Final Reflection

In this English 112L course, I have read many different pieces of works varying from poems, to plays and essays. In many instances, when a teacher assigns a piece of work for students to read as homework or in class, students are not eager or looking forward to reading. The reason for this is that many teachers like to implement the boring old school texts in their curriculum, instead of finding new, more interesting, modern readings. In my opinion, students tend to grasp material more easily when a story grabs their attention or relates to them in a certain way. All the readings that will be discussed in this paper have stood out to me in a way that made me think about and analyze situations in my world.

The first reading I will discuss is my personal favorite, *A Raisin in the Sun*, written by Lorrain Hansberry in Unit I. I would recommend studying this because I believe there are many lessons that can be taken away from the play and its engaging story line can easily grab the attention of many college students. One literature element I never actually paid attention to is the At Rise. This part of the play was beneficial for helping me understand the stings and the mood of the play. While reading, I realized that large sums of money can cause issues and disruptions in the lives of many families. In the play. I have seen first-hand how this situation has affected people close to me and I never understood the reason behind people making, what I thought to be, selfish decisions with money. After reading this play, I began to view these decisions as desperate instead of selfish. In, A Raisin in the Sun, after reading though Walter’s emotions while realizing he lost the money, I noticed how he real his intentions were to provide for his family, he just went the wrong way about it. In act II scene III Walter says, “Man I put my life in your hands. Man… that money is made out of my father’s flesh.” (page 128). Reading this and watching how he transformed throughout the play influenced my opinion on Walter’s character and people who could relate to him in real life.

 The poem that stood out to me the most in this class is “Those Winter Sundays” by Robert Hayden in Unit I. I think this poem is memorable to me because of the way the writer compared the three generations of his dad, him, and his son. I can compare this to me and my family. This poem made me realize that although many of us grow up in different backgrounds we still may see things the same way. For example, in line 5 he writes “I never saw stars.” Another example of this is in the last stanza of this poem where he writes “My father saw stars. My son sees stars.” (Line 13). His father saw stars from a punch and his son saw stars through a telescope, in the end they both saw stars. I think this poem is good for everyone to read because it has a strong theme people of all ages can relate to.

The short story that I enjoyed the most this class is “Recitatif”, by Toni Morrison. This story was significant to me because it non directly addresses race which I personally like to read about. Also, the story had and interesting plotline and was easy to understand. One theme from the story that left me thinking is don’t ever forget where you came from. I think many times when people grow up, they get caught of up in the image they want to portray and forget who they were before. We saw the first case of this in “Recitatif” when Twyla and Roberta saw each other’s for the first time in many years and Roberta seem uninterested in catching up with Twyla. Twyla and Roberta also did this thing where they both tried to put one another down by bringing up their dancing moms. An example of this can be found in the text where Twyla says, “I brought a painted sign in queenly red with huge black letters that said,

IS YOUR MOTHER WELL?” (page 17). This occurred when the two women began protesting for their children’s school, but instead of supporting the cause they kind of turned it into a competition of who’s life is better. I would recommend this story to college students because many people could learn from Twyla and Roberta’s relationship and even relate it to their own personal relationships.

 The personal essay that I will be discussing is “Something’s Wrong with Me” by Molly McCully Bryan. What made this work memorable to me is how the writer wrote in a more informal text. For example, she says “I spent nearly the entire day yesterday sitting in front of this computer trying not to write this essay—which I feel like I’ve written a thousand versions of before” (Brown). I think this caught my attention because most essays are not structured like this, and many writers would not include those details in their essay. This essay should be read by adults so they can have an idea about how some people with cerebral palsy may feel when you ask them questions.

Another short story that we read this semester was “A Pair of Tickets”, by Amy Tan in Unit III. The reason this story stuck out to me is because I can apply some of the themes to my personal life. I can relate to this short story because I have also struggled with some of the issues that Jing Mei faces having parents that were not born here in the U.S. but being born and raised here. In the first paragraph of the reading, Jing Mei says, “my mother said when I was fifteen and had vigorously denied that I had any Chinese whatsoever below my skin.” (page 166). Similarly, when I was young, I used to deny that I was African in anyway because I was embarrassed. One theme that stood out to me from this reading is embrace where you’re from. Something else she said was, “And now I also see what part of me is Chinese, it’s so obvious, it’s my family” (page 180). Jing Mei was not proud to be Chinese until she had met her family in China and learned about her mother’s past. I think this reading would be good to study in high school, because its short the diction is not complicated likeother school readings, and it is also an interesting read.

In conclusion, the pieces of work that I read in this English 112L class has prompted me to become an active reader and take time to engage in and appreciate what I’m reading. This class reminded me that I really do have an interest in reading, something that has become less interesting to me as I’ve grown older. These reading have also shown me that you can gain much knowledge and wisdom from reading because you get to read and experience things in someone else’s point of view. After completing this course, I plan to buy a few books I’ve been researching by Toni Morrison that I would like to read in my free time such as, “The Bluest Eye” and “Sula”. I also think I benefited in this class in a social perspective. Since Covid-19 started, this is the first class I’ve taken that is fully in person. This class helped me to begin engaging with others in class, as Professor Webber directed us to talk to the students around us about the readings we read. I enjoyed this aspect of the class because you can gain knowledge of how other students interpret material.