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11th Grade American Literature

August 10, 2012

Song Of Solomon Unit: Grounding To Fly

In Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* the protagonist, Milkman Dead, continually pines for the ability to fly and be free. Early on, all of his "flight" is mere escapism; it is the cowardice of a callow young man. He is, to quote Thoreau, part of the mass of men leading lives of quiet desperation. However, when Milkman finally becomes grounded--when he learns about his family and his history--he is able to become free in a meaningful sense. While students dislike Milkman early on, they tend to understand him. Students struggle to understand *how* exactly Milkman is transformed into a more thoughtful person. The focus of this unit is, in part, to help students better understand first, the ways in which Milkman is not self-reflective or grounded, and second, the process by which a series of transcendental moments transform Milkman.

This unit is designed to help students consider where their sense of self comes from, and how they might be affected if they did not understand some of the stories behind the names, objects, and places around them. The first part of the unit asks students to learn about, analyze, and reflect on their immediate surroundings--something Milkman is utterly unable to do when the novel begins. The second half on the unit has students analyzing *Song of Solomon* and connecting what they have learned about their surroundings to the journey Milkman takes in the novel. The midway assessment has students analyze a passage from the text that gets at just how alienated and misguided Milkman is. The final assessment asks students to reflect on how they, in their lives, have connected with people or places.

Enduring understandings:

America has continued to struggle with the tension between freedom for all and exclusion for many.

The United States was founded on and continues to struggle with the tension between individual rights and the rights of society.

Our ability to connect with and “read” the world around us enables us to live richer, fuller lives.

Essential Questions:

How have we as Americans navigated the tension between individual rights and the needs of society?

- How do we balance our needs to grow as individuals in the context of society?
- In what ways does our society help us grow?
- In what ways does society limit us?
- How can we respond when society is preventing us from growing?

How have your interactions with the places and people around you shaped the person you are?

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

Describe objects, places, and/or events that shape their sense of self

Analyze how the details in these descriptions create unified or conflicted impressions

Analyze imagery, motif and symbolism in *Song of Solomon*

Compare and contrast their experiences of being American with Milkman’s experience

Adapted from the Newton South English department curriculum and MassDOE frameworks www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/0601.pdf

Overview of Unit

Duration: 6-7 weeks

Weeks 1-2 Pre-novel activities: Students research, describe and analyze Newton and how it has shaped their senses of self. They will practice descriptive writing and reflect on how a sense of place can/has influenced their sense of self.

Day one: Students will be able to (SWBAT hereafter) read actively (using skills that good readers)

- Start reading and marking “Us & Them” by David Sedaris
- HW: Finish the story

HIGHLIGHTED LESSON 1

Day two: SWBAT analyze how imagery and repetition develop the story’s theme

SWBAT explain what Sedaris thinks enables him to be so selfish

Class Procedure

- Do now: What sort of people are the Tomkeys? What do you think of them? What do you think of David and his behavior?
- With a partner, discuss journals. Then draw the scene Sedaris describes as he watched the Tomkeys. If drawing is not a strong suit, make a map and sketch what you can.
- In the text, mark
 - Repeated images of watching and viewing
 - Repeated lines
- Analyze the images, title, and repeated lines
- Make a statement about theme. Why is David so selfish? What does Sedaris blame?

HW: Write about a time when you chose NOT to look closely at something you did or said. What made it possible for you to ignore the problem?

Day three: SWBAT identify how sensory details and language choices make a description powerful

- Reread selected passages from “Us and Them” together. Identify words, sentences and details that make the passage effective.
- HW: Go home and ask your parents to tell you about the worst thing you did when you were a little kid. Write a journal entry describing the event. Be ready to share with your peers.

Day four: SWBAT identify how sensory details and language choices make a description powerful; change verbs to change the feeling of a description

- In groups of three, students will exchange and analyze journal entries for language and sensory detail
- HW: Look around your room tonight and find an object that connects you emotionally to someone else. This connection could be positive or negative. In your journal, describe the object--and only the object. Be accurate, make us see the object, but without telling a story, try to make us have a feeling for the object.

Day five: SWBAT analyze how word (specifically verb) choices influence the mood in a description

- Review journals: point out strong examples & revise
- HW: Learn the story of your first or last name. Where did it come from? What does it mean? How did your parents pick it? If it is an old family name, who else had it and what stories can you learn about him or her. Write the story of your name in your journal. Briefly, explain how it feels to have your name.

HIGHLIGHTED LESSON 2

Day six: SWBAT explain how names can shape people; SWBAT list a variety of places in Newton that could be researched

Procedure

- A brief sharing of names & stories first with partners then as a class.
- In class, brainstorm a list of famous places—landmarks, parks, houses, businesses—in Newton. What do we know about them? What are some of the major streets in Newton? What do we know about them? What are the different “villages” of Newton?
- Pass out handout on Newton Places.
- On computers, start researching places of interest. Take notes & keep bibliographies (either on paper or on a google doc)
- HW: Finish researching and write the story of any of the following: the name of your street; the history of a park, river, or other nearby landmark. While this could be a “landmark” of local or personal significance, you could also research more “official” landmarks in Newton-- <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/histpres>. The town website has all sorts of interesting information; I would just ask you to try to focus on someplace near where you live or spend time. You must also come in with a printed picture of the place. You may get this on line, but you could also go and take one yourself.

HIGHLIGHTED LESSON 3

Day seven: SWBAT synthesize stories to gain a sense of place

Procedure

- Place pictures and postcards up around the room. Take a quick gallery tour. Prepare at least one specific question about a picture you found.
- Whip around: Ask your question & respond.
- Share journals with partners and then some highlights together.

- On the back of your journal, respond to these questions: What types of people are represented by the names and places in Newton? Who is not? Does it matter? What would it be like to live in Newton and not be represented?
- Discuss these questions as a class
- HW: In one to two pages, tell the story of your family in America. Does your family consider itself American? When did your family come here and why? Where did you live before this? If you consider yourselves Americans, when did you “become” American (as opposed to Irish, Russian, Chinese)? If you do not call yourselves American, why not? Ask relatives if you need to, but if you know this family story, just tell it.

Day eight: SWBAT describe how stories/histories shape people
 SWBAT differentiate between three American “stories”: the settlers story, the immigrant story, the conquered people story

- Share these stories.
- In class reflection: What do these stories have in common? Is there a shared story in America?
- Chart the most typical “American story” together in a group.
- As a group, what are the most common variations of this story? How are the stories of WASP America distinct from those of immigrant America? Is one story the “real” story?
- What about Native American, African Americans and non-immigrant Latinos? How do they fit into these two stories? What do you know about how these people “became” American?
- HW: Song of Solomon 1-9

Weeks 3-6 The Novel: Students will analyze Milkman's development in the novel, looking specifically at imagery and symbolism. As the novel transitions from urban to rural settings, students will compare the alienation Milkman (and other characters) feels in his home town to the grounded, transcendental moments he experiences when he travels

9. SWBAT identify the images that mark Milkman's birth as unusual
HW: SoS 9-35

HIGHLIGHTED LESSON 4

10. SWBAT analyze the use of names in the text

- Do now: Think back to our research into the names of places in Newton. Did you feel like learning about those names made you feel more or less connected to your hometown?
- With a partner,
 - Summarize where the name Not Doctor Street comes from.
 - Where does Guitar's name come from?
 - How do you suppose names like Mercy Hospital and Not Doctor Street might make people feel about where they live?
 - How would you feel about your town and yourself if you were surrounded by similar names? If the prominent people from your community were specifically not allowed to be the source of names?

HW: SoS 35-55

11. SWBAT compare and contrast the characters of Macon and Pilate and assess who is more trustworthy

HW: SoS 56-89

12. SWBAT identify and explain the importance of different types of evidence in a work of literature

HW: SoS 90-112

13. SWBAT define a symbol & analyze word choice to understand symbolism

Class discussion of watermark

HW:SoS 112-130

14. SWBAT analyze a symbol in order to understand Ruth Foster Dead

Formative assessment: Thesis & two paragraphs on watermark

HW:SoS 130-161

15. SWBAT analyze a symbol in order to understand Pilate

Formative assessment: Thesis & two paragraphs on Pilate's earring

HW:SoS 162-186

16. SWBAT assess analysis from yesterday & evaluate Guitar's political choices

- In class, read NY Times article on the Birmingham bombings. <http://tv.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0915.html>
- Do now: Discuss the line "None of the 50 bombings of Negro property here since World War II have been solved." World War 2 ended in 1945. This is 1963. Explain how this line makes you feel about Guitar's decision to be part of the Seven Days.
- Put yourself in Guitar's shoes, what would you do if your people—whoever you may consider that to be—faced the same situation. What would you do? Would violence be a justified response?

HW: SoS 187-216

17. SWBAT evaluate Magdalena called Lena and her opinion of Milkman at the end of part one

HW:SoS 216-259

18. Summative assessment: In class essay on passage from part one--White Peacock as a symbol of Milkman's alienation

19. SWBAT analyze Milkman's trip to the cave

Do now: Describe a time when you worked hard for something that you really wanted, and then you did not get it.

Work on chapter ten questions with a partner (see handouts)

HW: Complete the chapter 11 questions (see handouts)

HIGHLIGHTED LESSON 5

20. SWBAT analyze Milkman's hunt for the bobcat & his connection to the forest

Procedure

- In groups of three, review the questions from last night. Mark any question that you and your group feel unsure of and want discuss.
- As a class, review any questions that people still feel confused about.
- Go back to the scene where Milkman is alone and he pushes his hands into the dirt and suddenly feels connected to life. Mark words and lines that seem important, powerful or confusing.
- Make a word map as a class. What words come up repeatedly? What links do we see amongst these words?

- In your own words, explain what happens to Milkman when he feels his hands in the dirt.

- HW: Write about a place where you feel very "connected." When did you first feel that way?

21. SWBAT compare and contrast Milkman's trip to the cave and his hunt for the bobcat

HW: SoS 259-285

22. SWBAT trace a series of moments where Milkman shows empathy and connection to others

HW: SoS 304-337

23. SWBAT compare and contrast the three “dark” moments Milkman passes through--the cave, the forest, the cellar & explain how they mark growth in his character

HW: close reading of page 337

24. SWBAT explain how key words in the final passage underscore Milkman’s transformation in the novel

25. Optional test on analytical skills (see attached)

Week 6-7: Final assessment: The timeline here is flexible. The final depending on how you handle the writing process in class. (See handouts for the assignment.)

HANDOUTS

<p>Us and Them From <i>Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim</i> by David Sedaris</p>	
<p>WHEN MY FAMILY FIRST MOVED to North Carolina, we lived in a rented house three blocks from the school where I would begin the third grade. My mother made friends with one of the neighbors, but one seemed enough for her. Within a year we would move again and, as she explained, there wasn't much point in getting too close to people we would have to say good-bye to. Our next house was less than a mile away, and the short journey would hardly merit tears or even good-byes, for that matter. It was more of a "see you later" situation, but still I adopted my mother's attitude, as it allowed me to pretend that not making friends was a conscious choice. I could if I wanted to. It just wasn't the right time.</p> <p>Back in New York State, we had lived in the country, with no sidewalks or streetlights; you could leave the house and still be alone. But here, when you looked out the window, you saw other houses, and people inside those houses. I hoped that in walking around after dark I might witness a murder, but for the most part our neighbors just sat in their living rooms, watching TV. The only place that seemed truly different was owned by a man named Mr. Tomkey, who did not believe in television. This was told to us by our</p>	

mother's friend, who dropped by one afternoon with a basketful of okra. The woman did not editorialize—rather, she just presented her information, leaving her listener to make of it what she might. Had my mother said, "That's the craziest thing I've ever heard in my life," I assume that the friend would have agreed, and had she said, "Three cheers for Mr. Tomkey," the friend likely would have agreed as well. It was a kind of test, as was the okra.

To say that you did not believe in television was different from saying that you did not care for it. Belief implied that television had a master plan and that you were against it. It also suggested that you thought too much. When my mother reported that Mr. Tomkey did not believe in television, my father said, "Well, good for him. I don't know that I believe in it, either."

"That's exactly how I feel," my mother said, and then my parents watched the news, and whatever came on after the news.

Word spread that Mr. Tomkey did not own a television, and you began hearing that while this was all very well and good, it was unfair of him to inflict his beliefs upon others, specifically his innocent wife and children. It was speculated that just as the blind man develops a keener sense of hearing, the family must somehow compensate for their loss. "Maybe they read," my mother's friend said. "Maybe they listen to the radio, but you can bet your boots they're doing something."

I wanted to know what this something was, and so I began peering through the Tomkeys' windows. During the day I'd stand across the street from their house, acting as though I were waiting for someone, and at night, when the view was better and I had less chance of being discovered, I would creep into their yard and hide in the bushes beside their fence.

Because they had no TV, the Tomkeys were forced to talk during dinner. They had no idea how puny their lives were, and so they were not ashamed that a camera would have found them uninteresting. They did not know what attractive was or what dinner was supposed to look like or even what time people were supposed to eat. Sometimes they wouldn't sit down until eight o'clock, long after everyone else had finished doing the dishes. During the meal, Mr. Tomkey would occasionally pound the table and point at his children with a fork, but the moment he finished, everyone would

start laughing. I got the idea that he was imitating someone else, and wondered if he spied on us while we were eating.

When fall arrived and school began, I saw the Tomkey children marching up the hill with paper sacks in their hands. The son was one grade lower than me, and the daughter was one grade higher. We never spoke, but I'd pass them in the halls from time to time and attempt to view the world through their eyes. What must it be like to be so ignorant and alone? Could a normal person even imagine it? Staring at an Elmer Fudd lunch box, I tried to divorce myself from everything I already knew: Elmer's inability to pronounce the letter r, his constant pursuit of an intelligent and considerably more famous rabbit. I tried to think of him as just a drawing, but it was impossible to separate him from his celebrity.

One day in class a boy named William began to write the wrong answer on the blackboard, and our teacher flailed her arms, saying, "Warning, Will. Danger, danger." Her voice was synthetic and void of emotion, and we laughed, knowing that she was imitating the robot in a weekly show about a family who lived in outer space. The Tomkeys, though, would have thought she was having a heart attack. It occurred to me that they needed a guide, someone who could accompany them through the course of an average day and point out all the things they were unable to understand. I could have done it on weekends, but friendship would have taken away their mystery and interfered with the good feeling I got from pitying them. So I kept my distance.

In early October the Tomkeys bought a boat, and everyone seemed greatly relieved, especially my mother's friend, who noted that the motor was definitely secondhand. It was reported that Mr. Tomkey's father-in-law owned a house on the lake and had invited the family to use it whenever they liked. This explained why they were gone all weekend, but it did not make their absences any easier to bear. I felt as if my favorite show had been canceled.

Halloween fell on a Saturday that year, and by the time my mother took us to the store, all the good costumes were gone. My sisters dressed as witches and I went as a hobo. I'd looked forward to going in disguise to the Tomkeys' door, but they were off at the lake, and their house was dark. Before leaving, they had left a coffee can full of gumdrops on the front porch, alongside a sign reading DON'T BE GREEDY. In terms of Halloween candy, individual

gumdrops were just about as low as you could get. This was evidenced by the large number of them floating in an adjacent dog bowl. It was disgusting to think that this was what a gumdrop might look like in your stomach, and it was insulting to be told not to take too much of something you didn't really want in the first place. "Who do these Tomkeys think they are?" my sister Lisa said.

The night after Halloween, we were sitting around watching TV when the doorbell rang. Visitors were infrequent at our house, so while my father stayed behind, my mother, sisters, and I ran downstairs in a group, opening the door to discover the entire Tomkey family on our front stoop. The parents looked as they always had, but the son and daughter were dressed in costumes—she as a ballerina and he as some kind of a rodent with terry-cloth ears and a tail made from what looked to be an extension cord. It seemed they had spent the previous evening isolated at the lake and had missed the opportunity to observe Halloween. "So, well, I guess we're trick-or-treating now, if that's okay," Mr. Tomkey said.

I attributed their behavior to the fact that they didn't have a TV, but television didn't teach you everything. Asking for candy on Halloween was called trick-or-treating, but asking for candy on November first was called begging, and it made people uncomfortable. This was one of the things you were supposed to learn simply by being alive, and it angered me that the Tomkeys did not understand it.

"Why of course it's not too late," my mother said. "Kids, why don't you . . . run and get . . . the candy."

"But the candy is gone," my sister Gretchen said. "You gave it away last night."

"Not that candy," my mother said. "The other candy. Why don't you run and go get it?"

"You mean our candy?" Lisa said. "The candy that we earned?"

This was exactly what our mother was talking about, but she didn't want to say this in front of the Tomkeys. In order to spare their feelings, she wanted them to believe that we always kept a bucket of candy lying around the house, just waiting for someone to knock on the door and ask for it. "Go on, now," she said. "Hurry up."

My room was situated right off the foyer, and if the Tomkeys had looked in that direction, they could have seen my bed and the brown paper bag marked MY CANDY. KEEP OUT. I didn't want them to know how much I had, and so I went into my room and shut the door behind me. Then I closed the curtains and emptied my bag onto the bed, searching for whatever was the crummiest. All my life chocolate has made me ill. I don't know if I'm allergic or what, but even the smallest amount leaves me with a blinding headache. Eventually, I learned to stay away from it, but as a child I refused to be left out. The brownies were eaten, and when the pounding began I would blame the grape juice or my mother's cigarette smoke or the tightness of my glasses—anything but the chocolate. My candy bars were poison but they were brand-name, and so I put them in pile no. 1, which definitely would not go to the Tomkeys.

Out in the hallway I could hear my mother straining for something to talk about. "A boat!" she said. "That sounds marvelous. Can you just drive it right into the water?"

"Actually, we have a trailer," Mr. Tomkey said. "So what we do is back it into the lake."

"Oh, a trailer. What kind is it?"

"Well, it's a boat trailer," Mr. Tomkey said.

"Right, but is it wooden or, you know . . . I guess what I'm asking is what style trailer do you have?"

Behind my mother's words were two messages. The first and most obvious was "Yes, I am talking about boat trailers, but also I am dying." The second, meant only for my sisters and me, was "If you do not immediately step forward with that candy, you will never again experience freedom, happiness, or the possibility of my warm embrace."

I knew that it was just a matter of time before she came into my room and started collecting the candy herself, grabbing indiscriminately, with no regard to my rating system. Had I been thinking straight, I would have hidden the most valuable items in my dresser drawer, but instead, panicked by the thought of her hand on my doorknob, I tore off the wrappers and began cramming

the candy bars into my mouth, desperately, like someone in a contest. Most were miniature, which made them easier to accommodate, but still there was only so much room, and it was hard to chew and fit more in at the same time. The headache began immediately, and I chalked it up to tension.

My mother told the Tomkeys she needed to check on something, and then she opened the door and stuck her head inside my room. "What the hell are you doing?" she whispered, but my mouth was too full to answer. "I'll just be a moment," she called, and as she closed the door behind her and moved toward my bed, I began breaking the wax lips and candy necklaces pulled from pile no. 2. These were the second-best things I had received, and while it hurt to destroy them, it would have hurt even more to give them away. I had just started to mutilate a miniature box of Red Hots when my mother pried them from my hands, accidentally finishing the job for me. BB-size pellets clattered onto the floor, and as I followed them with my eyes, she snatched up a roll of Necco wafers.

"Not those," I pleaded, but rather than words, my mouth expelled chocolate, chewed chocolate, which fell onto the sleeve of her sweater. "Not those. Not those."

She shook her arm, and the mound of chocolate dropped like a horrible turd upon my bedspread. "You should look at yourself," she said. "I mean, really look at yourself."

Along with the Necco wafers she took several Tootsie Pops and half a dozen caramels wrapped in cellophane. I heard her apologize to the Tomkeys for her absence, and then I heard my candy hitting the bottom of their bags.

"What do you say?" Mrs. Tomkey asked.

And the children answered, "Thank you."

While I was in trouble for not bringing my candy sooner, my sisters were in more trouble for not bringing theirs at all. We spent the early part of the evening in our rooms, then one by one we eased our way back upstairs, and joined our parents in front of the TV. I was the last to arrive, and took a seat on the floor beside the sofa. The show was a Western, and even if my head had not been throbbing, I doubt I would have had the wherewithal to follow it. A

posse of outlaws crested a rocky hilltop, squinting at a flurry of dust advancing from the horizon, and I thought again of the Tomkeys and of how alone and out of place they had looked in their dopey costumes. "What was up with that kid's tail?" I asked.

"Shhhh," my family said.

For months I had protected and watched over these people, but now, with one stupid act, they had turned my pity into something hard and ugly. The shift wasn't gradual, but immediate, and it provoked an uncomfortable feeling of loss. We hadn't been friends, the Tomkeys and I, but still I had given them the gift of my curiosity. Wondering about the Tomkey family had made me feel generous, but now I would have to shift gears and find pleasure in hating them. The only alternative was to do as my mother had instructed and take a good look at myself. This was an old trick, designed to turn one's hatred inward, and while I was determined not to fall for it, it was hard to shake the mental picture snapped by her suggestion: here is a boy sitting on a bed, his mouth smeared with chocolate. He's a human being, but also he's a pig, surrounded by trash and gorging himself so that others may be denied. Were this the only image in the world, you'd be forced to give it your full attention, but fortunately there were others. This stagecoach, for instance, coming round the bend with a cargo of gold. This shiny new Mustang convertible. This teenage girl, her hair a beautiful mane, sipping Pepsi through a straw, one picture after another, on and on until the news, and whatever came on after the news.

from

<http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/2004/jun/sedaris/usandthem.html>

Learning Your Place: A Closer Look at Newton

Your job is to find out more about the place where you live. Hopefully, you will use this as a chance to find out more about someplace you've always loved, or a place you've always wondered about. To do this well you should...

- Pick a place in Newton
- Research the place
- Write a one to two page "story" of the place
 - This "story" is meant to be loosely defined—it could be the story of a person, the geological story of the place, the history of a building, the biological story of the place...what interests you about what you discovered?
- Bring in a picture of the place (downloaded or one you took yourself—but printed)
- Bring in a 4x6 note card with 3 interesting facts about the place you researched

Some possible places to consider...

- Your street
- Another nearby street
- A house or building
- A park
- The library or branch library
- A school
- A business (not a chain store)

Places to look for information...

- City of Newton Historic Places
<http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/gov/historic/default.asp>
- Newton Free Library Digital Archives
<http://guides.newtonfreelibrary.net/digitalnewton>
- Newton Conservators—Parks & Conservation Land
<http://www.newtonconservators.org/parks.htm> (Use the "map" link to get to links to all of the parks—most of them have their own websites)

Birmingham Bomb Kills 4 Negro Girls In Church; Riots Flare; 2 Boys Slain

Guard Summoned

Wallace Acts on City Plea for Help as 20 Are Injured

Wallace Orders Guardsmen Out

By Claude Sitton



Birmingham, Ala., Sept. 15--A bomb severely damaged a Negro church today during Sunday school services, killing four Negro girls and setting off racial rioting and other violence in which two Negro boys were shot to death.

Fourteen Negroes were injured in the explosion. One Negro and five whites were hurt in the disorders that followed.

Some 500 National Guardsmen in battle dress stood by at armories here tonight, on orders of Gov. George C. Wallace. And 300 state troopers joined the Birmingham police, Jefferson County sheriff's deputies and other law-enforcement units in efforts to restore peace.

Governor Wallace sent the guardsmen and the troopers in response to requests from local authorities.

Sporadic gunfire sounded in Negro neighborhoods tonight, and small bands of residents roamed the streets. Aside from the patrols that cruised the city armed with riot guns, carbines and shotguns, few whites were seen.

Fire Bomb Hurled

At one point, three fires burned simultaneously in Negro sections, one at a broom and mop factory, one at a roofing company and a third in another building. An incendiary bomb was tossed into a supermarket, but the flames were extinguished swiftly. Fire marshals investigated blazes at two vacant houses to see if arson was involved.

Mayor Albert Boutwell and other city officials and civic leaders appeared on television station WAPI late tonight and urged residents to cooperate in ending "this senseless reign of terror."

Sheriff Melvin Bailey referred to the day as "the most distressing in the history of Birmingham."

The explosion at the 16th Street Baptist Church this morning brought hundreds of angry Negroes pouring into the streets. Some attacked the police with stones. The police dispersed them by firing shotguns over their heads.

Johnny Robinson, a 16-year-old Negro, was shot in the back and killed by a policeman with a shotgun this afternoon. Officers said the victim was among a group that had hurled stones at white youths driving through the area in cars flying Confederate battle flags.

When the police arrived, the youths fled, and one policeman said he had fired low but that some of the shot had struck the Robinson youth in the back.

Virgil Wade, a 13-year-old Negro, was shot and killed just outside Birmingham while riding a bicycle. The Jefferson County sheriff's office said "there apparently was no reason at all" for the killing, but indicated that it was related to the general racial disorders.

Another Negro youth and a white youth were shot but not seriously wounded in separate incidents. Four whites, including a honeymooning couple from Chicago, were injured by stones while driving through the neighborhood of the bombing.

The bombing, the fourth such incident in less than a month, resulted in heavy damage to the church, to a two-story office building across the street and to a home.

Wallace Offers Reward

Governor Wallace, at the request of city officials, offered a \$5,000 reward for the arrest and conviction of the bombers.

None of the 50 bombings of Negro property here since World War II have been solved.

Mayor Boutwell and Chief of Police Jamie Moore expressed fear that the bombing, coming on top of tension aroused by desegregation of three schools last week, would bring further violence.

George G. Seibels Jr., chairman of the City Council's police committee, broadcast frequent appeals tonight to white parents, urging them to restrain their children from staging demonstrations tomorrow. He said a repetition of the segregationist motorcades that raced through the streets last Thursday and Friday "could provoke serious trouble, resulting in possible death or injury."

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. arrived tonight by plane from Atlanta. He had led Negroes, who make up almost one-third of Birmingham's population, in a five-week campaign last spring that brought some lunch-counter desegregation and improved job opportunities. The bombed church had been used as the staging

point by Negro demonstrators.

Curfew Plan Rejected

Col. Albert J. Lingo, State director of Public Safety and commander of the troopers, met with Mayor Boutwell and the City Council in emergency session. They discussed imposition of a curfew, but decided against it.

The bombing came five days after the desegregation of three previously all-white schools in Birmingham. The way had been cleared for the desegregation when President Kennedy federalized the Alabama National Guard and the Federal courts issued a sweeping order against Governor Wallace, thus ending his defiance toward the integration step.

The four girls killed in the blast had just heard Mrs. Ella C. Demand, their teacher, complete the Sunday school lesson for the day. The subject was "The Love That Forgives."

During the period between the class and an assembly in the main auditorium, they went to the women's lounge in the basement, at the northeast corner of the church.

The blast occurred at about 10:25 A.M. (12:25 P.M. New York time).

Church members said they found the girls huddled together beneath a pile of masonry debris.

Parents of 3 Are Teachers

Both parents of each of three of the victims teach in the city's schools. The dead were identified by University Hospital officials as:

Cynthia Wesley, 14, the only child of Claude A. Wesley, principal of the Lewis Elementary School, and Mrs. Wesley, a teacher there.

Denise McNair, 11, also an only child, whose parents are teachers.

Carol Robertson, 14, whose parents are teachers and whose grandmother, Mrs. Sallie Anderson, is one of the Negro members of a biracial committee established by Mayor Boutwell to deal with racial problems.

Addie Mae Collins, 14, about whom no information was immediately available.

The blast blew gaping holes through walls in the church basement. Floors of offices in the rear of the sanctuary appeared near collapse. Stairways were blocked by splintered window frames, glass and timbers.

Chief Police Inspector W. J. Haley said the impact of the blast indicated that at least 15 sticks of dynamite might have caused it. He said the police had talked to two witnesses who reported having seen a car drive by the church, slow down and then speed away before the blast.

From New York Times

<http://tv.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0915.html>

MIDTEXT ASSESSMENT

Part One Essay on *Song Of Solomon*

(75 points)

At the end of part one, Magdalene called Lena sums up her opinion of Milkman like this: “You are a sad, pitiful, stupid, selfish, hateful man.” Whether she is right or not, Morrison makes it clear that something is not quite right with Milkman Dead.

Read the attached passage carefully. Using the text from the passage and specific examples from elsewhere in the novel, answer the following question:

Fundamentally, what is wrong with Milkman Dead? (Or, if you prefer, what is Milkman’s principle character flaw?)

Since this is an in-class essay, save time by writing a one sentence intro (write only your thesis).

	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Just beginning
Thesis				
Coherence of body paragraphs				
Use of examples and analysis				
Use of language				

Some possible points of entry for analyzing the passage:

- Images
- Sentence types
- Comparing parallels within the passage
- Remember—look for patterns & change in patterns

...But the bird had set them up. Instead of continuing the argument about how they would cop, they began to fantasize about what the gold could buy...

SoS Ch. 10: The Cave

1. Reread the introduction to part 2. What are several reasons that Morrison might choose to begin with a reference to Hansel and Gretel?
 2. Carefully reread the second paragraph. Summarize the description of the house. What does Milkman see when he looks at the house? What does he fail to see?
 3. Reread Circe's conversation with Milkman on 247-248. Based on this, how clear is Milkman's vision of the house?
-
1. Trace/illustrate the steps in Milkman's journey to and into the cave (248-253). Note the physical changes that occur at each stage.
 2. We talked about Plato's famous "Allegory of the Cave." How does this allegory compare to what happens to Milkman? Pick three phrases or sentences from 252 and explain how they might relate to the allegory of the cave.
-
1. Retrace Milkman's thoughts at the end of the chapter. What exactly has he decided to do and why? Is this logical?
 2. On 257, Morrison gives us an unusual statement about Milkman: "His mind had begun to function clearly." Explain why this might be true. Connect it to two specific phrases or sentences from the paragraph above. (Again, what stands out here and why? Which words does Morrison highlight as powerful or unusual?)
 3. At the end of the chapter, Milkman interacts with two strangers—Fred Garnett and a nameless elderly man at the train station. What does he offer each of them and what do these interactions reflect about Milkman?

SoS Ch. 11: The Bobcat Hunt

1. What does Milkman do wrong when he arrives in Shalimar? List three things he says or does that are mistakes. What do they all have in common?
2. On 271, Milkman thinks about two ways in which he has changed. What are they?
3. Who is Ryna?

4. Milkman's journey into the woods is very important. On 273 he realizes that "If he was to grow accustomed to the dark, he would have to look at what it was possible to see." On a literal level, what does this mean? Figuratively, what are some of the ways you can "see" in the dark?
 5. Where else in the book does Milkman have to try to see in the dark? What does he discover there?
 6. Read the next three pages carefully (275-278). Write down all of the fragments.
 7. What are three things Milkman learns in this section?
 8. What does he compare Guitar to? What exactly does he understand about Guitar?

9. Read the last paragraph of 285. Why is this important? What does it show about Milkman?

FINAL ASSESSMENT

Personal Narrative: Darkness, Digging In, Connecting to Fly (150 pts)

Your final paper for this unit will be a personal narrative. The goal is to describe a moment so your reader understands just how you felt and can infer what you learned.

Your narrative should:

- Have a beginning, middle, and end
- Use rich, powerful language
- Describe a meaningful event, person, or object in your life
- Show, rather than tell, the importance of the moment
- Be no longer than 6 pages

THE THREE CHOICES

A Moment of Darkness: In the cave, Milkman is desperate when he does not find what he thinks he wants. Describe a moment when you were at your lowest because you had high expectations that did not work out. (Perhaps you can look back and see that you grew from the moment, but you do not need to include that in the narrative.)

A Moment of Grounding/Digging In: During the hunting scene, for the first time in the novel, Milkman really sees the world around him and seems to connect to it. At the end of the scene, the men who held him in disdain suddenly respect him. Describe a moment when you became intensely connected to a place that is important to you.

A Moment of Connecting to Fly: At the end of the novel Milkman has experienced real empathy for those around him--so much so that he is willing to take great risks for them. Describe a moment when you decided to take a "leap of faith" for someone, even though the two of you had been having serious difficulties.

REQUIRED

Final Reflection (To be done in class when you hand the paper in): Compare your experiences in these moments to Milkman's. I am not so interested in the literal details. Do you think that the emotions you felt connect you to Milkman, or do they underscore just how different your lives have been? Explain your reaction to Milkman now that you have written your own story.

Personal Narrative Rubric	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	JB
Description	Effective use of imagery and/or motif. Three or more senses evoked regularly.	Uses imagery and/or motif. Three or more senses evoked regularly.	Attempts to use imagery and/or motif. Three or more senses present.	
Power of language	Regular & deliberate use of a variety of rhetorical devices; consistently strong verbs and word choice	Some deliberate use of rhetorical devices; strong verbs and word choice	Occasional use of a variety of rhetorical devices; some strong verbs	
Organization	A beginning, middle, and end (creatively structured?). Transitions smoothly within and between paragraphs	A beginning, middle, and end. Transitions are mostly smooth within and between paragraphs	A beginning, middle, and end. Occasional confusion with transitions	
Mechanics	Flawless	Minimal errors	Errors begin to interfere with meaning	
Reflection				

Song of Solomon Honors Test

Take seven of the quotations below and synthesize them into an essay on *Song of Solomon*. You have limited time so...

- ⇒Take time to group quotations in logical sets.
 - ⇒Decide which ones most need to be explained
 - ⇒Have a one sentence intro—just the thesis
-

The North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance agent promised to fly from Mercy to the other side of Lake Superior at three o'clock. (3)

the plate-glass window contradicted him. In peeling gold letters arranged in a semicircle, his business establishment was declared to be Sonny's Shop.(17)

the uncomfortable little boy in the Packard went to school and met the boy...who could liberate him (35)

"You ought to try one. I know how to do them just right. I don't like my whites to move, you know. The yolk I want soft, but not runny. Want it like wet velvet. How come you don't just try one?" (39).

Pilate says, "Our papa was dead, you see. They blew him five feet into the air" (40).

"That why the call you Guitar?" "Not cause I do play. Because I wanted to. When I was real little. So they tell me." (45)

He called our farm Lincoln's Heaven. (51)

Wasn't that the history of the world? Isn't that what men did? Protected the frail and confronted the King of the Mountain? (75)

Guitar says, "This definitely is not Montgomery, Alabama. Tell me. What would you do if it was? If this turned out to be another Montgomery?" and Milkman responds, "Buy a plane ticket" (104).

"And he did sign it with love, but it was the word 'gratitude' and the flat-out coldness of 'thank you' that sent Hagar spinning into a bright blue place where the air was thing and it was silent all the time, and where people spoke in whispers or did not make sounds at all, and where everything was frozen except an occasional burst of fire inside her chest that crackled away until she ran out into the streets to find Milkman Dead." (99)

"Sing, Sing... You can't just fly off and leave a body." (147)

‘Look-she’s flying down.’ Milkman felt again his unrestrained joy at anything that could fly.”
Some jive flying, but look at her strut” (179)

Guitar smiled at the sun, and talked lovingly of televisions, and brass beds, and week-long card games, but his mind was on the wonders of TNT. (181)

“The airplane ride exhilarated him, encouraged illusion and a feeling of invulnerability. High above the clouds, heavy yet light, caught in the stillness of speed (“Cruise’ the pilot said), sitting in intricate metal become glistening bird, it was not possible to believe that he had ever made a mistake, or could...In the air, away from real life, he felt free, but on the ground, when he talked to Guitar just before he left, the wings of all those other people’s nightmares flapped in his face and constrained him.” (220).

“You don’t listen to people. Your ear is on your head, but it’s not connected to your brain. I said she killed herself...” (247)

There wasn’t any gold, but now he knew that all the fine reasons for wanting it didn’t mean a thing. The fact was that he wanted the gold because it was gold and he wanted to own it.
Free. (257)

If he was to grow accustomed to the dark, he would have to look at what it was possible to see.
(273)

No, it was not language. It was what there was before language. (278)

The tongue lay in its mouth as harmless as a sandwich. Only the eyes held the menace of the night. (283)

‘You can’t own a human being. You can’t lose what you don’t own.’ (306)

Her earring grazed her shoulder. Out of the total blackness of her clothes it blazed like a star.
(317)

Who’d he leave behind? (328 & 332)

She wouldn’t set foot on an airplane, so he drove. (334)

Then she made a little hole with her fingers and placed in it Sing’s snuffbox with the single word Jake ever wrote. (335)

Without ever leaving the ground, she could fly. (337)

As fleet and bright as a lodestar he wheeled toward Guitar and it did not matter which one of them would give up the ghost in the killing arms of his brother. For now he knew what Shalimar knew: If you surrender to the air, you could *ride* it. (338)

Song of Solomon Curriculum One Test

Take five of the quotations below and synthesize them into two strong paragraphs

- ⇒ You must use the sets as they appear below.
- ⇒ Your topic sentence should be clear, and should be about the topic that is the heading for the set of quotations
- ⇒ You must use 5+ quotations total
- ⇒ You should analyze the quotations

Milkman & Guitar

the uncomfortable little boy in the Packard went to school and met the boy...who could liberate him (35)

“The airplane ride exhilarated him, encouraged illusion and a feeling of invulnerability. High above the clouds, heavy yet light, caught in the stillness of speed (“Cruise’ the pilot said), sitting in intricate metal become glistening bird, it was not possible to believe that he had ever made a mistake, or could...In the air, away from real life, he felt free, but on the ground, when he talked to Guitar just before he left, the wings of all those other people’s nightmares flapped in his face and constrained him.” (220).

Who’d he leave behind? (328 & 332)

As fleet and bright as a lodestar he wheeled toward Guitar and it did not matter which one of them would give up the ghost in the killing arms of his brother. For now he knew what Shalimar knew: If you surrender to the air, you could *ride* it. (338)

Guitar

“That why the call you Guitar?” “Not cause I do play. Because I wanted to. When I was real little. So they tell me.” (45)

Guitar smiled at the sun, and talked lovingly of televisions, and brass beds, and week-long card games, but his mind was on the wonders of TNT. (181)

The tongue lay in its mouth as harmless as a sandwich. Only the eyes held the menace of the night. (283)

'You can't own a human being. You can't lose what you don't own.' (Guitar's advice to Hagar when he finds her in his apartment) (306)

Pilate

He had copied a group of letters out on a piece of brown paper (18)

Her earring grazed her shoulder. Out of the total blackness of her clothes it blazed like a star. (317)

Then she made a little hole with her fingers and placed in it Sing's snuffbox with the single word Jake ever wrote. (335)

Without ever leaving the ground, she could fly. (337)

Names & Words

He called our farm Lincoln's Heaven. (51)

the plate-glass window contradicted him. In peeling gold letters arranged in a semicircle, his business establishment was declared to be Sonny's Shop.(17)

No, it was not language. It was what there was before language. (278)

Then she made a little hole with her fingers and placed in it Sing's snuffbox with the single word Jake ever wrote. (335)

Milkman

The North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance agent promised to fly from Mercy to the other side of Lake Superior at three o'clock. (3)

Wasn't that the history of the world? Isn't that what men did? Protected the frail and confronted the King of the Mountain? (75)

Guitar says, "This definitely is not Montgomery, Alabama. Tell me. What would you do if it was? If this turned out to be another Montgomery?" and Milkman responds, "Buy a plane ticket" (104).

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