**ELA B30**

**Ms. McLeod**

**The Search for Self**

**Poetry**

**“Identity”**

-Julio Noboa Polanco-

Julio Polanco is Puerto Rican. He was born in the Bronx, New York. He writes poems in both Spanish and English.

After reading the poem, answer the following questions:

1. What is your favorite word, line or stanza in the poem?
2. Why would the poet prefer to be a “weed” than a “flower”?
3. Why is the poem’s title “Identity”?
4. Fill in the boxes below with either words or drawings.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Who I am when EVERYONE is looking | Who I am when NO ONE is looking |
|  |  |

1. Do you most closely resemble a “flower” or a “weed” according to Polanco’s definition? Explain your answer.

***Identity***

***-Julio Noboa Polanco-***

Let them be as flowers,  
always watered, fed, guarded, admired,  
but harnessed to a pot of dirt.

I'd rather be a tall, ugly weed,  
clinging on cliffs, like an eagle  
wind-wavering above high, jagged rocks.

To have broken through the surface of stone,  
to live, to feel exposed to the madness  
of the vast, eternal sky.  
To be swayed by the breezes of an ancient sea,  
carrying my soul, my seed,  
beyond the mountains of time or into the abyss of the bizarre.

I'd rather be unseen, and if  
then shunned by everyone,  
than to be a pleasant-smelling flower,  
growing in clusters in the fertile valley,  
where they're praised, handled, and plucked  
by greedy, human hands.

I'd rather smell of musty, green stench  
than of sweet, fragrant lilac.  
If I could stand alone, strong and free,  
I'd rather be a tall, ugly weed.

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**Search for “Selfie”**

* Do we see ourselves the same way that others see us?

In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, many times ‘who we are’ becomes clouded because of insecurities, ridicule and/or low self-esteem. In this time of technology, people are quick to judge one’s outer beauty before understanding the true beauty of an individual. We are ‘pushed’ and ‘pulled’ to fit into molds that make us become our own worst enemies – if we don’t fit, should we try harder to do so or should we break the mold? Is it easier said than done? What is ‘true beauty’?

* View the Dove commercial entitled, “Selfie”.

**Task:** Look through your phone and choose one “selfie” that you like

With your ‘selfie’ create a poem. The **hardest thing about writing a self-portrait** aka ‘selfie’ poem is (1) **being completely truthful**, and (2) **trying to find that part of yourself that is different from other people**. But it is also fun because you can make up your own variations on the suggestions given below.

* tell your likes and dislikes.
* tell what you want to be or do when you get out of school, and why.
* tell something that somebody has said about you, and how it made you feel; this can be either a compliment or an insult.
* tell something that made you feel very excited or very sad, and why.
* tell something you never told anybody before. (Maybe it involves an incident from a younger age.)
* tell what makes you special or different from somebody - and it’s not fair to say, “I’m different because I’m me.”)

Put each phrase or thought on a separate line so that the end result reads, and looks, like a poem rather than a story. Use imagery and figurative language in your poem. When you finish, illustrate your poem with your ‘selfie’ photo.

* Your poem is to be at least 20 lines in length. Be sure that the final result displays your best effort and is colourful, neat, and either typed or written in blue or black ink.
* Include a paragraph response that acts as a writer’s glimpse – this piece should explain the thought behind the poem and ‘selfie’, just in case it is unclear. In this writer’s glimpse you can explain the *tone you were trying to achieve* and *how you went about that*, the *poetic devices you included* and the *meaning you hoped the poem and/or ‘selfie’ would achieve,* as well as *how you want readers to feel/think about you after reading your poem*. This entry should be ½ page - 1 page, typed and double-spaced. It is formal, but still academic in language and reflection.

**Outcome: CC B 30.1**

1. **Create … written texts that explore identity … demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work.**

**-Saskatchewan Curriculum-**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Compose and Create (CC)**  Students will extend their abilities to speak, write, and use other forms of representation to explore and present thoughts, feelings, and experiences in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes and audiences. | | | | |
| Criteria | 4  Little Evidence | 6  Partial Evidence | 8  Sufficient Evidence | 10  Extensive Evidence |
| **Compose** and **Create** an original poem that explores identity. | The poem is satisfactory but unrefined.  Poem is understandable but uneven in its development. Product maintains the purpose on a basic level but may not show awareness of audience.  Planning shows an awareness of purpose.  The student shows a basic control over the writer’s craft.  Some of the errors in mechanics may impede understanding. | The poem is logical and straightforward.  Poem is adequately developed, appropriate to purpose, and shows some awareness of audience.  Planning identifies main ideas.  The student demonstrates control over the writer’s craft.  Minor errors, though noticeable, do not impede audience understanding. | The poem is clear and thoughtful.  Poem is fully developed and appropriate to purpose and audience.  Planning is evident and the poem seems complete.  The student effectively controls the writer’s craft.  The few mechanical errors do not impede communication. | The poem is original and insightful.  Poem is well-crafted, fully developed, and appropriate to purpose and audience.  Planning is evident and the poem comes together as a secure whole.  The student demonstrates confident control of the writer’s craft.  The few errors in mechanics are likely the result of risk taking. |

Self-Portrait aka “Selfie” Poem Poetry

A self-portrait poem is exactly what the name implies. Instead of picturing how you look on the outside, however, it gives the reader an indication of what you are like on the inside. Here are examples of student-written self-portrait poems:

SOMETIMES

Sometimes life can be good, sometimes bad.

When I was in kindergarten, kids used to call me

the smartest in the class.

I hate clean, pretty, nice things. I like dirty sneakers

and shirts with holes in them. I like popcorn, with butter

on it.

I hate slow music.

When something doesn’t go my way or I get into a fight

with my mother or father, I get so angry,

I blast!

I could scare an elephant and six tigers!

When I’m sad,

I cry my heart out. But when I’m happy, I feel seven feet tall. I’m special because I’m alive!

The first example is a very literal self-portrait poem. The other is one that is more imaginative because it makes use of metaphor and simile.

LIFE BEHIND A FACE

Behind this face there are wrinkles that hurt:

the wrinkles of memory, of being crushed up like paper,

being chewed like bubble gum, I try to act out pride,

to fight off the memory

of how it hurts. When someone calls me names, I feel soft

and spongy inside, not like the outside