**Essay 2: Poetry Comparison (15%), fall 2012, Prof. Scanlan**

**Basic Directions**: Write a 3-4 page comparison essay based on a close reading of two poems that we have read this semester. Especially important for this paper is the poetry “tool” that you use for the comparison.

**More Specifically**: In writing a comparison, you will need to consider one of the ways of analyzing poetry that we have discussed this semester—what I call poetry tools—such as the 8 characteristics or the rhetorical triangle or scansion (meter and foot analysis). Be aware that you will not have space or time to cover every aspect of the 8 characteristics or all parts of the rhetorical triangle. Instead, you must select the parts of the tool that help you to make sense of the poems and the comparison as a whole. The key difference between the explication essay and an analysis essay is that in this essay you must formulate a strong thesis and argue your case for an overall meaning. In other words, you need to make assertions and claims and back them using the poem as evidence.

8 Characteristics:

1. Feelings/emotions?

2. Who is the speaker?

3. What is the setting?

4. Plot/narrative?

5. Figurative language?

6. Sound/rhythm?

7. Form/structure?

8. Themes/subjects?

Rhetorical Triangle:

Speaker

(Context)

medium

Audience Message

**Helpful Tips:**

1. What is the basis for comparison? (for example: the theme of death; irony; tendency wit, enjambment, rhyme scheme)

2. How will you organize your essay?

• subject-by-subject (Chunking; essentially separate essays about each subject, but discussing the same points for both subjects)

• point-by-point (make a point about one subject and then follow it with a comparable point about the other)

3. Use parallel structure within sentences (matching nouns, verbs, phrases, or clauses to express the same or similar ideas. Examples: not only/but also, both/and, neither, nor, either/or).

**Essential Details:**

1. Include at least four quotations from the poems (see OWL or the MPC example).

2. Provide an MLA style citation for each poem.

3. Page length: 3-4 pages, typed, using standard margins and font. Use MLA format. See me or the Purdue OWL website for details on formatting.

4. Due Date: December 12, 2012, at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be accepted; early papers are always accepted.

Helpful sites for further information on explication and writing about poetry:

From Monterey Peninsula College:

<http://www.mpc.edu/academics/Humanities/ESSC/Handouts/LiterayCompPoems.pdf>

From the University of Wisconsin: <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/ReadingPoetry.html>