



Recasting the Text

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Inquiry-Based Activities for **Comprehending and Composing**

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Preface

Recasting the Text: Inquiry-Based Activities for Comprehending and Composing provides activities that help you explore multiple ways of reading and recreating a text in various forms. Examining works from diverse times, places, and peoples, you will see how individuals reread and re-see human experience through stories. You will gain perspectives that enrich your understanding of these recastings and will write many of your own transformations as well.

More or less obviously, a textbook reflects the values and beliefs of its authors. This text is no different. We value close reading of literature and careful attention to craft in the writing of literature. Yet, in many other ways, the book you're reading now does differ from the huge anthologies currently available.

Our overriding goal is to help you become transactive, discerning readers and thoughtful, perceptive writers. The way to approach this ideal, we decided, is by integrating the language arts as fully as possible. In this text, we consciously draw on many ways of learning that we have found useful to our students—observing, analyzing, imagining, and reflecting. Thus you'll find language and literature experiences structured so that you use writing, drawing, performing, and discussing to learn about what you're reading.

We believe that you as a reader need to find something of yourself in every selection, defining yourself as you examine the text. We also believe that through the shared stories and poems you read and write you will develop your understanding of how stories form and are transformed by human experience. This book offers texts from a variety of times and places written by professionals and students.

As you read and write, listen and speak, perform and draw, you will employ several language tools. Logs are a vital means for responding to the text. In logs and more sustained projects and papers, you are continually directed to extend your thinking beyond response and to engage in analysis, evaluation, and reflection. Performing and drawing are also powerful ways to read and interpret literature. Finally we give you guidelines for developing a portfolio that includes work completed in various media while using this textbook.

More and more teachers have expressed a need to accommodate various learning styles, provide opportunities for collaboration on problem-solving projects, and help you engage in a real negotiation with texts in both reading and writing. This book is designed to meet those needs.

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank our colleagues who have contributed to this text by engaging with us in the ongoing dialogue, the "grand conversation" about teaching and learning. Their names are too numerous to mention, but they extend from California to Florida, from New York to Colorado, from Idaho to Georgia, and points in between. We also wish to thank the many students whose patience and enthusiasm led us to refinements in our design of better ways to help them excel in and enjoy the processes of comprehending and composing. A special thanks goes to those students whose work appears in these pages.

Particular mention must go to Scott Lindsten and Juhl Wojahn, who carefully transcribed student work; to Jean Wendelin, who patiently tracked down difficult sources for permission to reprint works; and to Judith Hargrave, whose close reading and diligent copyediting ensured completion of the final manuscript. We are grateful to Madge Holland for reading and rereading the text, always with an eye toward clarity and classroom usefulness.

No acknowledgments would be complete without mentioning the work of those researchers and thinkers whose work has so powerfully affected our thinking about teaching and learning. Of most immediate relevance to this book is Louise M. Rosenblatt, for her seminal work with a transactional approach to reading and writing. Jimmy Britton's vision played a vital role in our understanding of language and learning. The thinking and writing of John Mayher, Dan Kirby, Robert Scholes, and Bob Probst are also implicated in the concepts and projects that we present in this text.

Finally we want to thank Bob Boynton and Peter Stillman for envisioning and trusting that there were books that *should* be written—books that depart from the standard fare available to both teachers and students. They have questioned, provoked, and supported us through all of the stages that led to the publication of *Recasting the Text*.

1

Exploring the Possibilities: An Introduction

We've titled this book *Recasting the Text* deliberately because we think it is important for you to explore many different ways of reading a piece of literature. Reading means more than opening a book, moving your eyes across a page, and trying to figure out what the author means. *Reading*, as we use the word, involves using all of your knowledge and experience as you work out your interpretation of a story, poem, play, or essay. There are many ways to read a book, just as there are many ways to read the world. *Reading* involves more than understanding words: We talk about reading the weather, reading other people's moods, reading a friend's actions or a parent's tone of voice.

To help you expand and extend your abilities as a reader, you will use the activities in this book to recast some of the works, sometimes taking the role of secondary author. You will rewrite some texts from different points of view, explore how certain choices affect the meaning, and then become the author and make different choices.

We use the word *text* often throughout this book, and for us, text means a poem, play, novel, short story, diary entry, essay, letter, film, drawing, painting—nearly anything that requires reading. Text is an artifact of imagining and crafting, something you or someone else creates. The text is like a fabric of many colors or textures with each reader taking a different thread or color of meaning from what's said and not said. In this book, we'll introduce ways that you can step back from the words of a text and look through a variety of lenses and from different angles. Each lens and angle will give you different ways of thinking about the reading.

Other people will read a text differently from the ways you read it. That's one reason we ask you to respond to what you read and then to share your ideas and collaborate with other readers to make comparisons. You will need to listen carefully to one another and be sensitive to why and how your meanings differ. Your experiences with family and friends or in your school or community will influence how you sort through and make sense of the experiences you find in literature. For example, if you've just experienced the loss of a close friend, you might respond deeply to a story about separation. In short, pay attention. Listen. Question. Keep an open mind. Share your thinking with others. Your class is a community of readers, and it is important to hear different opinions. Remember that while there is no "right" interpretation, you do need to validate your interpretation. It must make sense in light of the text itself, and it

must make sense to you, given your own experience and knowledge. The meaning of what you read is what happens between you, the community of readers, and the text.

As you work on the projects in this book, you will explore different ways of seeing, what we call *angles of vision*. Looking at a text from a number of different angles, you'll find multiple ways of understanding it. What are these angles of vision? You might write or draw how you feel after you finish a story or poem; you might tell the story to someone who hasn't read it; you might tell your group about an experience of your own that was similar to what you read and listen to their experiences; or you might write a poem or story of your own. You might read more stories or poems by the same author, or you might reread the story or poem. All of these responses will help you come to your understanding of a text.

We begin by asking you to look at a poem from seven different angles of vision (see pages 6–15). We chose a poem for practice because it is short, although these angles work with all kinds of texts. The angles we suggest are not the only ways of looking at a text; there are many others that you'll find by yourself or with your discussion group. We won't be asking you to explore all of these angles for every text that you read, but we will always ask you to look at the text from more than one angle. There is no particular order to these angles, except for the first—the personal response—and the last, when we ask you to move back from the text and reflect on its larger meanings.

As you work through the activities in this book, you will discover that we ask you to use many kinds of writing as you move from developing your interpretations of texts to crafting your own ideas into stories, poems, and reflective essays. As you work through the activities, you'll be asked to select some of your drafts and revise (or “re-vision”) them into finished pieces for your portfolio, a collection of your best work.

Terms and Concepts You Need to Know

Following are some of the terms and concepts that we use frequently throughout this book:

Log: The log is where you'll record ongoing work for a particular project. The log may include responses to or discussions about the

texts you read. It may include specific observation assignments or lists generated from brainstorming. The form should fit the purposes for using the log. Your teacher may prefer one kind of log—such as a loose-leaf notebook. Other teachers may prefer spiral notebooks.

In this book, we have numbered the log entries by chapter. When you begin a new chapter, label the new set of log entries with the name of that chapter and begin numbering again with Log Entry 1.

Double-entry Log: There will be some times that we will ask you to set up your log as a double-entry notebook (sometimes called a dual-entry notebook), recording on the left-hand side of the page the words, phrases, or lines that trigger a response for you. On the right-hand side, write your own thoughts and ideas. Set up your log this way:

Double-entry Log Format

Class _____		Name _____	
Date _____		Log Entry # _____	
<i>Words, phrases, or lines from the text</i>		<i>My response to the text</i>	

Clustering: Clustering is a process that helps you generate ideas and explore possibilities for writing. It is similar to what you might know as “webbing” or “semantic mapping.” Begin by writing the key or stimulus word in the center of a page; then, in two or three minutes, write as many words and phrases as you can, radiating outward from the key word. Each word or phrase triggers another until you have a web of words and phrases. Usually you find, as you are clustering, that ideas you were not even aware of emerge from the web.

Mapping: Mapping is a more consciously organized way of arranging your ideas on a page than clustering. In mapping, you begin with some ideas or categories and place your items of information

meaningfully on the page. The way you organize your material makes it available to you visually. Notes that would take pages, for example, can all be placed on a one-page map. Maps may be completely made up of words; they may use words and symbols or drawings; or they may be completely nonverbal—all symbols and drawings.

Graphic: A graphic is a drawing, cluster, or map. We'll often ask you to respond to or interpret a piece of literature by drawing or mapping your ideas.

Partner or Group: Throughout the book, we will frequently ask you to collaborate with a partner or a small group of your classmates as you explore your understanding of a text and work through revisions in your own writing or performing. Your teacher will establish these groups; they may change from time to time, depending on how your teacher organizes the class.

Writing Folder: The writing folder is a place to keep your work in progress—drafts of essays, stories, and poems. When you work through a particular assignment—writing a draft, having your writing group respond to it and, possibly, revising it—you will keep all of that work in your writing folder.

Course Portfolio: The portfolio represents your best completed work. When you have a finished piece of work, one that your teacher has read and responded to and that you have revised, put that piece into your portfolio. Throughout this book, we suggest many activities that could lead to finished portfolio pieces. Each is identified in the text as a *portfolio entry*.

Angles of Vision on a Poem

To demonstrate how various readings and perspectives can contribute to the meanings we make from text, we ask you now to look from seven different angles of vision at a poem about the myth of Icarus. Because we want you to respond first to the poem itself, we omit the poet's name until the fourth angle.

Remember that this is practice, to acquaint you with the strategies you will develop as you read and write your way through *Recasting the Text*. To work through these angles, you will need to set

up a log. Your teacher will assign or have you choose a partner for collaborating. Begin by reading the poem; then follow directions for each of the seven angles of vision. You will not read other works this many times, but we hope experimenting with these angles of vision will help you explore possibilities for your work with other selections in this book.

Angle 1: Initial Responses

To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph

Consider Icarus, pasting those sticky wings on,
testing that strange little tug at his shoulder blade,
and think of that first flawless moment over the lawn
of the labyrinth. Think of the difference it made!
There below are the trees, as awkward as camels;
and here are the shocked starlings pumping past
and think of innocent Icarus who is doing quite well:
larger than a sail, over the fog and the blast
of the plushy ocean, he goes. Admire his wings!
Feel the fire at his neck and see how casually
he glances up and is caught, wondrously tunneling
into that hot eye. Who cares that he fell back to the sea?
See him acclaiming the sun and come plunging down
while his sensible daddy goes straight into town.

Log Entry 1

Consider Icarus; consider this poem. What are your thoughts, feelings, observations, or questions? Use drawings and/or words to express your initial responses.

Collaborating

Share what you have written or drawn with a partner.

Angle 2: Story Threads

To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph

Consider Icarus, pasting those sticky wings on,
testing that strange little tug at his shoulder blade,
and think of that first flawless moment over the lawn
of the labyrinth. Think of the difference it made!
There below are the trees, as awkward as camels;
and here are the shocked starlings pumping past
and think of innocent Icarus who is doing quite well:
larger than a sail, over the fog and the blast
of the plushy ocean, he goes. Admire his wings!
Feel the fire at his neck and see how casually
he glances up and is caught, wondrously tunneling
into that hot eye. Who cares that he fell back to the sea?
See him acclaiming the sun and come plunging down
while his sensible daddy goes straight into town.

Collaborating

- Share any information you have about Icarus with a partner. Who was he? What did he do? Are there any stories you remember reading about him?
- Turn to page 74 and read the story of Daedalus and Icarus. Talk about how knowing the myth affects your understanding of the poem.
- Share any stories from your own experience that the Icarus story makes you think of.

Log Entry 2

In a cluster or a drawing, trace the threads or similarities that connect your stories with the story of Icarus.

Angle 3: Shifting Perspectives

To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph

Consider Icarus, pasting those sticky wings on,
testing that strange little tug at his shoulder blade,
and think of that first flawless moment over the lawn
of the labyrinth. Think of the difference it made!
There below are the trees, as awkward as camels;
and here are the shocked starlings pumping past
and think of innocent Icarus who is doing quite well:
larger than a sail, over the fog and the blast
of the plushy ocean, he goes. Admire his wings!
Feel the fire at his neck and see how casually
he glances up and is caught, wondrously tunneling
into that hot eye. Who cares that he fell back to the sea?
See him acclaiming the sun and come plunging down
while his sensible daddy goes straight into town.

Collaborating

One of the ways to read a piece of literature is to play “what if” and speculate about alternatives. For example, in focusing on the meaning of the title of a work, you might consider how different titles would change the meaning of the poem for you. Speculating on “what if” often leads you to consider possible interpretations.

Speculate with your partner on how you might read this poem differently if . . .

- the title were “Light,” “Expectations,” or “Greed.” What other title would fit this poem? How would this different title affect the poem’s meaning for you? How do you explain the title the poet chose?
- Icarus were a story of a mother and a daughter. How would that affect your understanding or your feelings about the poem?
- you were a parent who had lost a child because of the child’s daring bravado (flying too near the sun). How do you think your experience would affect your understanding of the poem?

Log Entry 3

Write up the speculation you are interested in exploring in more detail or the one that most intrigues you.

Angle 4: Connecting with the Writer

To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph

Anne Sexton

Consider Icarus, pasting those sticky wings on,
testing that strange little tug at his shoulder blade,
and think of that first flawless moment over the lawn
of the labyrinth. Think of the difference it made!
There below are the trees, as awkward as camels;
and here are the shocked starlings pumping past
and think of innocent Icarus who is doing quite well:
larger than a sail, over the fog and the blast
of the plushy ocean, he goes. Admire his wings!
Feel the fire at his neck and see how casually
he glances up and is caught, wondrously tunneling
into that hot eye. Who cares that he fell back to the sea?
See him acclaiming the sun and come plunging down
while his sensible daddy goes straight into town.

Anne Sexton's life has been the subject of intense scrutiny. She began to write seriously while she was recovering from a mental breakdown. She called it a "rebirth at twenty-nine." The power of her poems was soon recognized by the poetry community, and she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for her book *Transformations*, a series of powerful retellings of Grimm's fairy tales. Her poems are often brutally frank about her own life, which was tumultuous in its emotional swings. At the age of forty-six, she committed suicide, leaving a husband and two daughters.

Maxine Kumin, another noted poet, encouraged Sexton in her early days of writing and remained a close personal and professional confidante. After Sexton's death, Kumin wrote about how they always shared their poems on the telephone. Following is a

brief extract from Kumin's reminiscences titled *A Friendship Remembered*.

Early on in our friendship, indeed almost as soon as we began to share poems, we began to share them on the telephone. . . . We both installed second phone lines in our houses so that the rest of each of our families—the two husbands, the five children—could have equal access to a phone and we could talk privately for as long as we wanted. I confess we sometimes connected with a phone call and kept that line linked for hours at a stretch, interrupting poem-talk to stir the spaghetti sauce, switch the laundry, or try out a new image on the typewriter; we whistled into the receiver to each other when we were ready to resume. It worked wonders.

Writing poems and bouncing them off each other by phone does develop the ear. You learn to hear line breaks, to pick up and be critical of unintended internal rhyme, or intended slant rhyme or whatever.

Anne Sexton's poem "The Starry Night," like "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph," takes its genesis from a reference to another work, in this case a painting by Vincent Van Gogh. As with the first poem, the allusion to the painting in this poem is a springboard for personal reflections on life and death.

The Starry Night

Anne Sexton

That does not keep me from having a terrible need of—shall I say the word—religion. Then I go out at night to paint the stars.

(Vincent Van Gogh in a letter to his brother)

The town does not exist
except where one black-haired tree slips
up like a drowned woman into the hot sky.
The town is silent. The night boils with eleven stars.
Oh starry starry night! This is how
I want to die.

It moves. They are all alive.
Even the moon bulges in its orange irons
to push children, like a god, from its eye.
The old unseen serpent swallows up the stars.
Oh starry starry night! This is how
I want to die:

into that rushing beast of the night,
sucked up by that great dragon, to split
from my life with no flag,
no belly,
no cry.

Collaborating

Discuss with your partner how knowing some details about Anne Sexton affects your understanding of her poems. Following are some questions to get you started in your discussion:

- How does the fact that Sexton committed suicide affect your understanding of "The Starry Night"? Of "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph"?
- How does reading "The Starry Night" affect your reading of "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph"?
- How do Maxine Kumin's comments affect your understanding of "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph"? Of "The Starry Night"? Of Anne Sexton's life?

Log Entry 4

Describe how your earlier readings of "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph" have been affected by the biographical information, "The Starry Night," and your discussion.

Angle 5: Language and Craft

To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph

Anne Sexton

Consider Icarus, pasting those sticky wings on,
testing that strange little tug at his shoulder blade,
and think of that first flawless moment over the lawn

of the labyrinth. Think of the difference it made!
There below are the trees, as awkward as camels;
and here are the shocked starlings pumping past
and think of innocent Icarus who is doing quite well:
larger than a sail, over the fog and the blast
of the plushy ocean, he goes. Admire his wings!
Feel the fire at his neck and see how casually
he glances up and is caught, wondrously tunneling
into that hot eye. Who cares that he fell back to the sea?
See him acclaiming the sun and come plunging down
while his sensible daddy goes straight into town.

Poetry comes in many forms. Some forms are very loose, while others are structured in such matters as line length, rhythm, and rhyme patterns. Maxine Kumin told us that Anne Sexton worked with very tight forms in many of her poems. If you have studied the forms of poetry, you may have noticed that "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph" observes the pattern of a sonnet.

Collaborating

Talk with your partner about which words and phrases you find interesting in "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph." Are the phrases you selected ones that you like because of the sound? Because of the way they make you think or feel? Because of other reasons?

Log Entry 5

Using a dual-entry format (two columns), jot down in the left-hand column the interesting words and phrases you selected. In the right-hand column, write a few words explaining why you chose each one.

Collaborating

Talk with your partner and then the whole class about the following questions:

- Reread the poem and discuss any repetitions of sounds, both within lines and at the ends of lines. How do these repetitions affect your understanding?
- What other elements of form do you find in "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph"?
- In what ways can knowing the form of a poem help you as you read it?
- Why do you think a poet would choose a form as precise as a sonnet?

Log Entry 5 (continued)

Record in your log the highlights of your discussions with your partner and with the class about form, including how the form of this poem affects your understanding or enjoyment.

Angle 6: Recasting the Text

To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph

Anne Sexton

Consider Icarus, pasting those sticky wings on,
testing that strange little tug at his shoulder blade,
and think of that first flawless moment over the lawn
of the labyrinth. Think of the difference it made!
There below are the trees, as awkward as camels;

and here are the shocked starlings pumping past
and think of innocent Icarus who is doing quite well:
larger than a sail, over the fog and the blast
of the plushy ocean, he goes. Admire his wings!
Feel the fire at his neck and see how casually
he glances up and is caught, wondrously tunneling
into that hot eye. Who cares that he fell back to the sea?
See him acclaiming the sun and come plunging down
while his sensible daddy goes straight into town.

Literature is filled with what we call *recastings*. These recastings may take many forms: Writers may retell the original so that a story takes place in a different time period, to different people. Writers may change the form from a story to a play, for example, or from a painting to a poem, as Sexton does in "The Starry Night."

"To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph," as you already know, is itself a recasting of an old story, the Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus. This particular story has been recast many times, in paintings as well as in poems. Later in this book, you will read four additional Icarus poems.

Log Entry 6

Try your hand at recasting this poem in any of the following ways:

- as a drawing
- as another poem
- as a dialogue between Icarus and a friend of his
- as a conversation between a father and son or between a mother and a daughter (or make up your own relationship for the dialogue)
- as a work that uses your own structure and form for recasting

Angle 7: You, the Text, the World

To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph

Anne Sexton

Consider Icarus, pasting those sticky wings on,
testing that strange little tug at his shoulder blade,
and think of that first flawless moment over the lawn
of the labyrinth. Think of the difference it made!
There below are the trees, as awkward as camels;
and here are the shocked starlings pumping past
and think of innocent Icarus who is doing quite well:
larger than a sail, over the fog and the blast
of the plushy ocean, he goes. Admire his wings!
Feel the fire at his neck and see how casually
he glances up and is caught, wondrously tunneling
into that hot eye. Who cares that he fell back to the sea?
See him acclaiming the sun and come plunging down
while his sensible daddy goes straight into town.

We hope that this close study of "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph" has helped you see different ways that you, as a reader, can learn more about the text you are reading. As you continue to work and play with the meaning of texts, you will find that you use some of these angles or lenses more often than others. You may find that one angle is appropriate to a story, and another angle is more useful with an essay.

It is important to know that you do not need to come to a conclusion about the meaning of a work of literature. You may need to form your ideas about the meaning a work has for you at a particular moment. Another day, however, when you are in a different mood or have had an experience that relates to the events described, you may find that your understanding of the story has changed.

Every step you take toward creating richer meaning involves changing perspectives, making connections, and facing new possibilities. You make interpretive decisions each time you look through a different lens. By looking at a work from different angles, you will find your reading becomes more imaginative, intellectual, and emotional.

Collaborating

Read through your logs and think about the various activities you've done with Anne Sexton's poem "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph." Talk with your partner about how your understanding or appreciation of the poem has changed or deepened as you have looked at it from different angles, and as you have talked, written, and drawn your ideas.

- What new questions can you ask now?
- Which angles of vision gave you the most insight and the most pleasure as you worked with this poem?
- What else can you say about the meaning of this poem?

Log Entry 7

Using your logs, the text, your own responses, and relevant events in your own experience, write and/or draw your reflections about the meaning of this poem for you now.

Building Your Course Portfolio

Periodically, as you work through this book, we will suggest that you compose a piece for your portfolio. While your writing folder contains notes, first drafts, and short pieces written without extensive revision, your course portfolio is a collection of finished works that represent your best thinking about an idea or works of literature you have been studying. Your portfolio piece may be a piece of writing, a graphic, a live performance, a video presentation, or some combination. For the graphic, video presentation, and oral performance options, which probably will not fit into a portfolio, include a photograph or a carefully written description of your work,

along with notes, scripts, or tapes. In this book we frequently identify possible portfolio pieces as a *portfolio entry*.

Usually the portfolio work will come after you have read a number of related texts. In this introductory section, however, which acquaints you with techniques that you will use throughout the book, your first portfolio piece will be in response to the poem "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph."

Portfolio Entry

The following is the process for building your portfolio entry:

1. Reread the logs you wrote about the poem for each of the lenses or angles of vision.
2. Think about the ideas you would like to work with for your finished work.
3. Once you have decided on an idea that you want to develop, do some clustering or brainstorming to generate additional ideas.

As you worked through the various approaches to this one poem, you enlarged your thinking as you

- recorded your thoughts and feelings.
- looked at parallel stories from your previous reading or experience.
- speculated on how your reading might be different if you had changed various aspects of the poem.
- noted how additional information about Sexton affected your reading.
- looked at how the form of the poem figured into your understanding.
- recast the poem in different ways.
- reflected on how your understanding or appreciation changed as you worked through the various angles of vision.

Content and Form

You will need to consider two aspects of your product: the nature of the *idea* you want to develop and the *form* or *forms* you want to use to develop that idea. Each will affect the other. Following are some options, but don't feel limited by these. You may want to think of your own options.

Written options

- an original poem based on a different myth
- an analysis of the relationship between the original Icarus myth as summarized from Ovid (see p. 74) and the Sexton poem
- a written dialogue based on your logs for Angle 3: Shifting Perspectives
- a short story or personal narrative based loosely on a real-life experience you have had or know about, one that has similarities to the Icarus/Daedalus relationship
- a paper about Anne Sexton and her life, based on additional readings of her poetry
- a paper showing the relationship between a reproduction of Van Gogh's painting "Starry Night" and Sexton's poem. (For this option, you will need to find a reproduction of Van Gogh's painting "Starry Night.")

Graphic options

You probably have the origin of an idea for a graphic in your logs. Look through them for ways you might present your ideas about the work in this chapter.

Graphic options may stand alone, or they may accompany a written option. If the graphic stands alone, you should write a short explanation of your use of symbols, colors, or other means of representation for your portfolio.

For graphics, try to use good quality paper. You will need marking pens, crayons, or watercolors. You do not need to have artistic ability to begin working with graphics; your goal is to translate your ideas into symbols, images, or whatever seems to best represent your visions, using drawings and words as they are appropri-

ate. You are not simply illustrating the work; you are showing how you understand the work.

Here are suggestions that may stimulate some ideas:

- Map the relationship between Icarus and his father. Include in your map similar relationships that you know about from your reading or your experience.
- Design a graphic presenting the story of Icarus as you know it from the poem, from the Greek myth, and from your own related stories.
- Design a graphic presentation that shows your understanding of Sexton's poem "The Starry Night."

Performance options

Performance options may include written work and graphics as well as performances, if they are part of the presentation. You may want to work with a partner or in a small group to prepare a dramatic performance. You may, of course, design a solo presentation. Following are some suggestions:

- Look closely at your log entries for Angle 6: Recasting the Text. Working with a partner, write out and refine one of the suggested dialogues or one of your own. Present your dialogue to a larger group or to the class.
- Look back at the logs you have written for Angles 2, 3, and 6. Working with two or three classmates, prepare a storytelling session, with all of the stories dealing in some way with the relationship between Icarus and Daedalus. Refine your storytelling by listening to each other and making suggestions. Decide which order works best for your stories. Then present your stories to the class.
- Reread "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph." With a partner serving as a director, plan the "freeze frames" for significant points in the poem. Plan how you will physically represent Icarus at each point. What facial expressions? What gestures? What stance—standing, kneeling, bending over? Using the director's suggestions, polish your performance for the class. The

director will read the poem aloud as you present your interpretation and move from frame to frame.

From Process to Product

The success of your final product—written, graphic, oral, or a combination—depends on your ability to see something through to completion. There are several factors that will help you learn how you work best and how you can take advantage of that knowledge as you develop an idea into its best possible form.

The following steps in working through a major paper or project will help you present your ideas.

1. Messing around

You need to be able to tolerate the “messing around” stage. Often this stage will begin in your journal or log entries. In order to find out exactly what you want to do, however, you need to be able to make a number of starts, often in different directions. You can explore your own best way to get started by trying out different strategies such as clustering, mapping, listing, or brainstorming. (See pages 4–5 for explanations of clustering and mapping.)

2. Making a rough draft, notes, and sketches

Once you have decided on your idea, you need to cultivate your own space in which to write or draw. In your first draft, try to develop your ideas as fully as you can in a short period of time, depending on the scope of your planned work. Once you have your ideas roughly sketched out, you can begin the revising process. Throughout the book, we include ideas to show you how to turn your rough draft into a finished product.

3. Collaborating

We cannot stress enough the value of collaboration once you have a rough draft of your first ideas. This is the time for meeting with response groups to share your work and get feedback from others. Because you are the one who knows what your goal is, you are the one who must tell your responders what you want from them. Sometimes you may just want to have them listen; other times you may want specific revision suggestions. From time to time in this book, we will present specific response-group suggestions and guidelines.

For now, use your best knowledge of what you need from your group, and be sure to give back to the others what they ask of you.

4. Revising

Again, after the collaboration, you will need a quiet time while you further revise and refine. Regardless of the help others may offer, each word or placement of design is ultimately your decision; you will take both the praise and the criticism. This part of the process is often the most satisfying, when you see your work really taking shape and becoming more than you even dreamed of in the beginning.

5. Editing

With written work, this is the final step before publication. At this stage you may need the help of a partner, or you may need to consult a dictionary or writing handbook. If you are using a word processor, be sure to use the spell check, but remember that it does not catch certain kinds of typographical errors (*on* for *one*, for example). You need to proofread carefully and, if possible, get someone else to proofread for you (not because you wouldn't recognize a typo, but because your eyes see what your brain expects.)

6. Publishing

This is the next-to-the-last step. For classroom projects, publication can take many different forms. Finished written projects go into your course portfolio, the collection of work you consider ready for publication. Finished graphics should be accompanied by a presentation to the class and be displayed on the wall of the classroom. Finished performances may be presented to other classes as well as your own. Several of you may plan to take your performance "on the road," presenting it for your school open house, a PTA meeting, or an elementary school assembly. (Our students say that children are often the best audiences.) For finished work that cannot go into the portfolio, write a short, concise explanation of the graphic or oral performance that you did for your project. Include the chapter title, a brief description or title of the assignment that you completed, and a description of the finished work.

7. Evaluating

Although your teacher will be evaluating both your finished product and your work throughout the process, your own evaluation is an

important key to your growth as a self-sufficient reader, writer, and performer. It is important to step back and reflect on your accomplishment. Before you can do that usefully, you need to consider what your goals were in the beginning, how they changed as you worked, and how your final product reflects your thinking. Your teacher may provide specific suggestions for self-assessment throughout the chapters. For now, try writing a very short assessment of your final product for this one chapter. In it, state what you hoped to accomplish when you began and how your final work measures up to or exceeds your expectations.

As your portfolio grows, you will be able to trace the record of your best work. At the end of the course, you will have a substantial body of your own work to serve as a record of your growth as a reader, writer, graphic artist, and performer.

2

Transformations: A Study of Style and Point of View

Originality is an elusive quality. People crave to be original and at the same time to be like everyone else. Part of each of us wants to be unique, to stand out from the crowd; another part is slave to the fads and fashions of our age, our group, our culture.

Log Entry 1

Take a few minutes and write about how you see yourself with regard to originality. Include examples of how you are like other people and how you are also original in your thoughts and habits. For example, you might write about how your clothes reflect both your originality and your conventionality. Following are some questions to get you started. Don't try to answer them separately; just use them to jog your thinking.

- How are you most like your friends?
- How are you like other students in your community?
- How are you different from other students in your class?
- How are you different from others in your own circle of friends?
- How do the clothes you are wearing now reflect your originality?
- How do your clothes identify you as a member of a group—an age group, a group of friends, a team, a club?
- Are there clothes in your closet that you wouldn't ever wear again? If so, why have you stopped wearing them? Why haven't you thrown them away?
- On a scale from 1 ("I like to be one of the crowd") to 10 ("I like to think of myself as a complete individualist"), where would you put yourself at this time in your life?

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

- Where do you think other people—a good friend, a parent, a teacher, a coach—would place you? Ask a few of them after you've made a guess. (It might be interesting to make a chart of the results in your log.)

Modeling Form and Structure

Writers and artists, like everybody else, crave originality, yet they often want to be like a successful or admired predecessor. You may know that the traditional way artists study painting is to imitate the masters. Many writers, too, either consciously or unconsciously spend their early writing days in a kind of apprenticeship, modeling their work on that of writers they admire. "I once wrote endless imitations," wrote Dylan Thomas, "though I never thought them to be imitations, but, rather, wonderfully original things, like eggs laid by tigers."

Some writers acknowledge that their best work is embedded in the roots of their artistic teachers. Robert Duncan, who influenced many young poets himself, very openly called one of his early books *Derivations* to express his debt to Gertrude Stein, a model not only for Duncan but for Ernest Hemingway and many other writers as well. In a later book, *Roots and Branches*, Duncan also acknowledges the sources of his poetry, the "branches," being "rooted" in the history of the poets he admired from the past. Yet Duncan himself is admired today as one of the most original poets of this century.

Assuming that you want your writing to sound like *you* and not like somebody else, why would you want to spend time modeling the style or form of another writer? One way to begin to understand possible responses to this legitimate question is to try your hand at some specific modeling exercises. In this section, you are asked to try out several different writers' styles by modeling a poem or short passage of prose.

In the exercises that follow, you will be asked to try several ways of organizing your ideas, borrowing the form of the original and changing the outward appearance. The first exercise is an imitation in which you retain some starter words and the form of the original.

Loose Modeling

First read "The Child" by Donald Hall. If possible, have someone read it aloud first; then read it silently to yourself. At this point, just listen for the mood or tone of the poem; don't worry about possible meanings.

The Child*Donald Hall*

He lives among a dog,
a tricycle, and a friend.
Nobody owns him.

He walks by himself, beside
the black pool, in the cave
where icicles of rock

rain hard water,
and the walls are rough
with the light of stone.

He hears low talking
without words.
The hand of a wind touches him.

He walks until he is tired
or somebody calls him.
He leaves right away.

When he plays with his friend
he stops suddenly
to hear the black water.

Now select a person to use as the subject for your model of this poem. You might select a person you know well or someone you have observed closely but don't really know. Choose someone whose clothes, habits, or actions you can describe clearly.

Next write a loose model of "The Child" using the form that follows as a guideline (see Figure 2-1). You may write longer or shorter lines, but keep the same number of lines in each stanza and retain the key words as indicated. That's what makes this a "loose model"; you keep a few elements of the original, but change the rest.

Finally, give your poem a title. Titling a poem can be quite difficult, for in a way it demands that we understand what we have created. It's not unusual for a poet to leave a poem untitled, letting the first line serve as identification. Untitled, Hall's poem would be referred to as "He lives among a dog." Before you title your poem, spend time considering and discussing why Hall might have se-

The Child	
<p>He lives among a dog, a tricycle, and a friend. Nobody owns him.</p>	<i>He lives</i>
<p>He walks by himself, beside the black pool, in the cave where icicles of rock</p>	<i>He walks</i>
<p>rain hard water, and the walls are rough with the light of stone.</p>	
<p>He hears low talking without words. The hand of a wind touches him.</p>	<i>He hears</i>
<p>He walks until he is tired or somebody calls him. He leaves right away.</p>	<i>He walks</i>
<p>When he plays with his friend he stops suddenly to hear the black water.</p>	<i>When</i>
Donald Hall	

Figure 2-1.

lected the title he did and other possible titles for Hall's poem. Consider following the pattern of "The Child" by using a generic phrase such as "The Mother" or "The Coach" for the title of your poem.

Collaborating

Share your modeled poem with your writing group. Compare notes on how easy or difficult this modeling process was. The important thing to keep in mind about these exercises is that they are just that—exercises. When you are learning a new sport or a new instrument, for example, you spend a lot of time practicing, trying your best but not worrying when things don't go right at first.

If you had trouble modeling this poem, talk with your group about where you got stuck. Maybe someone else had difficulty in the same place. Some students, for example, have trouble modeling stanzas 2 and 3, where the original poem flows from one stanza to another with no punctuation mark. This poetic technique of letting ideas flow from one stanza to the next is called *enjambment*. When you read the example below, notice that the student followed that same pattern. It isn't necessary to follow Hall's punctuation, but some students find it easier to do it that way.

The Sailor

John Goddard

He lives upon the ocean,
the boat, and the churning sea,
lonely day after lonely day.

He walks the weathered deck, along
the violent tide, in his small battered ship
where splinters of rotting wood

fall with each watery knock
and the sails billow softly
with the gust of each new wind.

He hears the whisper of the ocean
in meaningless words
and the cold fingers of the turbulent sea.

He walks in his thoughts along
distantly remembered shores
where life had no problems.

When hours grow long,
he forgets his worries of loneliness
in dreams of someone he left behind.

Work in Progress

There are many poems that can be models for you. We suggest that you browse through poetry books until you find a poem you like, then use it as the basis for a poem of your own. Here are two additional poems that you might use as a pattern for a loose model. We suggest that you read the poem, talk about it with a partner or your group, and perhaps make a short log entry recording your understanding of the poem. Then turn to the writing of your own poem. We offer suggestions following each poem, but we also encourage you to create your own methods for loose modeling.

Swift Things Are Beautiful

Elizabeth Coatsworth

Swift things are beautiful:
Swallows and deer,
And lightning that falls
Bright veined and clear,
Rivers and meteors,
Wind in the wheat,
The strong-withered horse,
The runner's sure feet.

And slow things are beautiful:
The closing of day,
The pause of the wave
That curves downward to spray,
The ember that crumbles,
The opening flower,
And the ox that moves on
In the quiet of power.

Select two antonyms, words that express opposite ideas, such as “swift” and “slow.” Following the format loosely, write your own version of “Swift Things Are Beautiful.”

Four Little Foxes

Lew Sarett

Speak gently, Spring, and make no sudden sound;
For in my windy valley, yesterday I found
New-born foxes squirming on the ground—
 Speak gently.

Walk softly, March, forbear the bitter blow;
Her feet within a trap, her blood upon the snow,
the four little foxes saw their mother go—
 Walk softly.

Go lightly, Spring, oh, give them no alarm;
When I covered them with boughs to shelter them from harm,
The thin blue foxes suckled at my arm—
 Go lightly.

Step softly, March, with your rampant hurricane;
Nuzzling one another, and whimpering with pain,
The new little foxes are shivering in the rain—
 Step softly.

For this model, select a season. Then decide on a brief phrase directly addressing the season. This kind of direct address to a personified idea is called an *apostrophe*, the same word that we use in making possessives or contractions. Using your apostrophes as a beginning refrain, loosely follow the pattern of “Four Little Foxes,” varying the refrain as Sarett does.

Emulation

Next try the style of John Updike, author of many short stories and novels. In this brief excerpt from a story called “Pigeon Feathers,” Updike shows a very distinctive sentence pattern, one you will emulate by reproducing the pattern exactly, word for word, using your

own ideas and words to replace Updike's. The purpose here is to gain a close understanding of how Updike's sentence patterning supports the meaning he is trying to convey.

Directions for an emulation

1. Replace every word of the original with a word of your own that serves the same grammatical purpose. You don't need to know the parts of speech to do this exercise—we all have a keen ear for sentence structure; but if you do, that means you will replace every noun with a noun, every verb with a verb, every adjective with an adjective, and so on.
2. There are places where you can simply use the words of the original if you want to—words such as *and*, *but*, *or* may be kept. Prepositions (words such as *in*, *out*, *above*, *through*, *with*) may be kept or replaced, and any form of the verb *to be* (*am*, *is*, *was*, *were*, and so on) may be used as in the original.
3. Choose a passage you have already written in your log or write a paragraph or more on a topic that is interesting to you. Shape the passage into Updike's syntax, the sentence pattern, the way each kind of word functions in the sentence. Where Updike has a word with a modifier ("round hole" and "pinched bit"), you have a word with a modifier. Where the Updike passage has an action word ("fly," "fell," "skimming"), so do you.
4. The easiest way to do an emulation is to copy the original on your own paper, typed or handwritten in ink, leaving two spaces after each line. Write your emulation in pencil in the space below the original, keeping your words aligned with those in the original (see Figure 2-2). (These directions might seem like a lot of work for a short exercise, but they will save you time and energy in the long run.)

When you have finished your own emulation, keep writing another sentence or two. Bring your ideas to a natural conclusion while continuing to write in a way that sounds consistent with what you have emulated. The point is to continue to write in the style of the original without the support of its sentence patterns. By taking this extra step, you'll begin to internalize the structure of Updike's sentences.

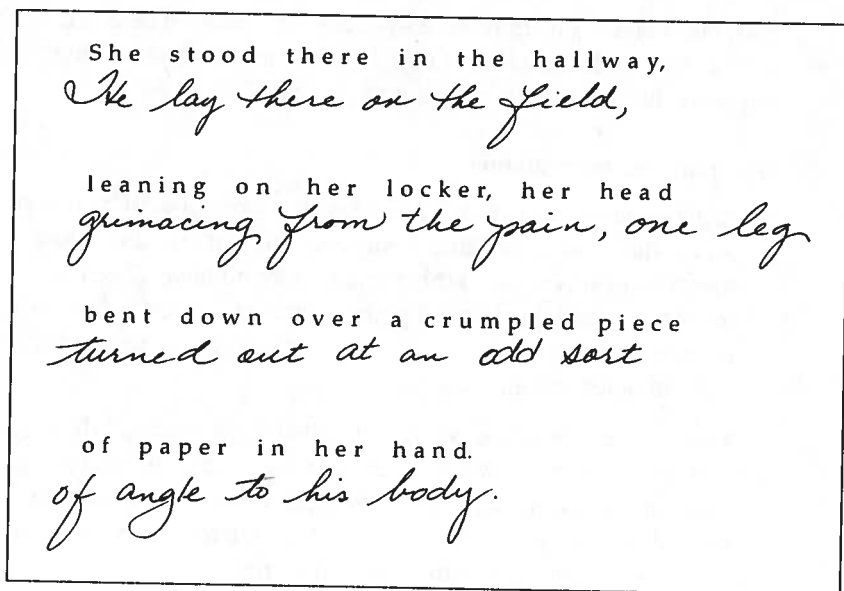


Figure 2-2.

Collaborating

Sometimes it is helpful to try out your ideas with a partner while you are doing this exercise. You might also be able to help each other think of appropriate words for difficult spots. If you get completely stuck and neither your teacher nor your partner seems able to help, you may just have to stop and either ask your teacher to help you find another passage to emulate or find one yourself.

Following is a passage from John Updike's "Pigeon Feathers," for your emulation. (Remember to copy this passage, typed or in ink, double spaced.)

It flew in, with a battering of wings, from the outside, and waited there, silhouetted against its pinched bit of sky, preening and cooing in a throbbing, thrilled, tentative way. Neither did it fly. Instead it

stuck in the round hole, pirouetting rapidly and nodding its head as if in frantic agreement. Then the pigeon fell into a handful of rags, skimming down the barn wall into the layer of straw that coated the floor of the mow on this side.

Following is an example of an emulation written to the John Updike passage by David Suico when he was a student. Notice that he has added one long sentence of his own to the emulation, finishing his idea and retaining the rhythm of the Updike passage.

It crept in, with a blowing of steam, from the pass, and stopped there, surrounded by its strange kind of home, hissing and clanging in a pulsating, chilled, rhythmic manner. Neither did it stop. Instead, it stood on the hardened steel, vibrating constantly and generating its power as if in harmonic motion. Then the train moved out of a station of people, edging down the wooden platform into the openness of the valley that filled the landscape of the bottom of this mountain range. Slowly gaining speed, stopping not for anyone or anything, the train rambled across the wooden trestle bridge that spanned the mighty river, through the open pastures and the dense forest of oak, finally coming to a rest in the city at the heart of the valley.

Look for the point when the emulation stopped and David's addition began. If he was successful, you had to look at the original Updike passage to determine where the break falls. Test your own extensions with your group.

What can be interesting, even fascinating, about this kind of writing is that it yields rich new meanings. In fact, the need to create meaning rather than nonsense is, according to most students, irresistible. Consider your own struggle with this challenging assignment. It would have been nearly effortless to throw words down on a page—to dash off the required number of lines with no thought at all. But the chances are that you didn't do that; you struggled with your words and your lines. Yet nowhere were you directly asked to create a coherent meaningful version of the original. Discuss what seems to be a human need to make meaning.

You might also discuss the related question of ownership. Whose words are these anyhow? Whose meaning, yours or the author of the original?

Log Entry 2

1. Write a page or so in your log expressing your ideas about this exercise. How do you feel about the results of your emulation?
2. Speculate in your log about the matters you discussed with your group—the subject of the human need to make meaning and the question of ownership.

Spin-off or Response Modeling

In spin-off or response modeling, you respond directly to the meaning and tone of the original, but you do not model the form.

First read the following poem.

Poem to be Read at 3:00 A.M.

Donald Justice

Excepting the diner
 On the outskirts,
 The town of Ladora
 At 3 A.M.
 Was dark but
 For my headlights
 And up in
 One second-story room
 A single light
 Where someone
 Was sick or
 Perhaps reading
 As I drove past
 At seventy
 Not thinking
 This poem
 Is for whoever
 Had the light on.

Collaborating

With a partner or your group, study Donald Justice's poem again. Notice that although it isn't punctuated, it is composed of just two sentences, one relatively long (forty-four words), the other short (nine words). What would happen to the poem if a period were inserted in an appropriate place? Where is an appropriate place? What does this suggest to you about poetry, punctuation, or writing in general?

Also consider and discuss why the poet must have chosen not to punctuate and why he made the first sentence so long as compared to the second sentence. What might the punctuation have to do with the meaning of the poem?

Work in Progress

Read through all of the following options for spin-off modeling before you select which of them you want to do. If you come up with a better idea, use it for a spin-off poem. Put your draft into your writing folder.

- Pretend you were the person who was in the room with the light on at 3:00 A.M. Think of some reasons why you might have been up at three in the morning. Write a poem as if you were speaking to the driver.
- Be someone in the house, but focus on the driver in your poem. Why would someone be driving through town at that hour? Was that person male or female? Alone or with someone? Why were they driving so fast? Write your response in the form of a poem.

Log Entry 3

Look at the poem or poems you wrote in response to Justice's poem. How did you decide where to put the punctuation or whether to use any at all? What does the punctuation of your poem have to do with

its meaning? Write down some of your ideas about Justice's poem, your poem, or the whole question of punctuation and meaning.

Here is one student's recasting of the Donald Justice poem:

Poem to be Read after Reading "Poem to be Read at 3:00 A.M."

Reggie Bailey

It's 3 A.M. and I just had a fight with my parents.
 Everybody has gone to bed.
 They were mad because they said I was home late
 And again they accused me of smoking dope.
 I don't think I can take any more of this.
 I want to split now,
 But something keeps holding me back.
 I lie on my bed
 Thinking
 What I should do.
 After awhile I get up and go to the window.
 I see a Volkswagen speeding past my house.
 I wonder to myself who is in the car
 And why it is going through town at this time
 And so fast.
 I wonder if maybe the driver is running from something
 Or if there is an emergency.
 I turn off the light
 And go to bed
 Thinking
 About the car and the driver.

Idea Modeling

Sometimes reading just a title or a line will be enough to trigger an idea for your own writing. In idea modeling, there is no need to retain the original writer's form or tone. Instead of responding directly to the author, as you did in spin-off modeling, you are simply using the author's ideas to trigger your own.

The next few exercises are structured to lead you from an idea in the original poem to a poem of your own. Although the suggestions

are quite specific, they are intended only as guidelines. You may choose to expand on one suggestion and bypass another. The important thing is to follow your own inclinations—once you sense what they are. These exercises contain ideas to help you explore possibilities.

Variations on a plum

This poem by William Carlos Williams has been modeled frequently by writers. The story goes that the poem was found on the refrigerator by the poet's wife. If you would like to know more about this poet, a second poem by Williams can be found on page 75 and stories about this poet and physician appear on pages 94 and 117.

This Is Just to Say

William Carlos Williams

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast.

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold.

Log Entry 4

This poem has inspired many other poets and students to write "This Is Just to Say" poems. Brainstorm a list of other situations that would require a note such as this poem.

Following are two models by high school students. As you read them, think about variations you might want to try.

This Is Just to Say*Cal Coolidge*

I have left you
some candy
which you'll find on the counter,

and which
you are probably avoiding
on your diet.

Forgive me.
You are so careful,
so healthy,
and so annoying.

Variations on Cal's Variations on Williams*Judd Piggott*

I have copied
the poem
that Cal was writing,

and which he was probably using
for credit.

Forgive me,
it was so fitting,
so good,
and so easy.

Work in Progress

Try your own versions of "This Is Just to Say." Write several and leave them around—on the refrigerator, lockers, mirrors—anywhere. Keep in mind that when you do, your poem will be just as "published" as Williams's was when he first pasted "This Is Just to Say" on his own refrigerator door.

Variations on a line or title

Sometimes just the first line of a poem will give you an idea for a poem. "Interior Decoration" begins with that kind of provocative line.

Interior Decoration

Adrien Stoutenburg

I am thinking of doing over my room,
of plastering wings on it,
of letting clouds in through the attic,
of collecting moles
and training them to assemble in an oval
for a rug as bright as black water:
of growing orchids under the couch
for a lavender surprise
against the sleeping dust;
of inviting wind to the closet—
empty shapes will blow and sing like sails—
of planting a quail's nest in a yellow corner—
eggs in time will hatch out stumbling flowers—
of taking a fox for a companion—
his fur will be my fire on cold days—
of building a great square silo of books:
pale green, blue (moss color, sky color),
deep red, russet, orange (sun and blowing leaf color)
their spines scrawled with loud gold
and chiming silver—ARABIA DESERTA,
LETTERS OF RILKE, WALDEN,
HUNGER, BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL.
These, when the blizzard comes,
will be my soaring walls.

Log Entry 5

Try the following sequence:

1. Most people think of interior decorators as people who plan other people's living spaces—selecting color schemes, choosing furnishings, rugs, even posters and paintings. Here,

however, the word *interior* seems to have another meaning. Take a few minutes to record in your log any lines that appeal to you and your reasons for recording them. Then jot down some ideas of things you would bring into your dream room—things that would be your “soaring walls” “when the blizzard comes.”

2. Draw or sketch the floor plan of the space you consider yours. It might be your bedroom, or the part of the room you share with someone else; it might be a practice room, if you are a musician. It might even be some space you have carved out for yourself where you are completely responsible for what goes into the area and how it is arranged. On the floor plan, indicate what is now in this space. You can indicate a chair by sketching in a simple square and labeling it, or you can actually draw it in.
3. Imagine that you have just the same space you have now, but you can transform it any way you choose. Draw another floor plan, and this time decorate it as you would if you could translate your dream space into reality. There is no limit here other than the actual space with its windows, doors, and dimensions. You might want to reread the poem to get a sense of fantasy, but you have the choice of making your room either realistic or dreamlike.

Work in Progress

Using your ideas or drawings as a guide, write your own poem beginning “I am thinking of doing over . . .”

Scar trek

The next exercise has to do with scars (the heading for this section is not a typographical error). Before reading the following poems that explore the idea of how some people feel about their scars, take a few minutes to write in your log.

Log Entry 6

Cluster or jot down all of the associations you have with the word *scar*. If you come to an association that you don't want to explore, bypass it and go on. Work quickly to get details down in a word or two—just enough so that you can recall what you meant.

You might begin with physical scars, recording such data as

- your age when the incident happened.
- the other people who were involved.
- where the incident happened (include details, if you can).
- anything else that is relevant.

When you have dealt with your physical scars, you might go on to cluster the ones that leave no marks on the body—emotional scars, scars on the land, or any other associations you have with the word *scar*. Now read William Dickey's poem.

Memoranda

William Dickey

The scars take us back to places we have been,
Cities named Masochism or Inaccuracy.
This little one between the finger and the thumb
Is something that my brother did to me
On a hot Washington's Birthday in the past,
When we were young and cruelly competent;
In a miniature world like a glass fishing float
He was the total image of intent.

Who stuck the pencil point into my palm?
It was so long ago that I cannot say;
But the black stick of graphite under the skin—
Some friend, some enemy put it there that way
to succeed in calling himself always to mind.
Action has consequence, and though his face
Has faded into the city of the lost,
I look at my hand and see the injured place.

Like hasty marks on an explorer's chart:
 This white stream bed, this blue lake on my knee
 Are an angry doctor at midnight, or a girl
 Looking at the blood and trying not to see
 What we both have seen. Most of my body lives,
 But the scars are dead like the grooving of a frown,
 Cannot be changed, and ceaselessly record
 How much of me is already written down.

Vincent Wixon provides another angle on scars in "Looking at My Hands." Like William Dickey, Vincent Wixon is a teacher as well as a poet.

Looking at My Hands

Vincent Wixon

Back of my right hand rises a white scar—
 spike wound from wrestling in the outfield.
 I read that the guy's plane
 went down in Vietnam.

People have said I have good hands;
 I catch footballs, baseballs easily.
 Why, then, is my handwriting so lousy?
 Why don't I juggle?
 Then there's the scar on my left first finger
 from cutting backwards with a jack knife.
 The den mother warned us.

I used to be vain about them—
 long strong fingers, slender palms.
 Now the skin looks old,
 veins blue and prominent;
 psoriasis eats the nails warping like old paper.

Collaborating

William Dickey writes in his poem that "scars take us back to places we have been"; he might have added, to the "person" we have been. In your writing group, discuss the incidents that Dickey and Wixon

relate in their poems and how they have turned them into poems. Then talk with each other about accidents that have resulted in scars that you carry, scars that take you back or, perhaps, forward. Your group may choose to discuss environmental and emotional scars, but stay with your own experiences and share only those scars you feel comfortable talking about.

Work in Progress

Choose a focus for a poem or prose piece of your own in which you explore some aspect of scars. You might choose a physical scar and write a short account of the accident that caused it. You might, as William Dickey and Vincent Wixon did, write about several scars, drawing some generalization from the cluster; or you may choose to write about an emotional scar. If you write about scars on the land, environmental scars, try to personalize the topic so that your reader will know how the land scar affects you personally, not just people in the abstract sense. None of these suggested approaches to the general subject of scars exhausts the possibilities, of course, so feel free to move out beyond them.

The following poem, written by a high school junior and titled simply "Scars," was the first poem that Margaret Mullens ever wrote. Do you agree that it shows how the power of a recreated memory can take over one's writing? Discuss how. Also consider after a first reading how the meaning of this particular poem may be intensified by being read aloud.

Scars

Margaret Mullens

This gloomy day brings memories of scars,
scars of my memories.
The day which almost ended my life,
the doctor left his mark.
The stitch lines

bring back that rainy day
my mother's face in horror
at my screams.
The red lights
flashing through my mind.
The white stretcher,
white uniforms, tubes in my arms.
I remember no more,
but the scar
mars my stomach.
The physical scars of my life
are healed
to be laughed about
or to have something
for conversation.
Can I speak of my emotional scars?
Can I face them?
Can I heal them?
If I could see my heart, I know the
scars would be deep,
ugly, protruding, showing,
condemning me.
My family, my friends.
The beat gets louder
and louder
the scars open and close,
open and close.
They scream for
medicine.
They bleed for
healing.
The infection
grows,
overcomes me.
I think,
weep
for these hidden scars.

This next poem's title is a play on words, much as in Stoutenburg's "Interior Decoration." In this poem, student Melanie Anne Gauché recounts a familiar experience.

States of Mind

Melanie Anne Gauché

I. Rhode Island

White snow, blinding snow;
Kids laughing and playing.
Sledding faster, faster;
Tree, Crash, Blood.
Brave girl, lucky girl,
Twelve stitches on top of her head.

II. Florida

Big fights, frantic fights. Kids crying and wondering.
Could it be us, was it us?
Arguing, yelling, slam!
It's OK Mom. It's OK Dad.
But it wasn't.

III. California

Loud mother-child quarrels.
"Why does she do this to me?"
"I hate her!"
Accusations, threats, smack!
It's not OK, but I'm fine.
Dad and I both are, here.

The next student poem was much longer in its first draft. Jana Hunt and her writing group worked to see how she could make the poem more concise while retaining the essence of the childhood experience that resulted in her scars.

Right Now They're Invisible

Jana Hunt

White hidden in whiteness,
like the famous picture of the white cow
eating marshmallows in a snow storm
that children talk about,
but when summer comes
and my skin begins to tan,
they will appear like secret messages
written in invisible ink by a Russian spy.

When I look at these three white blotches
 shaped like the Great Lakes on my elbow,
 I see myself standing
 on tip-toe
 struggling to reach the counter-top
 that was then six inches
 above my head.

I see my fingers
 grasping for the cookies
 placed purposely beyond my reach,
 and instead catching hold of the cord,
 and screaming as coffee grounds
 and black pools of water splattered
 and splashed, and my mother,
 her make-up half on and her hair
 in rollers, running in and
 "Why can't you be more careful?
 . . . like a bull in a china shop. . . ."
 Then she saw I was crying, and the blood,
 and held my elbow under the faucet
 letting the cool water wash over it,
 apologizing over and over, and I cried
 as I watched the red skin blister,
 not knowing that the sun
 would one day make me remember
 how it felt to be small.

Beyond Modeling: The Parologue

The last exercise we will suggest in this section involves a rather different kind of thinking. In the *parologue*, you actually enter into a kind of dialogue with the author. The prefix *para-* means "along-side" or "by the side of," and the word root *log* or *logue* means "written or spoken language." So a *parologue* refers to a piece of writing in which a reader responds directly to the author, either line by line or section by section. The result is a piece of writing in two voices, the original author's and the respondent's.

Portfolio Entry

1. Set up a page as you do for your double-entry log. You will use this format for a rough draft of your paralogue.
2. For this exercise, you will read a short prose excerpt entitled "Search for the Heron" from *River Notes* by Barry Lopez. Read just the first paragraph. Don't worry if you don't know all the words or if it doesn't make a lot of sense to you at this point. This passage may seem mysterious; you may not even know what Lopez is writing about, but that is okay. Writing the paralogue will let you see that you often can understand the tone or feeling of a piece even when you are not sure of its meaning.

I see you on the far side of the river, standing at the edge of familiar shadows, before a terrified chorus of young alders on the bank. I do not think you know it is raining. You are oblivious to the "thuck" of drops rolling off the tube of your neck and the slope of your back. Above, in the sweepy cedars, drops pool at the tips of leather needles, break away, are sheered by the breeze and, "thuck," hit the hollow-boned, crimson-colored shoulders of the bird and fall swooning into the river.

3. To begin the rough draft of your paralogue, select one sentence from the passage you have just read (it isn't necessary to account for your choice), or you may use phrases from different parts of the passage and make them into a sentence. Write this sentence or the sentence parts on the left side of your log, the original author's side. (Examples begin on page 49.)
4. Now on the right side of the log, your side, write a sentence of your own in response to the sentence you wrote on the left. When you have written your sentence, read this next passage from Barry Lopez:

Perhaps you know it is raining. The intensity of your stare is then not oblivion, only an effort to spot between the rain splashes in the river (past your feet, so well-known, there beneath the hammered surface like twigs in the pebbles) the movement of trout.

5. Follow the same procedure that you did previously. Select a sentence from Lopez, answer it with a sentence of your own, then go on to read the next passage:

I know: your way is to be inscrutable. When pressed, you leave. This is no more unexpected or mysterious than that you give birth to shadows. Or silence. I watch from a distance. With respect. I think of standing beside you when you have died of your own brooding over the water—as shaken as I would be at the collapse of a cathedral, wincing deep inside as at the screech of an overloaded cart.

6. Continue the same pattern: select a sentence from Lopez, copy it in column one of your log, and write your response in column two. Then read the following passage:

You carry attribution well, refusing to speak. With your warrior's feathers downsloped at the back of your head, those white sheaves formed like a shield overlaying your breast, your gray-blue cast, the dark tail feathers—do you wear wolves' tails about your ankles and dance in clearings in the woods when your blood is running? I wonder where you have fought, warrior. Where!

7. Again, select a sentence from Lopez and write a responding one. Then read the last passage:

You retreat beneath your cowl, spread wings, rise, drift upriver as silent as winter trees. I follow you. You have caught me with your reticence. I will listen to whatever they say about you, what anyone who has seen you wishes to offer—and I will return to call across the river to you, to confirm or deny. If you will not speak, I will have to consider making you up.

8. Finish the rough draft of your paralogue by selecting a sentence or combining phrases to make a sentence from Lopez's words and writing it in column one. Then write your concluding sentence in column two.

To turn your rough draft into a finished paralogue, read your rough draft as a whole, from left to right, sentence by sentence. First read Lopez's words, then your own, as you would a dialogue. At this point, make any changes you want. You may go back and add or subtract words from Lopez's side, but don't use any words or phrases here that are not part of the original. On your side, change anything you would like to make your words read more smoothly. You will probably be surprised at how much like a dialogue your draft sounds. When you're satisfied with the words, give your paralogue a title and make a final copy of it, using the following pattern:

Title

WORDS FROM LOPEZ

YOUR WORDS

Lopez

You

Lopez

You

Collaborating

Your last step before publishing is, of course, to read your paralogue aloud with a partner. Have your partner read Lopez's words; you read your words. Then do the same for your partner's paralogue. Once you have read your work through a couple of times, you might want to share your paralogue aloud with the class.

Following are three examples of paralogues. The first two were written by students; the third was written by a teacher.

Paralogue

Julie Chatt

LOPEZ

ME

I see you on the far side of the
river, standing at the edge of
familiar shadows. I do not
think you know it is raining; you
are oblivious to the "thuck" of drops.

I see you so far away from me, yet I
see where I once was so close. You do
not know that I am here. You are
oblivious to my presence.

The intensity of your stare is then
not oblivion, only an effort
to spot between the rain splashes
in the river.

I can see what you are thinking. You
are searching my face to see if
what I say is true.

LOPEZ

ME

When pressed, you leave. This
 is no more unexpected than that you
 give birth to shadows. I watch from
 a distance. I think of standing
 beside you when you have died, as
 shaken as I would be at the collapse
 of a cathedral.

You are afraid of lies so you retreat
 as always. I watch you. I think
 of how crushed I would be if
 you ever left me.

Your feathers downsloped at the
 back of your head, the white
 sheaves formed like a shield
 overlaying your breast. I
 wonder where you have fought.

Your eyes are clouded, acting as
 a shield to hide your heart. I
 wonder who or what has hurt
 you so deeply to create this
 strong outer shield you possess.

You retreat beneath your cowl.
 I follow you. You have caught
 me with your reticence.

You run away from me to your own
 little world. I follow you as
 far as I can go. You entice
 me with your innocence. You
 are so frightened. I will not hurt you.

Brave Young

Tricia Lehmkuhl

LOPEZ

ME

You are oblivious to the "thuck"
 of drops rolling off the tube of your
 neck and the slope of your back.

I see only you, your face, your
 hands. The rain seems an invisible
 curtain which must be parted
 if I am to touch you.

Perhaps you know it is raining.
 The intensity of your stare is
 then not oblivion . . .

LOPEZ

ME

I feel the rain, the cool droplets
of Mothers Earth's tears. My
stare is not into oblivion, but
into two pools of blue crystal,
falls my heart to you.

When pressed, you leave. This
is no more unexpected or
mysterious than that
you give birth to shadows.
Or silence. I watch from a distance.

I have been summoned. I must go.
We have expected this a long while
and should I not come home,
remember me. The shadow falls
upon my face as I am pulled from the
river. You watch from a distance.

You carry attribution well,
refusing to speak. I wonder where
you have fought, warrior.

I speak a language you know
not. I have fought in lands
you could not imagine. Yes,
I am a warrior, fighting for
you.

I follow you. You have caught
me with your reticence.

I see you through the shadows,
your face, your hands. It seems
you are following me. Why?
I know not where I am to go—
to heaven? To hell? Will I be
with you?

I watch from a distance.
With respect. I think of standing
beside you unless you have died.

Still in the shadow (of what is this
shadow caused?) I watch the crystal
pools come closer. It is hot, hard to
breathe. Tears run from my eyes as
you move closer. Blackness over-
takes my eyes, and I finally feel your
touch. The shadow is gone, we are
warm. No longer do I watch you from
a distance, no longer do I fight, no
longer do we not speak one language,
no longer am I a warrior.

Parologue with Barry Lopez*Markie Short*

LOPEZ

I see you on the far side of the river,
standing at the edge of familiar shadows,
before a terrified chorus of young alders
on the bank.

ME

First day of school. Teacher, you spend
time explaining, demonstrating, chalking
up the board, and we are nervous,
wondering if we can survive you.

The intensity of your stare is then
not oblivion.

Teacher, did we lose you? I think
your dreaming has taken you out of
this room.

I think of standing beside you when
you have died of your own brooding
over the water.

Teacher, don't take our attitude
personally. It's not your fault that
we don't care.

With your warrior's feathers downsloped
at the back of your head . . .

Teacher, you're back again and armed
with enthusiasm, concern, and hope.
You're getting hard to ignore.

You retreat beneath your cowl, spread
wings, rise, drift upriver as silent
as winter trees.

You watch us as we write, you read
over our shoulders, you raise your
eyebrows; sometimes you smile or nod.
We are sweating.

I follow you.

We are trying to follow you.

Reflecting on the Modeling Process

Think about what you have learned about how you work, how you think, and, of course, how you read and write. Modeling is a process that requires close reading, often with careful attention to the way words are put together; this is one way of looking at a

writer's style. Generating poems or prose passages that create the same tone and feeling in your own words helps you understand tone and feeling.

Modeling allows you to try out different authors' ways of forming ideas. Modeling allows you to begin to see how structure and style are directly tied to an author's ideas. You won't develop your own style in writing by modeling, but you can begin to explore what different styles feel like, and which ones come closest to how you like to express yourself. Style in writing, as in dress, evolves as we develop our entire personalities. "Our habits make our style," said poet and teacher Josephine Miles. Modeling involves a writer in conscious shaping of structure and language. Use it when you are intrigued by a piece of writing and want to understand it better.

Changing Point of View

One of the things that writers can do at will is adopt a mask or facade, a *persona*, to change who they are as they speak. A writer can take on the persona of anybody, in any place, in any time. Or a writer can take the persona of an animal, or through the power of language, try to give voice to the animal that the writer imagines. To create a persona requires that you use your mind to create the thoughts of another, to imagine how another might think. Always behind the created persona, however, is the sense of its creator, the imagining mind that has taken on the vision of another.

An effective writer draws the reader into the point of view of the persona who is telling the story or describing a scene. The words remain words, however, until an active reader enters into that point of view. You will never know whether the eyes you look through as a reader are the same as those of the persona the writer has assumed, but that doesn't really matter. What matters is the exchange of vision that happens when the reader transforms the words on the page into images, actions, and ideas.

Earlier in this chapter, you practiced taking on other writers' structural forms. They provided the skeleton, and you provided the flesh and blood. To work with other forms in that way helped hone your proficiency as an active reader as well as augment your options as a more informed writer. In this section, you are going to be both active reader and adaptable writer. You will read a number of

poems in which writers have adopted personas or in some way have attempted to probe the consciousness of an animal or object. Then you'll do much the same thing—you'll try to get inside the different personas that you choose. You will try to adopt that double vision of the writer that allows you to retain your own knowledge while looking out from other eyes.

Log Entry 7

Think about what it means to assume the consciousness of an animal, as some poets have. Jot down some notes in your log about the following ideas:

- What animal has always interested you or drawn your attention?
- What animal are you most like?
- What relationship can you see between the animal that most interests you and the one you think you are most like? Or are they the same?
- Of the animals you have been thinking about, which do you think you understand the best? This may be your choice for an exercise on changing your point of view later in this section. You don't have to decide just yet, however. Wait until you have had a chance to read some poems in which writers have adopted the persona of an animal.

Collaborating

With your partner or a group, discuss any experiences you may have had with a hawk or other large bird. Following are some suggestions for starters. Use only those that activate your own knowledge or memory.

- How can you tell a hawk from an eagle? From a buzzard? What feelings do these birds evoke? How do you account for any differences in your reaction to these birds?

- Why do most people admire the hawk, which is a predator, and disdain the buzzard, which feeds only on carrion (dead animals)?
- If you have ever seen a hawk make a kill, describe it.
- Have you ever killed a wild bird or a wild animal of any kind? Even with a car? Briefly describe that experience.

Developing Points of View

The reason for thinking about these questions before you read the two poems that follow is to establish a mindset for your reading. The poem that you are going to read first, "Hurt Hawks" by Robinson Jeffers, will have a different meaning for each of you as readers, depending on the experiences you have had with hawks, the feeling you have about killing an animal, and even the attitude you have toward poetry itself. Add to these factors all that Robinson Jeffers brings to the poem—his own passions about animals, his intense feeling for the craggy cliffs where he lived, and his belief in the power of language to convey both feeling and conviction. Out of the interplay between your experiences and the poet's words will emerge the meaning of this poem for you.

Robinson Jeffers lived in a stone house he built himself on a cliff above the rugged Pacific coast. It's easy to imagine this man, who wrote looking out from his "Hawk Tower," actually experiencing the occasion that the "I" of the poem records in "Hurt Hawks," but as readers, we shouldn't make that assumption. As you read this poem, put yourself in the place of the speaker, the "I." As always with poetry, it's best if you can first listen to the poem being read aloud.

Hurt Hawks

Robinson Jeffers

The broken pillar of the wing jags from the clotted shoulder,
The wing trails like a banner in defeat,
No more to use the sky forever but live with famine
And pain a few days: cat nor coyote
Will shorten the week of waiting for death, there is game without
talons.

He stands under the oak-bush and waits
 The lame feet of salvation; at night he remembers freedom
 And flies in a dream, the dawns ruin it.
 He is strong and pain is worse to the strong, incapacity is worse.
 The curs of the day come and torment him
 At distance, no one but death the redeemer will humble that head,
 The intrepid readiness, the terrible eyes.
 The wild god of the world is sometimes merciful to those
 That ask mercy, not often to the arrogant.
 You do not know him, you communal people, or you have forgotten
 him;
 Intemperate and savage, the hawk remembers him;
 Beautiful and wild, the hawks, and men that are dying, remember
 him.
 I'd sooner, except the penalties, kill a man than a hawk; but the
 great redbill
 Had nothing left but unable misery
 From the bone too shattered for mending, the wing that trailed
 under his talons when he moved.
 We had fed him six weeks, I gave him freedom,
 He wandered over the foreland hill and returned in the evening,
 asking for death,
 Not like a beggar, still eyed with the old
 Implacable arrogance. I gave him the lead gift in the twilight.
 What fell was relaxed,
 Owl-downy, soft feminine feathers; but what
 Soared: the fierce rush: the night-herons by the flooded river
 cried fear at its rising
 Before it was quite unsheathed from reality.

Log Entry 8

By talking with your discussion group and then writing in your log,
 work through your responses to this poem. If you need a starting
 point, try: How did you feel at the end? Then attempt to figure out
 what made you feel that way, using both the poem and your own
 experiences to reach your understanding of the poem.

Because our focus in this section is point of view, try to get inside the mind of the speaker of this poem. We don't, of course, know whether this is Jeffers himself speaking; he may have adopted another persona in this poem although it could be Jeffers. Work through the idea of whose mind is at work.

- How does Jeffers take you inside the consciousness of the hawk? Do you get a sense of knowing how much of the "hawk-consciousness" is really that of the hawk and how much is the mind of the poet?
- When Jeffers says the hawk is "asking for death," do you believe that it's Jeffers speaking or the consciousness of the hawk?
- Why do you think Jeffers titled this poem "Hurt Hawks" rather than "Hurt Hawk"? How does the plural color the poem's meaning?

Now listen to "Hawk Roosting" by Ted Hughes. Your teacher or a student might read it to the whole class before you read it silently to yourself. Then, again in groups, work through some of the ideas about whose consciousness this is.

Hawk Roosting

Ted Hughes

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.
Inaction, no falsifying dream
Between my hooded head and hooked feet:
Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat.

The convenience of the high trees!
The air's buoyancy and the sun's ray
Are of advantage to me;
And the earth's face upward for my inspection.

My feet are locked upon the rough bark.
It took the whole of Creation
To produce my foot, my each feather:
Now I hold creation in my foot

Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly—
I kill where I please because it is all mine.
There is no sophistry in my body:
My manners are tearing off heads—

The allotment of death.
For the one path of my flight is direct
Through the bones of the living.
No arguments assert my right:

The sun is behind me.
Nothing has changed since I began.
My eye has permitted no change.
I am going to keep things like this.

Log Entry 9

In "Hawk Roosting," the listener/reader is in the mind of the hawk, looking out from behind those eyes.

Jot down the answers to the following questions:

- For those of you who know hawks from your own observations, how accurate is Hughes's portrayal of the hawk?
- Whose consciousness is in such lines as "Now I hold creation in my foot"? What does that line mean to you?

Collaborating

With a partner or a small group, reread these two poems from the standpoint of whose awareness, whose mind dominates the poem. Read them just to get a sense of how the balance shifts when the writer attempts to get inside the mind of an animal. We can never really do that, of course, any more than we can ever really get inside the mind of another person, except one we make up for a story.

In what ways does the attempt to portray the inside view of the animal reveal the mind of the writer?

After discussing these two poems, talk about how you created your own versions of them, depending on your personal experiences with birds or hawks and with poetry. Share which poem you found more revealing about the nature of hawks and which was more in keeping with your beliefs about wild animals or birds particularly.

Seeing Through Other Eyes

"The Cow's Death," a story by the Irish writer Liam O'Flaherty, comes very close to taking us inside the consciousness of the cow even though O'Flaherty stays with third-person point of view throughout. Read the story and test out your own sense of this cow's reactions to the loss of her calf. Remember that the meaning of this story, as of everything you read, is going to be built on what you bring to the reading as well as what the author actually writes. You may have had no experience at all with cows, but you can draw on your own experience with the feelings that parents have for their children to comprehend the cow's distress.

The Cow's Death

Liam O'Flaherty

The calf was stillborn. It came from the womb tail first. When its red, unwieldy body dropped on the greensward it was dead. It lay with its head doubled about its neck in a clammy mass. The men stood about it and shook their heads in silence. The wife of the peasant who owned the cow sighed and said, "It is God's will." The cow moaned, mad with the pain of birth. Then she wheeled around clumsily, her hoofs driving into the soft earth beneath the weight of her body. She stooped over the calf and moaned, again smelling it. Then she licked the still body with her coarse tongue lovingly. The woman rubbed the cow's matted forehead, and there was a tear in her eye; for she too was a mother.

Then the cow, overcome once more with the pain, moved away from the calf and stood with her head bent low, breathing heavily through her nostrils. The breath came in long pale columns, like

sunbeams coming through the window of a darkened church. They drove her away to a corner of the field, and she stood wearily with her head over the fence, lashing her flanks with her tail restlessly.

They seized the calf and dragged it by the feet along the field to the fence, out through the fence into another field, then through another fence, then up the grassy slope that led to the edge of the cliff. They dropped it downwards into the sea. It lay in a pulped mass on the rocks. They rebuilt the gaps in the stone fences carefully and returned to the cow. The woman offered her a hot drink of oatmeal, but she refused it. They seized her and poured the drink down her throat, using a bull's horn as a funnel. The cow half swallowed the drink, half tossed it away with her champing mouth.

Then they went home, the woman still moaning the dead calf and apologizing to God for her sorrow. The peasant remained with the cow, watching until she should drop the bag. He buried it under a mound of stones. He dug his heel in the ground, and, taking a handful of the brown earth, he made the sign of the cross on the cow's side. Then he too went home.

For a long time the cow stood leaning over the fence, until the pain lessened. She turned around suddenly and lowed and tossed her head. She took a short run forward, the muscles of her legs creaking like new boots. She stopped again, seeing nothing about her in the field. Then she began to run around by the fence, putting her head over it here and there, lowing. She found nothing. Nothing answered her call. She became wilder as the sense of her loss became clearer to her consciousness. Her eyes became red around the rims and fierce like a bull's. She began to smell around on the ground, half running, half walking, stumbling clumsily among the tummocks of grass.

There was where she had lain in travail, on the side of a little slope, the grass compressed and faded by the weight of her body. There was where she had given birth, the ground trampled by many feet and torn here and there, with the brown earth showing though. Then she smelt where the calf had lain. There were wet stains on the grass. She looked around her fiercely, and then she put her nose to the ground and started to follow the trail where they had dragged the calf to the fence. At the fence she stopped and smelt a long time, wondering with her stupid brain whither the trail led. And then stupidly she pressed with her great bulk against the fence. The stones cut her breast, but she pressed harder in terror and the fence fell be-

fore her. She stumbled through the gap and cut her left thigh near the udder. She did not heed the pain, but pressed forward, smelling the trail and snorting.

Faster she went, and now and again she raised her head and lowed—a long, mournful low that ended in a fierce crescendo, like the squall of wind coming around a corner. At the second fence she pushed again. Again she pressed against it, and again it fell before her. Going through the gap she got caught, and in the struggle to get through she cut both her sides along the flanks. The blood trickled through jaggedly, discoloring the white streak on the left flank. She came at a run up the grassy slope to the cliff. She shuddered and jerked aside when she suddenly saw the sea and heard it rumbling distantly below—the waves seething on the rocks and the sea birds calling dismally with their noisome cackle. She smelt the air in wonder. Then she slowly advanced, inch by inch, trembling. When she reached the summit, where the grass ended in a gravel belt that dropped down to the sheer slope of rock, she rushed backwards and circled around wildly, lowing. Again she came up, and planting her feet carefully on the gravel, she looked down. The trail of her calf ended there. She could follow it no further. It was lost in the emptiness beyond that gravel ledge. She tried to smell the air, but nothing reached her nostrils but the salt smell of the sea. She moaned and her sides heaved with the outrush of her breath. Then she looked down, straining out her neck. She saw the body of her calf on the rocks below. She uttered a joyful cry and ran backwards, seeking a path to descend. Up and down the summit of the cliff she went, smelling here and there, looking out over the edge, going on her knees and looking down and finding nowhere a path that led to the object on the rocks below. She came back again, her hind legs clashing as she ran, to the point where the body had been dropped over the precipice.

She strained out and tapped with her fore hoof, scratching the gravel and trying to descend, but there was nothing upon which she could place her feet—just a sheer drop of one hundred feet of cliff and her calf lay on the rocks below.

She stood stupidly looking at it a long time, without moving a muscle. Then she lowed, calling to her calf, but no answer came. She saw the water coming in with the tide, circling around the calf on the rocks. She lowed again, warning it. Wave after wave came in, eddying around the body. She lowed again and tossed her head wildly as if she wanted to buffet the waves with her horns.

And then a great wave came towering in, and catching up the calf on its crest swept it from the rocks.

And the cow, uttering a loud bellow, jumped headlong down.

Log Entry 10

Before discussing this story, take a few minutes to write your initial response in your log. Begin perhaps with a single word that could describe how you felt at the end of the story. Then follow that word with ideas, tying together things in the story with experiences in your own life to arrive at a sense of the story's meaning for you.

Collaborating

After sharing with your group the meaning the story had for you, focus on the question of the cow's consciousness. Refer to the two hawk poems as you explore the different effects of first person and third person in conveying the inner sense of the animal. Discuss, too, how the story presentation of the cow is different, if you feel it is, from the poems. Is there a sense in which O'Flaherty is poetic? If there is, can you identify what it is about his prose that moves it toward poetry? On the other hand, what did O'Flaherty include in his story that, in your opinion, might have to have been left out had he written it as a poem?

Work in Progress

Re-read your log entries from the beginning of this section, when you explored your relationships with animals. Select one animal that you know something about and have a real interest in and write both of the following assignments in either poetry or prose.

1. Write about an experience you have had when you identified in some way with a bird or another kind of animal. Stay with the

third-person point of view, but present the animal's consciousness, as Jeffers did in "Hurt Hawks" and O'Flaherty did in "The Cow's Death."

2. Using the same experience, get inside the animal's consciousness and write about it from the animal's point of view. Use the "I" to identify the point of view of the animal, as Hughes did in "Hawk Roosting."

Get together with your group again and share your writings with each other. Discuss which piece each of you found easier to write. Which piece do you feel comes closer to presenting the consciousness of the animal? Which reveals more of you? Which do you like better? Explain why for all three questions.

Work in Progress

If you would like to write additional drafts for your folder, try recasting the text.

1. If you wrote in prose, put your descriptions into poetry.
2. If you wrote in poetry, recast the experience in prose.
3. Select one of the poems—"Hurt Hawks" or "Hawk Roosting"—or your own poem and rewrite it as a short story.
4. Rewrite "The Cow's Death" as a poem. Or write about any animal's death in poetry.
5. Change the persona of your poem or prose and write it from this point of view.

Log Entry 11

Write an entry in your log reflecting on how you felt assuming the consciousness of an animal. To what degree do you feel you were successful? Might it be reasonably argued that the only way we can

assume an animal's consciousness is to endow the animal with human qualities? If you were to create an animal persona in the future, what might you try that you didn't this time?

Collaborating

From your Work in Progress activity, read two versions of the same experience to your partner or group. Discuss the strengths of each.

- After you have each shared your work, talk about the different demands that prose and poetry make on the writer. For example, prose usually requires fuller descriptions and a more substantial context for the experience. In reading prose, the reader may expect a more comprehensive treatment of the subject. In poetry, however, we expect to find tightly constructed sentences, words that serve more than one function, often metaphorical or symbolic, pushing us to leaps of the imagination.
- Talk about the different demands prose and poetry make on the reader. Do you find it easier to read one than another? If you do, can you figure out why that is?
- Share suggestions for improving your work, and make a decision about which piece you want to revise for your course portfolio.

Acquiring an animal persona

In the following collection of poems, students wrote from the point of view of an animal that they identified with. Dawn Thomas, who wrote "Wilderastabeast," actually lived in Africa when she was a young child and remembers the wildebeests running in migratory herds. Richard Paul chose to write a light-hearted account of being a flea on his dog; Robert McKean never identifies his subject, but you probably will fairly easily. Annick Mebine writes of the quiet but significant moment when a white swan is transformed into a black one.

Wilderastabeast

Dawn Thomas

I am a Wildenhmparastabeast

runa

beast

hot hot hot

sunabeatadown

runaruna

beast

grazing on dry grass

nowaterforamillamiles

My People

roundmeinanight

roundmeinaday

My People

wildewildebeast

humpapeople

runaforamillamiles

need a little water

no beef witha People

my brothers

takinanap

innahothotsun

My peoplewatcha

for bigCats

acominround

smelling big beef

My People

oldoldwildebeast

he very tired

Big Cats

achasachasahim

Kill him dead

eatablood

chewachewabones

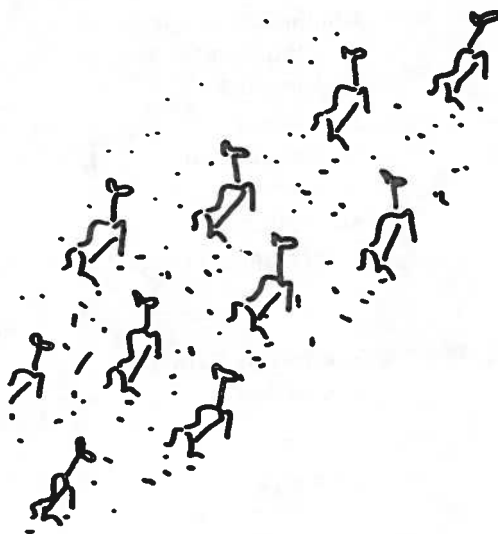
runapeople

wildeyes arunnin

stampedapeople

too much palaverdust

runafar



runaforawaterhole
 only Strongsurviva
 underneatha
 hot hot hot
 sunabeatadown
 onmyPeople
 My brothers
 Wildehumparastabeasta.

The Happy Parasite

Richard Paul

Here I am,
 Once again,
 Running up and down the spine
 Looking for a place to light.

I never have to search around
 To find a ripe and tender meal.
 I live on life.
 That keeps me living.

My dog is really a good guy.
 He doesn't bother me too much.
 Sometimes a scratch here and
 Sometimes a bite there;

It's his people that bother me.
 They're always spraying and hunting,
 Poking and squeezing.
 It drives me to drink!

So I do.

Oh, I just love to hop around
 Amidst the furry jungle.
 My feet hardly ever
 touch the ground.

I like it this way,
 and I want it to stay.
 A flea's life is definitely
 Not a dog's life.

The Hunter

Robert McKean

Me, black as night,
A king in my own right,
A nightmare to my enemies,
A benefactor to my kin.

My fur is supple and soft;
muscles bunch and flex as
I bound across the open clearings,
then silently fade into the
surrounding forest searching for prey.

I stop, sniff the air, hoping to catch
that familiar scent. I run on.
Again I stop. This time my mind pictures
an old acquaintance, the antelope.

Remorse? Never.
I take what I need, when I need it.
I ignore them when need is absent.
Never more, never less.

Me, black as night,
A king in my own right,
A nightmare to my enemies.
Need is present.

Black Swan

Annick McBine

The clear pool ripples silently,
mimicking my movements. I have no
bearings, floating effortlessly like
a ball of cotton, white and full,
suspended on the water's surface.

Ahead, near the shore, droplets of
water spatter about as a duck
pointlessly flaps his wings.

Now the glare from the sun becomes
bright. I dip my neck and head
into the cool blueness. In the shade
a green fern wavers in the breeze.

The water is very still and mirrors
the clouds against the sky. I burrow
my face in the downy feathers of my
wing and look at my reflection.

A red bill, but here black feathers
frame it. Black. Moments before,
white. I quickly immerse my whole
body under water, staying there as
long as I can. Finally I swim up.

I look straight at a wet rock that
sat in the center of the pond. From
under it comes a black swan, in the
place where I once was.

Going inside an object

Read the following poem by Charles Simic in which he both gives
and takes his own advice to "go inside a stone."

Stone

Charles Simic

Go inside a stone.
That would be my way.
Let somebody else become a dove
Or gnash with a tiger's tooth.
I am happy to be a stone.

From the outside the stone is a riddle:
No one knows how to answer it.
Yet within, it must be cool and quiet
Even though a cow steps on it full weight,
Even though a child throws it in a river;
The stone sinks, slow, unperturbed
To the river bottom
Where the fishes come to knock on it
And listen.

I have seen sparks fly out
When two stones are rubbed,
So perhaps it is not dark inside after all;
Perhaps there is a moon shining
From somewhere, as though behind a hill—
Just enough light to make out
The strange writings, the star charts
On the inner walls.

Work in Progress

Try taking Simic's advice and go inside some thing from the natural world—a stone, a feather, a shell, a leaf, a drop of water. Notice how Simic makes the world of the stone very particular, with recognizable scenes from the realistic world; yet he also creates a mysterious world with "strange writings," and "star charts/On the inner walls." Write from the inside of the object you choose, either in poetry or prose, and try to convey your imagined world.

Building Your Course Portfolio

You have probably written from many angles of vision and from many points of view other than your own in your classes over the years. You may have written letters from one character to another; recast history into a story or poem told from the point of view of a historical figure; brought a myth into contemporary life and rewritten the story from the mythical figure's point of view; created a science fiction character and imagined a futuristic world. If you've studied debate, you have learned to argue from a point of view you disagree with.

In the first part of this chapter, you experimented with assuming structural forms of both individual writers and established forms of poetry. Then you probed the consciousness of animals and natural objects by adopting their personas. Now we ask you to look at what you have read and what you have written during this chapter and to do some reflecting about what this looking reveals about who you are—not only as a reader and writer but as a unique human being.

The extended portfolio entry, your last project of this chapter, will contain a selection of your writing and your responses to literature. It will represent your best work and will become the basis for an evaluation of your work over this period of time. Review Building Your Course Portfolio in Chapter 1.

Selecting Your Best Writing

Take out your log and your writing folder and look at all the writing you have done during this chapter. Your goal is to select those pieces which you feel represent your best work. Get together with the other members of your writing group so you can help evaluate each other's work; then decide which pieces need revision and which are ready for inclusion. You may want to include some of your log entries as well as the poems, memory writings, stories, or essays that you wrote.

Revising

The word *revise* means, literally, "to see again." To revise a piece of writing requires you to step back, squint your eyes, and look at it a different way. Revising gives you another way to look out through other people's eyes—in this case through the eyes of your readers. You can, of course, revise a piece all by yourself; many writers work this way. But most writers feel the need to have other people read their work, respond honestly to it, ask questions, and let the writer know how the piece affected them.

If you have not worked with a writing group in revising, you might find some starting suggestions helpful. Look over this list and use any of the suggestions that seem pertinent.

- Guide the discussion about your work. Ask questions; probe for detailed responses from the group.
- If possible, make copies of your work for the members of your group. That may not always be possible, but it is helpful.
- Read the piece aloud to the group members (even if they have their own copies), noticing as you read whether there are any sections that you have difficulty reading. If you find such sentences or phrases, come back to them later. Stumbling over a passage while reading aloud may be a clue to the need for reworking that passage.

- Ask the group members to tell you how they felt listening to your piece. Check their reactions against your intent. You may find that they responded in a way that you did not intend but like anyway. Writers build on this kind of knowledge, maybe changing their own concept of their piece as they listen to discussion.
- Ask the group members to talk about point of view. Were you successful in conveying the consciousness of your persona, whether that persona was you, an animal, or another person? Were there any breaks in point of view? If, for example, you were writing from the point of view of a horse, did you maintain that viewpoint throughout?
- If you have any questions about whether you told too much or not enough, ask the members of your group. Where did they need more details? Where did they get bored?

Work on your selected piece until you are satisfied that it is the best you can do; use the suggestions of your teacher and your writing group as you revise. Remember, however, that other people can only give you suggestions. It's up to you as the author to make the final decisions.

Editing

The final step before publishing is checking your work for the kinds of errors that detract from a reader's ability to read for meaning. Look at your work objectively, or get the help of someone in your writing group, and check for spelling, punctuation, and sentence errors. Even after you have made a final copy, you need to proofread for typographical errors. If you use a computer, you can use a spell check, but that won't catch words that are spelled correctly but aren't the words you intended. To proofread your own work, it helps to have some time elapse between the final writing and the proofreading. Our eyes tend to see what our mind intended, regardless of what is in front of them.

Selecting Responses to Your Reading

Include in your portfolio entry an annotated list of titles and authors of poems or stories you found meaningful. Reread the log entries you wrote as you thought about each work. Beside the title of each one, write a short log-type reflective entry indicating why you selected

that work. Your reasons may range widely: you may choose one poem because you shared the insight of the author and choose another because it introduced you to a new or unusual perspective. You might like some of the students' work because it is like yours. You might like a piece because you responded to it emotionally or because it let you see some aspect of life through different eyes. You might even choose a piece because it introduced you to a new form, one you tried and liked. Whatever your choices, express some detailed reasons for your responses in your portfolio reading list.

Publishing

If you want to take your work beyond the portfolio, there are many ways to publish your work. Share it with other people—read it aloud, post your work on the bulletin board, put it into a class collection, send it to the school or local newspaper (which may have a weekly poetry section), or submit it to a magazine. There are some magazines that look especially for student writing, hoping to spot young talent. The most important thing is the sharing, however. Be sure to share your favorite work with your family and friends.

Reflecting

When you've made all of your selections—both reading and writing—arrange the pieces in an order that suits you and prepare a Table of Contents. Write an introductory essay on what you've chosen to place in this section of your portfolio and why. This essay should represent your best thinking and writing. It should convey to the readers of your portfolio—other members of your class, your teacher, perhaps friends, and members of your family—who you are at this time of your life in terms of the reading and writing you have done during your work in this chapter.

Because this chapter dealt with helping you explore options—of structures and points of view—we hope that you'll have a somewhat clearer picture of the many possibilities that make up who you are and who you are becoming.

3

Translating a Myth
into a Painting,
a Painting
into a Poem

Myths are stories that incorporate important truths about relationships of people to each other, to the earth, to their gods. Ancient myths have been inspirations for artists, musicians, and poets throughout history. Contemporary artists still look to myths as catalysts for their creations. In this chapter, we'll look at a cluster of poems that are derived from the myth of Icarus, the subject of the poem that you read from different angles of vision at the beginning of this book. To understand Daedalus and Icarus more fully, you'll need some additional background. The myth is summarized in the following paragraphs. (If you want to read more about Daedalus's exploits, you will find them in *Metamorphoses*, by the ancient Greek writer Ovid.)

Icarus's father Daedalus was known throughout the ancient world for his inventions and his cleverness. He was proud of his reputation and feared that his young nephew might surpass him. To prevent that from happening, he threw his nephew to his death. Then, to escape punishment for that dreadful act, he fled with his son Icarus to the island of Crete. The king of Crete, King Minos, knowing of Daedalus's cleverness, had him construct a maze to imprison the minotaur, a strange beast that was half-bull and half-man. When Minos used the maze to imprison the hero Theseus (who was in love with Minos's daughter Ariadne) in the maze with the minotaur, Daedalus felt sorry for Ariadne and Theseus and taught Ariadne the secret of how to free Theseus from the maze. King Minos punished Daedalus by imprisoning him and Icarus in the same labyrinth.

The story goes that Daedalus, freed from the maze but still exiled on the island of Crete, was homesick. Knowing that he could not escape by boat, he found himself gazing at the sky, watching the birds, and thinking about how he might engineer his and his son's escape by wings. He began to gather feathers that dropped from great sea birds and then spread them out to make wings, fastening them with twine and wax. When he had constructed wings for himself and his son, he taught his son, the way fathers try to do: "I warn you, Icarus, don't go too low or the water will weigh the wings down and you will be pulled into the sea. Don't go too high or the sun will melt the wax from the feathers and burn the feathers. Steer a middle course and you will be able to fly like the birds and reach the land of your birth. Don't try to chart your own course by the stars or the sun: Follow me. I will lead you safely."

Daedalus kissed his son, then spread his own wings and began to fly over the sea. Icarus followed, beating his wings, flying over

the water. Below them, a fisherman watched in amazement, and a shepherd. A ploughman looked up. They could not believe what they saw: a man and a boy, flying high in the sky.

But Icarus, filled with the joy of the flight, flew higher and higher, testing the power of the wings that carried him up into the heavens. He flew high into the sky, nearer and nearer to the sun, until the wax that held the feathers together melted. "Father!" Icarus cried, as he fell from the heavens. "Father!" he cried as he disappeared into the sea.

And Daedalus responded, "Icarus, where are you?" Then he saw the wings on the water and knew that his son had drowned and that all of his ingenuity and inventions could not save the one thing he loved in the world.

Recasting the Myth of Icarus

The yearning to fly, to test and go beyond the limits, has drawn many people to this myth. Painters, dancers, and sculptors throughout history have tried to translate this myth of flying and falling into color and line and movement.

In 1558, a famous painter named Brueghel translated a scene from the myth about Daedalus and Icarus into a painting. Titled *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*, the painting depicts an everyday scene of people going about their daily lives; the only trace of Icarus is his legs flailing as he goes down into the sea. Brueghel's painting has since become the inspiration for a number of well-known poems. As you read these poems, try to imagine your own picture of Brueghel's painting.

Landscape with the Fall of Icarus

William Carlos Williams

According to Brueghel
when Icarus fell
it was spring

a farmer was ploughing
his field
the whole pageantry

of the year was
 awake tingling
 near
 the edge of the sea
 concerned with itself
 sweating in the sun
 that melted
 the wing's wax
 insignificantly
 off the coast
 there was
 a splash quite unnoticed
 this was
 Icarus drowning

In the following poem by the contemporary poet W. H. Auden, you will not find Icarus mentioned by name until the second stanza.

Musée des Beaux Arts

W. H. Auden

About suffering they were never wrong,
 The old Masters: how well they understood
 Its human position; how it takes place
 While someone else is eating or opening a window or just
 walking dully along;
 How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
 For the miraculous birth, there always must be
 Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
 On a pond at the edge of the wood:
 They never forgot
 That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
 Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
 Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the
 torturer's horse
 Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.
 In Brueghel's *Icarus*, for instance: how everything turns
 away
 Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may

Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

Tone is a critical factor in all writing but especially in poetry. Try reading this poem aloud; then listen to someone else read it aloud. Listen for the tone. How would you describe it? Resigned? Cynical? Matter-of-fact? Talk with your partner and see whether you agree on how to describe the tone.

The community of thought in the Brueghel-Icarus poems transcends both time and space as painters and writers translate stories and ideas from one historical era to another, making them their own, making the stories relevant to changing perceptions.

Log Entry 1

Sketch the outlines of what you think the Brueghel painting must look like, using clues from the poems based on his work. Compare your notes with those of your partner or group. Then find a copy of the painting in an art book and see how closely the poets based their interpretations on Brueghel's painting. (The painting is in many collections. You shouldn't have any difficulty finding a copy in the library.)

Here is another contemporary poet's interpretation of the Icarus myth. This view takes quite a different slant from that of Brueghel or the poets you have read so far. In this poem Edward Field transplants Icarus into present-day society.

Icarus

Edward Field

Only the feathers floating around the hat
Showed that anything more spectacular had occurred
Than the usual drowning. The police preferred to ignore

The confusing aspects of the case,
And the witnesses ran off to a gang war.
So the report filed and forgotten in the archives read
simply

"Drowned," but it was wrong: Icarus
Had swum away, coming at last to the city
Where he rented a house and tended the garden.

"That nice Mr. Hicks" the neighbors called him,
Never dreaming that the gray, respectable suit
Concealed arms that had controlled huge wings
Nor that those sad, defeated eyes had once
Compelled the sun. And had he told them
They would have answered with a shocked,
uncomprehending stare.

No, he could not disturb their neat front yards;
Yet all his books insisted that this was a horrible
mistake:

What was he doing aging in a suburb?
Can the genius of the hero fall
To the middling stature of the merely talented?

And nightly Icarus probes his wound
And daily in his workshop, curtains carefully drawn,
Constructs small wings and tries to fly
To the lighting fixture on the ceiling:
Fails every time and hates himself for trying.

He had thought himself a hero, had acted heroically,
And dreamt of his fall, the tragic fall of the hero;
But now rides commuter trains,
Serves on various committees,
And wishes he had drowned.

Graphic

Select any two texts from the Icarus poems or the summary of the myth that you have read and draw your responses to them. Look to the texts for visual scenes and translate them into sketches; try to

sketch how these texts affected you as well as what you think the meaning is. Include representations of connections between your own life and that of the Icarus of the texts. Are you more like the Icarus of the myth, defying his father, flying for the joy of testing his own power, or like the Icarus of the Field poem, regretting that his one heroic moment did not end in glory but in a boring, mundane life? Let your drawing convey your interpretations and feelings.

Collaborating

With your partner or group, talk about the different versions of the Icarus myth. Here are some general questions for starters:

- Which poem caused your strongest reaction?
- What events seemed strange or out of place?
- What actions of Icarus seemed hard to explain?
- Were you reminded of any personal experiences as you read about Icarus defying his father?
- What ideas did the poems make you think about?

With regard to Edward Field's poem, discuss these questions:

- How do you interpret the lines "Can the genius of the hero fall/To the middling stature of the merely talented?" In what way do you think Edward Field might see Icarus as a genius, a tragic hero?
- Icarus, in Field's poem, sees himself as having been a man who "acted heroically./And dreamt of his fall, the tragic fall of the hero." Think of some of the tragedies you have read—Shakespeare's *Macbeth* or *Hamlet* or Sophocles' *Oedipus* (which appears later in this book)—and talk about Field's use of the concept of the "tragic fall" with respect to Icarus. Remember that in reading a myth, each person projects details into the story that make it relevant to his or her own situation.

One student, who was grieving a lost mother-son relationship in his own life, identified strongly with the fallen Icarus. In his poem, however, he chose to speak with the voice of the stricken mother, who does not appear in the myth, imagining, perhaps, that his own mother would have such feelings. Here is Bill's poem, written his senior year. Read it aloud in your group.

Icarus

Bill Whiteman

Icarus, come with me.
I feel small wings
growing from my womb.
Let us walk beside the sea.
Let us taste the flesh
of freshly fallen seabirds.
Let us feel the tender oils
of Grecian mermaids.
Icarus, come with me.
The sun will never touch us
with its too many fingers
of light.
We can watch the moon
with its silent albino ponies.
Icarus, I want you
to travel with me forever.
I want you to come
and walk beside metal barges
that have eroded into the tide.
I want to comb your tired feathers.
Let me brush your solemn wings.
Icarus, come with me,
come with me.

My child has fallen.
His wings have melted
into summer clouds.
His eyes have grown soft
from looking at the sun too long.
His once-beautiful blonde feathers
have grown dark and dull.

Icarus, why did you try
to make love with the sun,
with its evil chariot,
with its mirrored beauty?
You should have come with me, Icarus,
I loved you.

Collaborating

What are your initial reactions to Bill's poem? About the whole process of rewriting myths into contemporary versions? Retelling a myth in the language of one's own time is one thing, but actually changing the story, as Edward Field does, is another. Select a myth you know—a Greek myth, an Indian myth, a Norse myth, or a contemporary myth such as the story of Superman—and talk with your partner or group about how you might "translate" or rewrite it to make a statement about some aspect of society today.

Recasting Other Myths

Following is a revised version of the myth of Prometheus, whose name means, literally, "forethought." Barry Tribuzio was inspired to write this untitled poem during his senior year in high school after reading Edward Field's poem, "Icarus."

Barry Tribuzio

But he has made the true
escape from reality's pain
to consolidated gain,
His name etched in brass
and his life in code
on a chip stored away,
He is no more loved here
than caressed by the talons
and cold hard rock.

Eaten up inside by
the schedules of life,
Broken by the whip
of market trends,
"Time is Money"
and the clocks on the wall.

But these things
do not occur to him;
He sullenly scratches
the healing itch of his belly
and calls for coffee.
Ankles bound in shined shoes
He reclines,
lost in the grasp
of padded vinyl,
And the pigeons gather
outside for a feast . . .



Chris Walton, another student inspired by Field's poem, wrote a modern version of the story of Daphne and Apollo (Philip in the poem). Daphne was a nymph who, when pursued by Apollo, chose to be turned into a bay tree and consecrated to Apollo.

Wooded Lovers

Chris Walton

Quietly they left when
They ran away to Marin
And became the happiest
And the oddest couple on the block.
They didn't tell anyone she was supposed to be a tree.

Daphne and Philip live normal lives:
She leads Girl Scouts through the woods
Like some kind of huntress;
He plays the harp expertly
For the San Francisco Symphony
And heads the campaign to "Save the Dolphins."

Still, they are unable to escape
Destiny and the curse from her father.

Once born, their children grow leaves
And become part of their laurel forest.
The neighbors joke, "They stay married
Because of the children—the lack of them."
Daphne and Philip laugh, and inside
they envy their fertile friends.

At night she lies awake,
Sorry her father's spell missed her,
Longing to join her children in nature.
Next to her Philip grows old,
Hates himself for falling in love.

But they love eternally,
Their bond too beautiful, too strong to break;
the hidden despair in the suburbs and
Frustration of old age is not enough
To erase the wonder of life:
They live on.

Extending the Myth of Icarus

"Modern mythology recognizes both the upward and the downward impulse in human nature," writes F. Parvin Sharpless in *Symbol and Myth in Modern Literature* (Rochelle Park, N.J.: Hayden Book Co., 1976). You have seen, in the myth of Icarus, the imagery of the air and sun—the upward movement—and of the earth and water—the downward pull. But the drama of the story often lies in the passage between—the rising and the falling, not only of a boy who, flying too near the sun, falls into the sea, but of basic aspects of human nature to aspire, to fall, to rise again.

Icarus is only one of a number of Greek myths that have given rise to artists' and writers' translations over the years. Following are some suggestions for you, working either alone or with a partner, to extend your own understanding of myth. Through these activities, you can begin to develop your own consciousness of how myths—through the arts of painting, poetry, and drama—reflect aspects of what it means to be a human being.

Many writers and artists have seen Icarus as the perpetual adolescent. Reread the original version of the story of Daedalus and

Icarus (see pages 74–75); look again at the Brueghel painting and reread the cluster of Icarus poems. Think about times in your life when you have defied the limits implicit in being young. Think about the consequences of your defiance. Then try some of the following possibilities for pieces to include in your writing folder. Remember that later you may want to revise one or more to include in your course portfolio.

Work in Progress


- *Write a reflective-analytic essay.* Write about how you perceive the Icarus story and why you think the myth continues to influence artists and writers. Look specifically at how Ovid influenced Brueghel, Auden, Williams, Field, Sexton (from Chapter 1), and the student, Bill Whiteman. Be specific in your references to the poems, drawing on lines or forms or images that illustrate your ideas. Reflect on the continuing power of the Icarus myth to affect different artists in different time periods.
- *Recast the text into a nonverbal art form.* Translate the Icarus myth into some art form: a painting, a collage, a mandala, a sculpture. Or you could write the words and music for a song based on the theme of Icarus or compose a dance that carries the theme of flying and falling.
- *Research a myth—outwardly and inwardly.* Select the story of a different mythic figure and track down all the translations you can find in art, music, drama, or poetry. Create your own translation of this myth in any art form. Then write a short account of the process of your investigation and your creation.
- *Update a myth.* Select a myth that says something important to you and rewrite it to reflect a truth you see in society today. Write it as a poem or story or play. (See the poems in this chapter by Barry Tribuzio and Chris Walton for examples of myths rewritten as modern poems.) Write an entry in your log explaining why you chose your myth and why you made the changes in the myth that you did.

- *Read a mythic extension.* Because myths carry a deep significance for people of every era, the stories of the myths appear and reappear in different cultures and in different settings, with outwardly different situations. If you are ambitious, you might want to try reading a sustained treatment of a myth in a novel or play. There are many to choose from. We suggest four possible selections. If everyone in your group reads the same work, you will be able to talk about the ideas and issues each writer explores.

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce is a short novel that grows out of the Daedalus/Icarus myth. The young man in the novel is named Stephen Daedalus, although at times he is more like Icarus than Daedalus. This is not an easy book to read, but it is worth your while if you like probing ideas and experiencing inventive use of language. It leads to a lot of good discussion about growing up, especially about a young boy/man who isn't part of the crowd and whose artistic temperament sets him apart from the rough-and-tumble lives of his schoolmates.

The Centaur by John Updike is a wonderful experiment in writing a novel on two levels at the same time. On one level, it is the story of three days in the life of a high school history teacher/coach (Chiron, the centaur) and his son Peter (Prometheus). Zimmerman, the principal of the high school, is, of course, Zeus; and Vera Hummel, the women's physical education teacher, is Venus, and so on. On the other hand, interspersed throughout the novel are vignettes of myths about the main characters' mythic counterparts—primarily Chiron, the centaur, but others, as well. You can read the book for the story alone, but you will find yourself drawn into the ramifications of myths as stories about our most powerful feelings and ideas.

Read two plays based on the same Greek story—the story of Antigone, daughter of Oedipus. Sophocles' *Antigone* is the third play in the trilogy of plays about Oedipus (the first play, *Oedipus Rex*, appears later in this book). The power of *Antigone* lies in the confrontation between Antigone, the young, fiercely free-thinking daughter of Oedipus, and her uncle, now king, Creon. Antigone chooses to go to her death for burying her brother against the laws of the state rather than give in to what she believes are unjust laws. Jean Anouilh, a French dramatist of this



century, wrote his dramatic version of *Antigone* as a symbolic enactment of the German occupation of France during World War II. The parallels are clear; the drama is compelling. After reading these two plays, you might want to write your own version of Antigone's story, selecting someone from contemporary history to fulfill the role of Antigone, the defiant young challenger of the establishment. In the 1960s, students chose folk singer Joan Baez to embody the Antigone idealism. Can you think of current performers, public figures, or other people who exemplify Antigone's beliefs?

4

Truth in Fiction

People like to classify things, to give them names and categories, to separate one kind of bird or car or tree from another. We're used to classification in science; an eighteenth-century Swedish botanist named Linnaeus formulated a classification system that we still use today. Because of Linnaeus's work, a botanist, seeing an unnamed plant, for example, could immediately classify it according to its class, order, family, genus, and species. When you know what the scientific name is for a plant, you know something about it—what other plants it's related to and, therefore, how it fits into the larger picture of the plant kingdom. Even in biology there are problems, however. For example, the euglena, a microscopic bit of something, has chlorophyll in it, a definitive characteristic of the plant kingdom; it also is able to initiate movement, a definitive characteristic of the animal kingdom. So which is it, plant or animal?

Of course, it is false logic to maintain that where boundaries are blurred, no distinctions exist. Just because no one can specify at which smudge a clean wall becomes a dirty wall, that does not mean there is no difference between a clean wall and a dirty wall.

Classifying Literature

English teachers and critics have followed the lead of Linnaeus and over the years have tried to classify kinds of literature and kinds of writing. We even use the word *genre*, which is related to the scientific term *genus*, to distinguish categories of literature—the novel, the essay, the poem, and so on. Each is considered a separate genre, with descriptive qualities that help us identify the differences among types. But we run into trouble with our own euglenas. “What is poetry, and if you know what poetry is, what is prose?” asks Gertrude Stein, a noted poet of the 1930s and 40s.

Two big categories of writing, almost as large as the plant and animal kingdoms, seemed pretty clear-cut for a long time: fiction and nonfiction. You have probably already learned what these useful categories mean and how they are distinct from one another.

Before you go on, take a minute to write in your log simple definitions of *fiction* and *nonfiction* as you understand them. This is not a trap; it's just a way of getting started.

Log Entry 1

Define fiction and nonfiction. Don't look them up in the dictionary; just define these words as you might use them. Write out a working definition for each one.

Collaborating

Share your definitions with your group and talk about the different ways you approached defining these words. Did you

- use the words *true* or *false* or perhaps *made up*?
- write statements of definition?
- use examples?
- define by using similes or metaphors ("fiction is like . . .")?

How were each of your definitions different from one another? If you want to add anything to your definitions or perhaps change them, write your additions in your log now.

We will come back to this discussion after you have read a few pieces of literature. First read the opening lines of the autobiographical reminiscences of Doctor Robert Coles in "Starting Out."

The youth of fifteen had polio; he would lose the use of both legs. His father had been killed in the Second World War; his mother had died in an automobile accident when he was ten. A grandmother, a sensitive and thoughtful widow in her sixties, had become his main family. The young man had no brothers and sisters. He had two uncles, whom he yearned to see more often, but they were living in Texas and California.

Log Entry 2

Write in your log how you think you might feel if you were in this young man's situation: fifteen, orphaned, facing the rest of your life without the use of your legs. Try writing as if you were this person. You might include sketches or drawings that this young person might draw to represent his life.

The narrator of "Starting Out" is a pediatrician and child psychiatrist. He begins by interviewing the young man as part of his study of young polio victims. Now read the rest of the excerpt.

Starting Out

Robert Coles

The youth of fifteen had polio; he would lose the use of both legs. His father had been killed in the Second World War; his mother had died in an automobile accident when he was ten. A grandmother, a sensitive and thoughtful widow in her sixties, had become his main family. The young man had no brothers and sisters. He had two uncles, whom he yearned to see more often, but they were living in Texas and California. (Like him, they were born near Boston.) I came to know this fellow fairly well. I first met him in the emergency ward of a Boston hospital when he came in with a sore throat, feverish, and, alas, weak in the legs. My work with him as a pediatrician gave way eventually to my conversations with him as a child psychiatrist. He was "moody," by his own description, and he was not averse to long talks.

We always started with sports, especially baseball and hockey, his two loves. In time, we'd drift toward the hospital scene as he saw it: the nurses, the virtues and faults of various ones, and the doctors, mostly their faults. He regarded us residents with a skeptical eye. We strutted, were all too cocky. "The doctors give so many orders, it goes to their heads." He said those words so many times that I found myself, in retaliation, observing his "hostility." It was hard for him to accept the bad deal life had given him. He was angry, I knew, and needed a target, someone or something to attack, lest he turn all the fury on himself and become depressed. As he described us doctors, scurrying around, always on the move, collaring people with our or-

ders, he seemed wistful. He would look past me, toward a window, and I always hesitated to press our conversation. He seemed gone—his mind was out there, free of his body.

Once, as we talked about that body's prospects, he became philosophical. He wondered whether the soul is always confined to a given body. Might it become migratory? What did I think? I was stupid enough to shun the question and to throw it back at him. He was smart enough to spot my pose—a shrink in action—and irritated enough to give me a dose of his bile. He spoke at considerable length; one remark has stuck with me for the many years since he made it: "If you would tell me what you think, then I could answer better." At the time I wasn't getting any wiser, however. I interpreted that comment as an effort on his part to hide behind me, as it were—to let me know that he would pretend to oblige me by taking cues from me, but not deliver to me what I wanted, his own unvarnished self. He spotted a coy reserve in me at that moment, which must have told him what was crossing my mind. He changed the subject abruptly, instructively. Had I read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*? Yes, I answered, wondering what the question meant. He said no more. It was left to me, during the silence that followed, to figure out what to say, if anything. I waited just long enough to realize that the youth, whose name was Phil, had no intention of proceeding further in any direction. My wife's and supervisors' faces, their voices, rushed to my head. A week or so earlier my wife had urged me to "exchange stories" with the children I was interviewing in the hospital; Dr. Ludwig had agreed: "Why don't you chuck the word 'interview,' call yourself a friend, call your exchanges 'conversations'!"

Suddenly I heard myself talking about Huck and Jim, about the mighty river, about my own experiences as a child when my mother took my brother and me to visit her family in Sioux City, Iowa, located on the Missouri River. I told Phil that my grandfather used to take me to that river, point south, indicate the destination of the water: the Mississippi, then New Orleans and the ocean. "Those rivers are arteries of the American heartland," he'd tell me—the farmland expanding and contracting, opening up and offering crops, then retreating into the winter lair, and all the while the water flowing, keeping an entire region alive and fertile.

Not brilliant imagery, but enough to shed me of my scrutinizing, wary reticence; enough to involve Phil in a bit of a personal story, which in turn was connected to a reading experience he had re-

cently had, and one I had also had, though about seven or eight years earlier. I was almost ready to tell him how young he was to have read the Mark Twain book—to patronize him foolishly and smugly—when Phil began talking about the book. He had read it as a school assignment before he fell sick. When he'd been in the hospital a week or so and began to realize that he was "really paralyzed" and that his disease might be "for a lifetime," he became morose, more so than others on the same ward with the same disease, for whom the bad news had yet to sink in. All he could think of was "the black space" of his future life. But a teacher came to visit him on a Saturday afternoon, and the result was a reacquaintance with the Twain classic. Not that young Phil relished the idea at first. Here is how he described what happened (his remarks have been edited and on occasion reconstructed because my tape recorder intermittently broke down):

"I was surprised to see him [the teacher]. I'd liked him, but he was gone from my life, the way a teacher is when you go on to the next year of school. I guess he heard I was sick. We all knew he was a softie! Some of those teachers don't give a damn for you as a person. They talk to the back wall, and if you hear, fine, and if you don't, you flunk! This guy we all knew—he was different. I guess I didn't learn how different until he showed up here.

"He came in and smiled and said hello. I was surprised. I said hello back. I didn't have anything more to say, though. He was quiet, too. I was glad! I was tired of people coming and expecting me to talk with them. I wanted to lie there and think. I felt like crying, but I didn't; I couldn't; I think I was afraid that if I started—once I started, I'd never stop. He just sat there and smiled; then he asked if he could go get me something—food, or a glass of juice. I was thirsty, and I said, 'Yes, orange juice'; and he left, and came back with orange juice and with some peanuts. I liked that, the peanuts. I used to nibble on them a lot before I got sick. I remember my mother saying they were better for me than chocolate. I got a little choked up then, thinking of her and the peanuts and looking at my legs. No more baseball. No more hockey. No more walking, either.

"I saw him looking at the magazines I had on the table near my bed. He leafed through them; then he asked me if he could bring me some books, maybe. I shook my head. I didn't want any books. I was beginning to think I didn't want any teachers here either—*him*. Then he said he was going to go! I guess he'd read me! I felt like I

was going to cry, but I didn't know why. I was afraid of breaking down in front of him. I tried to tough it out. I became flip. I joked about having a ball when I came back to school—speeding down the corridors at sixty in a wheelchair. He smiled, but he didn't laugh as much as I did. I knew when I was laughing that it was fake. In a minute he was gone—and then I did cry. I didn't even want to see another day. It was raining outside, and I was crying, and my legs were useless, and I haven't even graduated from high school, that's how young I am, and all I can see ahead is those rehabilitation people, and nurses, and my grandmother looking so worried, and she looked so sick, once I got sick. For a while I thought she was going to die, and then there'd be no one.

“He came back a few days later; he had this book under his arm. He didn't push it on me. He stood there and talked, small talk, and I talked. After a few minutes there was nothing more to say. Suddenly, without saying anything, he up and left. I thought it was strange, the way he left. But he hadn't left; I mean, he came back. He had orange juice in one hand, a glass, and peanuts in the other. I couldn't help smiling. That was the first smile on my face, I think, since he'd been to see me. We talked a few minutes more, about the lousy weather, and then he said he was going. He shook my hand, and just as he was saying good-bye, he took the book from under his left arm with his right hand and put it on my table. He didn't say anything, and he was out of the room before I could say anything.

“I was really curious to see which book he'd brought. I looked, and saw it was the Mark Twain one, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. I started flipping through the pages. I wondered why he brought it. I'd already read it—in his class, last year. What was the point? I guess I was a little annoyed with him. I wondered what was wrong with him, at first. Why that book? What's he got in mind? I asked myself those kinds of questions. I didn't go near the book for a few days. It was just there, with the magazines my grandma brought. I didn't read them much either. I'd look at the pictures, and I'd read a paragraph—and you know what? I'd get sick to my stomach. I'd feel like puking. I thought it was part of the sickness. I told the nurse, and she told the doctor, and he asked me, and I explained to him what was going on. He examined me, and told me it was all in my head. I joked with him: I said, 'All'?

“When the doctor left the room, I decided to pick up that book; so I did. I flipped through the pages, and then I started reading it, and

then I didn't want to stop. I read and I read, and I finished the whole book that night; it was midnight, maybe. The nurse kept coming in to tell me I should put my light off and go to sleep because I needed my rest. What a joke! Are you kidding! I said to her. I'm going nowhere. I'll be in bed for the rest of my life. What difference does it make to me, night and day? She backed off. I read, and when I was done with the story, I felt different. It's hard to say what I mean. [*What do you think happened?*] I can't tell you, I can't explain what happened; I know that my mind changed after I read *Huckleberry Finn*. I couldn't get my mind off the book. I forgot about myself—no, I didn't, actually. I joined up with Huck and Jim; we became a trio. They were very nice to me. I explored the Mississippi with them on the boats and on the land. I had some good talks with them. I dreamed about them. I'd wake up, and I'd know I'd just been out west, on the Mississippi. I talked with those guys, and they straightened me out!"

At that point he paused for a long time. He shook his head. He stared out the window. Then he abruptly put a question to me: "Have you ever read a book that really made a difference to you—a book you couldn't get out of your mind, and you didn't want to [get out of your mind]?"

Yes, I said, and knowing he wanted an example, I told him: *Paterson*, William Carlos Williams's long poem. We got into a long talk about Dr. Williams's medical work with mostly poor and working-class people and about his effort through stories and poems to understand America's social history and moral values. He asked for examples, which of course I didn't have on hand. But he was obviously setting the stage for another conversation. I got my Williams books out of a box, brought a couple of them to his room the next day, and read from the first two books of *Paterson* and from various poems Williams had published in the course of his long writing life. I will never forget the direction of our discussion afterward. Phil wondered whether Williams would ever have been able to accomplish what he did, were he not inspired by what he was all the time as a practicing physician. Then he wondered whether Mark Twain, whose life he had briefly studied, would have been able to do the kind of writing *he* did, had he not been such an inveterate wanderer before he found himself having much to say. The reason for Phil's interest in pointing out the connection between art and life was not too hard for me to comprehend—or for him, either.

He began musing out loud about his future prospects, with discouragement and dismay. In reply, I pointed out that writers are constantly creating their own worlds, not necessarily needing to travel far and wide in order to gather the particulars for so doing. He once more wanted examples, and our next minutes were taken up with Jane Austen and *Pride and Prejudice*, which I'd read in high school and which his closest friend, a year older, was about to read at the behest of an English teacher. Well, Jane Austen was a novelist, a writer—lucky to be able to achieve what she did, living the life she did. Things would be different for him. He was no writer, would be no writer, had never even thought of becoming one. Now, significantly paralyzed, he could not even be the day-to-day athlete he'd been; nor did books seem the most inviting of alternatives. He politely but firmly reminded me that he was not “the greatest of students,” that he was a “slow reader,” that he was struggling with his own worries and terrors, not those described by a novelist in a story: “I wish one of those writers had written about the mess I'm in!”

I did not, then, try to come up with a novel that might pass his muster. Even if I had known of a novel with a polio victim of his age, sex, and background as the hero, I would not have mentioned it at the time. His complaint went deeper; like Job, he was puzzled in the most profound way possible and wanted to find his own voice, use it to make his own plea, his own cry, though he had already begun to regard the world as largely indifferent to him and his situation. I decided to await his decision: whether to do some reading as a means of reflecting indirectly, but with emotional resonance, on his personal situation; or to reject such a way of trying to come to terms with his ongoing situation. A week later, as I was talking with him in his room, I noticed a new box of candy on his bedside table, and underneath the candy box a book. The title was not immediately obvious; I had to move toward the window on a pretext—a bit of sun in my eyes, so best to pull the shades. As I did so, I saw that the book was *The Catcher in the Rye*. I didn't say anything; neither did Phil.

A few days later, as we talked about the rehabilitation efforts taking place, Phil suddenly changed the subject: “I've discovered a book that has a kid in it like Huckleberry Finn.” I said nothing but looked interested. He asked me, “Have you ever read *The Catcher in the Rye*?” Yes, I answered. “Do you see what I mean about Huck Finn and Holden Caulfield?” Yes, I answered. Silence. I got alarmed.

Why wasn't I feeding our conversation? Why my terse yes, two times spoken? But he began a lively monologue on that novel, on Holden, on Pencey Prep, on "phonies," on what it means to be honest and decent in a world full of "phoniness." Holden's voice (Salinger's) had become Phil's, and uncannily, Holden's dreams of escape, of rescue (to save not only himself but others), became Phil's. The novel had, as he put it, "got" to him: lent itself to his purposes as one who was "flat out"; and as one who was wondering what in life he might "try to catch." He lived on a city street rather than near a field of rye. He was not as utopian, anyway, as Holden. But this youth had been removed by dint of circumstances from the "regular road" (his expression) and he was trying hard to imagine where to go, how to get there. *The Catcher in the Rye* enabled him to return at least to the idea of school—to consider what kind of education he wanted, given his special difficulties.

He had been getting some tutoring in the rehabilitation unit of the hospital. Now he began teaching himself—leaving the building for Huck and Jim on the Mississippi, for repeated excursions to meet Holden. A friend of his invited him to expand his travels, to visit Ralph and Piggy and Jack and Simon on the tropical island in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. But Phil resisted that invitation; the book, brought to him by the friend, remained unread. He had glanced at it, seen its charged symbolism, its mix of hard realism and surrealism. Huck and Holden stirred him, brought him to reflection; Ralph and the band of boys on the island were "not for me." When Phil said that, he looked at me and saw my curiosity rising; he decided to give me a terse explication, one I would never forget: "I'd like to leave this hospital, and find a friend or two, and a place where we could be happy, but I don't want to leave the whole world I know."

My wife was quite taken by Phil's way of putting those books into a perspective that suited him. He was calling on certain novels in his own manner and turning away from others for his own reasons. (Phil also rejected the detective stories his friends brought to him, and the Westerns.) A week or so later I heard him again talk about Huck and Jim and Holden. They had become, for him, a threesome. Rather, he had joined them; they were a foursome. His misfortune had evoked in him a wry, sardonic side. He was quick to notice hypocrisy or deceit in the world as it came to him—on television, in the newspapers, in reports from friends and family members, and through hospital personnel. One particular doctor especially of-

fended him, reminding him of a certain teacher and also of an uncle, his mother's older brother. They all "pretended to be nice," but were (in his judgment) "phonies." How he loved that word; what palpable pleasure it gave him! Once, using it, he must have noticed something cross my face—an expression in my eyes, a tightening of my face—and he must have guessed that I thought his use of the word was significant and perhaps inappropriate. He called me on my heightened response to the word "phony"; he told me that both Twain and Salinger were warning the reader to take a hard, close look at the world. If I did so; if I read those two books as he had recently done; if I would "stop and think," then a recognition would descend upon me, too—or so he hoped. He loved the blunt, earthy talk of Twain, and Salinger's shrewd way of puncturing various balloons. He didn't like being paralyzed; but he did like an emerging angle of vision in himself, and he was eager to tell me about it, to explain its paradoxical relationship to his misfortune: "I've seen a lot, lying here. I think I know more about people, including me, myself—all because I got sick and can't walk. It's hard to figure out, how polio can be a good thing. It's not, but I like those books, and I keep reading them, parts of them, over and over."

Log Entry 3

Use the double-entry log format as you reread this piece. Select at least five quotations from the story that you feel strongly enough about to respond to. Think of your work in this log as having a dialogue with the text—with either the young man or the psychiatrist. You might write directly to the speaker of the quotation, expressing your own thoughts, feelings, and fears.

Collaborating

As a group, explore your ideas about Phil, his feelings about the characters in the books, and the way he is dealing with his life. Use your double-entry log as a springboard for your discussion with

your group. Share your own responses—incidents in your own life that this story made you remember, or fears you have about your own futures.

Work in Progress

Select one or more of the following options to draft a piece for your writing folder.

- Reflect on some of Phil's philosophical questions, perhaps in a dialogue with him. For example, Phil "wondered whether the soul is always confined to a given body. Might it become migratory?"
- Phil has some critical things to say about "some of those teachers [who] don't give a damn for you as a person." The teacher who comes to see Phil is different, though. Write about a teacher you have had who either showed in some way that she or he really cared about you as a person or one that you feel didn't care about you or your classmates.
- If you have ever established a strong bond with a character from a book, write about it. What was it about the character that led to this bond? Include the circumstances that made this particular character important to you at a specific time in your life.
- Robert Coles, the author of this reminiscence, writes at the end, "He didn't like being paralyzed; but he did like an emerging angle of vision in himself." In this textbook, we ask you to be aware of angles of vision, to try out different angles and see how your perspective changes. Think of something that has happened in your own life that has given you an "emerging angle of vision" about yourself. Write about what it was that happened and how it changed your angle of vision about yourself or your life.

Artistic Truth and Factual Truth

The relationship between a writer's life and the stories he or she creates is often apparent to one who knows the details of the writer's life. To most of us, however, this relationship is not so clear.

Certainly it is a question writers hear over and over again, and sometimes even they are baffled by where their ideas come from. Poets, as well as story writers and novelists, often take liberties with the "factual" details of their lives that become part of their poems. As readers, we do not know, nor should it matter, whether the occasion of the poem actually happened or not. If it did indeed happen, we do not know whether it happened in the same way that it is depicted in the poem. The artistic truth of the work lies much deeper than the factual truth of history or autobiography.

Desmond Chin, when he was a high school senior, wrote this poem about a visit to his grandmother. Remember, the details are true, whether or not they are factual.

Without Words

Desmond Chin

It was a cloudy day,
One of those days which made me feel heavy
And dark inside
Like a puddle of muddy, black water
Which just sits in the middle of a road,
Stagnant and lifeless.

It was always like this
Whenever I came to visit my grandmother
At the convalescent home.
The wind would always bite,
almost as if it knew that
It was just so depressing
And so hopeless.

She was in room 6,
Sitting in a chair,
Rocking back and forth, unceasingly.
She wasn't always like this.
She used to be energetic,
With hands attracted to paper work.

But things changed
Once the disease
Began eating away at her mind.
Day by day, I noticed the change.
She forgot numbers, dates, months,
And then she forgot me.

"Hi, Grandma! Do you remember me?
I'm your grandson,
The one who you thought
Was the President of the United States.
Do you remember me?"
She just sat there,
Her eyes looking at me,
And then looking away.

I held her frail, bony hand.
There was no warmth in the fingers,
Only coldness like frozen ice
And hardness like a mass of solid rock,
But they were my grandma's hands,
Hands that had once held me
When I was a little baby,
Hands that had held my hands
When I was learning to walk.

"Grandma. Do you remember me?
It's your grandson."

I was hoping some faint tear
Would answer me, But she just sat in the room,
Staring ahead at nothing,
Not able to recognize the wall in front of her
Or me, whenever I came to visit her.

Work in Progress

Choose one or more of the following options to draft for your writing folder.

- Write a dialogue between yourself and Desmond in which you share an experience that has given each of you a deeper understanding of a family member as a person.
- Robert Cormier, author of *Eight Plus One*, a collection of stories that has grown out of his own experiences, wrote in his introduction to "The Moustache," "I tell people that my ideas usually grow out of an emotion—something I have experienced, ob-

served, or felt. The emotion sparks my impulse to write and I find myself at the typewriter trying to get the emotion and its impact down on paper. Out of that comes a character and then a plot. The sequence seldom varies: emotion, character, plot."

Think of an experience you have had that could provide the nonfiction seed for a fictional story or poem. Make some notes about the emotion you felt about this experience; then create a character, someone other than yourself, and see how this character enters into that experience. Write as much as you can about how this situation might play out. Later you may want to develop this idea into a full-fledged story.

- Write notes for a poem fictionalizing the same experience you recalled in the previous assignment.
- Make some observations comparing the writing of a story and a poem. Note the relative importance of emotion, character, and plot in the two different pieces you have made notes for or drafted.

A Short Story and Its Origin

Henry James, an influential British novelist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, once commented that simply walking past a drawing room without even pausing to overhear a snatch of conversation was all one needed to stimulate the writing of a novel. That's all anyone needs; the rest is already inside us.

The next story, about an old woman named Phoenix Jackson, was stimulated by such a simple observation. Eudora Welty, the author of "A Worn Path," writes, "One day I saw a solitary old woman like Phoenix. She was walking. I saw her, at middle distance, in a winter country landscape, and watched her slowly make her way across my line of vision. That sight of her made me write the story." After you read the story, you will read more about the writer's own ideas about it and look again at the shifting lines of distinction between nonfiction, what we think of as the truth of the matter, and fiction, what we often think of as made up or created out of the imagination.

Begin by having someone read aloud the first two paragraphs, which follow, of Welty's story for the class or for your group.

It was December—a bright frozen day in the early morning. Far out in the country there was an old Negro woman with her head tied in a red rag, coming along a path through the pinewoods. Her name was Phoenix Jackson. She was very old and small and she walked slowly in the dark pine shadows, moving a little from side to side in her steps, with the balanced heaviness and lightness of a pendulum in a grandfather clock. She carried a thin, small cane made from an umbrella, and with this she kept tapping the frozen earth in front of her. This made a grave and persistent noise in the still air, that seemed meditative like the chirping of a solitary little bird.

She wore a dark striped dress reaching down to her shoe tops, and an equally long apron of bleached sugar sacks, with a full pocket: all neat and tidy, but every time she took a step she might have fallen over her shoelaces, which dragged from her unlaced shoes. She looked straight ahead. Her eyes were blue with age. Her skin had a pattern all its own of numberless branching wrinkles and as though a whole little tree stood in the middle of her forehead, but a golden color ran underneath, and the two knobs of her cheeks were illumined by a yellow burning under the dark. Under the red rag her hair came down on her neck in the frailest of ringlets, still black, and with an odor like copper.

Log Entry 4

Imagining or picturing is central to your reading. Without looking back at these two paragraphs, try sketching or drawing this opening scene as you heard or read it the first time. Go back to the text and, as you reread, fill in details of your sketch that you missed on the first reading. Notice where your attention was on the first reading: Was it primarily focused on Phoenix Jackson and how she was dressed? On details of her eyes and skin? Were you aware of the kind of country she was walking through? Were you reminded of anyone you have known or seen? Around your sketch, jot down words that describe your impressions of Phoenix. Now, begin again at the beginning and read the entire story.

A Worn Path

by Eudora Welty

It was December—a bright frozen day in the early morning. Far out in the country there was an old Negro woman with her head tied in a red rag, coming along a path through the pinewoods. Her name

was Phoenix Jackson. She was very old and small and she walked slowly in the dark pine shadows, moving a little from side to side in her steps, with the balanced heaviness and lightness of a pendulum in a grandfather clock. She carried a thin, small cane made from an umbrella, and with this she kept tapping the frozen earth in front of her. This made a grave and persistent noise in the still air, that seemed meditative like the chirping of a solitary little bird.

She wore a dark striped dress reaching down to her shoe tops, and an equally long apron of bleached sugar sacks, with a full pocket: all neat and tidy, but every time she took a step she might have fallen over her shoelaces, which dragged from her unlaced shoes. She looked straight ahead. Her eyes were blue with age. Her skin had a pattern all its own of numberless branching wrinkles and as though a whole little tree stood in the middle of her forehead, but a golden color ran underneath, and the two knobs of her cheeks were illumined by a yellow burning under the dark. Under the red rag her hair came down on her neck in the frailest of ringlets, still black, and with an odor like copper.

Now and then there was a quivering in the thicket. Old Phoenix said, "Out of my way, all you foxes, owls, beetles, jack rabbits, coons and wild animals! . . . Keep out from under these feet, little bob-whites . . . Keep the big wild hogs out of my path. Don't let none of those come running my direction. I got a long way." Under her small black-freckled hand her cane, limber as a buggy whip, would switch at the brush as if to rouse up any hiding things.

On she went. The woods were deep and still. The sun made the pine needles almost too bright to look at, up where the wind rocked. The cones dropped as light as feathers. Down in the hollow was the mourning dove—it was not too late for him.

The path ran up a hill. "Seems like there is chains about my feet, time I get this far," she said, in the voice of argument old people keep to use with themselves. "Something always take a hold of me on this hill—pleads, I should say."

After she got to the top she turned and gave a full, severe look behind her where she had come. "Up through pines," she said at length. "Now down through oaks."

Her eyes opened their widest, and she started down gently. But before she got to the bottom of the hill a bush caught her dress.

Her fingers were busy and intent, but her skirts were full and long, so that before she could pull them free in one place they were caught in another. It was not possible to allow the dress to tear. "I

in the thorny bush," she said. "Thorns, you doing your appointed work. Never want to let folks pass, no sir. Old eyes thought you was a pretty little *green* bush."

Finally, trembling all over, she stood free, and after a moment dared to stoop for her cane.

"Sun so high!" she cried, leaning back and looking, while the thick tears went over her eyes. "The time getting all gone here."

At the foot of this hill was a place where a log was laid across the creek.

"Now comes the trial," said Phoenix.

Putting her right foot out, she mounted the log and shut her eyes. Lifting her skirt, leveling her cane fiercely before her, like a festival figure in some parade, she began to march across. Then she opened her eyes and she was safe on the other side.

"I wasn't as old as I thought," she said.

But she sat down to rest. She spread her skirts on the bank around her and folded her hands over her knees. Up above her was a tree in a pearly cloud of mistletoe. She did not dare to close her eyes, and when a little boy brought her a plate with a slice of marble-cake on it she spoke to him. "That would be acceptable," she said. But when she went to take it there was just her own hand in the air.

So she left that tree, and had to go through a barbed-wire fence. There she had to creep and crawl, spreading her knees and stretching her fingers like a baby trying to climb the steps. But she talked loudly to herself: she could not let her dress be torn now, so late in the day, and she could not pay for having her arm or her leg sawed off if she got caught fast where she was.

At last she was safe through the fence and risen up out in the clearing. Big dead trees, like black men with one arm, were standing in the purple stalks of the withered cotton field. There sat a buzzard.

"Who you watching?"

In the furrow she made her way along.

"Glad this not the season for bulls," she said, looking sideways, "and the good Lord made his snakes to curl up and sleep in the winter. A pleasure I don't see no two-headed snake coming around that tree, where it come once. It took a while to get by him, back in the summer."

She passed through the old cotton and went into a field of dead corn. It whispered and shook and was taller than her head.

"Through the maze now," she said, for there was no path.

Then there was something tall, black, and skinny there, moving before her.

At first she took it for a man. It could have been a man dancing in the field. But she stood still and listened, and it did not make a sound. It was as silent as a ghost.

"Ghost," she said sharply, "who be you the ghost of? For I have heard of nary death close by."

But there was no answer—only the ragged dancing in the wind.

She shut her eyes, reached out her hand, and touched a sleeve. She found a coat and inside that an emptiness, cold as ice.

"You scarecrow," she said. Her face lighted. "I ought to be shut up for good," she said with laughter. "My senses is gone. I too old. I the oldest people I ever know. Dance, old scarecrow," she said, "while I dancing with you."

She kicked her foot over the furrow, and with mouth drawn down, shook her head once or twice in a little strutting way. Some husks blew down and whirled in streamers about her skirts.

Then she went on, parting her way from side to side with the cane, through the whispering field. At last she came to the end, to a wagon track where the silver grass blew between the red ruts. The quail were walking around like pullets, seeming all dainty and unseen.

"Walk pretty," she said. "This the easy place. This the easy going."

She followed the track, swaying through the quiet bare fields, through the little strings of trees silver in their dead leaves, past cabins silver from weather, with the doors and windows boarded shut, all like old women under a spell sitting there. "I walking in their sleep," she said, nodding her head vigorously.

In a ravine she went where a spring was silently flowing through a hollow log. Old Phoenix bent and drank. "Sweet-gum makes the water sweet," she said, and drank more. "Nobody know who made this well, for it was here when I born."

The track crossed a swampy part where the moss hung as white as lace from every limb. "Sleep on, alligators, and blow your bubbles." Then the track went into the road.

Deep, deep the road went down between the high green-colored banks. Overhead the live-oaks met, and it was as dark as a cave.

A black dog with a lolling tongue came up out of the weeds by the ditch. She was meditating, and not ready and when he came at

her she only hit him a little with her cane. Over she went in the ditch, like a little puff of milkweed.

Down there, her senses drifted away. A dream visited her, and she reached her hand up, but nothing reached down and gave her a pull. So she lay there and presently went to talking. "Old woman," she said to herself, "that black dog come up out of the weeds to stall you off, and now here he sitting on his fine tail, smiling at you."

A white man finally came along and found her—a hunter, a young man, with his dog on a chain.

"Well, Granny!" he laughed. "What are you doing there?"

"Lying on my back like a June-bug waiting to be turned over, mister," she said, reaching up her hand.

He lifted her up, gave her a swing in the air, and set her down. "Anything broken, Granny?"

"No sir, them old dead weeds is springy enough," said Phoenix, when she had got her breath. "I thank you for your trouble."

"Where do you live, Granny?" he asked, while the two dogs were growling at each other.

"Away back yonder, sir, behind the ridge. You can't even see it from here."

"On your way home?"

"No sir, I going to town."

"Why, that's too far! That's as far as I walk when I come out myself, and I get something for my trouble." He patted the stuffed bag he carried, and there hung down a little closed claw. It was one of the bob-whites, with its beak hooked bitterly to show it was dead. "Now you go on home, Granny!"

"I bound to go to town, mister," said Phoenix. "The time come around."

He gave another laugh, filling the whole landscape. "I know you old colored people! Wouldn't miss going to town to see Santa Claus!"

But something held old Phoenix very still. The deep lines in her face went into a fierce and different radiation. Without warning, she had seen with her own eyes a flashing nickel fall out of the man's pocket onto the ground.

"How old are you, Granny?" he was saying.

"There is no telling, mister," she said, "no telling."

Then she gave a little cry and clapped her hands and said, "Git on away from here, dog! Look! Look at that dog!" She laughed as if

in admiration. "He ain't scared of nobody. He a big black dog." She whispered, "Sic him!"

"Watch me get rid of that cur," said the man, "Sic him, Pete! Sic him!"

Phoenix heard the dogs fighting, and heard the man running and throwing sticks. She even heard a gunshot. But she was slowly bending forward by that time, further and further forward, the lids stretched down over her eyes, as if she were doing this in her sleep. Her chin was lowered almost to her knees. The yellow palm of her hand came out from the fold of her apron. Her fingers slid down and along the ground under the piece of money with the grace and care they would have in lifting an egg from under a setting hen. Then she slowly straightened up, she stood erect, and the nickel was in her apron pocket. A bird flew by. Her lips moved. "God watching me the whole time. I come to stealing."

The man came back, and his own dog panted about them. "Well, I scared him off that time," he said, and then he laughed and lifted his gun and pointed it at Phoenix.

She stood straight and faced him.

"Doesn't the gun scare you?" he said, still pointing it.

"No sir, I seen plenty go off closer by, in my day, and for less than what I done," she said, holding utterly still.

He smiled, and shouldered the gun. "Well, Granny," he said, "you must be a hundred years old, and scared of nothing. I'd give you a dime if I had any money with me. But you take my advice and stay home, and nothing will happen to you."

"I bound to go on my way, mister," said Phoenix. She inclined her head in the red rag. Then they went in different directions, but she could hear the gun shooting again and again over the hill.

She walked on. The shadows hung from the oak trees to the road like curtains. Then she smelled wood-smoke, and smelled the river, and she saw a steeple and the cabins on their steep steps. Dozens of little black children whirled around her. There ahead was Natchez shining. Bells were ringing. She walked on.

In the paved city it was Christmas time. There were red and green electric lights strung and crisscrossed everywhere, and all turned on in the daytime. Old Phoenix would have been lost if she had not distrusted her eyesight and depended on her feet to know where to take her.

She paused quietly on the sidewalk where people were passing by. A lady came along in the crowd, carrying an armful of red-

green- and silver-wrapped presents; she gave off perfume like the red roses in hot summer, and Phoenix stopped her.

"Please, missy, will you lace up my shoe?" She held up her foot.

"What do you want, Grandma?"

"See my shoe," said Phoenix. "Do all right for out in the country, but wouldn't look right to go in a big building."

"Stand still then, Grandma," said the lady. She put her packages down on the sidewalk beside her and laced and tied both shoes tightly.

"Can't lace 'em with a cane," said Phoenix. "Thank you, missy. I doesn't mind asking a nice lady to tie up my shoe, when I gets out on the street."

Moving slowly and from side to side, she went into the big building and into a tower of steps, where she walked up and around and around until her feet knew to stop.

She entered a door, and there she saw nailed up on the wall the document that had been stamped with the gold seal and framed in the gold frame, which matched the dream that was hung up in her head.

"Here I be," she said. There was a fixed and ceremonial stiffness over her body.

"A charity case, I suppose," said an attendant who sat at the desk before her.

But Phoenix only looked above her head. There was sweat on her face, the wrinkles in her skin shone like a bright net.

"Speak up, Grandma," the woman said. "What's your name? We must have your history, you know. Have you been here before? What seems to be the trouble with you?"

Old Phoenix only gave a twitch to her face as if a fly were bothering her.

"Are you deaf?" cried the attendant.

But then the nurse came in.

"Oh, that's just old Aunt Phoenix," she said. "She doesn't come for herself—she has a little grandson. She makes these trips just as regular as clockwork. She lives away back off the Old Natchez Trace." She bent down. "Well, Aunt Phoenix, why don't you just take a seat? We won't keep you standing after your long trip." She pointed.

The old woman sat down, bolt upright in the chair.

"Now, how is the boy?"

Old Phoenix did not speak.

"I said, how is the boy?"

But Phoenix only waited and stared straight ahead, her face very solemn and withdrawn into rigidity.

"Is his throat any better?" asked the nurse. "Aunt Phoenix, don't you hear me? Is your grandson's throat any better since the last time you came for the medicine?"

With her hands on her knees, the old woman waited, silent, erect and motionless, just as if she were in armor.

"You mustn't take up our time this way, Aunt Phoenix," the nurse said. "Tell us quickly about your grandson, and get it over. He isn't dead, is he?"

At last there came a flicker and then a flame of comprehension across her face, and she spoke.

"My grandson. It was my memory had left me. There I sat and forgot why I made my long trip."

"Forgot?" The nurse frowned. "After you came so far?"

Then Phoenix was like an old woman begging a dignified forgiveness for waking up frightened in the night. "I never did go to school, I was too old at the Surrender," she said in a soft voice. "I'm an old woman without an education. It was my memory fail me. My little grandson, he is just the same, and I forgot it in the coming."

"Throat never heals, does it?" said the nurse, speaking in a loud, sure voice to old Phoenix. By now she had a card with something written on it, a little list. "Yes. Swallowed lye. When was it?—January—two, three years ago—"

Phoenix spoke unasked now. "No, missy, he not dead, he just the same. Every little while his throat begin to close up again, and he not able to swallow. He not get his breath. He not able to help himself. So the time come around, and I go on another trip for the soothing medicine."

"All right. The doctor said as long as you came to get it, you could have it," said the nurse. "But it's an obstinate case."

"My little grandson, he sit up there in the house all wrapped up, waiting by himself," Phoenix went on. "We is the only two left in the world. He suffer and it don't seem to put him back at all. He got a sweet look. He going to last. He wear a little patch quilt and peep out holding his mouth open like a little bird. I remembers so plain now. I not going to forget him again, no, the whole enduring time. I could tell him from all the others in creation."

"All right." The nurse was trying to hush her now. She brought her a bottle of medicine. "Charity," she said, making a check mark in a book.

Old Phoenix held the bottle close to her eyes, and then carefully put it into her pocket.

"I thank you," she said.

"It's Christmas time, Grandma," said the attendant. "Could I give you a few pennies out of my purse?"

"Five pennies is a nickel," said Phoenix stiffly.

"Here's a nickel," said the attendant.

Phoenix rose carefully and held out her hand. She received the nickel and then fished the other nickel out of her pocket and laid it beside the new one. She stared at her palm closely, with her head on one side.

Then she gave a tap with her cane on the floor.

"This is what come to me to do," she said. "I going to the store and buy my child a little windmill they sells, made out of paper. He going to find it hard to believe there such a thing in the world. I'll march myself back where he waiting, holding it straight up in this hand."

She lifted her free hand, gave a little nod, turned around, and walked out of the doctor's office. Then her slow step began on the stairs, going down.

Log Entry 5

This log entry has four steps. First, write down your response to the story. Write whatever you think about it.

Then, using the double-entry log format, select and respond to one or more quotations from the story that deal with each of the following:

- the nature of Phoenix's journey, the kinds of obstacles she must overcome, how she deals with them
- Phoenix's character and how it is revealed
- the landscape itself and the contrasts in terrain as she makes her way to the city
- the reason Phoenix keeps going

Next, record and respond to any other parts of the story that you find provocative, puzzling, or interesting.

Finally read the following background information about the meaning of the word *phoenix* and tell how knowing the meaning of Phoenix Jackson's name deepens or enhances your understanding of this story. (If you already know the story of the phoenix, comment on how that knowledge influenced your reading.)

The phoenix is a fabulous Arabian bird, the only one of its kind, that is said to live a certain number of years. At the end of its life it makes, in Arabia, a nest of spices, sings a melodious dirge, flaps its wings to set fire to the nest, burns itself to ashes, and comes forth with new life. It is a symbol of immortality.

Over the years, many students have written to Eudora Welty to ask her about the grandchild in "A Worn Path." Some of them imagined that the child was really dead and that her journey was somehow raised to some new symbolic level because of that interpretation. In responding to these students, Welty deals with some of basic issues about writing fiction—about the relationship of fiction and truth, about words meaning what they say. Here is her response to students who have asked her about the grandchild.

Is Phoenix Jackson's Grandson Really Dead?

Eudora Welty

Reticent, like many writers, when asked to explain her work, Eudora Welty once wrote: "I never saw, as reader or writer, that a finished short story stood in need of any more from the author: for better or worse, there the story is." But because of the many letters she received about Phoenix's grandson, Welty finally decided, in 1974, to respond in the following essay. "Is Phoenix Jackson's Grandson Really Dead?" was then collected with other essays, in 1977, in The Eye of the Story. In addition to responding to readers' queries, Welty gives us insight into the writer's craft and the values of literature.

A story writer is more than happy to be read by students; the fact that these serious readers think and feel something in response to his work he finds life-giving. At the same time he may not always be able to reply to their specific questions in kind. I wondered if it might clarify something, for both the questioners and myself, if I set down a general reply to the question that comes to me most often in the mail, from both students and their teachers, after some class-

room discussion. The unrivaled favorite is this: "Is Phoenix Jackson's grandson really *dead*?"

It refers to a short story I wrote years ago called "A Worn Path," which tells of a day's journey an old woman makes on foot from deep in the country into town and into a doctor's office on behalf of her little grandson; he is at home, periodically ill, and periodically she comes for his medicine; they give it to her as usual, she receives it and starts the journey back.

I had not meant to mystify readers by withholding any fact; it is not a writer's business to tease. The story is told through Phoenix's mind as she undertakes her errand. As the author at one with the character as I tell it, I must assume that the boy is alive. As the reader, you are free to think as you like, of course: the story invites you to believe that no matter what happens, Phoenix for as long as she is able to walk and can hold to her purpose will make her journey. The *possibility* that she would keep on even if he were dead is there in her devotion and its single-minded, single-track errand. Certainly the *artistic* truth, which should be good enough for the fact, lies in Phoenix's own answer to that question. When the nurse asks, "He isn't dead, is he?" she speaks for herself: "He still the same. He going to last."

The grandchild is the incentive. But it is the journey, the going of the errand, that is the story, and the question is not whether the grandchild is in reality alive or dead. It doesn't affect the outcome of the story or its meaning from start to finish. But it is not the question itself that has struck me as much as the idea, almost without exception implied in the asking, that for Phoenix's grandson to be dead would somehow make the story "better."

It's all right, I want to say to the students who write to me, for things to be what they appear to be, and for words to mean what they say. It's all right, too, for words and appearances to mean more than one thing—ambiguity is a fact of life. A fiction writer's responsibility covers not only what he presents as the facts of a given story but what he chooses to stir up as their implications; in the end, these implications, too, become facts, in the larger, fictional sense. But it is not all right, not in good faith, for things *not* to mean what they say.

The grandson's plight was real and it made the truth of the story, which is the story of an errand of love carried out. If the child no longer lived, the truth would persist in the "wornness" of the path.