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Poetry reflections

1. “Incident”, the most moving to me, as well as a shorter poem containing the story of a young dark skinned boy and his trip to baltimore during the 1920s. The narrator, using short, simple, and yet powerful words explained how the young boy in the poem, not yet exposed to the cruel society he was living in, was in for a truly devastating wake up call. The boy was only eight years old when he excitedly and hopefully explored baltimore with his family. The faithful, doe eyed, and naive look on his young face, however was stolen during this trip. This baltimore trip that was supposed to be a new, happy, and memorable experience was destroyed by one word, this word threatened and consumed him as a young dark skinned boy in a big age of racism. The little words that contained this poem moved me in such powerful ways through its imagery and comparability. it creates the image of the non stop discrimination and unfair inequality that rains and will continue to rain upon whatever minority is subjected to it. In today's society as well, lots of comparisons can be viewed between that of the 1920s; human societies have always been stuck with the same problems, just tweaked over time and knowledge which is obviously seen in the society of the poem and the societies of before, after, and even present.

2. “I, too” , a more hopeful and positive look on the horrible situation of being a darker skinned human in the harlem renaissance, being treated inhumanely because of something as stupid as skin color. The narrator is aware of the inequality they are shown in this time period, yet they look on the brightside and have hope for the future to come. A future where as a darker skinned person you are given the same opportunities for a life deserved. This poem gives the reader hope for a better tomorrow. The message behind it has always been a part of my life, being raised by hispanic parents i was always taught that working hard will lead to success, but you need to want it and work for it even if it means having to work harder than others for the same successes. As a minority, life will always be different, but hard work and strive for a better future will slowly but surely bring it in life. Hope and faith are always important to have in life but so is realistic logic and understanding; as humans, my thoughts are we should never give in but we should just as equally never give up.

3.”in smothered fires” , more of a melancholy poem about the way of living in a society where you are not accepted (black folks during the harlem renaissance). The narrator speaks of not really living life as she isn't even given the opportunity to truly pursue her dreams. Rather than living life, the author portrays her living as more waiting out a storm to finally see the rainbow at the end of all the wreckage and pain. The title,”in smothered fires”, was the title for a reason as the narrator speaks of the fire as though it was her deep seeded and repressed feelings, though so powerful were not allowed to spread and flourish to become something bigger, a change. The harlem renaissance is explained in this poem as life, as a silencer, as repression, the harlem renaissance is described as an inescapable prison for the lives of those who simply are just differently colored and waiting for their chance at equality. I, personally love the metaphor of the fire with the potential for greatness, being forced to stay a weak and small flame slowly turning into ash to make others more comfortable such as the voices, rights, and dreams of darker skinned people during the harlem renaissance. Skin color should never silence any voice.

4.”my little dreams”, i believed this poem to be very intriguing and complex, using its elusive language, it was a poem that was up for interpretation. I interpreted this poem as i applied it to the situation of the harlem renaissance and how it affected those who were discriminated against. The title, to begin with, i saw it as saying the hopes and dreams for a better way of life of black people were lessend and seen as little and not important. As for the poem in general, the folding of the dreams were interpreted by me as though the dreams of black people in the 1920s had such little importance or even possibility that they would just be tucked away and never considered, they had no voice, they were always silenced. Continuing throughout the poem, as the author tells the reader that they wished to simply stop having emotional opinions about his or her life and forget their humanity if they couldn't be heard or seen as people either way. The narrator describes having hopes and opinions as torture when not allowed to act upon them and succeed in life. In my own words, i would sum this poem up by saying the following, “being given a brain for thinking and a heart for feeling, yet not being allowed to do either openly because of something so miniscule such as the color of a humans skin is so bad that some would rather not feel or think, but instead be a mindless object as they are unrightfully treated as such”. This poem speaks most of the misery and torture it is to be equals but never treated as such.

5. “ america ”, this poem is one that i found harder to really connect with and comprehend. It was a longer and more all over the place poem to me, with the listing and describing going so deep into details. All the other poems were more of a vast look upon the harlem renaissance and its effects on a group of people rather than separately individual. To start off my comprehension of this poem, i will start with the title, “america”, simple and alone yet such a big meaning and history behind it. The title is not what make the poem but the poem is what makes the title, the poem speaks of the different standards and powers and stand points that make america, america. To all different people, america can be all kinds of things, but that is the whole point as americans we all have different beliefs and opinions and we are allowed to have them rather than not. In my present opinion, a lot of stuff can change in america, improve, fail, keep going at the same rate, but america can't be rewritten. America is what we make it as majority rules, so it's best if we keep improving rather than playing it safe and staying the same, america runs on change and difference. America is change.

6.”let american be american again,” this was very impactful to me as a reader and gave me chills as i read it; i got chills once i had realized the fact that this after so long is still so valid to today and needs to get more attention. Not only as a reader was i affected by these confronting words, but as a citizen and student of my america. The poem introduction itself spoke a million words in a million voices, “let american be american again,” i took this as let us truly have a voice and make it so we are proud to be americans rather than ashamed; if this land is truly the land of the free then why is it everyone gets silenced based on something that is decided to be frowned upon. Going deeper into the poem, the narrator speaks of our claims of freedom and equality but the actions of the total opposite, the trouble is all have different opinions on major issues and agreeing parties usually team up and exclude. Not every one person is gonna get what they want, america isn't a utopia nor is it a dystopia, and to me it's better that way, this way we can all voice our own opinions and have that equality that we need so desperately. The body of the poem proves amazing points about the america we are in is not the america we thought to live in ,to me that is quite impossible to achieve but it doesn't hurt to try. America has come a long way as well has the title american, there is no look, no sound, no taste,not even a feeling to the word american, not until you make it those and embrace change,not fight it. America is amazing because we make it amazing, with our differences we unite as americans and create america. The harlem renaissance made america as well, if america never had adversity such as the harlem renaissance did on african americans, we would never improve and if we didn't improve and learn from our mistakes as americans, we wouldn't be true americans.

7.”nineteen-twenty-nine,” as the poem takes place in 1929 , also known as the beginning of the great depression, in the beginning of the poem, the author talks about how the people of the world can be so ungrateful, but as humans we are, no matter what situation the greediest things to live. To further sell it, we make our own lives horrible, complaining over everything and never just being grateful and thankful for all we have. Throughout the poem the author talks about how all the time we spend being greedy, problematic,and complaining, we could and should be working hard to get to our goals. This relates greatly to the harlem renaissance as well for in the harlem renaissance “black folk” don't complain so much and instead were very hard workers, since they were not allowed to be much else. Yet in the 1920s, african americans wanted so desperately to be able to even have dreams, dreams of their future as people and treated as people not slaves.once the great depression struck all were doomed by the stock market crash not only the african americans, but everyone. The only difference is african americans were already living hard lives and knew what they needed to do, meanwhile others just complained about the lives that they had forced a whole group of people into living.

8.’’if we must die,” the most gutsy poem of all, this poem was a protest to the forced lifestyles of african americans. The use of repetition in the poem made it so i was truly like a protest and meant something for the words are so impactful to the reader. The protest of the african americans was very dangerous and sometimes deadly, but to die nobly and having made a change was better than continued being treated lesser than. In the poem, it uses comparisons such as their lives being wasted away just as their bodies, and that shouldn't have to be the only option given to them as human beings. It is also mentioned that they should rather want to die a noble and strong death that has meaning than die as a hog, being captured and excluded and broken. This poem reminds me a lot of the rosa parks and martin luther king civil rights boycotts, in the same way that rosa refused to move from her seat as martin luther king protested in her name while she was in jail, the african americans would see the effort and risks that claude mckay would take by defying the rules that were put on him like a dog and protest in his name and for all of those who deserve to be free people. These movements were of courageous strength and in the beliefs of making a change in the human race.