

Text Pairing: *The Glass Menagerie* and 9 poems.

Poems:

“The Portrait” by Stanley Kunitz

“somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond” (first line) by e. e. cummings

“Piano” by D.H. Lawrence

“miss rosie” by Lucille Clifton

“The Fish” by Lila Zeiger

“Glass” by Robert Francis

“Elysium is as far as to” (first line) by Emily Dickinson

“Mirror” by Sylvia Plath

“Ex-Basketball Player” by John Updike

Short introduction to this assessment:

This is a high stakes assessment assignment after reading *The Glass Menagerie*. We have already read and discussed and analyzed the play as a class. Next we read and discuss “The Portrait” by Stanley Kunitz. While discussing the poem students do not know that they will be choosing another poem to pair with the play. I want to emphasize the analysis of the poem first and then talk about the connection to the play. Once the assignment is handed out, this is a point that needs to be repeated several times throughout the process – that the poem analysis must drive the critique, not the analysis of the play or else they will try to force the connections.

Once I give out the assignment, I give them the poems and give them several days in class to work together on poems – looking at all of them on the surface and then narrowing down to ones they understand and then choosing one to focus on and complete the close reading.

It is important to note that this assessment was given to **10th grade honors** students at the **end** of the year. They had already been exposed to many poems and many techniques on approaching poetry. I was trying to assess their close reading skills, their poetry analysis, as well as their ability to synthesize the texts. However, these pairings would work for a potential unit or single lessons plans.

ASSIGNMENT: Compare and contrast a poem that connects to a significant element found in the play. Think about characterization, imagery, symbolism, theme or a combination of these.

THESIS: Your thesis will need to do more than just state the obvious comparison. It should tell me the significance of the comparison. In other words a bad thesis would be: “The Portrait” by Stanley Kunitz reminds me of Tom and Amanda in *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams. A better one would be: Stanley Kunitz’s poem “The Portrait” and Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie* show the lasting effect parents’ actions have on their children. SEE BELOW FOR SOME OTHER SUGGESTIONS. Don’t forget that your thesis does not have to fit into one sentence.

POEM CHOICES:

“somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond” (first line) by e. e. cummings

“Piano” by D.H. Lawrence

“miss rosie” by Lucille Clifton

“The Fish” by Lila Zeiger

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SOME THESIS OPTIONS: Notice that these are mostly theme based. You may use them if you find they apply to the poem you choose, AND if you can successfully prove them with evidence from both the poem and the play. Of course, there are several more possibilities; these are just a sample.

- For “The Portrait” (the model poem): Stanley Kunitz’s poem “The Portrait” and Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie* show the lasting effect parents’ actions have on their children. REMEMBER – YOU MAY NOT USE THIS POEM FOR YOUR PAPER, BUT YOU MAY USE THIS THESIS IDEA IF IT WORKS FOR THE POEM YOU CHOOSE.
- Memory distorts people’s view of their lives making it harder to move forward.
- Memory can have a crippling effect on people.
- Living in the past keeps people from being able to live successfully in the present or being able to move onto the future.
- Both authors use similar literary techniques to show the power an overbearing mother has on her children.
- Hiding in a world of illusion prevents one from living a successful life.
- Nobody can escape the past. One must deal with it in order to move on.

REQUIREMENTS SUGGESTIONS & REMINDERS:

- Let the poem analysis drive your critique – not the analysis of the play or else you will be forcing the connection.
- Use several direct quotations from both the play **and** the poem.
- Complete a proper works cited as well as parenthetical citations within the text. Note: Parenthetical citation for poetry is a little different, check the WRHS Writing Manual, or the MLA or see me for extra help.
- Write in third person and present tense.
- Stay focused on your thesis. There is a lot you could say about the play and the poems that will not be important to proving your thesis.
- Show deep thinking. Do not just do a simple comparison. Write about symbolism, imagery, irony, etc. that helps support what you are trying to prove.

REQUIREMENTS & REMINDERS (continued):

- Regarding the word “contrast” in the prompt: Highlight contrasts **ONLY** when they have something to do with your thesis and will help to support the thesis. Remember in “The Portrait” the mother “locks” the father away whereas in *GM* Amanda has his portrait out. This contrast is important because it helps to prove the thesis above as well as the last thesis in the “Options” section on page 2. Another interesting contrast would be: The speaker’s dad in the poem commits suicide whereas Tom’s father simply leaves. Both show good evidence of how the abandonment of a father hurts the children. **DO NOT** state unimportant contrasts like, the speaker in the poem is a girl (in some of the choices it is) and the narrator of the play is a boy. I can’t see why that would be worth mentioning.
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY**, whether you are writing about comparisons or contrasts, remember that evidence is only **GOOD** proof if you explain it – show your analysis. **DO NOT** assume I will know why it is important.
- As always, we will follow the writing process steps, and all parts of the process will be part of the grade.
- Like the *Siddhartha* Critique, the marking up of the poem will count as part of the grade. It will count as part of your prewriting process. Here’s where I might see analysis of the poem that may not necessarily show up in your critique.
- None of these poems were written to match up with the play or in response to the play, so do not make this assumption or statement.
- **SUGGESTED ORGANIZATION/SET UP:**
 - **Introduction:** This paragraph will paraphrase the poem and summarize the play (briefly). Be sure authors and titles are included. (Note: The play will be underlined/italicized and the poem will be in quotation marks. The title of your critique will be neither underlined, italicized or in quotation marks.) It will also, obviously, include your thesis and blueprint. Think about this: your blueprint will be what makes the two pieces similar and the thesis will be why do these similarities matter or what do these similarities prove to us regarding theme?
 - **Body paragraphs:** Use these paragraphs to provide good, specific evidence that **SHOWS** your proof. The number of paragraphs will depend on your choice of poem, your thesis, and your evidence. Remember that you are using evidence from both pieces to prove your thesis. I don’t want it to feel like 2 separate essays. I would avoid simply organizing it where you state evidence from one piece and then the other. Go back and forth in your /thesis. In other words you don’t have to state obvious contrasts that exist simply because they are two different pieces. **MOST IMPORTANTLY**, whether you are writing about comparisons or contrasts, remember that evidence is only **GOOD** proof if you explain it – show your analysis. **DO NOT** assume I will know why it is important.
 - **Conclusion:** Restate and wrap up the evidence. Leave the reader with some lasting insight into these two pieces – perhaps a contemporary comparison to today’s world.
 - What I do **NOT** want is 2 separate essays. Do not group all of the analysis of the poem in one section of the paper and all of your analysis of the play in another. Integrate them in a logical order.