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AP Lit and Comp

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The Book Thief Poetry Project

The Blinding Kind

White.

I saw white all around;

it was another beginning.

The boy was gone,

I had taken him.

He is where it is white,

but so was she;

Snow painted itself.

It was warm.

But I could tell,

Losing him,

that was what made her cold.

The boy was gone,

I had taken him.

She had taken something else.

We would meet again.

Reflection: My poem is written--like in the book-- from the point of view of Death. I chose to write a poem about the moment when death first saw Liesel; when her brother died. He related the event to the color white and I made the poem about the coldness, literally and figuratively. I chose the title because Death said it himself in the book, when he described the white as "the blinding kind" (Zusak, 6). I thought that was a good representation of the feelings Liesel was experiencing in that moment. The third line I wrote because that was the beginning of Liesel's new life with the Hubermanns. The third and sixth lines were inspired by Death holding "a small soul" (Zusak, 8) in his arms--I imagined him taking Liesel's brother to heaven while she was in the snow. It was said that "the whole globe was dressed in snow" (Zusak, 6) and in the third stanza I used personification to make the snow 'paint' itself to make it seem more gentle. In the second and fourth stanzas I say, "The boy was gone, I had taken him," I was emphasizing the moments when Death appears in the book. The second to last line is obviously referring to her first stolen book. I isolated the very last line to give more power to the fact that there are other times when Liesel is faced with or people in her life face death and that it is inevitable.

War

Survival or pride?

Life or meaningful death?

Lives turned into pawns,
playing in a dangerous game.

The bang of a machine
knocking the pieces off the board.

The bullets making a home
in the bodies of men.

Hate praised
and acceptance thrown away.

The guilt of living,
becoming a rock around the ankle
of an already drowning man.

People running at each other
and hitting something else.

Reflection: This poem is inspired by World War II, and more specifically Hans Hubermann's experiences in the past war. A note from Death said that he has seen so many people running at each other, saying "They're running at me" (Zusak, 175). That was what the last stanza is referring to. The idea of "Life or pride" (Zusak, 177) gave me the idea to open my poem with a slight translation of the relationship between pride and possibly 'cowardice' in war. I really like chess so I used it to symbolize war and violence in the poem; for some reason I thought they

really fit and I used that symbolism to make up the biggest stanza. The fourth stanza is a metaphor referring to the price of Erik Vandenburg dying and Hans living, which was “guilt and shame” (Zusak, 2008). I made the whole poem and stanzas short to give emphasis on every aspect of war that I mentioned: persecution, facing death knowingly, and guilt.

Dear Death

Why do you take my souls?

What have they done to you?

I gave them a precious gift,
and you just take them away,
for what?

I try to take care of them,
my children.
But they hurt themselves and each other.

They take blood but do not keep it.
The red doesn't drip.
It pours now.

Did I give them too much?
Is that why they act this way?

The salted tears,
I catch them in my ancient hands.
Do I make them unhappy?

Is it my fault?

Please,
When you take them,
Take them someplace better.
I cannot stop my monsters.

Reflection: This poem is told from the eyes of Life instead of Death. In *The Book Thief*, Death was the narrator, so I decided to flip it and give Life a voice too. The poem is Life talking to Death, asking him why he takes her 'children'--the humans-- away. I wanted it to seem like she didn't understand that Death wasn't the one killing them, but they were killing each other and by the end she realizes he's just taking them away after they die. The first stanza I wrote to connect with Death's guilt--and Life blaming him-- which was inspired by Rudy's death and the "robbery of his life" (Zusak, 531). I tried to use imagery in the fourth stanza to compare the pace of death before and after the war, when Death's "workload increased" (Zusak, 73). Also in the fourth stanza, I wanted to show some kind of similarity between Life and Death, so I used colors, more specifically red, to show that they both make "a point to notice them" (Zusak, 4). But in my poem, Life only sees the red--the blood--thinking it's her fault, unlike Death who seems to know all and just does his job. Each stanza I made short to show Life's more frantic thinking and changing thoughts, similar to events changing in the world and Liesel's life.