to the young people. The men did not want to interfere, but at last the ladies forced the Baptist minister--Miss Emily's people were Episcopal--to call upon her. He would never divulge what happened during that interview, but he refused to go back again. The next Sunday they again drove about the streets, and the following day the minister's wife wrote to Miss Emily's relations in Alabama.

So she had blood-kin under her roof again and we sat back to watch developments. At first nothing happened. Then we were sure that they were to be married. We learned that Miss Emily had been to the jeweler's and ordered a man's toilet set in silver, with the letters H. B. on each piece. Two days later we learned that she had bought a complete outfit of men's clothing, including a nightshirt, and we said, "They are married." We were really glad. We were glad because the two female cousins were even more Grierson than Miss Emily had ever been.
So we were not surprised when Homer Barron—the streets had been finished some time since—was gone. We were a little disappointed that there was not a public blowing-off, but we believed that he had gone on to prepare for Miss Emily's coming, or to give her a chance to get rid of the cousins. (By that time it was a cabal, and we were all Miss Emily's allies to help circumvent the cousins.) Sure enough, after another week they departed. And, as we had expected all along, within three days Homer Barron was back in town. A neighbor saw the Negro man admit him at the kitchen door at dusk one evening.

And that was the last we saw of Homer Barron. And of Miss Emily for some time. The Negro man went in and out with the market basket, but the front door remained closed. Now and then we would see her at a window for a moment, as the men did that night when they sprinkled the lime, but for almost six months she did not appear on the streets. Then we knew that this was to be expected too; as if that quality of her father which had thwarted her woman's life so many times had been too virulent and too furious to die.

When we next saw Miss Emily, she had grown fat and her hair was turning gray. During the next few years it grew grayer and grayer until it attained an even pepper-and-salt iron-gray, when it ceased turning. Up to the day of her death at seventy-four it was still that vigorous iron-gray, like the hair of an active man.

From that time on her front door remained closed, save for a period of six or seven years, when she was about forty, during which she gave lessons in china-painting. She fitted up a studio in one of the downstairs rooms, where the daughters and granddaughters of Colonel Sartoris' contemporaries were sent to her with the same regularity and in the same spirit that they were sent to church on Sundays with a twenty-five-cent piece for the collection plate. Meanwhile her taxes had been remitted.

Then the newer generation became the backbone and the spirit of the town, and the painting pupils grew up and fell away and did not send their children to her with boxes of color and tedious brushes and pictures cut from the ladies' magazines. The front door closed upon the last one and remained closed for good. When the town got free postal delivery, Miss Emily alone refused to let them fasten the metal numbers above her door and attach a mailbox to it. She would not listen to them.

Daily, monthly, yearly we watched the Negro grow grayer and more stooped, going in and out with the market basket. Each December we sent her a tax notice, which would be returned by the post office a week later, unclaimed. Now and then we would see her in one of the downstairs windows—she had evidently shut up the top floor of the house—like the carven torso of an idol in a niche, looking or not looking at us, we could never tell which. Thus she passed from generation to generation—dear, inescapable, impervious, tranquil, and perverse.

And so she died. Fell ill in the house filled with dust and shadows, with only a doddering Negro man to wait on her. We did not even know she was sick; we had long since given up trying to get any information from the Negro
He talked to no one, probably not even to her, for his voice had grown harsh and rusty, as if from disuse.

She died in one of the downstairs rooms, in a heavy walnut bed with a curtain, her gray head propped on a pillow yellow and moldy with age and lack of sunlight.

V

THE NEGRO met the first of the ladies at the front door and let them in, with their hushed, sibilant voices and their quick, curious glances, and then he disappeared. He walked right through the house and out the back and was not seen again.

The two female cousins came at once. They held the funeral on the second day, with the town coming to look at Miss Emily beneath a mass of bought flowers, with the crayon face of her father musing profoundly above the bier and the ladies sibilant and macabre; and the very old men--some in their brushed Confederate uniforms--on the porch and the lawn, talking of Miss Emily as if she had been a contemporary of theirs, believing that they had danced with her and courted her perhaps, confusing time with its mathematical progression, as the old do, to whom all the past is not a diminishing road but, instead, a huge meadow which no winter ever quite touches, divided from them now by the narrow bottle-neck of the most recent decade of years.

Already we knew that there was one room in that region above stairs which no one had seen in forty years, and which would have to be forced. They waited until Miss Emily was decently in the ground before they opened it.

The violence of breaking down the door seemed to fill this room with pervading dust. A thin, acrid pall as of the tomb seemed to lie everywhere upon this room decked and furnished as for a bridal: upon the valance curtains of faded rose color, upon the rose-shaded lights, upon the dressing table, upon the delicate array of crystal and the man's toilet things backed with tarnished silver, silver so tarnished that the monogram was obscured. Among them lay a collar and tie, as if they had just been removed, which, lifted, left upon the surface a pale crescent in the dust. Upon a chair hung the suit, carefully folded; beneath it the two mute shoes and the discarded socks.

The man himself lay in the bed.

For a long while we just stood there, looking down at the profound and fleshless grin. The body had apparently once lain in the attitude of an embrace, but now the long sleep that outlasts love, that conquers even the grimace of love, had cuckolded him. What was left of him, rotted beneath what was left of the nightshirt, had become inextricable from the bed in which he lay; and upon him and upon the pillow beside him lay that even coating of the patient and biding dust.

Then we noticed that in the second pillow was the indentation of a head. One of us lifted something from it, and leaning forward, that faint and invisible dust dry and acrid in the nostrils, we saw a long strand of iron-gray hair.
In the graphic organizer below, include some of the more important observations you made about the literature in the collection. It is separated by genre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short Story:</th>
<th>Poetry:</th>
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<th>Visual Art:</th>
<th>Informational Text:</th>
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Look over the information present and the theme statement to which these works connect. Then, write a paragraph (on the back) showing how the different works all connect. In other words, answer these questions: Why does each item connect to each other? and How does this show that the theme statement is accurate?
Theme Statement: It can be difficult to find our own identity amid the identities of others and the tumult of our experiences.

2. Poems: “Young” by Anne Sexton, and “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” by Langston Hughes
3. Picture: Self-Portrait by Dorthea Tanning
4. Informational Text: “Choose Your Own Identity” by Bonnie Tsui

**Young**
by Anne Sexton

A thousand doors ago
when I was a lonely kid
in a big house with four
garages and it was summer
as long as I could remember,
I lay on the lawn at night,
clover wrinkling over me,
the wise stars bedding over me,
my mother's window a funnel
of yellow heat running out,
my father's window, half shut,
an eye where sleepers pass,
and the boards of the house
were smooth and white as wax
and probably a million leaves
sailed on their strange stalks
as the crickets ticked together
and I, in my brand new body,
which was not a woman's yet,
told the stars my questions
and thought God could really see
the heat and the painted light,
elbows, knees, dreams, goodnight.
The Negro Speaks of Rivers
Langston Hughes, 1902 – 1967

I’ve known rivers:
I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I’ve seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I’ve known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

MAGAZINE | ESSAY
Choose Your Own Identity
By BONNIE TSUI
DEC. 14, 2015 Originally Published in The New York Time Magazine

I never realized how little I understood race until I tried to explain it to my 5-
year-old son. Our family story doesn’t seem too complicated: I’m Chinese-
American and my husband is white, an American of English-Dutch-Irish
descent; we have two children. My 5-year-old knows my parents were born in
China, and that I speak Cantonese sometimes. He has been to Hong Kong and
Guangzhou to visit his gung-gung, my father. But when I asked him the other
day if he was Chinese, he said no.

“You’re Chinese, but I’m not,” he told me, with certainty. “But I eat Chinese
food.” This gave me pause. How could I tell him that I wasn’t talking about
food or cultural heritage or where we were born? (Me, I’m from Queens.) I
had no basis to describe race to him other than the one I’d taken pains to
avoid: how we look and how other people treat us as a result.

My son probably doesn’t need me to tell him we look different. He’s a whir-
in-a-blender mix of my husband and me; he has been called Croatian and
Italian. More than once in his life, he will be asked, “What are you?” But in that moment when he confidently asserted himself as “not Chinese,” I felt a selfish urge for him to claim a way of describing himself that included my side of his genetic code. And yet I knew that I had no business telling him what his racial identity was. Today, he might feel white; tomorrow he might feel more Chinese. The next day, more, well, both. Who’s to say but him?

Racial identity can be fluid. More and more, it will have to be: Multiracial Americans are on the rise, growing at a rate three times as fast as the country’s population as a whole, according to a new Pew Research Center study released in June. Nearly half of mixed-race Americans today are younger than 18, and about 7 percent of the U.S. adult population could be considered multiracial, though they might not call themselves that. The need to categorize people into specific race groups will never feel entirely relevant to this population, whose perceptions of who they are can change by the day, depending on the people they’re with.

Besides, the American definition of race has always been in flux. For one thing, context mattered: In 1870, mixed-race American Indians living on reservations were counted as Indians, but if they lived in white communities they were counted as whites. Who was “white” evolved over time: From the 1870s to 1930s, a parade of court rulings pondered the “whiteness” of Asian immigrants from China, Japan and India, often changing definitions by the ruling in order to exclude yet another group from citizenship. When mixed-race people became more prevalent, things got murkier still. Who the U.S. Census Bureau designated “colored” or “black” varied, too, before and after slavery, and at times including subcategories for people of mixed race, all details often left up to the whims of the census taker. In 1930, nativist lobbyists succeeded in getting Mexicans officially labeled nonwhite on the census; up until then, they were considered white and allowed citizenship. By 1940, international political pressure had reversed the decision. It wasn’t until 2000 that the Census Bureau started letting people choose more than one race category to describe themselves, and it still only recognizes five standard racial categories: white, black/African-American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Racial categories formed the historical basis for so many of America’s societal and political decisions, and yet even the Census Bureau has admitted that its categories are in flux, recognizing that race is not a fixed, “quantifiable” value but a fluid one. White or black or Asian America isn’t monolithic and never was. Everyone’s story can be parsed ever more minutely: Haitian-Hawaiian, Mexican-Salvadorean, Cuban-Chinese. And when you start mixing up stories, as my family has, much of the institutional meaning of race falls away; it becomes, instead, intensely individual. In a strange way, the renewed fluidity of racial identity is a homecoming of sorts, to a time before race — and racism — was institutionalized.
In the San Francisco Bay Area, where I live, the once-derogatory term *hapa* — from the Hawaiian word for “half”; it’s a Hawaiian pidgin term long used to refer to people of mixed-race background — is now part of the everyday lexicon. In my sons’ preschool and kindergarten classes, *hapais* fast becoming the norm because there are so many mixed-race children in attendance. There’s power in the word: a reclaiming of territory, a self-determination. To me, the idea of *hapa* as a racial definition is inclusive rather than exclusive and thus a step in the right direction. The term is mostly used to refer to people of part Asian heritage, but increasingly it’s used for anyone of mixed race. And it’s a term that tends to be a self-identifying choice, rather than an outside imposition.

There’s a difference, you know. A critical element in the long-running *Hapa Project*, for which the artist and filmmaker Kip Fulbeck traveled the country and photographed thousands of multiracial people, is that photo subjects speak for themselves. One woman states to her observers: “I am a person of color. I am not half-‘white.’ I am not half-‘Asian.’ I am a whole ‘other.’” There is a resistance to fragmentation, a taking control of the narrative. Fulbeck, as a mixed-race person himself, came up with the idea as a kid in elementary school, when he struggled with what he calls the “check one box only” question. Here, we aren’t talking about getting rid of the boxes or just adding *more* boxes but creating more flexible ones that can hold more going forward.

There will be surprises in my own household when it comes to racial identity. According to the Pew study, biracial Asian-whites are more likely to identify with whites than they are with Asians. This line made me sit up: It never occurred to me that my sons could possibly identify *only* as white. I’m forced to think more carefully about what it is that actually makes me uncomfortable with that idea: It’s not that I want my sons to experience discrimination, but if they do choose to identify as white, there is something about being a racial minority in America that I would want them to know. As a child, I most wanted to fit in. As a young adult, I learned how I stood apart and to have pride in it. In the experience of being an “other,” there’s a valuable lesson in consciousness: You learn to listen harder, because you’ve heard what others have to say about you before you even have a chance to speak.

But the truth is, I can’t tell my sons what to feel: more white than Asian, more Asian than white, neither, both. Other. I can only tell them what I think about my own identity and listen hard to what they have to tell me in turn. If that isn’t practicing good race relations, what is? Much as I hate to admit it, what they choose to be won’t necessarily have to do with me. Because my sons are going to be the ones who say who — not what — they are.
Speaking of Courage
by Tim O’Brien

The war was over and there was no place in particular to go. Norman Bowker followed the tar road on its seven-mile loop around the lake, then he started all over again, driving slowly, feeling safe inside his father's big Chevy, now and then looking out on the lake to watch the boats and water-skiers and scenery. It was Sunday and it was summer, and the town seemed pretty much the same. The lake lay flat and silvery against the sun. Along the road the houses were all lowslung and split-level and modern, with big porches and picture windows facing the water. The lawns were spacious. On the lake side of the road, where real estate was most valuable, the houses were handsome and set deep in, well kept and brightly painted, with docks jutting out into the lake, and boats moored and covered with canvas, and neat gardens, and sometimes even gardeners, and stone patios with barbecue spits and grills, and wooden shingles saying who lived where. On the other side of the road, to his left, the houses were also handsome, though less expensive and on a smaller scale and with no docks or boats or gardeners. The road was a sort of boundary between the affluent and the almost affluent, and to live on the lake side of the road was one of the few natural privileges in a town of the prairie—the difference between watching the sun set over cornfields or over water.

It was a graceful, good-sized lake. Back in high school, at night, he had driven around and around it with Sally Kramer, wondering if she'd want to pull into the shelter of Sunset Park, or other times with his friends, talking about urgent matters, worrying about the existence of God and theories of causation. Then, there had not been a war. But there had always been the lake, which was the town's first cause of existence, a place for immigrant settlers to put down their
loads. Before the settlers were the Sioux, and before the Sioux were the vast open prairies, and before the prairies there was only ice. The lake bed had been dug out by the southernmost advance of the Wisconsin glacier. Fed by neither streams nor springs, the lake was often filthy and algaed, relying on fickle prairie rains for replenishment. Still, it was the only important body of water within forty miles, a source of pride, nice to look at on bright summer days, and later that evening it would color up with fireworks. Now, in the late afternoon, it lay calm and smooth, a good audience for silence, a seven-mile circumference that could be traveled by slow car in twenty-five minutes. It was not such a good lake for swimming. After high school, he'd caught an ear infection that had almost kept him out of the war. And the lake had drowned his friend Max Arnold, keeping him out of the war entirely. Max had been one who liked to talk about the existence of God. "No, I'm not saying that," he'd argue against the drone of the engine. "I'm saying it's possible as an idea, even necessary as an idea, a final cause in the whole structure of causation." Now he knew, perhaps. Before the war they'd driven around the lake as friends, but now Max was just an idea, and most of Norman Bowker's other friends were living in Des Moines or Sioux City, or going to school somewhere, or holding down jobs. The high school girls were mostly gone or married. Sally Kramer, whose pictures he had once carried in his wallet, was one who had married. Her name was now Sally Gustafson and she lived in a pleasant blue house on the less expensive side of the lake road. On his third day home he'd seen her out mowing the lawn, still pretty in a lacy red blouse and white shorts. For a moment he'd almost pulled over, just to talk, but instead he'd pushed down hard on the gas pedal. She looked happy. She had her house and her new husband, and there was really nothing he could say to her. The town seemed remote somehow. Sally was remarried and Max was drowned and his father was at home watching baseball on national TV.

Norman Bowker shrugged. "No problem," he murmured. Clockwise, as if in orbit, he took the Chevy on another seven-mile turn around the lake. Even in late afternoon the day was hot. He turned on the air conditioner, then the radio, and he leaned back and let the cold air and music blow over him. Along the road, kicking stones in front of them, two young boys were hiking with knapsacks and toy rifles and canteens. He honked going by, but neither boy looked up. Already he had passed them six times, forty-two miles, nearly three hours without stop. He watched the boys recede in his rearview mirror. They turned a soft grayish color, like sand, before finally disappearing. He tapped down lightly on the accelerator.

Out on the lake a man's motorboat had stalled; the man was bent over the engine with a wrench and a frown. Beyond the stalled boat there were other boats, and a few water-skiers, and the smooth July waters, and an immense flatness everywhere. Two mud hens floated stiffly beside a white dock. The road curved west, where the sun had now dipped low. He figured it was close to five o'clock—twenty after, he guessed. The war had taught him to tell time without clocks, and even at night, waking from sleep, he could usually place it within ten minutes either way. What he should do, he thought, is stop at Sally's house and impress her with this new time-telling trick of his. They'd talk for a while, catching up on things, and then he'd say, "Well, better hit the road, it's five thirty-four," and she'd glance at her wristwatch and say, "Hey! How'd you do that?" and he'd give a casual shrug and tell her it was just one of those things you pick up. He'd keep it light. He
wouldn't say anything about anything. "How's it being married?" he might ask, and he'd nod at whatever she answered with, and he would not say a word about how he'd almost won the Silver Star for valor.

He drove past Slater Park and across the causeway and past Sunset Park. The radio announcer sounded tired. The temperature in Des Moines was eighty-one degrees, and the time was five thirty-five, and "All you on the road, drive extra careful now on this fine Fourth of July." If Sally had not been married, or if his father were not such a baseball fan, it would have been a good time to talk.

"The Silver Star?" his father might have said.
"Yes, but I didn't get it. Almost, but not quite."
And his father would have nodded, knowing full well that many brave men do not win medals for their bravery, and that others win medals for doing nothing. As a starting point, maybe, Norman Bowker might then have listed the seven medals he did win: the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Air Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart, though it wasn't much of a wound and did not leave a scar and did not hurt and never had. He would've explained to his father that none of these decorations was for uncommon valor. They were for common valor. The routine, daily stuff—just humping, just enduring—but that was worth something, wasn't it? Yes, it was. Worth plenty. The ribbons looked good on the uniform in his closet, and if his father were to ask, he would've explained what each signified and how he was proud of all of them, especially the Combat Infantryman's Badge, because it meant he had been there as a real soldier and had done all the things soldiers do, and therefore it wasn't such a big deal that he could not bring himself to be uncommonly brave.

And then he would have talked about the medal he did not win and why he did not win it.
"I almost won the Silver Star," he would have said.
"How's that?"
"Just a story."
"So tell me," his father would have said.

Slowly then, circling the lake, Norman Bowker would have started by describing the Song Tra Bong. "A river," he would've said, "this slow flat muddy river." He would've explained how during the dry season it was exactly like any other river, nothing special, but how in October the monsoons began and the whole situation changed. For a solid week the rains never stopped, not once, and so after a few days the Song Tra Bong overflowed its banks and the land turned into a deep, thick muck for a half mile on either side. Just muck—no other word for it. Like quicksand, almost, except the stink was incredible. "You couldn't even sleep," he'd tell his father. "At night you'd find a high spot, and you'd doze off, but then later you'd wake up because you'd be buried in all that slime. You'd just sink in. You'd feel it ooze up over your body and sort of suck you down. And the whole time there was that constant rain. I mean, it never stopped, not ever."
"Sounds pretty wet," his father would've said, pausing briefly. "So what happened?"
"You really want to hear this?"
"Hey, I'm your father."
Norman Bowker smiled. He looked out across the lake and imagined the feel of his tongue against the truth. "Well, this one time, this one night out by the river ... I wasn't very brave."
"You have seven medals."
"Sure."
"Seven. Count 'em. You weren't a coward either."
"Well, maybe not. But I had the chance and I blew it. The stink, that's what got to me. I couldn't take that awful smell."
"If you don't want to say any more—"
"I do want to."
"All right then. Slow and sweet, take your time."

The road descended into the outskirts of town, turning northwest past the junior college and the tennis courts, then past Chautauqua Park, where the picnic tables were spread with sheets of colored plastic and where picnickers sat in lawn chairs and listened to the high school band playing Sousa marches under the band shell. The music faded after a few blocks. He drove beneath a canopy of elms, then along a stretch of open shore, then past the municipal docks, where a woman in pedal pushers stood casting for bullheads. There were no other fish in the lake except for perch and a few worthless carp. It was a bad lake for swimming and fishing both. He drove slowly. No hurry, nowhere to go. Inside the Chevy the air was cool and oily-smelling, and he took pleasure in the steady sounds of the engine and air-conditioning. A tour bus feeling, in a way, except the town he was touring seemed dead. Through the windows, as if in a stopmotion photograph, the place looked as if it had been hit by nerve gas, everything still and lifeless, even the people. The town could not talk, and would not listen. "How'd you like to hear about the war?" he might have asked, but the place could only blink and shrug. It had no memory, therefore no guilt. The taxes got paid and the votes got counted and the agencies of government did their work briskly and politely. It was a brisk, polite town.

Norman Bowker leaned back and considered what he might've said on the subject. He knew shit. It was his specialty. The smell, in particular, but also the numerous varieties of texture and taste. Someday he'd give a lecture on the topic. Put on a suit and tie and stand up in front of the Kiwanis club and tell the fuckers about all the wonderful shit he knew. Pass out samples, maybe.

Smiling at this, he clamped the steering wheel slightly right of center, which produced a smooth clockwise motion against the curve of the road. The Chevy seemed to know its own way. The sun was lower now. Five fifty-five, he decided—six o'clock, tops.

Along an unused railway spur, four workmen labored in the shadowy red heat, setting up a platform and steel launchers for the evening fireworks. They were dressed alike in khaki trousers, work shirts, visored caps, and brown boots. Their faces were dark and smudgy. "Want to hear about the Silver Star I almost won?" Norman Bowker whispered, but none of the workmen looked up. Later they would blow color into the sky. The lake would sparkle with reds and blues and greens, like a mirror, and the picnickers would make low sounds of appreciation. "Well, see, it never stopped raining," he would've said. "The muck was everywhere, you couldn't get away from it."

He would have paused a second.

Then he would have told about the night they bivouacked in a field along the Song Tra Bong. A big swampy field beside the river. There was a ville nearby, fifty meters downstream, and right away a dozen old mama-sans ran out and started yelling. A weird scene, he would've said. The mama-sans just stood there in the rain, soaking wet, yapping away about how this field was bad news. Number ten, they said. Evil ground. Not a good spot for good GIs. Finally Lieutenant
Jimmy Cross had to get out his pistol and fire off a few rounds just to shoo them away. By then it was almost dark. So they set up a perimeter, ate chow, then crawled under their ponchos and tried to settle in for the night.

But the rain kept getting worse. And by midnight the field turned into soup. "Just this deep, oozy soup," he would've said. "Like sewage or something. Thick and mushy. You couldn't sleep. You couldn't even lie down, not for long, because you'd start to sink under the soup. Real clammy. You could feel the crud coming up inside your boots and pants."

Here, Norman Bowker would have squinted against the low sun. He would have kept his voice cool, no self-pity. "But the worst part," he would've said quietly, "was the smell. Partly it was the river—a dead-fish smell—but it was something else, too. Finally somebody figured it out. What this was, it was a crap field. The village toilet. No indoor plumbing, right? So they used the field. I mean, we were camped in a toilet."

He imagined Sally Kramer closing her eyes. If she were here with him, in the car, she would've said, "Stop it. I don't like that word."

"That's what it was."

"All right, but you don't have to use that word."

"Fine. What should we call it?"

She would have glared at him. "I don't know. Just stop it."

Clearly, he thought, this was not a story for Sally Kramer. She was Sally Gustafson now. No doubt Max would've liked it, the irony in particular, but Max had become a pure idea, which was its own irony. It was just too bad. If his father were here, riding shotgun around the lake, the old man might have glanced over for a second, understanding perfectly well that it was not a question of offensive language but of fact. His father would have sighed and folded his arms and waited.

"A crap field," Norman Bowker would have said. "And later that night I could've won the Silver Star for valor."

"Right," his father would've murmured, "I hear you."

The Chevy rolled smoothly across a viaduct and up the narrow tar road. To the right was open lake. To the left, across the road, most of the lawns were scorched dry like October corn. Hopelessly, round and round, a rotating sprinkler scattered lake water on Dr. Mason's vegetable garden. Already the prairie had been baked dry, but in August it would get worse. The lake would turn green with algae, and the golf course would burn up, and the dragonflies would crack open for want of good water.

The big Chevy curved past Centennial Beach and the A&W root beer stand. It was his eighth revolution around the lake.

He followed the road past the handsome houses with their docks and wooden shingles. Back to Slater Park, across the causeway, around to Sunset Park, as though riding on tracks.

The two little boys were still trudging along on their seven-mile hike.

Out on the lake, the man in the stalled motorboat still fiddled with his engine. The pair of mud hens floated like wooden decoys, and the water-skiers looked tanned and athletic, and the high school band was packing up its instruments, and the woman in pedal pushers patiently rebaited her hook for one last try.

Quaint, he thought.

A hot summer day and it was all very quaint and remote. The four workmen had nearly
completed their preparations for the evening fireworks. Facing the sun again, Norman Bowker decided it was nearly seven o'clock. Not much later the tired radio announcer confirmed it, his voice rocking itself into a deep Sunday snooze. If Max Arnold were here, he would say something about the announcer's fatigue, and relate it to the bright pink in the sky, and the war, and courage. A pity that Max was gone. And a pity about his father, who had his own war and who now preferred silence. Still, there was so much to say.

How the rain never stopped. How the cold worked into your bones. Sometimes the bravest thing on earth was to sit through the night and feel the cold in your bones. Courage was not always a matter of yes or no. Sometimes it came in degrees, like the cold; sometimes you were very brave up to a point and then beyond that point you were not so brave. In certain situations you could do incredible things, you could advance toward enemy fire, but in other situations, which were not nearly so bad, you had trouble keeping your eyes open. Sometimes, like that night in the shit field, the difference between courage and cowardice was something small and stupid. The way the earth bubbled. And the smell.

In a soft voice, without flourishes, he would have told the exact truth. "Late in the night," he would've said, "we took some mortar fire."

He would've explained how it was still raining, and how the clouds were pasted to the field, and how the mortar rounds seemed to come right out of the clouds. Everything was black and wet. The field just exploded. Rain and slop and shrapnel, nowhere to run, and all they could do was worm down into slime and cover up and wait. He would've described the crazy things he saw. Weird things. Like how at one point he noticed a guy lying next to him in the sludge, completely buried except for his face, and how after a moment the guy rolled his eyes and winked at him. The noise was fierce. Heavy thunder, and mortar rounds, and people yelling. Some of the men began shooting up flares. Red and green and silver flares, all colors, and the rain came down in Technicolor.

The field was boiling. The shells made deep slushy craters, opening up all those years of waste, centuries worth, and the smell came bubbling out of the earth. Two rounds hit close by. Then a third, even closer, and immediately, off to his left, he heard somebody screaming. It was Kiowa—he knew that. The sound was ragged and clotted up, but even so he knew the voice. A strange gargling noise. Rolling sideways, he crawled toward the screaming in the dark. The rain was hard and steady. Along the perimeter there were quick bursts of gunfire. Another round hit nearby, spraying up shit and water, and for a few moments he ducked down beneath the mud. He heard the valves in his heart. He heard the quick, feathering action of the hinges. Extraordinary, he thought. As he came up, a pair of red flares puffed open, a soft fuzzy glow, and in the glow he saw Kiowa's wide-open eyes settling down into the scum. Briefly, all he could do was watch. He heard himself moan. Then he moved again, crabbing forward, but when he got there Kiowa was almost completely under. There was a knee. There was an arm and a gold wristwatch and part of a boot.

He could not describe what happened next, not ever, but he would've tried anyway. He would've spoken carefully so as to make it real for anyone who would listen. There were bubbles where Kiowa's head should've been. The left hand was curled open; the fingernails were filthy; the wristwatch gave off a green phosphorescent shine as it slipped beneath the thick waters. He would've talked about this, and how he grabbed Kiowa by the boot and tried to pull him out. He pulled hard but Kiowa was gone, and then suddenly he felt himself going, too. He could taste
it. The shit was in his nose and eyes. There were flares and mortar rounds, and the stink was everywhere—it was inside him, in his lungs—and he could no longer tolerate it. Not here, he thought. Not like this. He released Kiowa's boot and watched it slide away. Slowly, working his way up, he hoisted himself out of the deep mud, and then he lay still and tasted the shit in his mouth and closed his eyes and listened to the rain and explosions and bubbling sounds.

He was alone.
He had lost his weapon but it did not matter. All he wanted was a bath.
Nothing else. A hot soapy bath.
Circling the lake, Norman Bowker remembered how his friend Kiowa had disappeared under the waste and water.
"I didn't flip out," he would've said. "I was cool. If things had gone right, if it hadn't been for that smell, I could've won the Silver Star."

A good war story, he thought, but it was not a war for war stories, nor for talk of valor, and nobody in town wanted to know about the terrible stink. They wanted good intentions and good deeds. But the town was not to blame, really. It was a nice little town, very prosperous, with neat houses and all the sanitary conveniences.

Norman Bowker lit a cigarette and cranked open his window. Seven thirty-five, he decided.
The lake had divided into two halves. One half still glistened, the other was caught in shadow. Along the causeway, the two little boys marched on. The man in the stalled motorboat yanked frantically on the cord to his engine, and the two mud hens sought supper at the bottom of the lake, tails bobbing. He passed Sunset Park once again, and more houses, and the junior college and the tennis courts, and the picnickers, who now sat waiting for the evening fireworks.

The high school band was gone. The woman in pedal pushers patiently toyed with her line.
Although it was not yet dusk, the A&W was already awash in neon lights.
He maneuvered his father's Chevy into one of the parking slots, let the engine idle, and sat back. The place was doing a good holiday business. Mostly kids, it seemed, and a few farmers in for the day. He did not recognize any of the faces. A slim, hipless young carhop passed by, but when he hit the horn, she did not seem to notice. Her eyes slid sideways. She hooked a tray to the window of a Firebird, laughing lightly, leaning forward to chat with the three boys inside.

He felt invisible in the soft twilight. Straight ahead, over the take-out counter, swarms of mosquitoes electrocuted themselves against an aluminum Pest-Rid machine.
It was a calm, quiet summer evening.
He honked again, this time leaning on the horn. The young carhop turned slowly, as if puzzled, then said something to the boys in the Firebird and moved reluctantly toward him. Pinned to her shirt was a badge that said EAT MAMA BURGERS.

When she reached his window, she stood straight up so that all he could see was the badge.
"Mama Burger," he said. "Maybe some fries, too."
The girl sighed, leaned down, and shook her head. Her eyes were as fluffy and airy-light as cotton candy.
"You blind?" she said.
She put out her hand and tapped an intercom attached to a steel post.
"Punch the button and place your order. All I do is carry the dumb trays."
She stared at him for a moment. Briefly, he thought, a question lingered in her fuzzy eyes, but then she turned and punched the button for him and returned to her friends in the Firebird.
The intercom squeaked and said, "Order."
"Mama Burger and fries," Norman Bowker said.
"Affirmative, copy clear. No rootie-tootie?"
"Rootie-tootie?"
"You know, man--root beer.
"A small one."
"Roger-dodger. Repeat: one Mama, one fries, one small beer. Fire for effect. Stand by."
The intercom squeaked and went dead.
"Out," said Norman Bowker.
When the girl brought his tray, he ate quickly, without looking up. The tired radio announcer in Des Moines gave the time, almost eight-thirty. Dark was pressing in tight now, and he wished there were somewhere to go. In the morning he'd check out some job possibilities. Shoot a few buckets down at the Y, maybe wash the Chevy.
He finished his root beer and pushed the intercom button.
"Order," said the tinny voice.
"All done."
"That's it?"
"I guess so."
"Hey, loosen up," the voice said. "What you really need, friend?"
Norman Bowker smiled.
"Well," he said, "how'd you like to hear about—"
He stopped and shook his head.
"Hear what, man?"
"Nothing."
"Well, hey," the intercom said, "I'm sure not going anywhere. Screwed to a post, for God sake. Go ahead, try me."
"Nothing."
"You sure?"
"Positive. All done."
The intercom made a light sound of disappointment. "Your choice, I guess. Over an' out."
"Out," said Norman Bowker.
On his tenth turn around the lake he passed the hiking boys for the last time. The man in the stalled motorboat was gone; the mud hens were gone. Beyond the lake, over Sally Gustafson's house, the sun had left a smudge of purple on the horizon. The band shell was deserted, and the woman in pedal pushers quietly reeled in her line, and Dr. Mason's sprinkler went round and round.
On his eleventh revolution he switched off the air-conditioning, opened up his window, and rested his elbow comfortably on the sill, driving with one hand.
There was nothing to say.
He could not talk about it and never would. The evening was smooth and warm.
If it had been possible, which it wasn't, he would have explained how his friend Kiowa slipped away that night beneath the dark swampy field. He was folded in with the war; he was part of the waste.
Turning on his headlights, driving slowly, Norman Bowker remembered how he had taken hold of Kiowa's boot and pulled hard, but how the smell was simply too much, and how he'd backed off and in that way had lost the Silver Star.
He wished he could've explained some of this. How he had been braver than he ever thought possible, but how he had not been so brave as he wanted to be. The distinction was important.
Max Arnold, who loved fine lines, would've appreciated it. And his father, who already knew, would've nodded. "The truth," Norman Bowker would've said, "is I let the guy go." "Maybe he was already gone." "He wasn't." "But maybe." "No, I could feel it. He wasn't. Some things you can feel."

His father would have been quiet for a while, watching the headlights against the narrow tar road. "Well, anyway," the old man would've said, "there's still the seven medals." "I suppose." "Seven honeys." "Right."

On his twelfth revolution, the sky went crazy with color. He pulled into Sunset Park and stopped in the shadow of a picnic shelter. After a time he got out, walked down to the beach, and waded into the lake without undressing. The water felt warm against his skin. He put his head under. He opened his lips, very slightly, for the taste, then he stood up and folded his arms and watched the fireworks. For a small town, he decided, it was a pretty good show.
In the graphic organizer below, include some of the more important observations you made about the literature in the collection. It is separated by genre.

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Look over the information present and the theme statement to which these works connect. Then, write a paragraph (on the back) showing how the different works all connect. In other words, answer these questions: Why does each item connect to each other? and How does this show that the theme statement is accurate?
Theme Statement: Looking back, we can see that each former chapter in our life shapes who we are today.
1. Short Story: “The Life You Save May Be Your Own” by Flannery O’Connor
2. Poem: “Testimonial” by Rita Dove
3. Picture: When the Plains Were His by Charles Marion Russell, “Nite Owl” from Watchmen
4. Informational Text: “One Writer’s Beginning” by Eudora Welty

Testimonial

BY RITA DOVE

Back when the earth was new
and heaven just a whisper,
back when the names of things
hadn't had time to stick;

back when the smallest breezes
melted summer into autumn,
when all the poplars quivered
sweetly in rank and file . . .

the world called, and I answered.
Each glance ignited to a gaze.
I caught my breath and called that life,
swooned between spoonfuls of lemon sorbet.

I was pirouette and flourish,
I was filigree and flame.
How could I count my blessings
when I didn't know their names?

Back when everything was still to come,
luck leaked out everywhere.
I gave my promise to the world,
and the world followed me here.
One Writer’s Beginnings
by Eudora Welty

I learned from the age of two or three that any room in our house, at any time of day, was there to read in, or to be read to. My mother read to me. She’d read to me in the big bedroom in the mornings, when we were in her rocker together, which ticked in rhythm as we rocked, as though we had a cricket accompanying the story. She’d read to me in the dining room on winter afternoons in front of the coal fire, with our cuckoo clock ending the story with “Cuckoo,” and at night when I’d got in my own bed. I must have given her no peace. Sometimes she’d read to me in the kitchen while she sat churning, and the churning sobbed along with any story. It was my ambition to have her read to me while I churned; once, she granted my wish, but she read off my story before I brought her butter. She was an expressive reader. When she was reading “Puss in Boots,” for instance, it was impossible to know that she distrusted all cats.

It had been startling and disappointing to me to find out that story books had been written by people, that books were not natural wonders, coming up of themselves like grass. Yet regardless of where they came from, I cannot remember a time when I was not in love with them - with the books themselves, cover and binding and the paper they were printed on, with their smell and their weight and with their possession in my arms, captured and carried off to myself. Still illiterate, I was ready for them, committed to all the reading I could give them.

Neither of my parents had come from homes that could afford to buy many books, but though it must have been something of a strain on his salary, as the youngest officer in a young insurance company, my father was all the while carefully selecting and ordering away for what he and Mother thought we children should grow up with. They bought first for the future.

Besides the bookcase in the living room, which was always called “the library,” there were the encyclopedia tables and dictionary stand under the windows in our dining room. Here to help us grow up arguing around the dining room table were the Unabridged Webster, the Columbia Encyclopedia, Compton’s Pictured Encyclopedia, the Lincoln Library of Information, and later the Book of Knowledge. And the year we moved into our new house, there was room to celebrate it with the new 1925 edition of Britannica, which my father, his face always deliberately turned toward the future, was disposed to think better than any previous edition.

In “the library,” inside the mission-style bookcase with its three diamond-latticed glass doors, with my father’s Morris chair and the glass-shaded lamp on its table beside it, were books I could soon begin on - and I did, reading them all alike and as they came, straight down their rows, top shelf to bottom. There was a set of Stoddard’s Lectures, in all its late nineteenth-century vocabulary and vignettes of peasant life and quaint beliefs and customs, with matching halftone illustrations: Venus erupting, Venice by moonlight, gypsies glimpsed by their campfires. I didn’t know then the clue they were to my father’s longing to see the rest of the world. I read straight through his other love-from-afar: the Victrola Book of the Opera, with opera after opera in synopsis, with portraits in costume of Melba, Caruso, Galli-Curci, and Geraldine Farrar, some of whose voices we could listen to on our Red Seal records.
My mother read secondarily for information; she sank as a hedonist into novels. She read Dickens in the spirit in which she would have eloped with him. The novels of her girlhood that had stayed on in her imagination, besides those of Dickens and Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson, were Jane Eyre, Trilby, The Woman in White, Green Mansions, King Solomon’s Mines. Marie Corelli’s name would crop up but I understood she had gone out of favor with my mother, who had only kept Ardath out of loyalty. In time she absorbed herself in Galsworthy, Edith Wharton, a vce all in Thomas Mann of the Joseph volumes.

St. Elmo was not in our house; I saw it often in other houses. This wildly popular Southern novel is where all the Edna Earles in our population started coming from. They’re all named for the heroine, who succeeded in bringing a dissolute, sinning roué and atheist of a lover (St. Elmo) to his knees. My mother was able to forgo it. But she remembered the classic advice given to rose growers on how to water their bushes long enough: “Take a chair and St. Elmo.”

To both my parents I owe my early acquaintance with a beloved Mark Twain. There was a full set of Mark Twain and a short set of Ring Lardner in our bookcase, and those were the volumes that in time united us all, parents and children.

Reading everything that stood before me was how I came upon a worn old book without a back that had belonged to my father as a child. It was called Sanford and Merton. Is there anyone left who recognizes it, I wonder? It is the famous moral tale written by Thomas Day in the 1780s, but of him no mention is made on the title page of this book; here it is Sanford and Merton in Words of One Syllable by Mary Godolphin. Here are the rich boy and the poor boy and Mr. Barlow, their teacher and interlocutor, in long discourses alternating with dramatic scenes - danger and rescue allotted to the rich and poor respectively. It may have only words of one syllable, but one of them is “quoth.” It and with not one but two morals, both engraved on rings: “Do what you ought, come what may,” and “If we would be great, we must first learn to be good.”

This book was lacking its front cover, the back held on by strips of pasted paper, now turned golden, in several layers, and the pages stained, flecked, tattered around the edges; its garish illustrations had come unattached but were preserved, laid in. I had the feeling even in my heedless childhood that this was the only book my father as a little boy had had of his own. He held onto it, and might have gone to sleep on its coverless face: he had lost his mother when he was seven. My father never made any mention to his own children of the book, but he had brought it along with him from Ohio to our house and shelved it on our bookcase.

My mother had brought from West Virginia that set of Dickens; those books looked sad, too - they and been through fire and water before I was born, she told me, and there they were, lined up - as I later realized, waiting for me.

I was presented, from as early as I can remember, with books of my own, which appeared on my birthday and Christmas morning. Indeed, my parents could not give me books enough. They must have sacrificed to give me on my sixth or seventh birthday - it was after I became a reader for myself - the ten-volume set of Our Wonder World. These were beautifully made, heavy books I would lie down on the floor in from of the dining room hearth, and more often than the rest volume 5, Every Child’s Story Book, was under my eyes. There were the fairy tales - Grimm, Anderson, the English, the French, “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves”; and there was Aesop and Reynard the
Fox; there were the myths and legends, Robin Hood, King Arthur, and St. George and the Dragon, even the history of Joan of Arc; a whack of Pilgrim’s Progress and a long piece of Gulliver. They all carried their classic illustrations. I located myself in these pages and could go straight to the stories and pictures I loved; very often “The Yellow Dwarf” was first choice, with Walter Crane’s Yellow Dwarf in full color making his terrifying appearance flanked by turkeys. Now that volume is as worn and backless and hanging apart as my father’s poor Sanford and Merton. The precious page with Edward Lear’s “Jumblies” on it has been in danger of slipping out for all these years. One measure of my love for Our Wonder World was that for a long time I wondered if I would go through fire and water for it as my mother had done for Charles Dickens; and the only comfort was to think I could ask my mother to do it for me.

I believe I’m the only child I know of who grew up with this treasure in the house. I used to ask others, “Did you have Our Wonder World?” I’d have to tell the The Book of Knowledge could not hold a candle to it.

I live in gratitude to my parents for initiating me - and as early as I begged for it, without keeping me waiting - into knowledge of the world, into reading and spelling, by way of the alphabet. They taught it to me at home in time for me to begin to read before starting to school. I believe the alphabet is no longer considered an essential piece of equipment for traveling through life. In my day it was the keystone to knowledge. You learned the alphabet as you learned to count to ten, as you learned, “Now I lay me” and the Lord’s Prayer and your father’s and mother’s name and address and telephone number, all in case you were lost.

My love for the alphabet, which endures, grew out of reciting it but, before that, out of seeing the letters on the page. In my own story books, before I could read them for myself, I fell in love with various winding, enchanting-looking initials drawn by Walter Crane a the heads of fairy tales. In “Once upon a time,” an “O” had a rabbit running it as a treadmill, his feet upon the flowers. When the day came, years later, for me to see the Book of Kells, all the wizardry of letter, initial, and word swept over me a thousand times over, and the illumination, the gold, seemed a part of the world’s beauty and holiness that had been there from the start.

Learning stamps you with its moments. Childhood’s learning is made up of moments. It isn’t steady. It’s a pulse.

In a children’s art class, we sat in a ring on kindergarten chairs and drew three daffodils that had just been picked out of the years; and while I was drawing, my sharpened pencil and the cup of the yellow daffodil gave off whiffs just alike. That the pencil doing the drawing should give off the same smell as the flower it drew seemed a part of the art lesson - as shouldn’t it be? Children, like animals, use all their senses to discover the world. Then artists come along and discover it the same way, all over again. Here and there, it’s the same world. Or now and then we’ll hear from an artist who’s never lost it. In my sensory education I include my physical awareness of the word. Of a certain word, that is; the connection it has with what it stands for. At around age six, perhaps, I was standing by myself in our front yard waiting for supper, just at that hour in a late summer day when the sun is already below the horizon and the risen full moon in the visible sky stops being chalky and begins to take on light. There comes the moment, and I saw it then, when the moon goes from flat to round. For the first time it met my eyes as a glove. The word “moon” came into my mouth as though fed to me out of a
silver spoon. Held in my mouth the moon became a word. It had the roundness of a Concord grape Grandpa took off his vine and gave me to suck out of its skin and sallow whole, in Ohio.

This love did not prevent me from living for years in foolish error about the moon. The new moon just appearing in the west was the rising moon to me. The new should be rising. And in early childhood the sun and moon, those opposite reigning powers, I just as easily assumed rose in east and west respectively in their opposite sides of the sky, and like partners in a reel they advanced, sun from the east, moon from the west, crossed over (when I wasn’t looking) and went down on the other side. My father couldn’t have known I believed that when, bending behind me and guiding my shoulder, he positioned me at our telescope in the front yard and, with careful adjustment of the focus, brought the moon close to me.

The night sky over my childhood Jackson was velvety black. I could see the full constellations in it and call their names; when I could read, I knew their myths. Though I was always waked for eclipses, and indeed carried to the window as an infant in arms and shown Halley’s Comet in my sleep, and though I’d been taught at our dining room table about the solar system and knew the earth revolved around the sun, and our moon around us, I never found out the moon didn’t come up in the west until I was a writer and Herschel Brickell, the literary critic, told me after I misplaced it in a story. he said valuable words to me about my new profession: “Always be sure you get your moon in the right part of the sky.”

My mother always sang to her children. Her voice came out just a little bit in the minor key. “Wee Willie Winkie’s” song was wonderfully sad when she sang the lullabies. “Oh, but now there’s a record. She could have her own record to listen to,” my father would have said. For there came a Victrola record of “Bobby Shafftoe” and “Rock-a-Bye Baby,” all of Mother’s lullabies, which could be played to take her place. Soon I was able to play her my own lullabies all day long.

Our Victrola stood in the dining room. I was allowed to climb onto the seat of a dining room chair to wind it, start the record turning, and set the needle playing. In a second I’d jumped to the floor, to spin or march around the table as the music called for - now there were all the other records I could play too. I skinned back onto the chair just in time to lift the needle at the end, stop the record and turn it over, then change the needle. That brass receptacle with a holding the lid gave off a metallic smell like human sweat, from all the hot needles that were fed it. Winding up, dancing, being cocked to start and stop the record, was of course all in one the act of listening - to “Overture to Daughter of the Regiment,” “Selections from The Fortune Teller,” “Kiss Me Again,” “Gypsy Dance from Carmen,” “Stars and Stripes Forever,” “When the Midnight Choo-Choo Leaves for Alabam,” or whatever came next. Movement must be at the very heart of listening.

Ever since I was first read to, then started reading to myself, there has never been a line read that I didn’t hear. As my eyes followed the sentence, a voice was saying it silently to me. It isn’t my mother’s voice, or the voice of any person I can identify, certainly not my own. It is human, but inward, and it is inwardly that I listen to it. It is to me the voice of the story or the poem itself. The cadence, whatever it is that asks you to believe, the feeling that resides in the printed word, reaches me through the reader-voice. I have supposed, but never found out, that this is the case with all readers - to read as listeners - and with writers, to write as listeners. It may be part of the desire to write. The sound of
what falls on the page begins the process of testing it for truth, for me. Whether I am right to trust so far I don’t know. By now I don’t know whether I could do either one, reading or writing, without the other. My own words, when I am at work on a story, I hear too as they go, in the same voice that I hear when I read books. When I write and the sound of it comes back to my years, then I act to make my changes. I have always trusted this voice.
When the Plains Were His by Charles Marion Russell
“Nite Owl” from *Watchmen*
THE OLD WOMAN and her daughter were sitting on their porch when Mr. Shiftlet came up their road for the first time. The old woman slid to the edge of her chair and leaned forward, shading her eyes from the piercing sunset with her hand. The daughter could not see far in front of her and continued to play with her fingers. Although the old woman lived in this desolate spot with only her daughter and she had never seen Mr. Shiftlet before, she could tell, even from a distance, that he was a tramp and no one to be afraid of. His left coat sleeve was folded up to show there was only half an arm in it and his gaunt figure listed slightly to the side as if the breeze were pushing him. He had on a black town suit and a brown felt hat that was turned up in the front and down in the back and he carried a tin tool box by a handle. He came on, at an amble, up her road, his face turned toward the sun which appeared to be balancing itself on the peak of a small mountain.

The old woman didn't change her position until he was almost into her yard; then she rose with one hand fisted on her hip. The daughter, a large girl in a short blue organdy dress, saw him all at once and jumped up and began to stamp and point and make excited speechless sounds.

Mr. Shiftlet stopped just inside the yard and set his box on the ground and tipped his hat at her as if she were not in the least afflicted; then he turned toward the old woman and swung the hat all the way off. He had long black slick hair that hung flat from a part in the middle to beyond the tips of his ears on either side. His face descended in forehead for more than half its length and ended suddenly with his features just balanced over a jutting steel-trap jaw. He seemed to be a young man but he had a look of composed dissatisfaction as if he understood life thoroughly.

"Good evening," the old woman said. She was about the size of a cedar fence post and she had a man's gray hat pulled down low over her head.

The tramp stood looking at her and didn't answer. He turned his back and faced the sunset. He swung both his whole and his short arm up slowly so that they indicated an expanse of sky and his figure formed a crooked cross. The old woman watched him with her arms folded across her chest as if she were the owner of the sun, and the daughter watched, her head thrust forward and her fat helpless hands hanging at the wrists. She had long pink-gold hair and eyes as blue as a peacock's neck.
He held the pose for almost fifty seconds and then he picked up his box and came on to the porch and dropped down on the bottom step. "Lady," he said in a firm nasal voice, "I'd give a fortune to live where I could see me a sun do that every evening."

"Does it every evening," the old woman said and sat back down. The daughter sat down too and watched him with a cautious sly look as if he were a bird that had come up very close. He leaned to one side, rooting in his pants pocket, and in a second he brought out a package of chewing gum and offered her a piece. She took it and unpeeled it and began to chew without taking her eyes off him. He offered the old woman a piece but she only raised her upper lip to indicate she had no teeth.

Mr. Shiftlet's pale sharp glance had already passed over everything in the yard—the pump near the corner of the house and the big fig tree that three or four chickens were preparing to roost in—and had moved to a shed where he saw the square rusted back of an automobile. "You ladies drive?" he asked.

"That car ain't run in fifteen year," the old woman said. "The day my husband died, it quit running."

"Nothing is like it used to be, lady," he said. "The world is almost rotten."

"That's right," the old woman said. "You from around here?"

"Name Tom T. Shiftlet," he murmured, looking at the tires.

"I'm pleased to meet you," the old woman said. "Name Lucynell Crater and daughter Lucynell Crater. What you doing around here, Mr. Shiftlet?"

He judged the car to be about a 1928 or '29 Ford. "Lady," he said, and turned and gave her his full attention, "lemme tell you something. There's one of these doctors in Atlanta that's taken a knife and cut the human heart—the human heart," he repeated, leaning forward, "out of a man's chest and held it in his hand," and he held his hand out, palm up, as if it were slightly weighted with the human heart, "and studied it like it was a day-old chicken, and lady," he said, allowing a long significant pause in which his head slid forward and his clay-colored eyes brightened, "he don't know no more about it than you or me."

"That's right," the old woman said.

"Why, if he was to take that knife and cut into every corner of it, he still wouldn't know no more than you or me. What you want to bet?"

"Nothing," the old woman said wisely. "Where you come from, Mr. Shiftlet?"

He didn't answer. He reached into his pocket and brought out a sack of tobacco and a package of cigarette papers and rolled himself a cigarette, expertly with one hand, and attached it in a hanging position to his upper lip. Then he took a box of wooden matches from his pocket and struck one on his shoe. He held the burning match as if he were studying the mystery of flame while it traveled dangerously toward his skin. The daughter began to make loud noises and to point to his hand and shake her finger at him, but when the flame was just before touching him, he leaned down with his hand cupped over it as if he were going to set fire to his nose and lit the cigarette.

He flipped away the dead match and blew a stream of gray into the evening. A sly look came over his face. "Lady," he said, "nowadays, people'll do anything anyways. I can tell you my name is Tom T. Shiftlet and I come from Tarwater, Tennessee, but you never have seen me before: how you know I ain't lying? How you know my
name ain't Aaron Sparks, lady, and I come from Singleberry, Georgia, or how you know it's not George Speeds and I come from Lucy, Alabama, or how you know I ain't Thompson Bright from Toolafalls, Mississippi?"

"I don't know nothing about you," the old woman muttered, irked.

"Lady," he said, "people don't care how they lie. Maybe the best I can tell you is, I'm a man; but listen lady," he said and paused and made his tone more ominous still, "what is a man?"

The old woman began to gum a seed. "What you carry in that tin box, Mr. Shiftlet?" she asked.

"Tools," he said, put back. "I'm a carpenter."

"Well, if you come out here to work, I'll be able to feed you and give you a place to sleep but I can't pay. I'll tell you that before you begin," she said.

There was no answer at once and no particular expression on his face. He leaned back against the two-by-four that helped support the porch roof. "Lady," he said slowly, "there's some men that some things mean more to them than money." The old woman rocked without comment and the daughter watched the trigger that moved up and down in his neck. He told the old woman then that all most people were interested in was money, but he asked what a man was made for. He asked her if a man was made for money, or what. He asked her what she thought she was made for but she didn't answer, she only sat rocking and wondered if a one-armed man could put a new roof on her garden house. He asked a lot of questions that she didn't answer. He told her that he was twenty-eight years old and had lived a varied life. He had been a gospel singer, a foreman on the railroad, an assistant in an undertaking parlor, and he had come over the radio for three months with Uncle Roy and his Red Creek Wranglers. He said he had fought and bled in the Arm Service of his country and visited every foreign land and that everywhere he had seen people that didn't care if they did a thing one way or another. He said he hadn't been raised thataway.

A fat yellow moon appeared in the branches of the fig tree as if it were going to roost there with the chickens. He said that a man had to escape to the country to see the world whole and that he wished he lived in a desolate place like this where he could see the sun go down every evening like God made it to do.

"Are you married or are you single?" the old woman asked.

There was a long silence. "Lady," he asked finally, "where would you find you an innocent woman today? I wouldn't have any of this trash I could just pick up."

The daughter was leaning very far down, hanging her head almost between her knees, watching him through a triangular door she had made in her overturned hair; and she suddenly fell in a heap on the floor and began to whimper. Mr. Shiftlet straightened her out and helped her get back in the chair.

"Is she your baby girl?" he asked.

"My only," the old woman said, "and she's the sweetest girl in the world. I wouldn't give her up for nothing on earth. She's smart too. She can sweep the floor, cook, wash, feed the chickens, and hoe. I wouldn't give her up for a casket of jewels."

"No," he said kindly, "don't ever let any man take her away from you."

"Any man come after her," the old woman said, "I'll have to stay around the place."
Mr. Shiftlet's eye in the darkness was focused on a part of the automobile bumper that glittered in the distance. "Lady," he said, jerking his short arm up as if he could point with it to her house and yard and pump, "there ain't a broken thing on this plantation that I couldn't fix for you, one-arm jackleg or not. I'm a man," he said with a sullen dignity, "even if I ain't a whole one. I got," he said, tapping his knuckles on the floor to emphasize the immensity of what he was going to say, "a moral intelligence!" and his face pierced out of the darkness into a shaft of doorlight and he stared at her as if he were astonished himself at this impossible truth.

The old woman was not impressed with the phrase. "I told you you could hang around and work for food," she said, "if you don't mind sleeping in that car yonder."

"Why listen, Lady," he said with a grin of delight, "the monks of old slept in their coffins!"

"They wasn't as advanced as we are," the old woman said.

The next morning he began on the roof of the garden house while Lucynell, the daughter, sat on a rock and watched him work. He had not been around a week before the change he had made in the place was apparent. He had patched the front and back steps, built a new hog pen, restored a fence, and taught Lucynell, who was completely deaf and had never said a word in her life, to say the word "bird."

The big rosy-faced girl followed him everywhere, saying "Burrttdlt ddbirrrttdt," and clapping her hands. The old woman watched from a distance, secretly pleased. She was ravenous for a son-in-law.

Mr. Shiftlet slept on the hard narrow back seat of the car with his feet out the side window. He had his razor and a can of water on a crate that served him as a bedside table and he put up a piece of mirror against the back glass and kept his coat neatly on a hanger that he hung over one of the windows.

In the evenings he sat on the steps and talked while the old woman and Lucynell rocked violently in their chairs on either side of him. The old woman's three mountains were black against the dark blue sky and were visited off and on by various planets and by the moon after it had left the chickens. Mr. Shiftlet pointed out that the reason he had improved this plantation was because he had taken a personal interest in it. He said he was even going to make the automobile run.

He had raised the hood and studied the mechanism and he said he could tell that the car had been built in the days when cars were really built. "You take now," he said, "one man puts in one bolt and another man puts in another bolt and another man puts in another bolt so that it's a man for a bolt. That's why you have to pay so much for a car: you're paying all those men. Now if you didn't have to pay but one man, you could get you a cheaper car and one that had had a personal interest taken in it, and it would be a better car." The old woman agreed with him that this was so.

Mr. Shiftlet said that the trouble with the world was that nobody cared, or stopped and took any trouble. He said he never would have been able to teach Lucynell to say a word if he hadn't cared and stopped long enough.

"Teach her to say something else," the old woman said.

"What you want her to say next?" Mr. Shiftlet asked.

The old woman's smile was broad and toothless and suggestive. "Teach her to say 'sugarpie,'" she said.
Mr. Shiftlet already knew what was on her mind.

The next day he began to tinker with the automobile and that evening he told her that if she would buy a fan belt, he would be able to make the car run.

The old woman said she would give him the money. "You see that girl yonder?" she asked, pointing to Lucynell who was sitting on the floor a foot away, watching him, her eyes blue even in the dark. "If it was ever a man wanted to take her away, I would say, 'No man on earth is going to take that sweet girl of mine away from me!' but if he was to say, 'Lady, I don't want to take her away, I want her right here,' I would say, 'Mister, I don't blame you none. I wouldn't pass up a chance to live in a permanent place and get the sweetest girl in the world myself. You ain't no fool,' I would say."

"How old is she?" Mr. Shiftlet asked casually.

"Fifteen, sixteen," the old woman said. The girl was nearly thirty but because of her innocence it was impossible to guess.

"It would be a good idea to paint it too," Mr. Shiftlet remarked. "You don't want it to rust out."

"We'll see about that later," the old woman said.

The next day he walked into town and returned with the parts he needed and a can of gasoline. Late in the afternoon, terrible noises issued from the shed and the old woman rushed out of the house, thinking Lucynell was somewhere having a fit. Lucynell was sitting on a chicken crate, stamping her feet and screaming, "Burrrrdtt! bddurrrdtttt!" but her fuss was drowned out by the car. With a volley of blasts it emerged from the shed, moving in a fierce and stately way. Mr. Shiftlet was in the driver's seat, sitting very erect. He had an expression of serious modesty on his face as if he had just raised the dead.

That night, rocking on the porch, the old woman began her business at once. "You want you an innocent woman, don't you?" she asked sympathetically. "You don't want none of this trash."

"No'm, I don't," Mr. Shiftlet said.

"One that can't talk," she continued, "can't sass you back or use foul language. That's the kind for you to have. Right there," and she pointed to Lucynell sitting cross-legged in her chair, holding both feet in her hands.

"That's right," he admitted. "She wouldn't give me any trouble."

"Saturday," the old woman said, "you and her and me can drive into town and get married."

Mr. Shiftlet eased his position on the steps.

"I can't get married right now," he said. "Everything you want to do takes money and I ain't got any."

"What you need with money?" she asked.

"It takes money," he said. "Some people'll do anything anyhow these days, but the way I think, I wouldn't marry no woman that I couldn't take on a trip like she was somebody. I mean take her to a hotel and treat her. I wouldn't marry the Duchesser Windsor," he said firmly, "unless I could take her to a hotel and give her something good to eat.

"I was raised thataway and there ain't a thing I can do about it. My old mother taught me how to do."
"Lucynell don't even know what a hotel is," the old woman muttered. "Listen here, Mr. Shiftlet," she said, sliding forward in her chair, "you'd be getting a permanent house and a deep well and the most innocent girl in the world. You don't need no money. Lemme tell you something: there ain't any place in the world for a poor disabled friendless drifting man."

The ugly words settled in Mr. Shiftlet's head like a group of buzzards in the top of a tree. He didn't answer at once. He rolled himself a cigarette and lit it and then he said in an even voice, "Lady, a man is divided into two parts, body and spirit."

The old woman clamped her gums together.

"A body and a spirit," he repeated. "The body, lady, is like a house: it don't go anywhere; but the spirit, lady, is like a automobile: always on the move, always . . ."

"Listen, Mr. Shiftlet," she said, "my well never goes dry and my house is always warm in the winter and there's no mortgage on a thing about this place. You can go to the courthouse and see for yourself And yonder under that shed is a fine automobile." She laid the bait carefully. "You can have it painted by Saturday. I'll pay for the paint."

In the darkness, Mr. Shiftlet's smile stretched like a weary snake waking up by a fire. After a second he recalled himself and said, "I'm only saying a man's spirit means more to him than anything else. I would have to take my wife off for the week end without no regards at all for cost. I got to follow where my spirit says to go."

"I'll give you fifteen dollars for a week-end trip," the old woman said in a crabbed voice. "That's the best I can do."

"That wouldn't hardly pay for more than the gas and the hotel," he said. "It wouldn't feed her."

"Seventeen-fifty," the old woman said. "That's all I got so it isn't any use you trying to milk me. You can take a lunch."

Mr. Shiftlet was deeply hurt by the word "milk." He didn't doubt that she had more money sewed up in her mattress but he had already told her he was not interested in her money. "I'll make that do," he said and rose and walked off without treating with her further.

On Saturday the three of them drove into town in the car that the paint had barely dried on and Mr. Shiftlet and Lucynell were married in the Ordinary's office while the old woman witnessed. As they came out of the courthouse, Mr. Shiftlet began twisting his neck in his collar. He looked morose and bitter as if he had been insulted while someone held him. "That didn't satisfy me none," he said. "That was just something a woman in an office did, nothing but paper work and blood tests. What do they know about my blood? If they was to take my heart and cut it out," he said, "they wouldn't know a thing about me. It didn't satisfy me at all."

"It satisfied the law," the old woman said sharply.

"The law," Mr. Shiftlet said and spit. "It's the law that don't satisfy me."

He had painted the car dark green with a yellow band around it just under the windows. The three of them climbed in the front seat and the old woman said, "Don't Lucynell look pretty? Looks like a baby doll." Lucynell was dressed up in a white dress that her mother had uprooted from a trunk and there was a Panama hat on her
head with a bunch of red wooden cherries on the brim. Every now and then her placid expression was changed by a sly isolated little thought like a shoot of green in the desert. "You got a prize!" the old woman said.

Mr. Shiftlet didn't even look at her.

They drove back to the house to let the old woman off and pick up the lunch. When they were ready to leave, she stood staring in the window of the car, with her fingers clenched around the glass. Tears began to seep sideways out of her eyes and run along the dirty creases in her face. "I ain't ever been parted with her for two days before," she said.

Mr. Shiftlet started the motor.

"And I wouldn't let no man have her but you because I seen you would do right. Good-by, Sugarbaby," she said, clutching at the sleeve of the white dress. Lucynell looked straight at her and didn't seem to see her there at all. Mr. Shiftlet eased the car forward so that she had to move her hands.

The early afternoon was clear and open and surrounded by pale blue sky. Although the car would go only thirty miles an hour, Mr. Shiftlet imagined a terrific climb and dip and swerve that went entirely to his head so that he forgot his morning bitterness. He had always wanted an automobile but he had never been able to afford one before. He drove very fast because he wanted to make Mobile by nightfall.

Occasionally he stopped his thoughts long enough to look at Lucynell in the seat beside him. She had eaten the lunch as soon as they were out of the yard and now she was pulling the cherries off the hat one by one and throwing them out the window. He became depressed in spite of the car. He had driven about a hundred miles when he decided that she must be hungry again and at the next small town they came to, he stopped in front of an aluminum-painted eating place called The Hot Spot and took her in and ordered her a plate of ham and grits. The ride had made her sleepy and as soon as she got up on the stool, she rested her head on the counter and shut her eyes. There was no one in The Hot Spot but Mr. Shiftlet and the boy behind the counter, a pale youth with a greasy rag hung over his shoulder. Before he could dish up the food, she was snoring gently.

"Give it to her when she wakes up," Mr. Shiftlet said. "I'll pay for it now."

The boy bent over her and stared at the long pink-gold hair and the half-shut sleeping eyes. Then he looked up and stared at Mr. Shiftlet. "She looks like an angel of Gawd," he murmured.

"Hitch-hiker," Mr. Shiftlet explained. "I can't wait. I got to make Tuscaloosa."

The boy bent over again and very carefully touched his finger to a strand of the golden hair and Mr. Shiftlet left.

He was more depressed than ever as he drove on by himself. The late afternoon had grown hot and sultry and the country had flattened out. Deep in the sky a storm was preparing very slowly and without thunder as if it meant to drain every drop of air from the earth before it broke. There were times when Mr. Shiftlet preferred not to be alone. He felt too that a man with a car had a responsibility to others and he kept his eye out for a hitch-hiker. Occasionally he saw a sign that warned: "Drive carefully. The life you save may be your own."

The narrow road dropped off on either side into dry fields and here and there a shack or a filling station stood in a clearing. The sun began to set directly in front of the automobile. It was a reddening ball that through
his windshield was slightly flat on the bottom and top. He saw a boy in overalls and a gray hat standing on the edge of the road and he slowed the car down and stopped in front of him. The boy didn't have his hand raised to thumb the ride, he was only standing there, but he had a small cardboard suitcase and his hat was set on his head in a way to indicate that he had left somewhere for good. "Son," Mr. Shiftlet said, "I see you want a ride."

The boy didn't say he did or he didn't but he opened the door of the car and got in, and Mr. Shiftlet started driving again. The child held the suitcase on his lap and folded his arms on top of it. He turned his head and looked out the window away from Mr. Shiftlet. Mr. Shiftlet felt oppressed. "Son," he said after a minute, "I got the best old mother in the world so I reckon you only got the second best."

The boy gave him a quick dark glance and then turned his face back out the window.

"It's nothing so sweet," Mr. Shiftlet continued, "as a boy's mother. She taught him his first prayers at her knee, she give him love when no other would, she told him what was right and what wasn't, and she seen that he done the right thing. Son," he said, "I never rued a day in my life like the one I rued when I left that old mother of mine."

The boy shifted in his seat but he didn't look at Mr. Shiftlet. He unfolded his arms and put one hand on the door handle.

"My mother was a angel of Gawd," Mr. Shiftlet said in a very strained voice. "He took her from heaven and giver to me and I left her." His eyes were instantly clouded over with a mist of tears. The car was barely moving.

The boy turned angrily in the seat. "You go to the devil!" he cried. "My old woman is a flea bag and yours is a stinking pole cat!" and with that he flung the door open and jumped out with his suitcase into the ditch.

Mr. Shiftlet was so shocked that for about a hundred feet he drove along slowly with the door stiff open. A cloud, the exact color of the boy's hat and shaped like a turnip, had descended over the sun, and another, worse looking, crouched behind the car. Mr. Shiftlet felt that the rottenness of the world was about to engulf him. He raised his arm and let it fall again to his breast. "Oh Lord!" he prayed. "Break forth and wash the slime from this earth!"

The turnip continued slowly to descend. After a few minutes there was a guffawing peal of thunder from behind and fantastic raindrops, like tin-can tops, crashed over the rear of Mr. Shiftlet's car. Very quickly he stepped on the gas and with his stump sticking out the window he raced the galloping shower into Mobile.
In the graphic organizer below, include some of the more important observations you made about the literature in the collection. It is separated by genre.

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Look over the information present and the theme statement to which these works connect. Then, write a paragraph (on the back) showing how the different works all connect. In other words, answer these questions: Why does each item connect to each other? and How does this show that the theme statement is accurate?