

Mentor Poem

Theme for English B

The instructor said,

Go home and write
a page tonight.
And let that page come out of you—

Then, it will be true.

I wonder if it's that simple?
I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.
I went to school there, then Durham, then here
to this college on the hill above Harlem.
I am the only colored student in my class.
The steps from the hill lead down into Harlem,
through a park, then I cross St. Nicholas,
Eighth Avenue, Seventh, and I come to the Y,
the Harlem Branch Y, where I take the elevator
up to my room, sit down, and write this page:

It's not easy to know what is true for you or me
at twenty-two, my age. But I guess I'm what
I feel and see and hear, Harlem, I hear you.
hear you, hear me—we two—you, me, talk on this page.
(I hear New York, too.) Me—who?

Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love.
I like to work, read, learn, and understand life.
I like a pipe for a Christmas present,
or records—Bessie, bop, or Bach.
I guess being colored doesn't make me not like
the same things other folks like who are other races.

So will my page be colored that I write?
Being me, it will not be white.
But it will be
a part of you, instructor.
You are white—
yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.
That's American.
Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of me.
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.
But we are, that's true!
As I learn from you,
I guess you learn from me—
although you're older—and white—
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.

Emulation Poem

Theme for Happiness

The psychologist said,

*Go and find placidness
a glimmer tonight.
And let that placidness come from within you—
Then, you will say you're happy and mean it .*

I wonder if that's all it takes?

I am nineteen, chronically anxious, born in an overly analytical brain
I spend most of my time there, then, occasionally, nowhere at all
Then here, to this state of in between

I am the only one who couldn't describe what my life is like when
asked

The steps from despair lead down into the depths of self loathing,
through a place with no reason, then by a miracle I cross the street,
self reflection, tranquility, and I come to a clearing,

The clearing in my mind, where things just make sense
The new found silence is a peace offering, I sit down, and gather my
thoughts:

It's not easy to know what true happiness is for you or me
at nineteen, my age, still budding. But I guess I'm what
I obsess over and over-analyze and misconstrue, Brain, I hear you.
hear you, hear me—we two—you, me, work in cohesion.
(I hear all parts of you, too.) Me—who?

Well, I like to socialize, practice self care , be gentle and bask in the
simplicity of life.

I like to draw, create, discover, and understand myself.

I like a pair of headphones for a Christmas present,

Or a itunes subscription— I'd stream Bobby Brown, Brandy, or Brent
Faiyaz,

I guess being neurodivergent doesn't make me *not* like
the same things other folks like who are neurotypical.

So will my definition of happiness, of calm, be atypical?

Being me, it will not be quintessential.

But it will be

an opportunity to empathize, doctor.

You aren't experiencing the same ailments—

yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.

That's Spiritual.

Sometimes perhaps you don't want to understand me

Nor do I often want to read your textbooks about people like me,

But we will, that's a certainty!
As I learn from the clinical scripture,
I guess you learn from the unorthodox mind—
although you're licensed—and sane—
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for what happiness means to me.

RAB

Kwai, Isabella, and Elian Peltier. "What's the Point?' Young People's Despair Deepens as Covid-19 Crisis Drags On." The New York Times, The New York Times, 14 Feb. 2021, www.nytimes.com/2021/02/14/world/europe/youth-mental-health-covid.html?searchResultPosition=6.

Summary:

This article discusses the deterioration of the youth's mental health amidst the pandemic and the resulting social restrictions. It seems that the youth are expected to be able to single handedly combat feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression, this causes people to dismiss mental wellness as a vital aspect of one's health. The article provides a study reflecting rates of anxiety and depression in people ages 18 to 29 years old and increased percentages in self harm and suicide. It also explains how the youth's key self developmental stages have been stunted, e.g: when young people move from belonging to their family to belonging to their peers.

Reflection:

This article aided in bringing attention to the global mental health pandemic. It is not simply about not being able to see our teachers, friends, and loved one's, but rather the true impact of social isolation on a person's psyche. During these times hardship and tribulations, we need resources to assist in coping and adjusting. For many, mental health resources are easily accessible. Another grim side of this issue, as mentioned in the article, is the fact that many don't take mental health seriously. Trivialisation of illness of the mind can create devastating effects including people being reluctant to receive care. As for returning to "normal" mental health support should be included in reopening models/plans. In my poem, I touch on the feeling of being misunderstood in my struggle with mental illness. There is a disconnect between the mentally ill, doctors, and the general public. This is rooted in a lack of empathy and

understanding between neurotypicals and neurodivergents. This article only touches surface level ideas about these disparities, however I believe the information provided is a foundational resource.