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English Composition I
The heat inside the cab of the truck is almost unbearable and the constant droning of the reefer unit makes relaxation or thought a real chore. It's my first day on the job, and I have some idea of what I need to do; it's not complicated. Weigh the lobsters and crabs, write it down, and give the guy his slip. The hard part might be dealing with the fishermen. Working on the water can attract some real borderline personalities, so I'm half-expecting the first few encounters to be garnished with various "who the hell are you?"s and the odd "what happened to the other guy?" The heat and noise are obviously making me paranoid, so I decide to go into the back of the truck and enjoy the cooler temperature.

The truck itself is a good one. It is not one of those "sewing machine" diesels but a real truck with a seven-speed transmission, airbrakes, and a big six-cylinder diesel engine that spews black smoke and, thanks to the hole in the muffler, sounds like a stockcar. Driving it is a serious workout. The steering wheel, gearshift and clutch create a kind of universal gym that leaves me panting after the short drive to the canal. I open the side door and climb into the back and let the cooler air soothe me before doing something about the leaks in the back door. The temperature needs to be as cold as possible. Constant exposure to salt water has left the rear rolling overhead door about as airtight as a screen, and with only the side door open, the temperature is over 60 degrees in seconds. Although the lobster boats have cold water holding tanks, by the time the catch is off the boat and into my truck, the little critters can be running a serious fever. I need more like 40 degrees in the truck or the lobsters will die. At almost five dollars a pound, a truck load of heat stroked lobsters is not going to be acceptable, so I take the burlap sacks that are used to keep the lobsters wet and stuff them around the perimeter of the door to keep the cold air in.

It is even louder in the back of the truck than it is in the cab, so I barely hear someone yelling at me, and when I turn around I see a sweating, red-faced guy with a "Save America, Kill a Liberal" bumper sticker on the tailgate of his pick-up.

"Hi, my name's Sam." I try not to shout too loudly.

He hollers back, "Who the hell are you?"
"Well, I'm the new buyer," I answer, and he yells back, "What happened to the other guy? He was an idiot!"

"I think he's back in jail. I'm not sure," I yell over the wailing refrigerator unit. "Whaddaya got for me?" I ask him and tell him the prices for the day. "We're payin' four-fifty straight and fifty cents for good-sized, healthy crabs," I shout as unthreateningly as possible. So far, everything is going far worse than I would have expected, and the day has just begun.

The marina at Sandwich is called "the Basin" by the fishermen. The dirt parking lot on the west side of the basin is where most of the lobster boats are moored, and that's where I'll wait for them to return from the day's fishing. While they're out, the parking lot is full of their brand new pick-up trucks. These don't look like work trucks to me, but they are, and the oldest one is only three years old. This doesn't mean that business is all that good; in fact, it hasn't been good for a while.

Declining catches and shell-rot have hurt the industry in the past years, while the cost of "going out" continues to rise. Fuel costs rise every year, and so does the price of bait. A good stern-man can earn up to twenty percent of the catch, and some get a guarantee of one hundred dollars per day just to go out no matter how much is hauled in. Boat maintenance can make car problems seem like finding money in the street, and the fishing gear is either getting damaged or getting lost, but there is still money to be made. Working on the water, preferably alone, beats answering stupid questions at Home Depot or working on a construction crew. Most of the fishermen's wives have jobs that provide health insurance as well as a steady, year round income. I notice that the guys who aren't married don't have new pickup trucks. They drive old beater trucks that look as though they might not be safe.

Among the lobstermen at the Basin, lobster is not a favorite food, and no one sees the sense in trying to eat the crabs: too much work for too little meat. Crabs are the pistachios of the seafood world. Occasionally, someone will run from the floating docks up to the parking lot and grab a few beers from a cooler in the back of a truck. Some guys are doing repairs, and working in the bilge of a boat in ninety degree weather requires plenty of beer. For such hard workers, most of the men are not in what would be
considered good shape, and most of them are past the age that they would have lived to if they were doing this type of work a century ago. I can't help thinking how much easier the job would be if they weighed fifty pounds or so less, and I wonder how many people realize what it takes to put a lobster on the table. The people who catch lobsters seem to have little in common with the people who eat the lobsters. The lobster catcher relies on the lobster eater for his livelihood, and the lobster eater probably wouldn't last a day on a lobster boat.

In conversation, I sense that they have little regard for people who get paid a lot without risking their lives. The sub-culture of the commercial fisherman is one that has changed very little through the years and for a very good reason. Once at sea, regardless of diesel motors, hydraulic winches for hauling lobster pots, radar and two-way radios, not all that much has changed. The ocean is a mighty force to reckon with, and when things go wrong on a boat, the elements can always be counted on to make matters worse. Stories of sinkings and amputated fingers are not unusual. The men all claim to know someone who never made it home, and I believe them.

As a truck full of fish-totes pulls up, I brace myself for another Deliverance-type encounter. I am greeted cheerfully by Bob Berkeley, and all my preconceptions are immediately destroyed. Bob is a tall, slender man in his mid-fifties who doesn't drink and doesn't smoke. He is a former high school English teacher who lobsters in the summer and teaches skiing in the winter. He is also a private pilot who flies for a hobby. We talk easily, and after commenting on the price, we chat some more. I comment on the music on his truck radio, and he tells me he "saw them at Woodstock in 1969. I didn't take any of that brown acid, though!" he jokes, and I begin to relax.

Over all, they are actually a good bunch of guys, and I think I just may have managed to earn the trust and perhaps a little of the lobstersmen's respect. A few even asked if I might be interested in being a stern-man. I tell them thanks, but I wouldn't last a day in a lobster boat.

English Composition I

Erin Cimeno
Photographs are like stories without words. Wolfgang Schmidt, a photographer, recently displayed an exhibit of his images at the Higgins Art Gallery. The faces he captured on film are stunning examples of the raw emotion and telling tales that photographs can radiate. He visited many countries to obtain these photos, including Peru, Morocco, Guatemala, India, Nepal and Tibet. Schmidt excludes no one and with great dignity includes those from all walks of life. From wise old men and women to innocent children with dirtied faces, the artist portrays the lives of people who are often forgotten. Schmidt allows them to break language barriers and tell their stories to the world without ever needing to open their mouths.

Unlike most artists who centrally position their subjects at a distance, Schmidt opts for a closer, more personal approach to unconventional people. By taking his photos at close range, the artist is able to include many telling details that most pictures cannot convey. His audience is able to observe life-sized images of other human beings and thus gain a better understanding of them. Another aspect of Schmidt’s pictures that sets him apart from the other artists is his incorporation of natural backgrounds and sunlight. The people in his photos always seem at ease in their native surroundings.

One of these photos, entitled "Wise Tibetan Woman," depicts a face for which the piece is appropriately named. It shows an elderly woman who has round cheeks and a wide grin that give an instant feeling of contentment. An old sweater is wrapped around her shoulders, and a flowered scarf hangs loosely around her neck. The tanned and weathered skin of her face illustrates the knowledge and wisdom she must possess. Her kind blue eyes mimic the color and glimmer of a polished blue topaz, and each wrinkle on her face represents a feeling of well-deserved respect. Lush green trees create a pleasant atmosphere for this cheerful woman while the sun reflects brightly off her forehead.

Another eye-catching photo is "Happy Man in Lhasa," which was also taken in Tibet. Though he exudes the same feeling as the old woman, this man is from a less prosperous area of the country. He has small dark eyes and a beaming smile full of yellow decaying teeth. His disheveled
appearance makes his poverty obvious. The hair on his head and face is as unwashed as it is unruly. He stands in a town under the sun with no trees. Despite the pleasant weather, he wears many layers of clothes, including a once white shirt with a sullied collar beneath two worn cardigan sweaters. Regardless of his living conditions, this man appears to be happy in his own skin.

All of the photos in Schmidt’s show have the intensity of the two described, and it is easy to get lost in the stories provoked by them. Each picture displays different people performing their regular tasks in their otherwise uneventful homelands. Every one of the pictures is rich with color, light and passion, and the natives in them have a personal tale to tell.

Schmidt has a knack for incorporating people, places, color and light to portray the underlying tales of his subjects. His ability to reveal the inner beauty of the people in our world who live in the shadows is remarkable. The intimate approach that he takes toward his passion of photography creates an exhibit that is worth visiting.

English Composition II

Corey Colella

The Power of Faith

The struggle between good and evil is the essence of human existence and represents the foundation of all conscious thought and its expression through art. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s short story "Young Goodman Brown" chronicles the journey of a young Puritan man and his confrontation with the hidden evil in his community and the evil inherent within himself. Set in the Puritan community of Salem several decades after the infamous witch trials, it is also a commentary about hypocrisy among a people who preach righteousness while they are, in fact, malevolent. While this is the more obvious conclusion one might draw from the work, the deeper symbolic meaning of the story describing the propensity of people to fall from the right path and wander toward corruption expresses an all-encompassing view of humanity and the individual struggles with understanding and doubt that each person faces in life.
In establishing the setting, Hawthorne uses these elements of authenticity to enhance the realism in the thoughts, dialogue, and outside world of the characters. The gloomy style, in combination with the plot, develops the symbolic meaning of the story so that the story succeeds in enlightening the audience. As Goodman Brown and the Devil meet and begin to walk together deeper into the forest, the internal and external conflicts of the protagonist begin to become more obvious. An example of external conflict begins early when Goodman Brown encounters Goody Cloyse on the way to same event; ironically, she is none other than his old catechism teacher. This meeting in the woods is an example of Hawthorne's use of situational irony as is the presence of Salem's most prestigious citizens at the satanic gathering. The protagonist's internal struggle after learning of their hypocrisy forms the foundation of Goodman Brown's moral dilemma, his own fundamental choice between good and evil. This exposure to the truth, at least from Goodman Brown's perspective, changes his character and adds much complexity, fueling his fears and increasing his doubts. His loss of faith comes directly from his perceiving the evil of others, and rather than choose the path of righteousness for himself, he degenerates into madness.

The allegorical nature of "Young Goodman Brown" moves the true meaning from the literal to the symbolic. Throughout the story, Hawthorne uses a combination of his own created symbols, literary allusion, and archetypal symbols to give much more meaning and detail to the tale's events. The earliest symbols appear in the first two sentences of the story:

Young Goodman Brown came forth, at sunset, into the street of Salem village, but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife. And Faith...thrust her own pretty head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons of her cap.

Hawthorne uses the imagery of sunset and its symbolic meaning of finality to show that Goodman Brown has left behind Faith, symbolically his spiritual faith. It is inevitable that darkness, which symbolizes evil or death, will prevail over Goodman Brown's new state of mind. The description of the dark forest, which Goodman Brown continues to traverse, encourages a sense of impending danger, fear, and mounting confinement. Hawthorne uses the imagery of the thick trees and narrow bending path in this manner to express the notion that the farther one strays from the path
of righteousness, the more difficult it is to return. Although Goodman Brown maintains to himself and to the Devil that he should return, he actually walks deeper into the forest with his companion. "In `Young Goodman Brown' we must believe that the Devil is in the forest, but that the forest is within and the devil is ourselves..." (Blackbur 178). Thus, this imagery of entering a dark forest represents the journey into the self, the beginning of doubt, and the devilish thoughts one might encounter and embrace. Whether this is due to a simple human fascination with evil or an innate desire to commit evil is left up to the reader; however, it seems that Hawthorne confirms the latter when he refers to an "instinct that guides mortal man to evil" (Hawthorne 590). Hawthorne describes the loneliness of the protagonist's state and the vulnerability of being both alone and fearful as the result of losing his faith.

Similarly, the sky exists as the primary symbol reflecting Goodman Brown's state throughout the story. Initially, the twilight blue of the sky above the trees is another example of archetypal symbolism; the color blue represents freedom, idealism, and hope. As the opposite of red in the color spectrum, blue is perfectly opposed to the color Hawthorne associates with the Devil, and through this light imagery, another layer of symbolism becomes evident. Blue, together with the bright pink ribbons of Faith, stands in contrast to the shadows and dark red of a deep forest both in color and in meaning. "But after Young Goodman Brown has lost his Faith and testified to his conversion to doubt and evil, the blue sky is no longer visible; he plunges into 'the heart of the wilderness,' until he sees a `red light''' (Elder 101). The symbolism here is clear and shows that a lack of faith blocks out higher ideals, symbolized by heaven, and that without faith's guiding light, one falls into the dark, violent, and chaotic wilderness that is evil; the world of the Devil is a great ball of red blood.

In an allegorical story, the symbols created by the author are not only meant to be accurately interpreted, but also understood as carrying a moral message about life or some commentary about humanity. In this particular story, the symbols relate directly to the theme of the entire work and describe the struggle every free mind has with a seemingly incomprehensible existence. Young Goodman Brown, however, allows himself to see only the evil within his community, and without any redeeming thoughts of potential goodness among humankind, he becomes an embittered man who refuses to acknowledge the possibility of goodness and spiritual redemption within him and others.
After his incident in the forest, Goodman Brown becomes a victim of his own obsession with evil and becomes blind to whatever good may exist. "Brown allows his newly awakened sense of the potential for human depravity to color his perceptions, and he is thenceforth unable to derive any pleasure from the society of others" (Fitzgerald 153). The destruction of Brown's life is the result of his own naïve belief in all good or no good and arises from his inability to appreciate the good possibilities of free will. As the representative of any human being, Goodman Brown also epitomizes Hawthorne's belief that people naturally pursue evil and that faith is all anyone has to stay afloat in a perpetually sinking ship. Essentially, the desperation of Goodman Brown to keep faith alive and uncorrupted illustrates that faith itself is the only means of resisting the evil in our own hearts.

Hawthorne is known as an author of allegories who frequently uses symbolism to express deeper meanings in his stories. "Young Goodman Brown" is a perfect example of a story that reaches beyond the superficial to paint a gloomy portrait of self-examination, the choices people make between good and evil, and ultimately the struggle to keep faith alive in our own hearts.

Works Cited


English Composition II

Amber Collins

Feminist Perspectives of the Early 20th Century
Kate Chopin was reviled in life outside of her native New Orleans as an extremist and fanatic, yet found modern acclaim during the pinnacle of the feminist movement. Acknowledgement of the literary merit of her novel The Awakening introduced an eager audience to her other works, such as the concise opus "The Story of an Hour." Charlotte Perkins-Gilman, in contrast, enjoyed praise in life as her published works, most prominently "The Yellow Wallpaper," gained recognition, and she actively participated in the similarly revolutionary era of the jazz age. Also known as the Roaring Twenties, the jazz age was an explosive precursor to the feminist movement in declaring women's genuine desire to be relieved of the historical bondage imposed and accepted in a male-dominated society.

Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" and Perkins-Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" explore themes reflecting the lives of the authors and timeless sentiments felt by generations of women. The authors employ foreshadowing, irony, and symbolism, among other literary techniques, to provide the reader with an understanding of women’s suffering, felt and echoed in later years by such feminist icons as Eleanor Roosevelt, Betty Friedan, and Gloria Steinem (Imbornoni 3). In examining the social and cultural mores of their time, both works effectively emphasize the anguish arising from independence denied.

Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" is set in the home of Mrs. Mallard, a reticent wife informed of a train accident resulting in the death of her husband. The story opens with Mrs. Mallard's ambiguous "heart trouble" and therefore the "great care taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death" (Chopin 552). This is later recognized as foreshadowing, as the later death of Mrs. Mallard is said to be due to "heart disease _ of joy that kills" (553).

In beginning to comprehend Mrs. Mallard, the reader understands the presentation of situational irony, as the omniscient third person narrator informs the reader throughout the story of Mrs. Mallard's predisposition with respect to her newfound sovereignty. Mrs. Mallard takes time to digest the terms of widowhood and, in isolated solace, quickly takes comfort in the prospect of independence. Illustrative of dramatic irony, Mrs. Mallard whispers repetitively, "Free! Body and soul free!" (553). The reader simultaneously understands Mrs. Mallard is eventually freed, but only in the sense that expected subservience as the wife of a well-made man.
"The Story of an Hour" employs several archetypal symbols. As Mrs. Mallard sits "pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul" (552), she faces an open window with a view of tree tops, symbolic of connectedness and growth, and the sound of "sparrows twittering" (552), symbolic of freedom. That Mrs. Mallard is affected with unspecified heart trouble is a symbol in itself, the heart representing the emotional center. These symbols tie together to demonstrate Mrs. Mallard's desire for independence as indicative of Chopin's fascination with "the basic, primitive desires of both men and women. [Humans]... are complex creatures who have no choice but to discover their passion, in spite of risks, confusion, and guilt" (Bloom 81).

Kate Chopin was born Catherine O'Flaherty in 1850 to a prominent Missouri family. When Kate was five, her father, a renowned Irish-born businessman named Thomas O'Flaherty, was killed, along with numerous city dignitaries, aboard a train crossing the newly opened Gasconade Bridge as it collapsed during opening ceremonies (Petry 2).

As the O'Flaherty estate was left to Kate's mother Eliza, who never re-married, the connection between Chopin's life and that of Mrs. Mallard briefly glimpsed in "The Story of an Hour" is obvious. Drawing from her mother's explicit freedom and her own experiences of subjugation simply for being female, Chopin daringly explores the probable mindset of her mother at the news of her husband's death, risking chances of future censure and rejection as a writer.

Charlotte Perkins-Gilman employs irony and symbolism within the poignant wit of "The Yellow Wallpaper" to portray a further developed but congruently dramatic theme. "The Yellow Wallpaper" is told in the first person point of view by a nameless narrator, spending the summer months at a vacation home on lease to her husband, John, who happens to be a "physician of high standing" (Perkins-Gilman 572). The narrator's "temporary nervous depression [and] slight hysterical tendency" (572) is deemed curable only with a common treatment of the time known as a "rest cure," demanding complete lethargy on the part of the afflicted.

This illness and its cure are apt depictions not only of the mindset of the era, but of situational irony. The story is told as the hastily written ruminations of a narrator who, by the terms of her rest cure, is not to think the slightest of thoughts, forcing hurried entries in a secret journal while
her husband is not paying attention. Because John is unavailable to her other than as a breadwinner and decision-maker, the narrator has time to depict her descent into madness as she is effectively imprisoned in a former nursery, complete with "windows barred for little children" (573). The supposed cure for the narrator's illness is eventually what drives her to insanity, trapping her in her own mind and forcing her to delusions and hallucinations evocative of the inescapability of her situation.

The nursery as the setting of the story is symbolic in its representation of the narrator's inability to evade the confines of her mind, a mind that screams of irreversible damage inflicted over the course of her rest cure sentence. The room her husband has chosen, for the convenience of space for two beds, was initially meant to contain the children of the former homeowner. Although the narrator makes several suggestions as to rooms she would feel more comfortable in, John refers to her as a "blessed little goose" (574) and his "little girl" (578), brushing the suggestions off as fanciful, patronizingly explaining that although she might not realize it, "the place is doing [her] good" (574).

As the narrator quickly understands that the rest cure is failing and essentially working against her recovery, she weakly hints at this fact. Regardless, John truly believes that the rest cure, and the nursery specifically, are best for his wife's condition, choosing not to "[let] it get the better of [her, believing that] nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give way to such fancies" (574). As a physician and man accustomed to being in control, John refuses to accept the idea that she may not benefit from the treatment he has prescribed.

The yellow wallpaper itself becomes, as do the barred windows, emblematic of the narrator's internment. She begins to see the wallpaper as two layers, the top layer confining her delusion of a "woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern" (577). The reader can see the narrator's feelings of incarceration transposed to the hallucination of the confined woman, who mirrors the narrator's suffering as she is trapped in direct conflict between her own beliefs and those of general society and specifically those of her husband.

The narrator eventually sees the woman hidden in the wallpaper escaping. She is described as a shadowy figure,
"always creeping... in that long shaded lane, creeping up and down... in those dark grape arbors, creeping all round... creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a wind" (581). The narrator's own wish to escape and the unfairness of the shadow's daylight creeping while the narrator is held captive promote further insanity, forcing a deeper recognition of helplessness and the need for her to take action.

The action taken is that of removing the wallpaper. The paper has already been "stripped off... in great patches all around the head of my bed, ...and in a great place on the other side of the room low down" (573). On the last day of the narrator's stay in the room, she takes it upon herself to remove as much of the paper as she can, saying to John, "I've got out at last... in spite of you... And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back" (584).

"Having tolerated enforced rest for weeks, the narrator reclaims her right to `work' by joining her symbolic sister in bondage in vigorously stripping the walls of its paper" (Knight 10). The narrator's indignant tone is that of a woman free, and in freeing the woman behind the wallpaper, whom she has come to accept as real to the point of identity unification, the narrator essentially frees herself.

Charlotte Perkins-Gilman was born Charlotte Perkins a day before Independence Day in 1860 and raised in poverty due to an absent father (8). Perkins-Gilman was for a time Perkins-Stetson, and as her first marriage proved incompatible with her wishes to work, she expressed the torture of captivity with the publication of "The Yellow Wallpaper" two years before her divorce in 1894.

"John says if I don't pick up faster he shall send me to see Weir Mitchell in the fall. But I don't want to go there at all. I had a friend who was in his hands once, and she says he is just like John and my brother [who is also a physician], only more so" (Perkins-Gilman 576). Silas Weir Mitchell, a leading nerve specialist of the time and an advocate of the rest cure, is an actual physician to whom Perkins-Gilman herself had been sent after suffering what would today be called severe post-partum depression (Knight 8), a diagnosis not even considered in those times and therefore a condition often grossly mistreated.

In the story Mitchell, who would certainly reinforce the husband's prescription of the rest cure, eventually shown to be the cause of her insanity, is mentioned only briefly as a
threat to the narrator. "The Yellow Wallpaper" can be construed as an effective "I told you so" to Weir Mitchell and Perkins-Gilman's first husband, Charles Walter Stetson, both of whom boasted the benefits of the rest cure and domestic home life.

The life experiences mentioned above demonstrate the reflection of the real lives of both Chopin and Perkins-Gilman within "The Story of an Hour" and "The Yellow Wallpaper." Unfortunately Chopin, who died in 1904, was unable to witness a brewing revolution's fruition with the rise of the jazz age, affectionately known as the Roaring Twenties. Perkins-Gilman enjoyed acclaim during this time as a popular literary figure and public speaker, having found happiness in her second attempt at marriage to a cousin (Kennedy and Gioia 571).

The Roaring Twenties began boisterously in 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote, after countless formative years and the foundation of women's groups such as The National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1890, The National Association of Colored Women in 1896 and the National Women's Party in 1913. In 1921, the American Birth Control League was formed, and it took fifteen years for the distribution of birth control information to dispel its reputation as offensive (Imbornoni 2). Although birth control pills were not approved by the Food and Drug Administration until 1960, the fact that birth control was available at all as early as the twenties was a step towards the empowerment of women, who for so long had had no reproductive choice.

Although Chopin was condemned for the content of her work, its literary merit was undeniable, and she enjoyed a comeback during the feminist movement that swept the nation in the 1960s and seventies. Reignited by the formation of The National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966, the 1967 expansion of Lyndon Johnson's affirmative action policy covering gender discrimination, and the 1973 Supreme Court ruling establishing a woman's right to a safe and legal abortion through Roe v. Wade (Imbornoni 4), the feminist movement was the perfect avenue for the resurrection of Chopin's work, specifically The Awakening, which opened the doors for acceptance of her short stories.

The feminist ideal has yet to be fully reached. Authors such as Chopin and Perkins-Gilman espoused values stressing equality and feminine independence with stories such as "The Story of an Hour" and "The Yellow Wallpaper,"
but sadly the full fruition of that independence must be considered a future prospect even today. The most recent White House figures available regarding gender wage gaps, published in 1998, show women making seventy-five percent of the wages men make after factoring such variables as discrimination, union involvement, and educational status (Council of Economic Advisors).

Chopin and Perkins-Gilman stood for that which seemed distant in the future, a long-held dream of escape from repression at the hands of a nation populated and governed by men obsessed with maintaining control over those deemed the "weaker sex." The seemingly impossible dream has been legally realized; however, those hard-won equal rights promised only after years of struggle have yet to be fully activated. The fight must continue for modern women to lose the belief that they are less than their male counterparts.

Works Cited


The beginning of United States involvement in World War II began on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked the American military base at Pearl Harbor. The start of the war brought about many great advances in American aviation, such as the first helicopter, the jet-powered engine, as well as the development of missiles and rockets ("Aviation"). A New York Times article published in 1944 stated, "We Americans have run wild on the subject of the future of aviation" and also reported that there were "fantastic predictions about the number of airplanes which will fill the skies immediately after the war" (Burden 1). All of the advancements in aviation that have now become a reality must be truly astonishing to people who lived during WWII. However, there is one advance that took place during the war that has been forgotten in our nation's history: women pilots who served in WWII. For some reason, the courageous stories of 1,830 American women who flew for our country, as well as the 38 who sacrificed their lives, have been lost.

When the British and Russians first granted the involvement of women pilots in the military, a total of 23 American women joined the "Royal Air Transport Auxiliary" (ATA) based in England; it was considered to be "the first organized group of American women pilots in the war" (Tanner 13). In a recent NECN broadcast, a former "ATA girl" was interviewed about her experiences as a pilot during the war. Anne Wood, who is now in her 80s and resides in Manchester, MA, recalls a time when she was "just one of the boys." In 1939, Wood, then a college student, heard about President Franklin D. Roosevelt's program, which was aimed toward recruiting women "civilian pilots" to join the war effort. The American military was not yet ready to accept such a proposal, so Anne Wood decided to join the ATA. She moved to a London estate and lived there while she trained to be a military pilot, along with many other ambitious American women, such as the famous Jacqueline Cochran. Cochran had established herself as a record-setting pilot on July 1, 1941, when she became the first woman to "ferry a Lockheed Hudson bomber across the Atlantic for delivery to the besieged British" (Tanner 13). It was her idea to set up a training program for women pilots, and she expressed this to President Roosevelt when she was
invited to the White House for her many flight accomplishments. This meeting was the beginning of a plan that would soon allow women to perform various domestic flying tasks for their country.

The American military experienced a shortage of male pilots in 1942, and it was then that the Army Air Forces agreed to arrange a training program for women pilots. After serving as a flight captain with the ATA, Cochran returned to participate in organizing the first program of its kind in American military history. Of 25,000 volunteer women civilian pilots who jumped at the opportunity, only 1,830 were accepted into the program. In order to qualify for training, the women had to meet certain requirements. Applicants had to be American citizens between 18.5 and 35 years of age; had to stand at least 64 inches tall; had to pass the Forum Sixty-Four physical examination performed by a flight surgeon, and had to have a total of 35 certified flying hours completed (Tanner 14). The women who were selected learned everything they could about aviation over a 27-week period. Four hundred hours of the program were dedicated to "ground schooling" the women about aircraft design, theory of flight, mathematics, physics, navigation, weather, instrument flying, codes, and many other skills deemed necessary before taking to the skies. The other section of the program required that everyone complete 210 hours of in-air flight instruction.

Women were not allowed to fight in combat during the war, yet the skills they acquired throughout the training period were based upon the very same flying techniques and requirements that men had to learn. The only omitted flying practices were the ones involving formation and aerobatic instruction, which could only be applied during combat duty (Tanner 15). The women had originally been separated into two training groups: the Women's Auxiliary Ferry Service (WAFS) and the 319th Army Air Force Flying Detachment. They operated as individual units until August 1943, when the two training groups joined together. The commanding General of the Army Air Forces, Henry "Hap" Arnold, became responsible for guiding and overseeing the development of the new organization called the "Women Airforce Service Pilots" or WASP. The woman in charge of directing and organizing the WASP program was Jacqueline Cochran. With the support of General Arnold, as well as a contract that granted the training of women in the "Army method of flying," the WASPs were ready to make their mark in aviation history (Parish 1).
As more and more women began to arrive for training, it was evident that the Howard Hughes Municipal Airport in Houston, TX was now overcrowded, making it too dangerous to continue. The only other area for the WASP program to relocate was Avenger Field in Sweetwater, TX. This was seemingly a perfect place for the women to go; however, it did have one drawback: a male cadet training program, though near completion, was still in progress at the location. Despite initial hesitation, 95 women arrived in Sweetwater on November 1, 1943. Class 44-W-4 was the first group of women pilots ever to train alongside male cadets. When the men graduated and relocated for official duty, Avenger Field became "the only all-female Air Force base in history, which became known as `Cochran's Convent'" (Fly Girls).

Each part of the piloting program was considered a separate "phase" that each woman had to pass before advancing toward graduation and receiving her Silver Wings. The first phase of training was the Primary phase, which involved 70 hours of in-air flight instruction. Many of the women had experience only with flying civilian airplanes, such as the 65-horsepower Piper Cub. The WASPs were now being taught how to fly military aircraft that had almost three times as much horsepower as they were accustomed to. "WASPs flew virtually every type of aircraft from light trainers to heavy four-engine bombers" (United States). Once they had mastered the operation of trainer planes like the 175-horsepower Fairchild PT-19, the Stearman PT-17 with a 225-horsepower engine was introduced (Tanner 16).

Learning how to maneuver these great American military giants was difficult in itself, but mastery in the sky was a requirement for every woman in the WASP program. Flight instructors would test each pilot’s skills by unexpectedly killing the engine in mid-air or by ordering emergency landings. Since the WASPs were training to be part of the most powerful military in the world, they had to be prepared for a wide range of surprising circumstances. Testing in the primary phase proved who was capable of thinking "quickly, calmly, and carefully under such pressure" and reminded the women that "there was no tolerance for emotional reaction or hysteria" (Tanner 17).

Those who successfully passed the first phase would then move on to the basic phase of instrument flying. Women pilots of Class 44-W-4 were used as the "guinea pigs" for the Army when the group was sent straight into the final Advanced phase of standard military pilot training instead of
completing the Basic phase as male trainees had always done. The Army wanted to skip the second phase to prevent "the waste of time and money" they had been putting forth in the past, only to have many cadets "wash out during the final or Advanced phase" (Tanner 18). Although the experiment proved to be a success in the end, the women were a bit intimidated when confronted with the 650-horsepower North American AT-6 "Texan" advanced trainer (18). The pilots soon grew fond of the powerful machine and moved forward through each step of the program with enthusiasm and a new sense of fulfillment in their lives.

Army Airforce flight training provided women with the feeling that they were actually contributing to society. The 1,074 women who graduated from the WASP program went on to perform numerous duties for the United States Air Force. They completed all types of flight operations from 1942-1944; ferrying, engineering testing, demonstrations (towing targets for aerial gunnery), check piloting, administrative duties, and acting as flight instructors were just some of the WASP women's responsibilities performed in 77 types of different aircraft (Fly Girls). On December 20, 1944, just eleven days after the final graduation ceremony, a letter from General Arnold informed the WASP women that their "volunteered services" were no longer needed. There was nothing that he could have done to prevent the end of the WASP program because it was all based on a decision made by the U.S. Congress.

Years filled with confusion and resentment passed while the contributions of women who served under the WASP program during WWII were ignored. They were never awarded any military honors, and the families of the 38 women who sacrificed their lives received no assistance with funeral costs or in bringing their loved ones home. "The government made no provision for returning the body back home because the women had no official military status" (Fly Girls). After a series of failed attempts, surviving WASP members finally convinced Congress to pass Bill 3277 in 1977, which provided them with veteran status and benefits for their active duty service as American Air Force Pilots during WWII. These women waited 33 years for well-deserved and certainly long overdue acknowledgment. The country they served and protected refused to accept women pilots as significant figures in history for a painful length of time, but now their stories are being told and their memories can be relived.
One particular word can describe the horrible contents of a lingering dark cloud shading my vital hopes. I would use the word "oblivious." The horrible contents include ignorance, hate and wrongful prejudgment. Millions of people around the earth are oblivious to the hate that surrounds us all. I have experienced these contents for too many years in far too many places. Three most damaging experiences have left permanent emotional scars.

The first experience occurred when I was thirteen years old. I spent the first fifteen years of my life in a "separated" town. The Caucasian population was located in the center of the small town and was surrounded by the huge African American population. My mother raised four kids in the poor, highly populated area until she saved enough money to buy a house big enough for all of her family. The only house big enough was located between the African-American and the Caucasian population. That is where my brother and I were raised. When my brother and I grew old enough to
walk a quarter of a mile down the road to the grocery store, we jumped at the opportunity to go. Little did we know that we were in for a rude awakening. As we proceeded to look around for the items our mother told us to purchase, we noticed that a small Caucasian man was following three or four feet behind us. When we turned the corner, the store employee turned the corner. When we stopped, the store employee stopped. After we returned home, I asked my brother why that strange acting man was following us. My brother, a couple of years older than I was, said the man thought we were going to steal from the store. From then on, whenever I went to the store, this man or someone else who worked there followed me. This went on for several weeks until I finally asked the man trailing me why he was following me. He replied in a very sarcastic and intimidating way. "You people always steal from us." Because I knew my brother and I did not steal from the store, I finally realized that this man was wrong in his assumption. I later saw every African-American in that store being followed, but I could not understand why people acted this way.

My next experience was when I was a couple of years older and much more aware of what was going on in the world. My family moved close to Washington D.C. I applied for and started a job at a moving company very close to my house. One day I was assigned to pack and load the furniture and household items of a man who lived just two streets down from my home. It was a big job, so my co-workers and I had to do a lot of preparation. We arrived at the client's home and proceeded to open the truck and take out all the materials we needed to complete the job. Suddenly a big Caucasian man ran out to meet us and seemed to be very upset. "I didn't order any black boys," he said. The leader of our crew responded with a very calm voice and told him to let us do our job. If he did not want our services, we would leave. I was not the only African-American on the crew. And we were both offended. After a few words with our crew leader, the man finally let us into his home, so we could pack up his house and move him out. The client proceeded to walk around me and the other black worker making extremely rude comments. This man did not want us touching his belongings because we had dark skin. He had no clue who we were, but that did not matter. All he saw were two black men in his home; we might as well have worn prison uniforms. I did not know why this man judged us prematurely. I did not know what made him feel that way, but I was angry because I knew I didn't deserve that type of treatment. I went home later that day and thought about the reasons people create such horrible tension in the world by
acting this way. It seemed that everywhere I went, someone did not like me because of my skin or even the way I dressed. I wondered to myself if people would ever stop treating me like an outsider when I did nothing wrong. I was overwhelmed with confusion, anger, resentment and sadness because I just couldn't understand why this was happening. Luckily for me, I had the support of a big loving family to reassure me and help me continue to try to get over the situations that troubled me.

The most recent hateful experience I came across was six months later. My girlfriend had just finished moving into a house in which she had rented a room. Whenever I went to visit her, the owner of the house would give me hateful looks. I had seen this same look on the faces of the people who had prejudged me in the past. My girlfriend then told me that the owner had said that she would have to find another place to live because he did not want a black girl living in his home. I was once again struck by the anger and confusion of a hateful situation. That night I went back to see my girlfriend. I was walking in the door when she ran out to me shaking and screaming. The owner had attempted to force himself on her and told her that black girls were put on the earth to please the white man. I quickly called a friend to come and get us, so we could get her belongings and leave. As we were walking to the car, I was suddenly hit with so much anger that I could not control my thoughts. I thought this person needed to pay for his actions.

I turned around and went back into the house to look for the man who had assaulted my girlfriend. I did not know how I was going to behave once I found him. I knew it was going to be really bad. I stood in front of him, and he told me that she deserved it. He then told me I was a little monkey in shining armor. I tried to turn around and walk away as I had in the past, but this time the anger and frustration were too much to bear. I lunged at him and put my hands around his throat and squeezed, not hard enough to cut off his breathing, but hard enough to show him that I was oozing rage because of his ignorant actions. Just a few seconds later, my girlfriend appeared behind me and told me to stop because I was giving into the hate and anger. She said I was placing myself at his level of ignorance by trying to hurt him. I thought for a few seconds that seemed like a few hours. Then I released the man’s neck, turned away and got into the car with my girlfriend. I didn't speak for about forty-five minutes because my mind could not tolerate the raging emotions. Later I settled down and collected my thoughts. The uncomfortable chill of that memory is imprinted on my
soul.

These experiences called for a lot of will power and self-respect, not to mention an open mind and patience. I had to find the patience that I didn't really have and use it to acknowledge the situations and think about them clearly. I realized the importance of trying to prevent the hateful misjudgment of ignorant minds. Unfortunately, it is nearly impossible to prevent, so I am forced to face it head on and overcome the bitterness of hate. My goal is to teach my children not to prejudge others by their race, gender or culture. In turn, my children will teach their children. I strongly believe that over time this will make the world just a little less hateful.

English Composition I

Christine Towle-Jonas

The Assignment

When I was twelve years old and in the middle of seventh grade, I had to move. My mind holds numerous memorable events that happened during that time period, along with a cast of characters I could not forget if I tried. There was one character in particular, my English teacher. With one simple assignment, he taught me a complex lesson.

I can remember vividly the first day I walked into his classroom. I was wearing my black velvet blazer, which I thought looked wonderful on me. I felt that it made me look like an adult. I entered the room clutching my blue three-ring binder close to my chest as if it were a shield (I had wanted a Trapper Keeper like all the other kids). Fear had taken me over completely. With my head down, somehow I managed to navigate my way to the back of the room to an empty seat. As I took a quick glance around at my new surroundings, I spotted him.

Sitting at a rickety old metal desk with a dent in the front panel was my new English teacher, Mr. Rogers. He was looking intently at something in front of him on the desk. It seemed as if he didn't realize there was anyone in the room with him. His head rested on his hand, and his white, greasy hair stuck out in every possible direction. Occasionally he would run his hand through his hair, causing a mini snow
With one deep breath, he blew the accumulated dead skin flakes off his desk. With another, he gave a writing assignment that I'll remember for the rest of my life. As I watched the skin particles falling for a second time, I heard him say, "In front of you there's a piece of paper and an index card. On that piece of paper, write what it is you want to be when you grow up. The index card is for you to give me a permanent address in your life because I'm going to mail your paper to you when you turn twenty-one." I followed his instructions (at that age, I had yet to become completely defiant), and then I forgot it ever happened.

A short time after my twenty-first birthday, to my complete astonishment, someone in my life kept his word. Just as Mr. Rogers had said he would, he mailed me that paper. There it was in an envelope in my shaking hands, waiting to be opened. I tried desperately to remember what I had written that day.

As I held the envelope and stared at it, it started feeling incredibly heavy. That's when curiosity arrived, bringing the strength needed to open the envelope. The first thing that struck me was visual, the handwriting. The paper was written in pencil, and the letters looked like bubbles floating haphazardly around the page. It looked as if a child had written it. Confused, I started reading to figure out why I had received this letter written by some little girl. That girl rambled on about how it'd be "cool" to be an astronaut up in space, staring down at the earth. She also mentioned something about possibly being a lawyer, but nothing could have prepared me for what I read next. She wrote, "I guess I don't know what I want to be when I grow up, but I know what I don't want to be! I don't want to be a housewife with a nagging husband who tells me what I can or can not do and a bunch of screaming kids." When I realized that I was that little girl, my knees buckled underneath me, and I fell to the floor. I remembered.

I sat on the floor with my knees pulled up against my chest as if they were a shield that could protect me. My daughter was crawling over to me, squealing with excitement to have me at her level. At the exact moment she reached me, I heard her father yelling obscenities outside in the driveway in conjunction with my name, possibly an indication that I was going to need a stronger shield. Clearly, it was an indication that I had created my life exactly the way
I had not wanted it. "How did this happen?" I asked myself over and over again as tears fell in an unstoppable torrent. I fought with all my strength the overwhelming need to run and hide.

This was a turning point in my life. Remembering my mind set when I wrote that paper was breaking my heart. I had thought I was an adult; I had thought I knew all there was to know. I had made life decisions, adult decisions, decisions that were crucial to the formation of my future. Now I realized that I was just a little girl when I made those decisions, a little girl who dotted her i's with bubbles.

My mother used to quote a Native American proverb to me that said, "Be aware and beware; as human creatures we can create our worst fears." Most of the time I had been able to figure out the meanings of her little sayings, and I'd learn something from them that I could apply to my life. That particular saying had escaped my understanding at the time she presented it to me. The assignment Mr. Rogers gave me was instrumental in helping me to understand what had escaped me before. Now I am aware of how powerful my forces within truly are.

English Composition I

Brian Kelley

Talking the Talk Is Almost as Important as Walking the Walk

Snowboarding is among the newest and fastest growing sports. Over the last decade, it has quickly developed a culture of its own. Influences come from skateboarding, surfing, hip-hop, and punk music. For some people, snowboarding is a lifestyle. With the growth of the sport, a language has developed. The lifestyle and the language snowboarders speak define them as "true" snowboarders. Snowboarders from the icy East Coast to the riders of the champagne powder out West share this language of snowboarding.

A group of teenagers sit across from the top of a chairlift departure. Their rebellious image and the strange English they speak are all anyone needs to see and to hear to know that they are snowboarders. They are separate from the
skiers, racers, and weekend warriors. Many people try to buy their way into the subculture by imitating images they see in magazines, but unless they are surrounded by the sport, they never learn the snowboard lingo. Most of the words and phrases snowboarders use have never been written down, so there is no correct spelling for many of them. Most terms are used only when discussing the sport or when snowboarders are actually snowboarding.

"During this shred session, I was greasing this jibb when I bailed and took a gnar gnar fall broaa." The language is very strange and sounds uneducated to someone unfamiliar with snowboarding. Most of the words describe and break down the different maneuvers pulled. Words like "cab," "cork," "underflip," "backside spin," "stalefish," "melon," and "japan" explain aerial tricks, how people throw themselves in the air. Then there are words to describe the amount of air and style someone has when executing a trick. To say someone "stuck a hella huge cab seven with mad steeze" would be the same as saying he landed two complete spins, 720 degrees, with a lot of style. More words break down jibb tricks, which are maneuvers on rails and boxes. A term for someone who is new to the sport or a poser would be "joey" or "rook." These terms are especially effective in keeping the outsiders out because when you put people down by calling them joeys, they have no idea that you are insulting them. It is very different from just telling them that they're no good. These code names work for a lot of people. Attractive females are called "snow bunnies" on the hill, and young talented kids are called "groms."

The words and phrases snowboarders use are tools to define themselves as a group and to keep outsiders out. It takes considerable practice to learn new tricks and allow style to develop in snowboarding. The snowboard lingo is used among snowboarders, and newcomers pick it up over time. Using the terms allows other riders to know that you have put time and energy into the sport and that you have not just bought into it with the main stream. Even though some riders may not have the talent or skills, if they still love riding and have passion for the sport, they are snowboarders. They prove that to the rest of the group by using the terminology. The language is something that snowboarders have earned, a group of symbols no one else is supposed to be able to relate to.
Mom and I sat with my sisters on the front steps of our house waiting for him to come home from work. It was Friday, and he was always late when we were headed for the cottage. Suddenly, I could hear his red Fiat Spider buzzing down the road. The Fiat was the last vestige of his independence, and he loved his little red sports car. According to my mother, it had something to do with male menopause. He wheeled into the drive, and with two little beeps he announced he was home, albeit forty-five minutes late. The cooler was already packed with sandwiches, sodas, crackers, face wipes, and other road survival items. My mother was always prepared. We piled into the family's 1969 Ford Country Squire that was nearing the end of its useful existence. The last member of the family to jump in was Kelly, our faithful dog, who watched over the three of us like a second mother. It was a long ride to Sebago, but the time passed quickly by playing slug bug, a yelling game we invented to count Volkwagens. When we tired of the game, my sister and I would tease our younger sibling until tears and crying commenced. It was great fun until, as always, my father would announce (more like bellow) that the hand was coming around. Naturally we had to push the issue of his patience until whacks were evenly distributed, even to my little sister. After two hours we stopped for supper at Yoken's restaurant in Portsmouth, where my father could cool off with a beer and my mother made sure we all peed. Even Kelly had to pee. Yoken's had great food and kids under six ate for free. This was obviously the main attraction for my father, in addition to the beer. Yoken's had a magic treasure box that you could try to open with a key all the kids got with their meal. In all the years we were in that restaurant, I never saw one kid open that box.

We piled back into the car dressed in our pajamas, with our blankets and stuffed animals. Soon the sounds of the Maine Turnpike turned the endless trip into wonderful dreams of fishing and running through the woods. When the car finally stopped, I woke up to the blackness of the Maine woods and the brilliance of thousands of stars in the sky. The frogs croaked and sang their nightly love songs to the accompaniment of crickets chirping. My mother held my hand leading me up the path to the cottage, while my father
carried my little sister up the stairs. Because my other sister was the middle child, she was left to fend for herself as usual. I am sure that to this day she is psychologically scarred from such abuse. Soon we were all tucked into our beds and fell asleep listening to the crickets and the frogs while our parents fooled around and giggled down on the porch.

The cottage faced east over the lake, and in the summer the sun would burst into our room at some ungodly hour to announce the new day. This day was no different from any other cottage day, and I woke up my sisters to announce that fishing would commence in five minutes. We all dressed in our shorts and shirts and, quietly as we could, crept down the stairs to where our rods and tackle box awaited us. I retrieved the worm can from the basement, and soon the three of us were tumbling down the path to the dock with Kelly trailing behind. Tumbling is probably the best phraseology, as old "mister snarley root" was always waiting on that path to grab one of us by the foot and cast us to the ground. On that day I tripped; tackle box, fishing rod, worms and boy flew threw the air like an Olympic gymnast, much to the great amusement of my sisters. We all laughed as I picked up the lures and stuffed them back into the tackle box. We recovered most of the worms and soon they were impaled onto barbed hooks. My sisters could bait a hook with the squirmiest worms and never bat an eye. But, because I was the fishing master, I would never entertain the juvenile practice of using bobbers and worms just to catch sunfish and perch. I was after bigger game, like pickerel and bass. This required the great skill with a rod and reel that was taught by my father. With this skill, along with Daredevil spinners, florescent plastic worms or the killer of all pickerel, The Jitterbug, the fish had no chance.

Suddenly my rod bent sideways and the reel screamed at giving up line. This was no ordinary fish I had hooked. As hard as I reeled, the drag would just give up more line. I yelled, "Get Dad!" and soon my father was beside me, screaming instructions and readying the net as the mighty opponent pulled me toward the end of the dock. When it broke the water, we all gasped at seeing its claws, huge mouth and horned beak. "It's Snagglepuss!" I screamed. I had caught the huge snapping turtle that lived under the dock, and the Jitterbug lure was firmly hooked in its mouth. After we netted him and brought Snagglepuss up on the dock, my father explained that for a turtle to be that size, about two feet long including his tail, it would be about forty years old and near the end of its life. Snapping turtles live a
long time. "We should let him go back to his family to finish out his days," he said. My father very carefully removed the lure from the turtle's mouth with pliers, and it slowly meandered back into the lake.

After dinner we played a board game called Parcheesi, and of course I won. My mother announced bedtime, and after several losing arguments about going to bed so early, we were all once again in our bunks upstairs. As I lay in my bed, I thought about Snagglepuss. Maybe he and Mrs. Snagglepuss had three little turtles and lived under the dock with their turtle family. Maybe they had a cottage or a tree stump or a place they visited that was very special. I wondered about my father's comment about "finishing out his days." What did that mean? How do you finish your days? Can this mean we will not always have adventures of fishing and hunting frogs and salamanders? The cottage will always be here, won't it? What could possibly happen to it? The crickets and the frogs will always be here to sing us to sleep, won't they? I started to get scared as I thought about my parents. My father will always be there to help me pull in fish, won't he? Who will teach me to drive the boat? If I let them win at Parcheesi, will my sisters always be with me? What about my mother? Who will make sandwiches for us and make sure we brush our teeth? Surely she will always be around to make sure I don't do bad things. Tomorrow I will ask my father what it means to "finish out your days."

English Composition II

Lezli Rowell

Summer Love and an Endless Devotion

The tradition of the Shakespearean sonnets is to write in iambic pentameter and follow a tight, alternating rhyming scheme through twelve lines, followed by a couplet. Within the rigid structure and meter of ten syllable lines and fourteen-line length, the poetic expression must be distilled. The sentiment must be conveyed in a concentrated form, relying heavily on imagery, symbolism and connotation to flesh out what message does not fit within the confines of the poetic production. In William Shakespeare's two similar pieces, "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" and "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" the nature of the speaker's love is described and contrasted. In one poem, an
unconditional, mature love is communicated, and in the
other work, the peaks of passion are immortalized.

After declaring "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the
sun" (line 1), Shakespeare offers other comparisons to
natural elements, in which the object of his affection falls
short. Coral (2), snow (3), and roses (5) provide the colors of
youthful beauty, symbolizing red lips (2), the Elizabethan-
era preference for white skin (3) and flushed, excited cheeks
(5), which "My mistress" does not possess. The reader is
introduced to the older woman whose allure has faded.
Shakespeare further demonstrates her ungainliness in lines
7 through 10:

And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound.
The lover is an ordinary woman, who is grossly
physical and merely human.

Shakespeare defies the usual semantics of beauty. He
brings his woman down from the heavens to tread "on the
ground" (12). She is solidly of the earth. The mistress is
loved not despite the passage of time and the fading of her
attributes, but because of the duration shared and subtle
assets deeper than a woman's youthful looks. In the couplet,
he crystallizes the quality of his uncommon love for a
common woman: "And yet, by heaven, I think my love as
rare / As any she belied with false compare" (13-14). This
assertion completes the poem by assuring the reader that
kinder, more predictable analogies describing the woman
with lofty ideals would misrepresent the depth of his love,
derived truly of the substance of his mistress.

Conversely, the question "Shall I compare thee to a
summer's day?" (1) opens the Shakespeare poem about a
lover placed high upon a pedestal for all to admire for her
sheer beauty. The piece is a sketch of young, all-consuming
love. The choice of season asserts passion, fiery emotion, and
sexual climax. (Spring might have felt gentle and tender,
while autumn would suggest the settling into mundane life
after the novelty of new love has worn off.) In response to
the rhetorical question, Shakespeare continues in lines 2 and
3 to refine the imagery of his lover; she is "lovely and more
temperate" (2), and the "darling buds of May" (3) contrasts
her delicacy against summer's intensity. He will not dare
compare her to the summer's day. Any analogy would limit
her to the weaknesses of such definition; the speaker exalts
his love above the bounds of summer.

The next four lines decry the ephemeral nature of summer and thus ordinary beauty:

And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd
And every fair from fair sometime declines. (lines 4-7)

The finite limit of the high season, the blemish of heat or shade, and the gradual decline of the long summer days yielding to the slanting light of autumn _ these faults of the season he will not ascribe to his perfect love.

Shakespeare promotes this woman above the unpredictability of both season and aging: "By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd: / But thy eternal summer shall not fade" (8-9). He challenges Death itself against any claim on this image of his lover (11) and defies time from taking its toll on the representation of her physical beauty. "Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow' st / Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade / When in eternal lines to time thou grow' st. " (10-12) He immortalizes the fresh moment of her youth and the fire of their love against tarnish by committing the sentiments to words.

In the poem's couplet, "So long as men can breathe or eyes can see / So long lives this and this gives life to thee" (13-14), Shakespeare realizes his intent to capture forever the speaker's attraction. His beloved is a still image, a work of art in the frame of his feelings toward her, an abstract of a living, breathing woman. She is a fragment of a whole. She lingers beyond her time, projected by the speaker's praise of an ephemeral moment into the immortality of the written word.

"My mistress" enjoys a love that endures the seasons and the fading of sun. The poem is not pretty, but the depth of emotion is genuine and tested. She is physical. She surpasses the object of "a summer's day" and is equally committed to the ages by sonnet. "My mistress" stands firm against diminishing, while the lover in "a summer's day" can only topple from her idealistic stand on the poet's pedestal. She is only meant to endure as she stands in the perfection of her youth. The focus is less on the love of a lover than it is on the love of poetic expression.
From such a peak of new-found love, there is only descent, which this woman is not suited to withstand. There is love, fast and furious and of the moment, and there is Love, of the ages.

Works Cited


English Composition II

Maria Wagner

The Power of Empathy

Susan Glaspell wrote the play Trifles, which was first produced in 1916 for the Provincetown Players she founded with her husband. She later rewrote the play as the short story "A Jury of Her Peers." Glaspell was inspired by a murder that she covered while working as a journalist for the Des Moines Daily News. The play reflects the gender-specific application of justice at the beginning of the 20th century and its subversion by two women.

The story takes place in an old country farmhouse in the early 1900's. While Minnie Wright was sitting in a rocking chair downstairs, Mr. Hale has found his neighbor, John Wright, strangled upstairs in the bedroom. To investigate the mystery and try to find some clues about the murder, Mr. Hale, the sheriff, and their wives enter the farmhouse the next day, accompanied by the county attorney. While the three men investigate the scene of the crime, the two women stay in their sphere, the kitchen. Looking only at the surface and the big picture, the men miss the subtle clues hidden in the place that holds "nothing [...] but kitchen things" (Glaspell 47). The women sympathize with Minnie, defending her against the attacks of the county attorney. And once they look closer, they discover the truth — Minnie killed her husband. However, both keep silent, hiding the evidence (a dead canary) from the men, hoping that the lack of a motive will help Minnie escape judgment in court.
The background explaining the women's solidarity with a murderess is hinted at in several places in the play. Mrs. Hale describes John Wright as "a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him _ [Shivers.] Like a raw wind that gets to the bone" (Glaspell 52). Later, when talking about the dead canary, she points out that "Wright wouldn't like the bird _ a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too" (Glaspell 54). Mrs. Peters recalls an incident from her childhood, when a boy killed her kitten, and remarks, "If they hadn't held me back I would have ... hurt him" (Glaspell 54).

As Suzy Holstein writes, "This evocation of memories compels the women to see Minnie Wright not as an abstract murderer but as a fully developed, complex victim who at last retaliated against the source of her pain. [...] Clearly, as several feminist commentators have noted, the women are able to empathize with Minnie Wright because they share her experience" (286). As Mrs. Hale says in the play, "We all go through the same things _ it's all just a different kind of the same thing" (Glaspell 54).

The shared background of the women includes the experience of having little recourse in the law when confronted with domestic cruelty and violence. At the time the play was written, divorce was hard to obtain and often left the wife impoverished. Although wife beating was shunned and could be punished by flogging, the consequences for a wife who reported her husband to the authorities could be dire. As Reva Siegel writes:

Thus, as the American legal system repudiated the husband's prerogative to chastise his wife, it did begin to respond differently to wife beating—even if not adopt policies calculated to provide married women much relief from family violence. Women of the social elite might escape husbands who beat them by obtaining a divorce, if they were not deemed blameworthy, and if they were willing to subject themselves and their children to the economic perils and social stigma associated with single motherhood. Women of poorer families might have a husband fined, incarcerated, or perhaps even flogged, if they were willing to turn him over to a racially hostile criminal justice system. The law thus provided relief to some battered wives, but the majority had little recourse against abusive husbands.

Although the play never makes explicit claims about physical violence, the psychological damage inflicted on
Minnie is made clear. "It slowly dawns on Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters that years and years of stifling, enforced solitude was in itself a form of murder that must be avenged. John Wright slowly strangled Minnie's spirit over the previous two decades, isolating her physically and mentally from the community of women and holding her incommunicado" (Bendel-Simso 294-295).

At the time Glaspell wrote the play, she was involved in feminist activities and co-founded a group of activist women called Heterodoxy. And at least some authors consider Trifles a feminist work. Linda Ben-Zvi summarizes the issues touched on in the play as "how to free women from the stereotypic roles into which they have been cast, how to articulate their lives and their rights without reinscribing them in the very roles against which they inveigh, how to represent female power not victimization" (42). However, at least on first reading, the play does not appear "feminist" in the strict dictionary sense of "belief in the need to secure, or a commitment to securing, rights and opportunities for women equal to those of men" (Encarta). Neither men nor women have the right to murder, yet the play appears to construct such a right for Minnie. By guiding the reader to feel empathy for the oppressed woman, the author pushes the audience to accept the murder as the only way out of an unbearable misery and therefore justified. While this appears ethically questionable, at least from today's perspective, a deeper reading reveals that the author is pleading for a different kind of justice, a more humane application of the law that involves emotion and empathy. In this sense, the play is indeed feminist _ as Ben-Zvi writes, "illustrating the need to provide both male and female voices in court ... if human experience is not to be forever subsumed under the male pronoun and if women's voices are to be heard not as difference but as equally registered" (42).

As Glaspell herself illustrates with the title she gave the short story derived from the play, the two women truly are a "jury of her peers" because only they can fully understand the motives driving Minnie to the crime.

Works Cited

English Composition I

**Sally Walker**

*Skip's Ashes*

I met Connie Leeds a year after her son, Charles "Skip" Leeds, Jr., died. Connie was one of the "coolest" ladies I've ever known. She had beauty, style, and grace. We were introduced through a mutual friend, Beth Benson. Connie and Beth had worked together for several years at the court complex in Barnstable, Massachusetts. Connie worked in the District Attorney's office, and Beth was a defense attorney.

After my divorce, Connie took me under her wing and always invited me to dinners, movies, and shows just to get me out of the house and my post-divorce funk. Connie always had a positive attitude about life, and she could always turn a bad situation into something good. She had been through a lot of heartache over the years. Her husband had suffered from alcoholism; her son had had a mental illness, and Connie had had her own share of physical maladies, but none of these issues ever got her down. She had a strong faith and always looked at the bright side of things. I told her that when I grew up, I wanted to be just like her.

Connie was a widow. She had had two children, Skip and Lynn. Now that Skip was gone, she had only her daughter, who was very busy raising her own children, so I guess
Connie thought of Beth and me as her "kids." Connie was eighty-two and should have seemed more like a grandmother to me, but I felt as if she was just a dear, wonderful aunt. Connie always said that when she died she wanted Skip's ashes to be buried with her. She kept his ashes in a coffee container in her kitchen. However, I thought Connie would live forever.

One long weekend I went off on a retreat, and when I came home, I found out that Connie had become gravely ill and passed away. It all had happened so quickly, and I was shocked and devastated. Lynn moved into her mother's apartment to clean it out and take care of Connie's effects. Beth decided to see how Lynn was doing. When Beth called me at work, she was in tears. "She's just throwing everything out! Everything!"

"Oh, Beth, I am so sorry," I stammered. What else could I say? It was as if Connie were dying all over again. Lynn was dealing with her mother's death in her way, and her way was to remove every single thing in sight and toss it into the trash.

Later, Beth called me again with an update: "She's gone home to Lexington to take care of her kids. She'll be back tomorrow night for the wake." I will never forget Beth's next words to me. "She's been trying to find Skip's ashes to give to the funeral director. Do you remember where Connie put them?"

"Oh, My God!" I shrieked, and my stomach flipped. "Beth, the ashes were in a coffee can in the kitchen!" I was met with dead silence.

After a moment, Beth said, "Sally, the kitchen has been COMPLETELY emptied. Top to bottom." I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

"What are you doing after work?" Beth asked me. It was November and already dark at 5:15 p.m. I arrived straight from work wearing a dress and high heels. We found the dumpster for Connie's apartment and parked our cars facing it with our headlights shining on it so we could see what we were doing. "We need to get into the dumpster," Beth said.

"Are you kidding me?" I asked. (I may have used some colorful language, but that's the gist of it.) Luckily, it was a small dumpster, but it was still a dumpster. It was dirty,
smelly, and filled with garbage bags. We took a deep 
breath and reached into it, going through the trash like a 
couple of bag ladies. Again, I didn't know whether to laugh 
or cry.

I asked my friend, my dear defense attorney friend, if it 
was illegal to go through someone else's trash. "Don't ask me 
any legal questions! Just keep looking!" I burst into laughter 
and couldn't help feeling like Lucy and Ethel getting into 
some ridiculous situation.

"Shhhh! We have to be quiet!" Beth said, laughing along 
with me.

We found the ashes. Naturally, they were in the last bag 
we opened. We swiftly put all the other trash bags back, 
retreated to our cars, and took off like a couple of bank 
robbers leaving the scene of a crime.

Unbeknownst to us, while we were shuffling around and 
rummaging in the dumpster, many of the apartment 
dwellers, looking out their windows, were incensed that 
homeless people were stealing their trash. These 
conscientious, yet nosy apartment owners called the police. 
Evidently, we left moments before the police arrived. The 
very next day at court, Beth found out how small Cape Cod 
really is. Everyone had heard about our little escapade in the 
dumpster. Even a judge commented to Beth, "Attorney 
Benson, I hear you are now working for BFI trash removal."

I still smile when I remember that night. I wonder what 
might have happened if we hadn't left when we did and the 
police had caught us. What would I have said? "Gee, officer, 
we're just looking for a coffee can containing the ashes of a 
dead man." Would the police have allowed us to continue 
searching? Who knows the answer? What we do know is that 
the ashes were found, and they were buried with Connie, just 
as she wished. We also know that the dumpster now has a 
lock on it.

English Composition I

Sarah Wildman

Community College
College is a huge step for anyone to take as well as a milestone in someone's life. It is one of the most important decisions many people will ever make. Some people think that they need to attend a fancy, expensive, private college to achieve their desired level of success. They do not consider all the positive aspects of two-year community colleges. Community colleges offer a variety of good things that many people overlook, due to the term "community college." For example, community colleges often have transfer agreements with many other public and private four-year universities. They have flexible scheduling and offer many of the same things other colleges do. They give a great deal of individual attention to all students from experienced, well-educated professors. One of the most important reasons for choosing a community college is the cost. In these days of college tuitions that cost the life savings and retirement funds of students and their families, community college is a very affordable and wonderful option.

Many community colleges have agreements with other four-year universities that allow students at community colleges to get their associate degrees and then further their education at their first or second choice school. Most community colleges offer programs such as the joint-admissions program, the transfer advantage program, and, in Massachusetts, the Commonwealth Transfer Compact. "These programs are designed for students who plan to continue their postsecondary education at a four-year college or university. The programs are comparable to the first two years of a baccalaureate degree program and usually terminate in an associate degree" (Bender 34). This means, for example, that a student who has had the life-long dream of attending NYU may do so after attending a community college first. This student attends the dream school, but with half of the financial debt. These transfer programs are also very good for students who did not do so well in high school, but are looking to do well in college. "There is clear evidence that junior colleges are salvaging a large number of students for success in advanced studies who would otherwise have missed them entirely" (Monroe 61).

More and more students these days transfer after two years because the education at a community college is no different from the education at a four-year university. Freshman and many sophomore classes are very similar. Students are required to take the same general courses no matter what schools they attend. Some majors require specific specialty courses within freshman and sophomore
year that may be available only at a few select universities, but this is rare. As Paul Wildman, an engineer who went to community colleges for two years and graduated from WPI, stated, "I'm very glad I attended community college. I got my basic classes done quickly, for very little money." Community college is a great start for all college students.

Community colleges also offer flexible scheduling for students. They offer day and night classes and part-time or full-time schedules. These offerings are vital for many students who are also parents and/or full-time workers.

More than ever, community college students go to college part-time as they strive to squeeze in education and job training after work or on weekends. Nearly two-thirds of community college students attend college part-time, compared with just 40% of students at four-year colleges. Family commitments and the need to work at paying jobs keep many would-be full-time students away from campuses during traditionally scheduled daytime classes, leading colleges to offer evening and weekend classes (Phillippe 42).

Community colleges make education more convenient and accessible to people who do not fit the definition of the "average student." Many of these people feel that community colleges are there to help them further their education, not to stand in their way, so "many of them [adult students], surmounting their fears, are turning to institutions like these [community colleges] to get ready for new pursuits" (Gleazer 21).

Community colleges also have great instructors. "Community college spokesmen often claim that community colleges offer a superior brand of instruction" (Monroe 272). The instructors are well educated, and some have PhDs. In the book, Profile of a Community College, a community college teacher is described in the following way: "He is student-centered. He accepts and gladly works with students of an extraordinary range of abilities" (246). And, since many classes at community colleges are smaller than classes at other colleges, students receive more individual attention. This attention extends itself to students with disabilities. "Community colleges have excelled in providing support services to individuals with disabilities. In addition to assessments and counseling, many community colleges offer tutors and special learning materials to disabled students. Some community colleges assist disabled students with housing and transportation" (American Association of
Community Colleges). No student is ignored. On the list titled, "A community college is" in the book, Learning Resources and the Instructional Program in Community Colleges, one of the items is, "offering a wide variety of technical and semi-professional programs" (31). Offering these technical courses is another wonderful aspect of community colleges. Degrees in any sort of skilled trade or industrial study are in very high demand. "Graduates in allied health, information technology, skilled trades, business and public services continue to enjoy marketplace demand for their skills" (American Association of Community Colleges). These programs are great in that they train students in the specific areas they desire, and the students receive their associate degrees within two years. These programs are excellent for all students, even for returning adults, as stated in National Profile of Community Colleges: Trends and Statistics 1997-1998. "More and more adults—those aged 25 or older—are returning to college for associate degrees, to brush up on workplace skills, or to get the technical education that was unnecessary when they got their low-tech jobs right out of high-school years ago" (42). These programs are wonderful opportunities for all students.

There are many positive aspects when it comes to community college, but one of the most popular is the cost. "On average, it costs a public community college student roughly half what a student attending a four-year public college would pay in tuition" (Phillippe 70) and about a fourth of the cost of attending a private four-year college. Financial aid is available as well, which makes community college even more affordable. College is one of the most feared expenses of students and their families, but community colleges make furthering education more enjoyable and less stressful. Community college is a very affordable option for prospective students.

"Making a college education accessible to the broadest possible range of students has been an enduring goal for the nation's community colleges" (Phillippe 70). Community college is a wonderful option for anyone and should never be overlooked. It is not inferior to other colleges with more prestigious names. "Prestige has never yet been transferred automatically from a college to a student" (Lass and Wilson 2). Community college has many positive aspects that many people do not know about or ignore. Students should be less worried about the name of their school and instead focus on what about their future education is most important to them. Do they want to be close to home? Do they want to work while going to school? Do they have a special interest
for their career? A college education is not where a student goes, but what the student makes of it. "The only limits placed on your accomplishment will be set by your own interests, aptitudes, resolution, and dedication—not by the college you attend" (Lass and Wilson 3).

Works Cited


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