



## English 11

### Summer Packet for Rising Eleventh Grade Students

**Student Instructions:** The schedule below includes the work that you will complete for the next four weeks. All of the resources that you need to complete the activities are included in this packet. The focus of the work that you will complete will be exploring poetry and short stories. These are types of reading and writing that you will be working on when you enter Grade 11 RELA classes in the fall. Be sure to read all of the directions and documents carefully.

	Instructional Focus (Topic)	Task	Standard Alignment
Week 1	<b>Poetry (Reading and Analyzing a Mentor Poet)</b> Read and analyze the themes of three poems in order to use one of these as mentor texts for writing their own poetry.	<input type="checkbox"/> Read each of the mentor poems <input type="checkbox"/> Annotate each poem with your thinking, questions, and ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on the themes presented in each poem <input type="checkbox"/> Select the poem that you will use as a mentor text	<a href="#">RL 9-10.1</a> <a href="#">RL 9-10.2</a> <a href="#">RL 9-10.4</a> <a href="#">SL 9-10.1</a> <a href="#">SL 9-10.5</a>
Week 2	<b>Poetry (Creating Original Poetry)</b> Students will create and share their own original poems using one of the mentor texts and its theme.	<input type="checkbox"/> Use mentor texts for inspiration <input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm ideas for poems <input type="checkbox"/> Draft poetry based upon theme <input type="checkbox"/> Read your poems to someone for feedback and make revisions <input type="checkbox"/> Share with others	<a href="#">W9-10.3</a> <a href="#">SL 9-10.1</a> <a href="#">SL 9-10.5</a>
Week 3	<b>Short Story (Reading and Analyzing Point of View and Theme)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read each of the mentor short stories <input type="checkbox"/> Annotate each story with your thinking, questions, and ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on the themes and the author's point of view presented in each short story <input type="checkbox"/> Select the short story that you will use as a mentor text	<a href="#">RL 9-10.1</a> <a href="#">RL 9-10.2</a> <a href="#">RL 9-10.4</a> RL9-10.6 <a href="#">SL 9-10.1</a> <a href="#">SL 9-10.5</a>
Week 4	<b>Talk Back to Your Story- Create response to the story you selected as your mentor text</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Use mentor text for inspiration <input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm ideas for your response to the story	<a href="#">W9-10.3</a> <a href="#">SL 9-10.1</a>

		<p><b>you selected as a mentor text</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Draft your own short story or other creative response</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Share your creative response to someone for feedback and make revisions</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Share with others</b></li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">SL 9-10.5</a></p>
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**Instructional Guidance and Support Resources**

**Daily Reading:** Find a book, magazine, comic, newspaper article to read. Read your selection for 30 or more minutes a day. You are asked to time your reading every day, and to track the time you spend reading on a self-made chart. The chart you create can be hand-written or created digitally, and it might look like this example:

Date	Book	Pages Read	Time Spent Reading

**Week 1/ Lesson 1 Objective:** Students will explore how stories can be expressed and told through the medium of poetry through reading and analyzing poetry by American author Langston Hughes.

**Overview:** In week one, you will be able to read three different poems by one author, Langston Hughes, each with a message about the theme of struggle for freedom. As you read, make notes about what Hughes is saying. You may annotate your ideas in the chart below. As you read and think about the poems, decide which one you would like to use as a mentor text that you will think about as you write your own poem in Week 2.

**Warm-Up:**  
 Why do you think it is important to tell your own story to others? What type of medium (writing, film, audio, in-person, etc) would you prefer to tell your own story and why? Write your thoughts in the space provided.

## Reading And Thinking About Poems

Now, let's take a look at three poems by American poet Langston Hughes and how they reflect the theme of the struggle for freedom. Each of the poems has a different approach or insight about the need for freedom and how it affects one's life. See if you can determine what each poem is saying about the struggle for freedom in the United States. **Write your ideas as you read and annotate the three poems. You may underline, highlight ideas, and jot down your thinking next to each poem.**

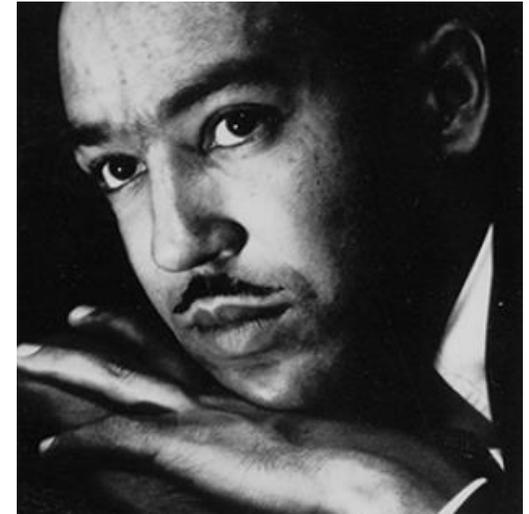
### About the Author: Langston Hughes

James Mercer Langston Hughes was born February 1, 1902, in Joplin, Missouri. His parents divorced when he was a young child, and his father moved to Mexico. He was raised by his grandmother until he was thirteen, when he moved to Lincoln, Illinois, to live with his mother and her husband, before the family eventually settled in Cleveland, Ohio. It was in Lincoln that Hughes began writing poetry. After graduating from high school, he spent a year in Mexico followed by a year at Columbia University in New York City. During this time, he held odd jobs such as assistant cook, launderer, and busboy. He also travelled to Africa and Europe working as a seaman. In November 1924, he moved to Washington, D. C. Hughes's first book of poetry, [The Weary Blues](#), (Knopf, 1926) was published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1926. He finished his college education at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania three years later. In 1930 his first novel, *Not Without Laughter*, (Knopf, 1930) won the Harmon gold medal for literature.

Hughes, who claimed [Paul Lawrence Dunbar](#), [Carl Sandburg](#), and [Walt Whitman](#) as his primary influences, is particularly known for his insightful, colorful portrayals of black life in America from the twenties through the sixties. He wrote novels, short stories and plays, as well as poetry, and is also known for his engagement with the world of jazz and the influence it had on his writing, as in his book-length poem *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (Holt, 1951). His life and work were enormously important in shaping the artistic contributions of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. Unlike other notable black poets of the period—Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, and Countee Cullen—Hughes refused to differentiate between his personal experience and the common experience of black America. He wanted to tell the stories of his people in ways that reflected their actual culture, including both their suffering and their love of music, laughter, and language itself.

The critic Donald B. Gibson noted in the introduction to *Modern Black Poets: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Prentice Hall, 1973) that Hughes "differed from most of his predecessors among black poets . . . in that he addressed his poetry to the people, specifically to black people. During the twenties when most American poets were turning inward, writing obscure and esoteric poetry to an ever decreasing audience of readers, Hughes was turning outward, using language and themes, attitudes and ideas familiar to anyone who had the ability simply to read . . . Until the time of his death, he spread his message humorously—though always seriously—to audiences throughout the country, having read his poetry to more people (possibly) than any other American poet."

Source: Poets.org, <https://poets.org/poet/langston-hughes>



**Poem #1: Read and Annotate**

**Reflection: My Thoughts, My Reactions**

**I, Too**

By [Langston Hughes](#) - 1902-1967

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.  
Nobody'll dare  
Say to me,  
"Eat in the kitchen,"  
Then.

Besides,  
They'll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

*From The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes, published by Knopf and Vintage Books. Copyright © 1994 by the Estate of Langston Hughes. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Harold Ober Associates Incorporated.*

<b>Poem #2: Read and Annotate</b>	<b>Reflection: My Thoughts, My Reactions</b>
<p><i>The Negro Speaks of Rivers</i> Langston Hughes - 1902-1967</p> <p>I've known rivers: I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.</p> <p>My soul has grown deep like the rivers.</p> <p>I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young. I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep. I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it. I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.</p> <p>I've known rivers: Ancient, dusky rivers.</p> <p>My soul has grown deep like the rivers.</p> <p><i>From The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes, published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright © 1994 the Estate of Langston Hughes. Used with permission.</i></p>	

<b>Poem #3: Read and Annotate</b>	<b>Reflection: My Thoughts, My Reactions</b>
<p><b>Refugee in America</b> By Langston Hughes</p> <p>There are words like Freedom Sweet and wonderful to say On my heart-strings freedom sings All day everyday.</p> <p>There are words like Liberty That almost make me cry. If you had known what I knew You would know why.</p> <p>1947</p>	



1) FIRST: Select the poem you want to write a message to.

NEXT: Consider what you would say in response to this poem. What are your thoughts about the poet's central message or insight and how they developed that message? Why did you select this poem? How did the poet speak to you?

2) Write a poem in the style of the poem you liked the best reflecting the poet's central message on the theme of freedom. You may choose your own ideas about why you choose this poem and how Hughes' writing style spoke to you.

**Write your response to the choice #1 or choice #2 in the space provided.**

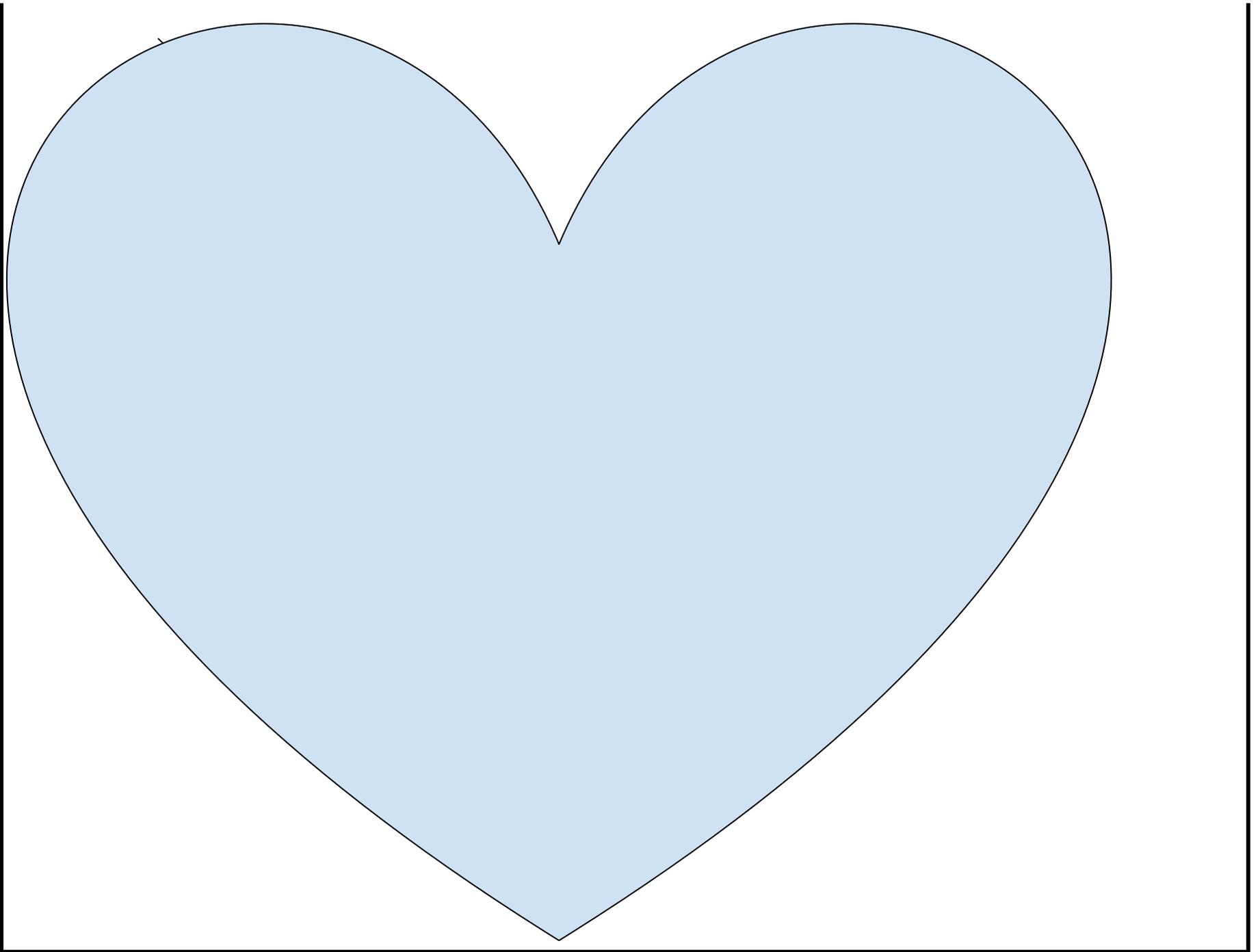
**WEEK 2/ Lesson 2 Objective:** Students will build understanding of expressing their insights through the creation of their own poetry about their own ideas and insights on the theme of freedom as their culminating task.

**Overview:** This lesson will focus on the creation of your own poetry. As we have learned, poets use words to paint pictures for others about the messages and insights they have on topics. You have insights and ideas about our theme of freedom as well. You may be thinking about your own freedom within society, or how you can tell your own story about your struggle for freedom. When we want to start our ideas, one of the best ways is to brainstorm or jot down anything that comes to mind about the topic before we start to draft these ideas into some structure or form. In today’s lesson, you will focus on brainstorming your ideas and then drafting your first draft of your poem.

**Warm Up:** Using the poem you selected as a mentor poem, jot down some of your ideas about freedom or the struggle for freedom that you might use in brainstorming.

**Brainstorming:** Now, let’s see if we can put some more ideas together around this big theme of freedom/struggle for freedom related to the world that you live in. We will use a heartmap to capture these ideas. A Heartmap is a graphic organizer that you can use to add ideas about the most important people, places, and things in your own heart. As you think about your own ideas and story, who are the people that you have in your life that symbolize freedom, the fight for freedom or support others in the struggle for freedom? You may include yourself in this heart map as well. What aspects of your life symbolize freedom or a need to struggle for it? What activities or things do you think about?

**Fill in the HeartMap below with all of your ideas about people, places, things, or anything else that would be close to your heart and that you could use for ideas in your poem about power.**



**Drafting:** After you have finished your brainstorming ideas, you will start to create the form or structure for your poem. You can decide to make the poem rhyme, use a similar style, or use any other form of poetry that you wish. Think about these big ideas:

- a. **How will you show your theme- your big message or insight about freedom or the struggle for freedom that you want your readers to come away from your poem?**
- b. **What kinds of patterns, rhymes, or forms will you use?**
- c. **What kinds of word images will you use?**

Write your poem in the space provided.

**Close Reading:** Give your draft to someone else to read or re-read your poem and think about the following questions:

- What is the message or insight (THEME) of the poem? How can you tell?
- What word pictures or images are created? Where could more detail be added to help with creating word pictures?
- What is the structure of this poem?

Put the responses here and be sure to review these ideas as you make revisions to the poem.

**REVISING:** Rewrite the poem to add ideas, details, nouns, verbs, adjectives adverbs that make the word pictures more vivid, clear, and more reflective of your theme.

**EDITING:** BE SURE YOUR LANGUAGE CHOICES, SPELLING, AND PUNCTUATION ARE CORRECTLY USED.

**Sharing with Others:**

**Find one other person close to you- friend or family member to read your final poem to.**

**WEEK 3/ Lesson 3 Objective:** Students will read two different short stories in which they consider how complex characters develop by coming to an important realization.

**Overview:** This week, you will be reading two different stories about what it means to grow up. As you read, think about which of these two stories would be your choice as a mentor text- a story you can read for what it says and how it is written. Then, you will be able to craft your own story that responds to the mentor text you have chosen. You will be able to select how you will respond- write a story, write a short play, write a letter to the author, make a video, etc.

**Warm Up:** When you are reading the stories about other people, what do you think about as you are reading? Jot down your ideas here.

**Story #1: Read this story about a woman who remembers an important moment in her childhood. You may make notes and write your ideas about what you are thinking as you read.**

## MARIGOLDS

by Eugenia Collier - 1969

When I think of the hometown of my youth, all that I seem to remember is dust — the brown, crumbly dust of late summer — arid, sterile dust that gets into the eyes and makes them water, gets into the throat and between the toes of bare brown feet. I don't know why I should remember only the dust. Surely there must have been lush green lawns and paved streets under leafy shade trees somewhere in town; but memory is an abstract painting — it does not present things as they are, but rather as they feel. And so, when I think of that time and that place, I remember only the dry September of the dirt roads and grassless yards of the shantytown where I lived. And one other thing I remember, another incongruence of memory — a brilliant splash of sunny yellow against the dust — Miss Lottie's marigolds.

Whenever the memory of those marigolds flashes across my mind, a strange nostalgia comes with it and remains long after the picture has faded. I feel again the chaotic emotions of adolescence, illusive as smoke, yet as real as the potted geranium before me now. Joy and rage and wild animal gladness and shame become tangled together in the multicolored skein of fourteen-going-on-fifteen as I recall that devastating moment when I was suddenly more woman than child, years ago in Miss Lottie's yard. I think of those marigolds at the strangest times; I remember them vividly now as I desperately pass away the time.

I suppose that **futile** waiting was the sorrowful background music of our impoverished little community when I was young. The Depression that gripped the nation was no new thing to us, for the black workers of rural Maryland had always been depressed. I don't know what it was that we were waiting for; certainly not for the prosperity that was "just around the corner," for those were white folks' words, which we never believed. Nor did we wait for hard work and thrift to pay off in shining success, as the American Dream promised, for we knew better than that, too. Perhaps we waited for a miracle, amorphous in concept but necessary if one were to have the grit to rise before dawn each day and labor in the white man's vineyard until after dark, or to wander about in the September dust offering one's sweat in return for some meager share of bread. But God was chary with miracles in those days, and so we waited — and waited.

We children, of course, were only vaguely aware of the extent of our poverty. Having no radios, few newspapers, and no magazines, we were somewhat unaware of the world outside our community. Nowadays we would be called culturally deprived and people would write books and hold conferences about us. In those days everybody we knew was just as hungry and ill clad as we were. Poverty was the cage in which we all were trapped, and our hatred of it was still the vague, undirected restlessness of the zoo-bred flamingo who knows that nature created him to fly free.

[5]

As I think of those days I feel most poignantly the tag end of summer, the bright, dry times when we began to have a sense of shortening days and the imminence of the cold.

By the time I was fourteen, my brother Joey and I were the only children left at our house, the older ones having left home for early marriage or the lure of the city, and the two babies having been sent to relatives who might care for them better than we. Joey was three years younger than I, and a boy, and therefore vastly inferior. Each morning our mother and father trudged wearily down the dirt road and around the bend, she to her domestic job, he to his daily unsuccessful quest for work. After our few chores around the tumbledown shanty, Joey and I were free to run wild in the sun with other children

similarly situated.

For the most part, those days are ill-defined in my memory, running together and combining like a fresh watercolor painting left out in the rain. I remember squatting in the road drawing a picture in the dust, a picture which Joey gleefully erased with one sweep of his dirty foot. I remember fishing for minnows in a muddy creek and watching sadly as they eluded my cupped hands, while Joey laughed uproariously. And I remember, that year, a strange restlessness of body and of spirit, a feeling that something old and familiar was ending, and something unknown and therefore terrifying was beginning.

One day returns to me with special clarity for some reason, perhaps because it was the beginning of the experience that in some inexplicable way marked the end of **innocence**. I was loafing under the great oak tree in our yard, deep in some reverie which I have now forgotten, except that it involved some secret, secret thoughts of one of the Harris boys across the yard. Joey and a bunch of kids were bored now with the old tire suspended from an oak limb, which had kept them entertained for a while.

“Hey, Lizabeth,” Joey yelled. He never talked when he could yell. “Hey, Lizabeth, let’s go somewhere.”

[10]

I came reluctantly from my private world. “Where you want to go? What you want to do?”

The truth was that we were becoming tired of the formlessness of our summer days. The idleness whose prospect had seemed so beautiful during the busy days of spring now had degenerated to an almost desperate effort to fill up the empty midday hours.

“Let’s go see can we find some locusts on the hill,” someone suggested.

Joey was scornful. “Ain’t no more locusts there. Y’all got ‘em all while they was still green.”

The argument that followed was brief and not really worth the effort. Hunting locust trees wasn’t fun anymore by now.

[15]

“Tell you what,” said Joey finally, his eyes sparkling. “Let’s us go over to Miss Lottie’s.”

The idea caught on at once, for annoying Miss Lottie was always fun. I was still child enough to scamper along with the group over rickety fences and through bushes that tore our already raggedy clothes, back to where Miss Lottie lived. I think now that we must have made a tragicomic spectacle, five or six kids of different ages, each of us clad in only one garment — the girls in faded dresses that were too long or too short, the boys in patchy pants, their sweaty brown chests gleaming in the hot sun. A little cloud of dust followed our thin legs and bare feet as we tramped over the barren land.

When Miss Lottie’s house came into view we stopped, ostensibly to plan our strategy, but actually to reinforce our courage. Miss Lottie’s house was the most ramshackle of all our ramshackle homes. The sun and rain had long since faded its rickety frame siding from white to a sullen gray. The boards themselves seemed to remain upright not from being nailed together but rather from leaning together, like a house that a child might have constructed from cards. A brisk wind might have blown it down, and the fact that it was still standing implied a kind of enchantment that was stronger than the elements. There it stood and as far as I know is standing yet — a gray, rotting thing with no porch, no shutters, no steps, set on a cramped lot with no grass, not even any weeds — a monument to decay.

In front of the house in a squeaky rocking chair sat Miss Lottie's son, John Burke, completing the impression of decay. John Burke was what was known as queer-headed. Black and ageless, he sat rocking day in and day out in a mindless stupor, lulled by the monotonous squeak-squawk of the chair. A battered hat atop his shaggy head shaded him from the sun. Usually John Burke was totally unaware of everything outside his quiet dream world. But if you disturbed him, if you intruded upon his fantasies, he would become enraged, strike out at you, and curse at you in some strange enchanted language which only he could understand. We children made a game of thinking of ways to disturb John Burke and then to elude his violent retribution.

But our real fun and our real fear lay in Miss Lottie herself. Miss Lottie seemed to be at least a hundred years old. Her big frame still held traces of the tall, powerful woman she must have been in youth, although it was now bent and drawn. Her smooth skin was a dark reddish brown, and her face had Indian-like features and the stern stoicism that one associates with Indian faces. Miss Lottie didn't like intruders either, especially children. She never left her yard, and nobody ever visited her. We never knew how she managed those necessities which depend on human interaction — how she ate, for example, or even whether she ate. When we were tiny children, we thought Miss Lottie was a witch and we made up tales that we half believed ourselves about her exploits. We were far too sophisticated now, of course, to believe the witch nonsense. But old fears have a way of clinging like cobwebs, and so when we sighted the tumbledown shack, we had to stop to reinforce our nerves.

[20]

"Look, there she is," I whispered, forgetting that Miss Lottie could not possibly have heard me from that distance. "She's fooling with them crazy flowers."

"Yeh, look at 'er."

Miss Lottie's marigolds were perhaps the strangest part of the picture. Certainly they did not fit in with the crumbling decay of the rest of her yard. Beyond the dusty brown yard, in front of the sorry gray house, rose suddenly and shockingly a dazzling strip of bright blossoms, clumped together in enormous mounds, warm and passionate and sun-golden. The old black witch-woman worked on them all summer, every summer, down on her creaky knees, weeding and cultivating and arranging, while the house crumbled and John Burke rocked. For some perverse reason, we children hated those marigolds. They interfered with the perfect ugliness of the place; they were too beautiful; they said too much that we could not understand; they did not make sense. There was something in the vigor with which the old woman destroyed the weeds that intimidated us. It should have been a comical sight — the old woman with the man's hat on her cropped white head, leaning over the bright mounds, her big backside in the air — but it wasn't comical, it was something we could not name. We had to annoy her by whizzing a pebble into her flowers or by yelling a dirty word, then dancing away from her rage, reveling in our youth and mocking her age. Actually, I think it was the flowers we wanted to destroy, but nobody had the nerve to try it, not even Joey, who was usually fool enough to try anything.

"Y'all git some stones," commanded Joey now and was met with instant giggling obedience as everyone except me began to gather pebbles from the dusty ground. "Come on, Lizabeth."

I just stood there peering through the bushes, torn between wanting to join the fun and feeling that it was all a bit silly.

[25]

"You scared, Lizabeth?"

I cursed and spat on the ground — my favorite gesture of phony bravado. "Y'all children get the stones, I'll show you how to use 'em."

I said before that we children were not **consciously** aware of how thick were the bars of our cage. I wonder now, though, whether we were not more aware of it than I thought. Perhaps we had some dim notion of what we were, and how little chance we had of being anything else. Otherwise, why would we have been so preoccupied with destruction? Anyway, the pebbles were collected quickly, and everybody looked at me to begin the fun.

“Come on, y’all.”

We crept to the edge of the bushes that bordered the narrow road in front of Miss Lottie’s place. She was working placidly, kneeling over the flowers, her dark hand plunged into the golden mound. Suddenly zing — an expertly aimed stone cut the head off one of the blossoms.

[30]

“Who out there?” Miss Lottie’s backside came down and her head came up as her sharp eyes searched the bushes. “You better git!”

We had crouched down out of sight in the bushes, where we stifled the giggles that insisted on coming. Miss Lottie gazed warily across the road for a moment, then cautiously returned to her weeding. Zing — Joey sent a pebble into the blooms, and another marigold was beheaded.

Miss Lottie was enraged now. She began struggling to her feet, leaning on a rickety cane and shouting. “Y’all git! Go on home!” Then the rest of the kids let loose with their pebbles, storming the flowers and laughing wildly and senselessly at Miss Lottie’s impotent rage. She shook her stick at us and started shakily toward the road crying, “Git ‘long! John Burke! John Burke, come help!”

Then I lost my head entirely, mad with the power of inciting such rage, and ran out of the bushes in the storm of pebbles, straight toward Miss Lottie, chanting madly, “Old witch, fell in a ditch, picked up a penny and thought she was rich!” The children screamed with delight, dropped their pebbles, and joined the crazy dance, swarming around Miss Lottie like bees and chanting, “Old lady witch!” while she screamed curses at us. The madness lasted only a moment, for John Burke, startled at last, lurched out of his chair, and we dashed for the bushes just as Miss Lottie’s cane went whizzing at my head.

I did not join the merriment when the kids gathered again under the oak in our bare yard. Suddenly I was ashamed, and I did not like being ashamed. The child in me sulked and said it was all in fun, but the woman in me flinched at the thought of the malicious attack that I had led. The mood lasted all afternoon. When we ate the beans and rice that was supper that night, I did not notice my father’s silence, for he was always silent these days, nor did I notice my mother’s absence, for she always worked until well into evening. Joey and I had a particularly bitter argument after supper; his exuberance got on my nerves. Finally I stretched out upon the pallet in the room we shared and fell into a fitful doze.

[35]

When I awoke, somewhere in the middle of the night, my mother had returned, and I vaguely listened to the conversation that was audible through the thin walls that separated our rooms. At first I heard no words, only voices. My mother’s voice was like a cool, dark room in summer — peaceful, soothing, quiet. I loved to listen to it; it made things seem all right somehow. But my father’s voice cut through hers, shattering the peace.

“Twenty-two years, Maybelle, twenty-two years,” he was saying, “and I got nothing for you, nothing, nothing.”

“It’s all right, honey, you’ll get something. Everybody out of work now, you know that.”

“It ain’t right. Ain’t no man ought to eat his woman’s food year in and year out, and see his children running wild. Ain’t nothing right about that.”

“Honey, you took good care of us when you had it. Ain’t nobody got nothing nowadays.”

[40]

“I ain’t talking about nobody else, I’m talking about me. God knows I try.” My mother said something I could not hear, and my father cried out louder, “What must a man do, tell me that?”

“Look, we ain’t starving. I git paid every week, and Mrs. Ellis is real nice about giving me things. She gonna let me have Mr. Ellis’s old coat for you this winter — ”

“D— Mr. Ellis’s coat! And d— his money! You think I want white folks’ leavings?”

“D—, Maybelle” — and suddenly he sobbed, loudly and painfully, and cried helplessly and hopelessly in the dark night. I had never heard a man cry before. I did not know men ever cried. I covered my ears with my hands but could not cut off the sound of my father’s harsh, painful, despairing sobs. My father was a strong man who could whisk a child upon his shoulders and go singing through the house. My father whittled toys for us, and laughed so loud that the great oak seemed to laugh with him, and taught us how to fish and hunt rabbits. How could it be that my father was crying? But the sobs went on, unstifled, finally quieting until I could hear my mother’s voice, deep and rich, humming softly as she used to hum to a frightened child.

The world had lost its boundary lines. My mother, who was small and soft, was now the strength of the family; my father, who was the rock on which the family had been built, was sobbing like the tiniest child. Everything was suddenly out of tune, like a broken accordion. Where did I fit into this crazy picture? I do not now remember my thoughts, only a feeling of great bewilderment and fear.

[45]

Long after the sobbing and humming had stopped, I lay on the pallet, still as stone with my hands over my ears, wishing that I too could cry and be comforted. The night was silent now except for the sound of the crickets and of Joey’s soft breathing. But the room was too crowded with fear to allow me to sleep, and finally, feeling the terrible aloneness of 4 A.M., I decided to awaken Joey.

“Ouch! What’s the matter with you? What you want?” he demanded disagreeably when I had pinched and slapped him awake.

“Come on, wake up.”

“What for? Go ‘way.”

I was lost for a reasonable reply. I could not say, “I’m scared and I don’t want to be alone,” so I merely said, “I’m going out. If you want to come, come on.”

[50]

The promise of adventure awoke him. “Going out now? Where to, Lizabeth? What you going to do?”

I was pulling my dress over my head. Until now I had not thought of going out. “Just come on,” I replied tersely.

I was out the window and halfway down the road before Joey caught up with me.

“Wait, Lizabeth, where you going?”

I was running as if the Furies were after me, as perhaps they were — running silently and furiously until I came to where I had half known I was headed: to Miss Lottie’s yard.

[55]

The half-dawn light was more eerie than complete darkness, and in it the old house was like the ruin that my world had become — foul and crumbling, a grotesque caricature. It looked haunted, but I was not afraid, because I was haunted too.

“Lizabeth, you lost your mind?” panted Joey.

I had indeed lost my mind, for all the smoldering emotions of that summer swelled in me and burst — the great need for my mother who was never there, the hopelessness of our poverty and degradation, the bewilderment of being neither child nor woman and yet both at once, the fear unleashed by my father’s tears. And these feelings combined in one great impulse toward destruction.

“Lizabeth!”

I leaped furiously into the mounds of marigolds and pulled madly, trampling and pulling and destroying the perfect yellow blooms. The fresh smell of early morning and of dew-soaked marigolds spurred me on as I went tearing and mangling and sobbing while Joey tugged my dress or my waist crying, “Lizabeth, stop, please stop!”

[60]

And then I was sitting in the ruined little garden among the uprooted and ruined flowers, crying and crying, and it was too late to undo what I had done. Joey was sitting beside me, silent and frightened, not knowing what to say. Then, “Lizabeth, look!”

I opened my swollen eyes and saw in front of me a pair of large, calloused feet; my gaze lifted to the swollen legs, the age-distorted body clad in a tight cotton nightdress, and then the shadowed Indian face surrounded by stubby white hair. And there was no rage in the face now, now that the garden was destroyed and there was nothing any longer to be protected.

“M-miss Lottie!” I scrambled to my feet and just stood there and stared at her, and that was the moment when childhood faded and womanhood began. That violent, crazy act was the last act of childhood. For as I gazed at the immobile face with the sad, weary eyes, I gazed upon a kind of reality which is hidden to childhood. The witch was no longer a witch but only a broken old woman who had dared to create beauty in the midst of ugliness and sterility. She had been born in squalor and lived in it all her life. Now at the end of that life she had nothing except a falling-down hut, a wrecked body, and John Burke, the mindless son of her passion. Whatever verve there was left in her, whatever was of love and beauty and joy that had not been squeezed out by life, had been there in the marigolds she had so tenderly cared for.

Of course I could not express the things that I knew about Miss Lottie as I stood there awkward and ashamed. The years have put words to the things I knew in that moment, and as I look back upon it, I know that that moment marked the end of **innocence**. **Innocence** involves an unseeing acceptance of things at face value, an ignorance of the area below the surface. In that humiliating moment I looked beyond myself and into the depths of another person. This was the beginning of compassion, and one cannot have both compassion and **innocence**.

The years have taken me worlds away from that time and that place, from the dust and squalor of our lives, and from the bright thing that I destroyed in a

blind, childish striking out at God knows what. Miss Lottie died long ago and many years have passed since I last saw her hut, completely barren at last, for despite my wild **contrition** she never planted marigolds again. Yet, there are times when the image of those passionate yellow mounds returns with a painful poignancy. For one does not have to be ignorant and poor to find that his life is as barren as the dusty yards of our town. And I too have planted marigolds.

**Stop and Jot:** What were some of your thoughts and reflections about this story? Why do you think the “loss of innocence” is portrayed as a necessary part of growing up/becoming an adult? Is it necessary? Put your ideas in the space below.

**Story #2:** Read this story about a daughter who learns some surprising information about her mother’s past. You may make notes and write your ideas about what you are thinking as you read.

### **SAFETY OF NUMBERS**

by Lucy Tan, 2015

When my friend Bobby Klein didn’t make it into the gifted program back in fifth grade, Mom said, “What’s so hard about IQ? There’s nothing you can’t study for.” She’s right, in my case. There is nothing she can’t make me study for. She keeps a schedule that she brings out whenever I’m not where I’m supposed to be. On Saturdays, for example, when she catches me leaving through the kitchen door, she points to the red letters that read, SAT. I say, “Yeah Ma, I know it’s a Saturday!” and Dad chuckles, which is his way of commiserating.

My mother is from northern China, a woman with a small face and a big voice and hair that springs from her head so fiercely you’re sure it’s about to have a word with you. She walks home for lunch every day because she believes in moderate exercise and the health hazards of plastic food containers. She is petrified of credit theft, house theft, car theft, and AIDS; uncomfortable around emotional confrontation and underachievement.

By the time other kids in my year start prepping for the SAT, I have already taken nine months of classes. Twelve, if you count algebra drills. Most of Mom’s child-rearing energy is spent on my education, and she’s impatient for results. She likes the kinds of success you can plot and graph, reports you can hold in your hand. This makes the SAT the score of all academic scores, representing both a return on one investment and the principal for the next.

“Like the Americans say,” she muses, “safety of numbers. That’s what colleges want to see.”

[5]

“You mean ‘safety in numbers’,” I tell her. “And that’s something completely different.”

She lets out a little laugh. “You think you know everything? The main word there is safety. What do you know about safety?”

“What do you mean?”

“Exactly,” she says, as if that answers anything.

Mom works in the Procurement Department of a Sears satellite office, where she orders desk chairs and tracks the average lifespan of IBM laptops. They’re big into motivation over at Sears. Every so often Mom goes on a company retreat and comes back with posters that say things like CONQUER IT and OPPORTUNITY. She hangs a select few up in the study, but recently, a poster called ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS moved her enough to earn a spot on the kitchen wall. That poster has an image of a running track, where a white hand passes a baton off to a brown hand. I have seen this same picture in our college advisor’s office, except that one said DIVERSITY. I find it troubling that these photos are used for more than one type of motivation, but my best friend Caterina thinks it’s funny. “Your mom and Mrs. Staedtler have the same taste in decorating,” she says. I don’t tell her that there are still more posters in the garage that haven’t made it onto the walls, lesser motivations, like TEAMWORK and ACCEPTANCE. I don’t say that the total supply of motivation in our house could put Mrs. Staedtler out of a job.

[10]

During the afternoons, while Mom is still at work, I invite friends over to watch TRL on MTV. Cat gets up to reenact the music videos, and everyone gives her performance points on a scale of one to ten. We write the scores on sticky notes and fix them to ping-pong paddles scavenged from the basement. Then we wave the paddles around and yell and sometimes someone turns to me and says, “I don’t know what you’re talking about — your house is fun!”

After Total Request Live, the reruns of Road Rules and The Real World come on, as well as a relationship show called The Blame Game, in which couples go on TV to expose each other’s flaws. There’s a lot of shouting involved, and it always ends with a karaoke segment. Most of my friends leave before this point, but I watch the whole thing. I love the elements of surprise and power play. Just when you think one person is winning the hearts of the audience, bam! He expects her to hand-wash his underwear! At a quarter to five, I switch the TV back to one of Dad’s channels before turning it off. In my room, I arrange binders around my desk and fabricate fresh eraser dust. By the time Mom gets home, my eyes look bleary from studying instead of watching Ruthie Alcaide run around naked on TV all afternoon.

Some nights, after my parents have gone to bed, Cat rides over on her brother’s bike and parks it under my window. We live in a ranch-style house, so it’s only a four-foot drop from my room, but the window screen isn’t removable. At least, not in the sense that you can put it back afterward. The first time I sneaked out, it was winter. We pulled and pushed on the screen until it started to crack. For every three minutes spent pulling and pushing, we waited one, just in case someone was awake and listening. When it finally came off, Cat propped it up against the house, like a portrait ready to be hung. It stayed there until the spring, when Dad found it while clearing the backyard.

“What happened here?” he called from outside.

“I think the wind blew it off.”

[15]

“Where are we, Kansas?”

“Probably a raccoon then.”

“Yeah, that sounds about right,” he said. “A raccoon. Or, you know, a stray Cat.” He held my gaze just a moment longer than he had to. Then he dragged

the screen out front to the garage.

The garage is Dad's hobby shop — full of our neighbors' discarded furniture and lawn equipment lined up and shining like overgrown insects. Crouched next to him out there, and in pauses between the buzzing of his electric sander, I can sometimes get him to talk about Mom's crazy.

"Back in China, college entrance exams were serious stuff," he says. "We had one shot — the gaokao — and that test meant the difference between becoming a scholar and a laborer, between a chance at America and no chance at all. Those scores? They mattered."

[20]

There were other scores that mattered. Seventeen million of Mao's youth were sent to the countryside for reeducation. Ten thousand arrested in connection with the June fourth movement. Hundreds to thousands killed at Tiananmen Square. "Isn't that the scariest thing," he says, "the fact that those death-toll numbers are missing?"

"Yeah," I say, but the truth is that I don't really know. I can't imagine the difference between ten thousand and seventeen million. I can't imagine something so abstract as death, or so concrete as Mom's involvement in all this.

"Wait here," he says. He puts down the sander and goes over to the metal shelves that line the back of the garage. Motivational posters land on the floor, and on top of them, the lids of cardboard document boxes. When he comes back, he's holding a faded photo of people standing together in a half circle in front of a school. Mom is there in the center, her head turned and eyes just barely catching the camera, as though distracted in mid-speech.

"She was an activist," he says. "This was taken in May of 1989. If you think about it, you're in this picture too." I imagine myself over on the other side of the world, a tiny embryo stuck to the inside of her, like a snail.

"You're more like her than you think," he says.

[25]

"Yeah, right. How?"

"You're fearless."

He hands me a can of Mountain Dew from the stash he keeps hidden in the garage. Mom says Mountain Dew is the color of cancer, and even though I know that cancer doesn't have a color, the thought has put me off Mountain Dew. I drink the soda anyway, and it's not as bad as I remember.

I'm sure Mom has reasons for running our lives the way she does, even if they only hold up in her own mind. Call them superstitions then, or the practices of a self-made faith. Somewhere there is a god that demands double-locking doors and triple-checking my homework. What I want to know is how the politics and the soda connect. In other words, at what point did she become so small in her living of life?

I don't say any of this, but it's as if Dad hears anyway. "They're her stories," he says softly. "I can't tell them."

[30]

Later that week, as I am going through my Reading Comprehension study pile, I find that Dad has slipped in a few articles on modern Chinese history. In one of them, there is a picture of twenty or so tanks headed single-file down a broad avenue. At the very corner of the frame, a person stands right up

against the first tank. It almost looks as though he or she is directing the artillery, but the caption below reads “Tiananmen Square, June 4, 1989: Civil Disobedience.” This person, I think, could be Mom. And the more I stare, the more I’m convinced it is her. The picture is grainy, but I can almost recognize her ferocious hair.

The closer the SAT gets, the more little red letters appear on my schedule. Mom thinks she’s being very American by making a baseball metaphor about “going to third base” and then doesn’t want to know why I’m laughing. She works from home one day a week so that she can help me with drills after school. Without my friends there, the house feels empty and unfamiliar. Mom counts vocabulary flashcards while I stare into my lap, or at the napkin holder, or at a nearby stack of newspapers on the kitchen table. I wish she would pour herself a drink, the way Cat’s mother does when she comes home from work. I wish she would get drunk on sorghum wine like the Chinese families that used to stay with us sometimes. Just off the plane, they had a weird dusty smell on them, as if they’d been shipped straight from Mom’s past. They snacked on whole fruits — apples and oranges and round pears with flesh so light it looked translucent. When they drank, they started speaking about the eighties in a way that made Mom go psspsps with her lips. Not in front of the kid.

“Alacrity,” Mom says, flipping through the cards. Her tone reminds me of old people playing bingo. “Esoteric.”

Sometimes I test her vocabulary too. For instance, I know that on the back of the card that reads “brusque,” there is written only the word “short,” so I answer, “vertically challenged,” to see if she knows the difference. When she doesn’t, I shout in my head Aha! You lose! and squint one eye shut to picture her face on the Blame Game Wall of Shame. Other times, I define words in French or Ebonics. “la mode de ma mère.” “Vexed,” she reads, and I answer, “When b\*\*\*\*\* be all up in yo’ steez.” At this, she drops the deck and glares. “Concentrate on your first language. You can be funny after you get into Harvard.”

One day, I forget my class project and my keys at home. During sixth period, Cat rides me back to my house on her bike and we try each window, including the one without the screen, but they are locked — all except one. We have to look up to see it. It’s two feet high, three feet wide, and positioned six feet off the ground, in the corner of my parents’ bedroom. With the help of a garbage bin and a boost from Cat, I wriggle my way through the opening and land on Mom’s bureau-top, knocking several things over in the process. But there’s no time to clean up, so I grab what I need and leave through the front door.

[35]

That afternoon, there is a cop car parked in the driveway. I walk in to find my mom in the living room with two policemen. When she sees me, she yells, “Someone robbed our house!”

One of the cops standing in our living room is Bobby Klein’s dad, and he winks at me discreetly.

“Ma’am,” he says, putting a hand on Mom’s shoulder, “nothing is missing.”

“Yes, yes, but…” She points to the hallway and gives him the look of exasperation she usually saves for supermarket managers and DMV reps. “I came home early. Maybe I scared them away.”

Through the doorway of the bedroom, I can see the open window, a felled plant, a trail of soil, and a few bottles of Clinique Moisture-Lock lying on their sides among the rest of the bureau-top battalion.

“We’ve searched the house and everything’s fine. Maybe a wild animal came in for a little visit, that’s all.”

At “little visit,” Mom glares at Mr. Klein as if he has extended this invitation himself.

“And the missing screen on my daughter’s window?” she finishes. “Was that an animal too?”

Now, each morning before she leaves for work, Mom checks to make sure every window and door in our house is locked. “What period is your Euro exam?” (Click.) “And did you finish the second draft of your Tom Stoppard essay?” (Click.) I sip on my orange juice and wait until she leaves. Then I go into her bedroom, unlock the tiny window, and leave it open just an inch.

Seeing Mom panic thrills me. She doesn’t call the cops again, but late at night I can hear her talking to Dad about moving money between banks and getting fancy alarm systems installed. Sometimes, in the middle of chopping vegetables or writing a letter, she suddenly closes a hand over her neck to check that her gold chain is still there, or brushes a thumb against her ring finger to feel for her wedding band. One night, I overhear a conversation in their bedroom:

“You don’t believe in spirits, do you?” she asks Dad.

“There aren’t any spirits,” Dad replies, no follow-up questions asked. He is used to her habit of starting conversations out loud in the middle of the ones already going on inside her head.

I’m not evil, I swear it. But once I start, I can’t stop. Cat says this is because there is something lacking in me, a form of drama that is missing from my life. “It’s like you live in a bad indie movie,” she says. “All mood, no conflict.” What she means is, why don’t I reason with my mother? Why don’t I bring issues to light? Cat doesn’t understand what it’s like to deal with a parent like mine. She has four older brothers, and it’s a rare day if their mom can call them all by the right names. Her family practices Delegated Discipline, which means each kid is in charge of keeping the next youngest in line. Any “reasoning” done by her brothers is carried out through use of their fists.

I’m not good at math. The verbal analogies and sentence completions are easy, but the math gets me every time. “X and Y are not interchangeable,” Mom says. “You have to assign things value.” She stands behind me with a stopwatch as I drill, peering at my pencil marks and blocking the overhead light. “One minute forty-two seconds per question,” she says, doing quick division in her head. “Not fast enough.” After I finish a section, she checks it to identify the types of problems that take me the longest to complete. I like to watch her work for a change, to see the crease between her eyebrows grow into the shape of a butt crack.

That final week of preparations, I barely leave the house at all. Mom has me in bed by nine thirty every night and taking Vitamin C pills every day, just in case. On the Friday before the test, I am concentrating — for once, really concentrating — when she comes into my room and throws bits of colored paper on my desk.

“What is this?” she asks. “8.5? 9.1? 10? ‘I’d do you!’?”

Cat's performance Post-Its lie there looking defeated, having been crumpled and then smoothed out again. Mom's hair is bigger than usual, and suddenly I feel my own stand up at the back of my neck, as if some gene of hers has just decided to assert itself, to remind me whose daughter I am.

"You go through my trash?"

Mom blinks a couple times and stands up straight, as if she has been asked a difficult theoretical question. In that moment of triumph, I feel my chest expand and my eyebrows rise a fraction of an inch — this, too, is an expression of hers. The shock of reacting like her twice in twenty seconds makes me look away, and by the time I look back, she is pretending that she hasn't heard me at all.

"I don't want you around that girl anymore," she says quietly.

[55]

When I realize she is talking about Cat, my face grows hot. I think of all the words I could use to say how I'm feeling now: irate, livid, incensed. I am one adjective away from bellicose. But they are all too neat to describe the mix of emotions going through me.

"She's my best friend. You don't have a say in it."

Mom blinks at me, leans in.

"You think I've never been wild? You think I've never left through a window? Ask me about the last time I tried to leave through a window."

I stare back and say nothing.

[60]

"Ask me."

"Fine. What happened the last time you left through a window?"

"My father caught me. I was on my way to Tiananmen Square for a protest. He locked the window from the outside and pushed two cabinets up against the door to keep me in. By the time he let me out, four of my best friends were dead."

The light from my desk lamp glances off her nose and cheekbones in a way that makes her eyes look darker than usual. Then her lips pull back and her chin bunches up. I have never seen her cry, and the fact that she almost does comes as a surprise. But there is nothing surprising to me about her facial expression of pain. I recognize it in a way that feels congenital, that must have something to do with bloodlines. Oh, I think. Of course she would look like that.

"It was supposed to be peaceful," she says. "No one ever thought they would open fire on students. When you're young, you think everyone is on your side. You can't imagine everything you have to lose."

[65]

It occurs to me then that there are things about my mom that I know without being told or shown. I know them just because I am her daughter. For example, Dad thinks she's haunted by what could have happened to her at Tiananmen Square. But I know that she's just as haunted by the fact that it

didn't.

"I'm sorry about your friends," I say.

She fiddles with the Post-Its on my desk, lines them up in a row. She looks suddenly worn — the exact opposite of her expression from that old photo taken in front of the school. One by one, Mom gathers the bits of paper back up into her palm. She doesn't look at me again until she's at the door. "Time for sleep," she says. "Tonight, rest is your first priority."

The school parking lot is filled with parents and kids passing books, pencils, and calculators between them. My parents stand on the lawn facing the entrance, staring over my shoulder at the registration table.

"I'm OK now," I say, starting to back away.

[70]

Mom has forgotten to change out of her flip-flops when leaving the house, and her toes are clenched away from the morning dew.

"You see, honey? She's fine." Dad tugs the flashcards out of her hands. After they send me off, they are headed to the Ritz Diner for brunch with some of the other nervous parents. I feel bad for Dad. I picture him sitting there, one hand cupping a mug of Lipton tea, the other working the worry out of Mom's fingers.

As she turns to look at me, her brows separate and her nostrils flare. This is her "pep talk" face. She wore it on my first day of ninth grade, and the time I refused to submerge my head during a YMCA swimming lesson, and the time I stood five terrifying feet from my bedroom door, its handle connected to my tooth by a string. Despite her exposure to motivational posters, Mom's pep talks never fail to sound like eulogies.

"I have to go," I say before she can begin.

Mom nods and reaches over to give my arm a squeeze. In that moment, she suddenly looks at me differently, and I look back at her differently. I can't say what's changed, except that it reminds me of an online test that's supposed to tell you whether you're more left-brained or right-brained. There is an image of a dancing girl, and whichever direction you see her turning indicates the way you think. Usually, you can only see her going one way, but occasionally a collection of nerves relaxes in your mind — you become not so you, and then the dancer starts to spin the other way. Something just as delicate is turning between my mother and me. It has been there all along, but for the first time in a long time, we are watching it go in the same direction.

[75]

"If you mess up, you can always take it again in June," she says.

So then we're back to normal.

Here's the verbal analogy I've come up with: The SAT is to my future as my future is to Mom's past. The outcome of the first will inform how we feel about the second, even though these connections seem tenuous at best.

If it will make her happy, I will play by these rules. I will suffer the security procedure required — hand over my calculator, my admission ticket, my two

IDs. I will write down the codes they assign, bubble in the letters that spell out my name. I am prepared to fly through the verbal sections, pick off math problems in order of difficulty, and rediagram the ones that give me trouble the first time around. I will tell X from Y. I will assign value to all the unknowns.

But after we hand in our papers, while everyone is heading toward the front exit, where the parents are waiting, I will leave through the back. I will run down the empty halls, my fingers trailing along the locker gills, and blast through the gymnasium, out past those heavy doors. There will be no one there except for Cat, waiting at the curb, spinning one bike pedal with her foot. “Get in front,” I’ll tell her, even though I’m blind with sunshine. “I’ll drive.”

[80]

We avoid the main roads, ride along side streets and through empty elementary-school playgrounds. We cut between two lawns at the end of my cul-de-sac and cross a wooden bridge. Speed picks up as we come down the road — we’re holding on with four hands, and then two hands, and then none. At the entrance to the bike trail, our tires snag on a branch, launching us into the air, but Cat’s weight on the handlebars keeps our course when we land.

“Stunning performance!” she shouts over her shoulder. “Ten out of ten!”

In my bag are a toothbrush and a change of clothes. We are not sure where we’re going yet, but we have always wanted to see MTV Studios in New York City. We have dreams of getting on a bus bound for Port Authority and joining the crowd at Times Square. There are neon signs we will wave, cheers we will yell in hopes of being let up to Total Request Live. Cat keeps reminding me how much trouble I’ll be in when we get back, but I’m not scared of getting in trouble. What I’m scared of is growing up to be scared. She ducks forward so I can pedal standing, to gain momentum. For one wild moment, as we hurl through the woods, I think I see my mom’s face streak between the trees alongside us, trying to keep up.

*“Safety of Numbers” by Lucy Tan. Copyright © 2015 by Lucy Tan. Originally published in Ploughshares. Used with permission, all rights reserved.*

**Stop and Jot:** What were some of your thoughts and reflections about this story? How would you describe the shift between childhood and adulthood? How does it differ for different generations and people? Put your ideas in the space below.

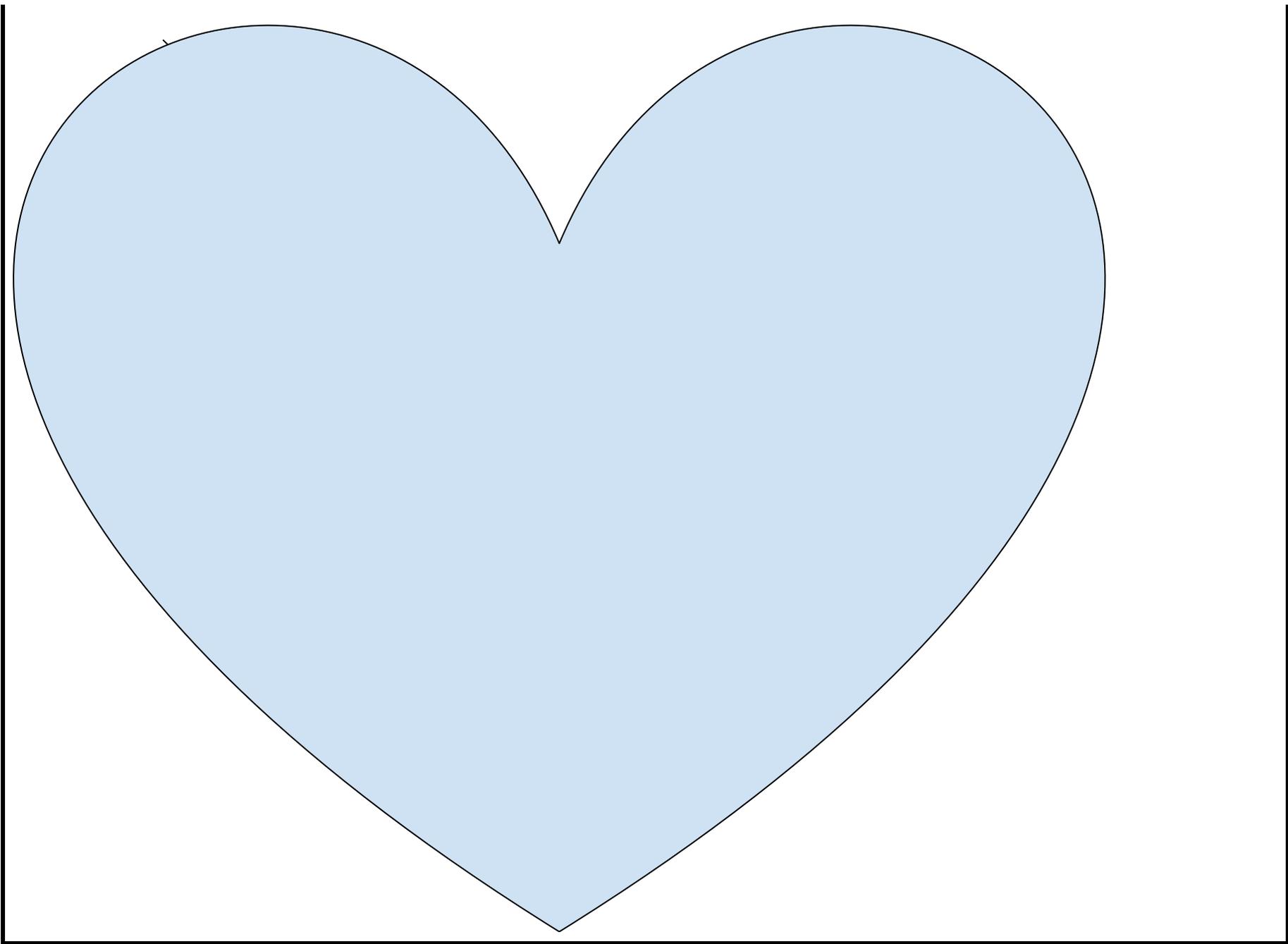
**EXIT TICKET:** Select the story you want to use as your mentor text and write a message to the author. Consider what you would say in response to this story. What are your thoughts about the author’s central message or insights about the theme of “coming of age” and how they developed that message? Why did you select this story? How did the writer speak to you?

**WEEK 4/ Lesson 4 Objective:** Students will build understanding of expressing their insights through the creation of their own short story about their own ideas and insights on the theme of “growing up” as their culminating task.

**Overview:** This lesson will focus on the creation of your own short story. As we have learned, authors use important realizations to develop the complexity of their characters. You may be thinking of your own childhood or that of one of your loved ones or a friend and what important realization was the catalyst for them “growing up.” How did that realization propel them from childhood into adulthood? When we want to start our ideas, one of the best ways is to brainstorm or jot down anything that comes to mind about the topic before we start to draft these ideas into some structure or form. In today’s lesson, you will focus on brainstorming your ideas and then drafting your first draft of your short story.

**Warm Up:** Using the short story you selected as a mentor story, jot down some of your ideas about coming of age that you might use in brainstorming.

**Brainstorming:** Now, let’s see if we can put some more ideas together around this big theme of coming of age related to the world that you live in. We will use a heartmap to capture these ideas. A Heartmap is a graphic organizer that you can use to add ideas about the most important people, places, and things in your own heart. As you think about your own ideas and story, what are moments that you believe have led you closer to growing up or led you to grow up? What aspects of your life symbolize childhood and/or the beginnings or adulthood? What activities or things do you think about?



**Drafting:** After you have finished your brainstorming ideas, you will start to create the form or structure for your short story. Think about these big ideas:

- d. **How will you show your theme- your big message or insight about coming of age that you want your readers to come away from your short story?**
- e. **What kinds of language, characters, and setting will you use?**
- f. **What kinds of imagery will you use?**

Write your short story in the space provided. Use additional paper as needed.

**Close Reading:** Give your draft to someone else to read or re-read your short story and think about the following questions:

- What is the message or insight (THEME) of the story? How can you tell?
- How are characters developed? Where could more detail be added to help with creating complex characters?

Put the responses here and be sure to review these ideas as you make revisions to the story.

**REVISING:** Rewrite the short story to add ideas, details, characterization that make the story more vivid, clear, and more reflective of your theme.

**EDITING:** BE SURE YOUR LANGUAGE CHOICES, SPELLING, AND PUNCTUATION ARE CORRECTLY USED.

**Sharing with Others:**

**Find one other person close to you- friend or family member to read your final short story to.**