Farewell to Manzanar

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Pledge of Allegiance while holding an American Flag, just days before the relocation and internment of all Japanese Americans in San Francisco during World War II.

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston

In December of 1941 Papa's disappearance didn't bother me nearly so much as the world I soon found myself in.

He had been a jack-of-all-trades. When I was born he was farming near Inglewood. Later, when he started fishing, we moved to Ocean Park, near Santa Monica, and until they picked him up, that's where we lived, in a big frame house with a brick fireplace, a block back from the beach. We were the only Japanese family in the neighborhood. Papa liked it that way. He didn't want to be labeled or grouped by anyone. But with him gone and no way of knowing what to expect, my mother moved all of us down to Terminal Island.[1]

Woody already lived there, and one of my older sisters had married a Terminal Island boy. Mama's first concern now was to keep the family together; and once the war began, she felt safer there than isolated racially in Ocean Park. But for me, at age seven, the island was a country as foreign as India or Arabia would have been. It was the first time I had lived among other Japanese, or gone to school with them, and I was terrified all the time.

This was partly Papa's fault. One of his threats to keep us younger kids in line was "I'm going to sell you to the Chinaman." When I had entered kindergarten two years

1. *Terminal Island,* part of the Port of Los Angeles, is at the city's southern tip.

Literary Element Historical Narrative *Why does Mama feel safer in Terminal Island?*

earlier, I was the only Oriental in the class. They sat me next to a Caucasian girl who happened to have very slanted eyes. I looked at her and began to scream, certain Papa had sold me out at last. My fear of her ran so deep I could not speak of it, even to Mama, couldn't explain why I was screaming. For two weeks I had nightmares about this girl, until the teachers finally moved me to the other side of the room. And it was still with me, this fear of Oriental faces, when we moved to Terminal Island.

In those days it was a company town, a ghetto owned and controlled by the canneries. The men went after fish, and whenever the boats came back—day or night—the women would be called to process the catch while it was fresh. One in the afternoon or four in the morning, it made no difference. My mother had to go to work right after we moved there. I can still hear the whistle— two toots for French's, three for Van Camp's—and she and Chizu would be out of bed in the middle of the night, heading for the cannery.

The house we lived in was nothing more than a shack, a barracks with single plank walls and rough wooden floors, like the cheapest kind of migrant workers' housing. The people around us were hardworking, boisterous, a little proud of their nickname, *yo-go-re,* which meant literally *uncouth one,* or roughneck, or dead-end kid. They not only spoke Japanese exclusively, they spoke a dialect peculiar to Kyushu,[2] where their families had come from in Japan, a rough, fisherman's language, full of oaths and insults. Instead of saying *ba-ka-ta-re,* a common insult meaning *stupid,* Terminal Islanders would say *ba-ka-ya-ro,* a coarser and exclusively masculine use of the word, which implies gross stupidity. They would swagger and pick on outsiders and persecute anyone who didn't speak as they did. That was what made my own time there so hateful. I had never spoken anything but English, and the other kids in the second grade despised me for it. They were tough and mean, like ghetto kids anywhere. Each day after school I dreaded their ambush. My brother Kiyo, three years older, would wait for me at the door, where we would decide whether to run straight home together, or split up, or try a new and unexpected route.

None of these kids ever actually attacked. It was the threat that frightened us, their fearful looks, and the noises they would make, like miniature Samurai, in a language we couldn't understand.

Visual Vocabulary For centuries, the *Samurai* (sam′ oo rī′) were a class of fearsome warriors. Japan abolished its class system in the 1860s.

At the time it seemed we had been living under this reign of fear for years. In fact, we lived there about two months. Late in February the navy decided to clear Terminal Island completely. Even though most of us were American- born, it was dangerous having that many Orientals so close to the Long Beach Naval Station, on the opposite end of the island. We had known something like this was coming. But, like Papa's arrest, not much could be done ahead of time. There were four of us kids still young enough to be living with Mama, plus Granny, her mother, sixty-five then, speaking no English, and nearly blind. Mama didn't know where else she could get work, and we had nowhere else to move *to.* On February 25 the choice was made for us. We were given forty-eight hours to clear out.

The secondhand dealers had been prowling around for weeks, like wolves, offering

2. *Kyushu* is the southernmost of Japan's four main islands.

Big Idea The Power of Memory *Why does Wakatsuki Houston remember being afraid of the little girl with slanted eyes?*

Big Idea The Power of Memory *Why would a small thing like the sound of a whistle be important to the author?*

Reading Strategy Summarizing *How does Wakatsuki Houston describe the other Japanese at Terminal Island?*

Literary Element Historical Narrative *Why did the navy think it was dangerous to have Asian Americans close to the Long Beach Naval Station?*

humiliating prices for goods and furniture they knew many of us would have to sell sooner or later. Mama had left all but her most valuable possessions in Ocean Park, simply because she had nowhere to put them. She had brought along her pottery, her silver, heirlooms like the kimonos Granny had brought from Japan, tea sets, lacquered tables, and one fine old set of china, blue and white porcelain, almost translucent.[3] On the day we were leaving, Woody's car was so crammed with boxes and luggage and kids we had just run out of room. Mama had to sell this china.

Visual Vocabulary
A *kimono* (ki mō′ nō) is a loose robe or gown tied with a sash, traditionally worn as an outer garment by Japanese men and women.

One of the dealers offered her fifteen dollars for it. She said it was a full setting for twelve and worth at least two hundred. He said fifteen was his top price. Mama started to quiver. Her eyes blazed up at him. She had been packing all night and trying to calm down Granny, who didn't understand why we were moving again and what all the rush was about. Mama's nerves were shot, and now navy jeeps were patrolling the streets. She didn't say another word. She just glared at this man, all the rage and frustration channeled at him through her eyes.

He watched her for a moment and said he was sure he couldn't pay more than seventeen fifty for that china. She reached into the red velvet case, took out a dinner plate and hurled it at the floor right in front of his feet.

The man leaped back shouting, "Hey! Hey, don't do that! Those are valuable dishes!"

Mama took out another dinner plate and hurled it at the floor, then another and another, never moving, never opening her mouth, just quivering and glaring at the retreating dealer, with tears streaming down her cheeks. He finally turned and scuttled out the door, heading for the next house. When he was gone she stood there smashing cups and bowls and platters until the whole set lay in scattered blue and white fragments across the wooden floor.

The American Friends Service[4] helped us find a small house in Boyle Heights, another minority ghetto, in downtown Los Angeles, now inhabited briefly by a few hundred Terminal Island refugees. Executive Order 9066 had been signed by President Roosevelt, giving the War Department authority to define military areas in the western states and to exclude from them anyone who might threaten the war effort. There was a lot of talk about internment, or moving inland, or something like that in store for all Japanese Americans. I remember my brothers sitting around the table talking very intently about what we were going to do, how we would keep the family together. They had seen how quickly Papa was removed, and they knew now that he would not be back for quite a while. Just before leaving Terminal Island Mama had received her first letter, from Bismarck, North Dakota. He had been imprisoned at Fort Lincoln, in an all-male camp for enemy aliens.

Papa had been the **patriarch**. He had always decided everything in the family. With him gone, my brothers, like councilors in the absence of a chief, worried about what should be done. The ironic thing is, there wasn't much left to decide. These were mainly days of quiet, desperate waiting for what seemed at the time to be inevitable. There is a phrase the Japanese use in such situations, when something difficult must be endured. You would hear the

Susan McCartney/Photo Researchers

3. A material that is *translucent,* such as frosted glass, allows light to pass through but does not permit objects on the other side to be clearly distinguished.

4. The *American Friends Service* is a Quaker charity that provides assistance to political and religious refugees and other displaced persons.

Reading Strategy Summarizing *Summarize the information Wakatsuki Houston provides about the factors that affected Japanese Americans as the war progressed.*

Vocabulary

patriarch (pā′trē ärk′) *n.* the male head of a family or group

The National Archives/CORBIS

War Relocation Authority center (Manzanar) where evacuees of Japanese ancestry are spending the duration of World War II. California, July 3, 1942

older heads, the Issei,[5] telling others very quietly, *"Shikata ga nai"* (It cannot be helped). *"Shikata ga nai"* (It must be done).

Mama and Woody went to work packing celery for a Japanese produce dealer. Kiyo and my sister May and I enrolled in the local school, and what sticks in my memory from those few weeks is the teacher—not her looks, her remoteness. In Ocean Park my teacher had been a kind, grandmotherly woman who used to sail with us in Papa's boat from time to time and who wept the day we had to leave. In Boyle Heights the teacher felt cold and distant. I was confused by all the moving and was having trouble with the classwork, but she would never help me out. She would have nothing to do with me.

This was the first time I had felt outright hostility from a Caucasian. Looking back, it is easy enough to explain. Public attitudes toward the Japanese in California were shifting rapidly. In the first few months of the Pacific war, America was on the run. Tolerance had turned to distrust and irrational fear. The hundred-year-old tradition of anti-Orientalism on the west coast soon resurfaced, more vicious than ever. Its result became clear about a month later, when we were told to make our third and final move.

The name Manzanar meant nothing to us when we left Boyle Heights. We didn't know

5. *Issei* (ēs′ sā′) literally means "first generation" and refers to Japanese natives who immigrated to the United States.

Big Idea The Power of Memory *Why does the author remember the Issei saying Shikata ga nai?*

Reading Strategy Summarizing *How does the author summarize the prejudice against the Japanese in America at this time?*

where it was or what it was. We went because the government ordered us to. And, in the case of my older brothers and sisters, we went with a certain amount of relief. They had all heard stories of Japanese homes being attacked, of beatings in the streets of California towns. They were as frightened of the Caucasians as Caucasians were of us. Moving, under what appeared to be government protection, to an area less directly threatened by the war seemed not such a bad idea at all. For some it actually sounded like a fine adventure.

Our pickup point was a Buddhist church in Los Angeles. It was very early, and misty, when we got there with our luggage. Mama had bought heavy coats for all of us. She grew up in eastern Washington and knew that anywhere inland in early April would be cold. I was proud of my new coat, and I remember sitting on a duffel bag trying to be friendly with the Greyhound driver. I smiled at him. He didn't smile back. He was befriending no one. Someone tied a numbered tag to my collar and to the duffel bag (each family was given a number, and that became our official **designation** until the camps were closed), someone else passed out box lunches for the trip, and we climbed aboard.

I had never been outside Los Angeles County, never traveled more than ten miles from the coast, had never even ridden on a bus. I was full of excitement, the way any kid would be, and wanted to look out the window. But for the first few hours the shades were drawn. Around me other people played cards, read magazines, dozed, waiting. I settled back, waiting too, and finally fell asleep. The bus felt very secure to me. Almost half its passengers were immediate relatives. Mama and my older brothers had succeeded in keeping most of us together, on the same bus, headed for the same camp. I didn't realize until much later what a job that was. The strategy had been, first, to have everyone living in the same district when the evacuation began, and then to get all of us included under the same family number, even though names had been changed by marriage. Many families weren't as lucky as ours and suffered months of anguish while trying to arrange transfers from one camp to another.

We rode all day. By the time we reached our destination, the shades were up. It was late afternoon. The first thing I saw was a yellow swirl across a blurred, reddish setting sun. The bus was being pelted by what sounded like splattering rain. It wasn't rain. This was my first look at something I would soon know very well, a billowing flurry of dust and sand churned up by the wind through Owens Valley.[6]

We drove past a barbed-wire fence, through a gate, and into an open space where trunks and sacks and packages had been dumped from the baggage trucks that drove out ahead of us. I could see a few tents set up, the first rows of black barracks, and beyond them, blurred by sand, rows of barracks that seemed to spread for miles across this plain. People were sitting on cartons or milling around, with their backs to the wind, waiting to see which friends or relatives might be on this bus. As we approached, they turned or stood up, and some moved toward us expectantly. But inside the bus no one stirred. No one waved or spoke. They just stared out the windows, ominously silent. I didn't understand this. Hadn't we finally arrived, our whole family intact? I opened a window, leaned out, and yelled happily. "Hey! This whole bus is full of Wakatsukis!"

Outside, the greeters smiled. Inside there was an explosion of laughter, hysterical,

Literary Element Historical Narrative *What do these details suggest about the dangers of scapegoating a group of people?*

Vocabulary

designation (des´ig nā′shən) *n.* a distinguishing name or mark

6. Manzanar was built in *Owens Valley,* near Death Valley, about two hundred miles north of Los Angeles.

Big Idea The Power of Memory *Why does the author remember the people in the bus and the greeters laughing?*

Aaron Haupt Photography

Visual Vocabulary
A soldier in the field eats from a *mess kit,* which is a metal container that holds eating utensils and opens into a plate with two compartments.

tension-breaking laughter that left my brothers choking and whacking each other across the shoulders.

We had pulled up just in time for dinner. The mess halls[7] weren't completed yet. An outdoor chow line snaked around a half-finished building that broke a good part of the wind. They issued us army mess kits, the round metal kind that fold over, and plopped in scoops of canned Vienna sausage, canned string beans, steamed rice that had been cooked too long, and on top of the rice a serving of canned apricots. The Caucasian servers were thinking that the fruit poured over rice would make a good dessert. Among the Japanese, of course, rice is never eaten with sweet foods, only with salty or savory foods. Few of us could eat such a mixture. But at this point no one dared protest. It would have been impolite. I was horrified when I saw the apricot syrup seeping through my little mound of rice. I opened my mouth to complain. My mother jabbed me in the back to keep quiet. We moved on through the line and joined the others squatting in the lee[8] of half-raised walls, dabbing courteously at what was, for almost everyone there, an inedible concoction.

After dinner we were taken to Block 16, a cluster of fifteen barracks that had just been finished a day or so earlier—although finished was hardly the word for it. The shacks were built of one thickness of pine planking covered with tarpaper. They sat on concrete footings, with about two feet of open space between the floorboards and the ground. Gaps showed between the planks, and as the weeks passed and the green wood dried out, the gaps widened. Knotholes gaped in the uncovered floor.

Each barracks was divided into six units, sixteen by twenty feet, about the size of a living room, with one bare bulb hanging from the ceiling and an oil stove for heat. We were assigned two of these for the twelve people in our family group; and our official family "number" was enlarged by three digits—16 plus the number of this barracks. We were issued steel army cots, two brown army blankets each, and some mattress covers, which my brothers stuffed with straw.

The first task was to divide up what space we had for sleeping. Bill and Woody contributed a blanket each and partitioned off the first room: one side for Bill and Tomi, one side for Woody and Chizu and their baby girl. Woody also got the stove, for heating formulas.

The people who had it hardest during the first few months were young couples like these, many of whom had married just before the evacuation began, in order not to be separated and sent to different camps. Our two rooms were crowded, but at least it was all in the family. My oldest sister and her husband were shoved into one of those sixteen-by-twenty-foot compartments with six people they had never seen before—two other couples, one recently married like themselves, the other with two teenage boys. Partitioning off a room like that wasn't easy. It was bitter cold when we arrived, and the wind did not abate.[9] All they had to use for room dividers were those army blankets, two of which were barely enough to keep one person warm. They argued over whose blanket should be sacrificed and later argued about noise at night—the parents wanted their boys asleep by 9:00 P.M.—and they continued arguing over matters like that for six months, until my

7. In the army, a *mess hall* is the place where meals are eaten.
8. *Lee* is shelter or protection, especially on the side of something facing away from the wind.

Reading Strategy Summarizing *Summarize the information given in this passage about the food at Manzanar. What point is the author making here?*

9. The fact that the wind did not *abate* means that it did not lessen in force or intensity.

sister and her husband left to harvest sugar beets in Idaho. It was grueling[10] work up there, and wages were pitiful, but when the call came through camp for workers to **alleviate** the wartime labor shortage, it sounded better than their life at Manzanar. They knew they'd have, if nothing else, a room, perhaps a cabin of their own.

That first night in Block 16, the rest of us squeezed into the second room—Granny, Lillian, age fourteen, Ray, thirteen, May, eleven, Kiyo, ten, Mama, and me. I didn't mind this at all at the time. Being youngest meant I got to sleep with Mama. And before we went to bed I had a great time jumping up and down on the mattress. The boys had stuffed so much straw into hers, we had to flatten it some so we wouldn't slide off. I slept with her every night after that until Papa came back.

We woke early, shivering and coated with dust that had blown up through the knotholes and in through the slits around the doorway. During the night Mama had unpacked all our clothes and heaped them on our beds for warmth. Now our cubicle looked as if a great laundry bag had exploded and then been sprayed with fine dust. A skin of sand covered the floor. I looked over Mama's shoulder at Kiyo, on top of his fat mattress, buried under jeans and overcoats and sweaters. His eyebrows were gray, and he was starting to giggle. He was looking at me, at my gray eyebrows and coated hair, and pretty soon we were both giggling. I looked at Mama's face to see if she thought Kiyo was funny. She lay very still next to me on our mattress, her eyes scanning everything—bare rafters, walls, dusty kids—scanning slowly, and I think the mask of her face would have cracked had not Woody's voice just then come at us through the wall. He was rapping on the planks as if testing to see if they were hollow.

"Hey!" he yelled. "You guys fall into the same flour barrel as us?"

"No," Kiyo yelled back. "Ours is full of Japs."

All of us laughed at this.

"Well, tell 'em it's time to get up," Woody said. "If we're gonna live in this place, we better get to work."

He gave us ten minutes to dress, then he came in carrying a broom, a hammer, and a sack full of tin can lids he had scrounged somewhere. Woody would be our leader for a while now, short, stocky, grinning behind his mustache. He had just turned twenty-four. In later years he would tour the country with Mr. Moto, the Japanese tag-team wrestler, as his sinister assistant Suki—karate chops through the ropes from outside the ring, a chunky leg reaching from under his kimono to trip up Mr. Moto's foe. In the ring Woody's smile looked sly and crafty; he hammed it up. Offstage it was whimsical, as if some joke were bursting to be told.

"Hey, brother Ray, Kiyo," he said. "You see these tin can lids?"

"Yeah, yeah," the boys said drowsily, as if going back to sleep. They were both young versions of Woody.

"You see all them knotholes in the floor and in the walls?"

They looked around. You could see about a dozen.

Woody said, "You get those covered up before breakfast time. Any more sand comes in here through one of them knotholes, you have to eat it off the floor with ketchup."

"What about sand that comes in through the cracks?" Kiyo said.

Woody stood up very straight, which in itself was funny, since he was only about five-foot-six.

10. Grueling work is very difficult, exhausting work.

Reading Strategy Summarizing *Summarize what happened to the author's sister and brother-in-law.*

Vocabulary

alleviate (ə lē′vē āt′) *v.* to make easier to bear; relieve; lessen

Big Idea The Power of Memory *Why does the author remember moments of humor during her stay at Manzanar?*

Time & Life Pictures

"Don't worry about the cracks," he said. "Different kind of sand comes in through the cracks."

He put his hands on his hips and gave Kiyo a sternly comic look, squinting at him through one eye the way Papa would when he was asserting his authority. Woody mimicked Papa's voice: "And I can tell the difference. So be careful."

The boys laughed and went to work nailing down lids. May started sweeping out the sand. I was helping Mama fold the clothes we'd used for cover, when Woody came over and put his arm around her shoulder. He was short; she was even shorter, under five feet.

He said softly, "You okay, Mama?"

She didn't look at him, she just kept folding clothes and said, "Can we get the cracks covered too, Woody?"

Outside the sky was clear, but icy gusts of wind were buffeting our barracks every few minutes, sending fresh dust puffs up through the floorboards. May's broom could barely keep up with it, and our oil heater could scarcely hold its own against the drafts.

"We'll get this whole place as tight as a barrel, Mama. I already met a guy who told me where they pile all the scrap lumber."

"Scrap?"

"That's all they got. I mean, they're still building the camp, you know. Sixteen blocks left to go. After that, they say maybe we'll get some stuff to fix the insides a little bit."

Her eyes blazed then, her voice quietly furious. "Woody, we can't live like this. Animals live like this."

It was hard to get Woody down. He'd keep smiling when everybody else was ready to explode. Grief flickered in his eyes. He blinked it away and hugged her tighter. "We'll make it better, Mama. You watch."

Posted notices informing people of Japanese ancestry of imminent relocation rules due to fears of treason and spying during the early years of World War II.

Viewing the Art: If you saw a sign like this posted today, how would it make you feel? Explain.

We could hear voices in other cubicles now. Beyond the wall Woody's baby girl started to cry.

"I have to go over to the kitchen," he said, "see if those guys got a pot for heating bottles. That oil stove takes too long—something wrong with the fuel line. I'll find out what they're giving us for breakfast."

"Probably hotcakes with soy sauce," Kiyo said, on his hands and knees between the bunks.

"No." Woody grinned, heading out the door. "Rice. With Log Cabin Syrup and melted butter."

I don't remember what we ate that first morning. I know we stood for half an hour in cutting wind waiting to get our food. Then we took it back to the cubicle and ate huddled around the stove. Inside, it was warmer than when we left, because Woody was already making good his promise to Mama, tacking up some ends of lath[11] he'd found, stuffing rolled paper around the door frame.

Trouble was, he had almost nothing to work with. Beyond this temporary weather stripping, there was little else he could do. Months went by, in fact, before our "home" changed much at all from what it was the day we moved in—bare floors, blanket partitions, one bulb in each compartment dangling from a roof beam, and open ceilings overhead so that mischievous boys like Ray and Kiyo could climb up into the rafters and peek into anyone's life.

The simple truth is the camp was no more ready for us when we got there than we were ready for it. We had only the dimmest ideas of what to expect. Most of the families, like us, had moved out from southern California with as much luggage as each person could carry. Some old men left Los Angeles wearing Hawaiian shirts and Panama hats and stepped off the bus at an altitude of 4000 feet, with nothing available but sagebrush and tarpaper to stop the April winds pouring down off the back side of the Sierras.[12]

The War Department was in charge of all the camps at this point. They began to issue military surplus from the First World War—olive-drab knit caps, earmuffs, peacoats, canvas leggings. Later on, sewing machines were shipped in, and one barracks was turned into a clothing factory. An old seamstress took a peacoat of mine, tore the lining out, opened and flattened the sleeves, added a collar, put arm holes in and handed me back a beautiful cape. By fall dozens of seamstresses were working full-time transforming thousands of these old army clothes into capes, slacks and stylish coats. But until that factory got going and packages from friends outside began to fill out our wardrobes, warmth was more important than style. I couldn't help laughing at Mama walking around in army earmuffs and a pair of wide-cuffed, khaki-colored wool trousers several sizes too big for her. Japanese are generally smaller than Caucasians, and almost all these clothes were oversize. They flopped, they dangled, they hung.

(t)Aaron Haupt Photography (b)Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS

Visual Vocabulary
A *peacoat* is a double-breasted jacket of thick woolen cloth, worn especially by sailors.

Visual Vocabulary
The great actor and director *Charlie Chaplin* gained fame for his role as a tramp in baggy pants in a series of movies in the 1920s.

It seems comical, looking back; we were a band of Charlie Chaplins marooned in the California desert. But at the time, it was pure chaos. That's the only way to

11. In construction, *lath* is any of the thin, narrow strips of wood used as a foundation for plaster or tiles.

12. The *Sierras,* or Sierra Nevada Mountains, run through eastern California. Manzanar was between these mountains and Death Valley.

Literary Element Historical Narrative *How does Kiyo's comment reflect the misperceptions many people in the United States had about Japanese Americans?*

Big Idea The Power of Memory *What was significant about the author's memory of the seamstresses?*

CORBIS

Young evacuees of Japanese ancestry are awaiting their turn for baggage inspection upon arrival at a World War II Assembly Center in Turlock, CA.

Viewing the Art: What does this photograph suggest about life in the internment camp?

Time Life Pictures

Group of evacuees of Japanese ancestry lined up outside train after arriving at Santa Anita Assembly Center from San Pedro as row of US soldiers face them.

describe it. The evacuation had been so hurriedly planned, the camps so hastily thrown together, nothing was completed when we got there, and almost nothing worked.

I was sick continually, with stomach cramps and diarrhea. At first it was from the shots they gave us for typhoid, in very heavy doses and in assembly-line fashion: swab, jab, swab, *Move along now,* swab, jab, swab, *Keep it moving.* That knocked all of us younger kids down at once, with fevers and vomiting. Later, it was the food that made us sick, young and old alike. The kitchens were too small and badly ventilated. Food would spoil from being left out too long. That summer, when the heat got fierce, it would spoil faster. The refrigeration kept breaking down. The cooks, in many cases, had never cooked before. Each block had to provide its own volunteers. Some were lucky and had a professional or two in their midst.

Literary Element Historical Narrative *What does this information tell you about living conditions at Manzanar?*

But the first chef in our block had been a gardener all his life and suddenly found himself preparing three meals a day for 250 people.

"The Manzanar runs" became a condition of life, and you only hoped that when you rushed to the latrine, one would be in working order.

That first morning, on our way to the chow line, Mama and I tried to use the women's latrine in our block. The smell of it spoiled what little appetite we had. Outside, men were working in an open trench, up to their knees in muck—a common sight in the months to come. Inside, the floor was covered with excrement, and all twelve bowls were erupting like a row of tiny volcanoes.

Mama stopped a kimono-wrapped woman stepping past us with her sleeve pushed up against her nose and asked, "What do you do?"

"Try Block Twelve," the woman said, grimacing. "They have just finished repairing the pipes."

It was about two city blocks away. We followed her over there and found a line of

women waiting in the wind outside the latrine. We had no choice but to join the line and wait with them.

Inside it was like all the other latrines. Each block was built to the same design, just as each of the ten camps, from California to Arkansas, was built to a common master plan. It was an open room, over a concrete slab. The sink was a long metal trough against one wall, with a row of spigots for hot and cold water. Down the center of the room twelve toilet bowls were arranged in six pairs, back to back, with no partitions. My mother was a very modest person, and this was going to be agony for her, sitting down in public, among strangers.

One old woman had already solved the problem for herself by dragging in a large cardboard carton. She set it up around one of the bowls, like a three-sided screen. OXYDOL was printed in large black letters down the front. I remember this well, because that was the soap we were issued for laundry; later on, the smell of it would permeate these rooms. The upended carton was about four feet high. The old woman behind it wasn't much taller. When she stood, only her head showed over the top.

She was about Granny's age. With great effort she was trying to fold the sides of the screen together. Mama happened to be at the head of the line now. As she approached the vacant bowl, she and the old woman bowed to each other from the waist. Mama then moved to help her with the carton, and the old woman said very graciously, in Japanese, "Would you like to use it?"

Happily, gratefully, Mama bowed again and said, *"Arigato"* (Thank you). *"Arigato gozaimas"* (Thank you very much). "I will return it to your barracks."

"Oh, no. It is not necessary. I will be glad to wait."

The old woman unfolded one side of the cardboard, while Mama opened the other; then she bowed again and scurried out the door.

shikata ga nai, this cannot be helped

Those big cartons were a common sight in the spring of 1942. Eventually sturdier partitions appeared, one or two at a time. The first were built of scrap lumber. Word would get around that Block such and such had partitions now, and Mama and my older sisters would walk halfway across the camp to use them. Even after every latrine in camp was screened, this quest for privacy continued. Many would wait until late at night. Ironically, because of this, midnight was often the most crowded time of all. Like so many of the women there, Mama never did get used to the latrines. It was a humiliation she just learned to endure: *shikata ga nai,* this cannot be helped. She would quickly **subordinate** her own desires to those of the family or the community, because she knew cooperation was the only way to survive. At the same time she placed a high premium on personal privacy, respected it in others and insisted upon it for herself. Almost everyone at Manzanar had inherited this pair of traits from the generations before them who had learned to live in a small, crowded country like Japan. Because of the first they were able to take a desolate stretch of wasteland and gradually make it livable. But the entire situation there, especially in the beginning—the packed sleeping quarters, the communal mess halls, the open toilets—all this was an open insult to that other, private self, a slap in the face you were powerless to challenge.

Big Idea **The Power of Memory** *How would it affect you to see friends or family members endure humiliations such as the ones Mama endured?*

Reading Strategy **Summarizing** *What does this summary of conditions at Manzanar show the reader? What might have been the author's purpose in including it here?*

Vocabulary

subordinate (sə bôr′də nāt′) *v.* to cause to be, or treat as, secondary, inferior, or less important

AFTER YOU READ

RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond

1. What detail of Manzanar affected you the most? Explain.

Recall and Interpret

2. (a)How did the author feel about moving to Terminal Island? (b)Why do you think the author felt this way?

3. What did Mama do when the secondhand dealer offered her a low price for her valuable dishes?

4. (a)How did the teacher at Boyle Heights treat the author? (b)Compare and contrast that teacher to the teacher from Ocean Park.

Analyze and Evaluate

5. (a)Why does the author mention various events in U.S. history throughout the selection? (b)Do you think this makes her story more effective?

6. (a)Why does the author offer descriptions of her houses throughout this time period? (b)Do the comparisons of the houses achieve an important purpose within the selection? Explain.

7. What does the author mean when she says "The camp was no more ready for us when we got there than we were ready for it"? Explain.

Connect

8. **Big Idea** **The Power of Memory** Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston said that going back to visit Manzanar made her realize that her life began there. Discuss the lessons you learned about U.S. internment of Japanese Americans from reading about Wakatsuki Houston's memories.

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary Element Historical Narrative

A **historical narrative** can blend elements of objectivity and subjectivity. For instance, some facts mentioned by Wakatsuki Houston are verifiable and recounted in numerous other sources. Other details described by Wakatsuki Houston are anecdotal, deal with feelings and perceptions, and come from her personal memories. Both kinds of details—the objective and the subjective—have much to teach the reader about what happened to many Japanese Americans during World War II.

1. How would this story be different if someone who had no personal experiences related to Manzanar had written it? Do you think it would be as effective?

2. Does Wakatsuki Houston give enough objective details about the historical period to help the reader understand the context of the narrative?

Review: Autobiography

As you learned on pages 318-319, an **autobiography** is a person's account of his or her own life. In most autobiographies, the writer tells the story from the first-person point of view, using the pronoun *I*. The use of this point of view makes most autobiographies very personal and subjective.

Partner Activity Meet with another student and list some details from the selection that you would not find in a more objective source, such as an encyclopedia. How do these details help you better understand this episode in U.S. history?

Details	Evaluation
Mama breaks her valuable china.	gives a personal account; offers a perspective that a strictly factual account wouldn't
Children waking up in barracks with dust on their eyebrows	

READING AND VOCABULARY

Reading Strategy Summarizing

When you **summarize,** you describe the main ideas and events of a selection in your own words and in a logical sequence.

1. Summarize events in the life of Wakatsuki Houston's family before and after their internment at Manzanar.
2. What were the most important points or insights conveyed by the family's story? Explain.

Vocabulary Practice

Practice with Word Parts Use your knowledge of suffixes to choose the best definition for each vocabulary word.

1. patriarch
   - **a.** a male ruler of a group
   - **b.** a male who is part of a group
   - **c.** a male who is excluded from a group
2. designation
   - **a.** resignation
   - **b.** to name something
   - **c.** an instance of naming something
3. alleviate
   - **a.** to cause pain to lessen
   - **b.** to cause pain
   - **c.** painful
4. subordinate
   - **a.** the act of being inferior
   - **b.** to make inferior or secondary
   - **c.** second

Academic Vocabulary

Here are two words from the vocabulary list on page R86.

implicate (im′plə kāt′) *v.* to involve or connect

modify (mod′ə fī′) *v.* to change

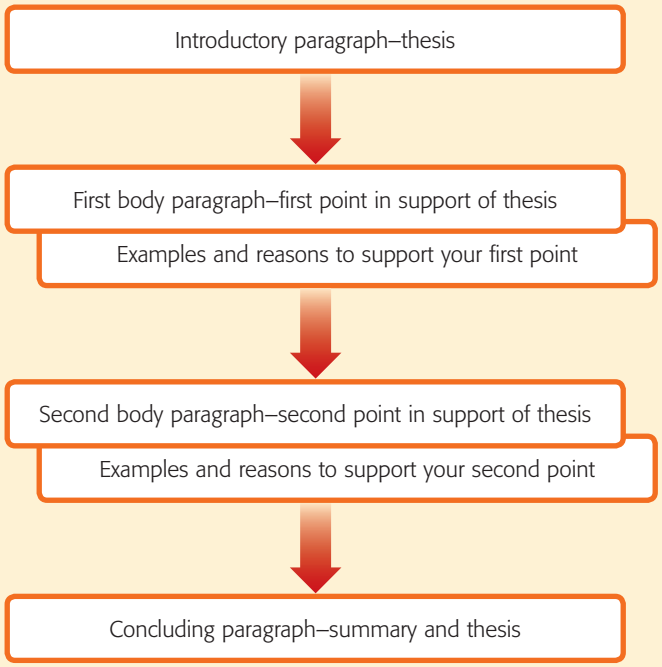
Practice and Apply

1. Why was Papa **implicated** as a spy?
2. Why did the people in the camp **modify** their barracks?

WRITING AND EXTENDING

Writing About Literature

Compare and Contrast Setting In *Farewell to Manzanar,* the narrator describes the different settings in which the events of the selection occur. Write a brief essay comparing and contrasting these settings. Which place does the narrator seem to like best? Why? Use evidence from the text to support your opinion. Before you write your essay, use the following graphic organizer to help you organize your ideas.



When you are finished writing, meet with another student to read each other's essays and to suggest revisions. Then proofread and edit your essay for errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Reading Further

If you would like to read more about Japanese Americans during World War II, you might enjoy this nonfiction work:

Behind Barbed Wire: The Imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II, by Daniel S. Davis, looks at the factors that led to the internment of Japanese Americans.

Web Activities For eFlashcards, Selection Quick Checks, and other Web activities, go to www.glencoe.com.

BEFORE YOU READ

Typhoid Fever from *Angela's Ashes*

MEET FRANK McCOURT

"When I look back on my childhood I wonder how I survived at all. It was, of course, a miserable childhood: the happy childhood is hardly worth your while." Thus begins Frank McCourt's powerful memoir, *Angela's Ashes.*

Frank McCourt was born in Brooklyn, New York, to recently immigrated Irish parents. His father, Malachy McCourt, struggled with alcoholism and unemployment. His mother, Angela Sheehan, bore the grim task of raising young children in the face of unrelenting poverty. In the mid-1930s, the McCourts moved back to Limerick, Ireland, to better their lives.

An Irish Childhood In Ireland, however, the McCourts fared no better, given the country's economic depression, unstable employment, and wretched living conditions. Angela tried to sustain the family by scrimping and saving, and by soliciting help from Catholic charities and the government. She also endured the deaths of three of her children.

Breaking Free When he was nineteen, McCourt decided to go to the United States to begin a new life. After working a series of jobs, McCourt served in the Korean War, which entitled him to benefits under the GI Bill and funded his education at New York University. He became a teacher and taught in New York City public schools for twenty-seven years.

Francine Fleischer/CORBIS

A Story to Tell McCourt knew he had a story to tell and struggled for years trying tell it. "All along I wanted to do this book badly. I would have to do it or I would have died howling." In 1996, at the age of sixty-six, he finally published *Angela's Ashes.*

> *"I learned the significance of my own insignificant life."*
>
> —Frank McCourt

McCourt's gritty story gripped readers almost immediately. When he wrote *Angela's Ashes,* McCourt did not want to write something "charming or lyrical." Instead, he wanted to offer a description of his poverty-stricken Irish childhood that was real and honest. He won several prestigious awards for the book, including the Pulitzer Prize.

Two years later, McCourt followed *Angela's Ashes* with *'Tis,* the second work in his memoir series. *'Tis* chronicles his adventures in the United States, including his first job, his time in the military, his college education, and his profession as a teacher. McCourt published another book in 2005, *Teacher Man.* It is based on his own unique experience of teaching in the U.S. public school system.

Frank McCourt was born in 1930.

LiteratureOnline **Author Search** For more about Frank McCourt, go to www.glencoe.com.

LITERATURE PREVIEW

Connecting to the Memoir

The following selection tells of the author's early experiences with love while bedridden in a hospital. Before you read, think about the following questions:

- When you are sick, what do you do to keep your mind occupied?
- When was the first time that something made you realize part of your childhood had vanished?

Building Background

Typhoid fever (tī′foid fē′vər) is an infection spread via food, water, and milk contaminated with the *Salmonella typhi* bacteria. If not treated effectively, typhoid can cause widespread damage to the body and can be fatal. Today typhoid is common in disaster-struck regions and impoverished areas with inadequate sanitary systems. It can be prevented by vaccine and treated with antibiotics.

Diphtheria (dif thēr′ē ə) is a disease caused by bacteria that have been infected by certain viruses. If left untreated, death can result from inflammation of the heart or suffocation brought about by a buildup of dead tissue in the throat. The disease is treated with antibiotics and can be prevented by vaccination.

Setting Purposes for Reading

Big Idea The Power of Memory

As you read this selection from *Angela's Ashes,* think about how McCourt portrays his childhood decades after he lived it.

Literary Element Voice

Voice is the distinctive use of language that conveys the author's or narrator's personality to the reader. Voice is determined by elements of style such as word choice and tone. Noting an author's voice can help you understand his or her perspective.

- See Literary Terms Handbook, p. R1

Interactive Literary Elements Handbook To review or learn more about the literary elements, go to www.glencoe.com.

READING PREVIEW

Reading Strategy Analyzing Style

Style consists of the expressive qualities that distinguish an author's work, including word choice and the length and arrangement of sentences, as well as the use of figurative language and imagery. **Analyzing style** can reveal an author's attitude and purpose.

Reading Tip: Asking Questions Ask yourself questions about style as you read and record them in a chart like the one shown below:

Interactive Graphic Organizer

Question	Answer	Example
What kinds of imagery does McCourt use?	He uses fantastical and nonsensical imagery to create an air of innocence or childhood.	"a poem about an owl and a pussycat that went to sea in a green boat with honey and money"
What kinds of words does McCourt use?		

Vocabulary

induce (in dōōs′) *v.* to lead or move by persuasion; to bring about; p. 377 *The physicians decided to induce labor.*

potent (pōt′ənt) *adj.* having strength or authority; powerful; p. 377 *The black widow spider injects a potent poison into its victims.*

rapier (rā′pē ər) *n.* a narrow, long-bladed, two-edged sword; p. 379 *The pirates drew their rapiers and dueled on deck.*

Vocabulary Tip: Word Origins Many English words are derived from Latin and the languages that developed from it, including Italian, Spanish, and French.

OBJECTIVES
In studying this selection, you will focus on the following:
- analyzing style and voice
- understanding memoir
- expressing personal responses

Giraudon/Bridgeman Art Library

Typhoid Fever

Frank McCourt

A Sick Ward at the Salpetriere. Mabel Henrietta May. Oil on canvas. Musée de l'Assistance Publique, Hopitaux de Paris, France.

The other two beds in my room are empty. The nurse says I'm the only typhoid patient and I'm a miracle for getting over the crisis.

The room next to me is empty till one morning a girl's voice says, Yoo hoo, who's there?

I'm not sure if she's talking to me or someone in the room beyond.

Yoo hoo, boy with the typhoid, are you awake?

I am.

Are you better?

I am.

Well, why are you here?

I don't know. I'm still in the bed. They stick needles in me and give me medicine.

What do you look like?

I wonder. What kind of a question is that? I don't know what to tell her.

Yoo hoo, are you there, typhoid boy?

I am.

What's your name?

Frank.

That's a good name. My name is Patricia Madigan. How old are you?

Ten.

Reading Strategy Analyzing Style *McCourt does not use quotation marks to set off dialogue. What effect does this style have?*

Oh. She sounds disappointed.

But I'll be eleven in August, next month.

Well, that's better than ten. I'll be fourteen in September. Do you want to know why I'm in the Fever Hospital?

I do.

I have diphtheria and something else.

What's something else?

They don't know. They think I have a disease from foreign parts because my father used to be in Africa. I nearly died. Are you going to tell me what you look like?

I have black hair.

You and millions.

I have brown eyes with bits of green that's called hazel.

You and thousands.

I have stitches on the back of my right hand and my two feet where they put in the soldier's blood.

Oh, God, did they?

They did.

You won't be able to stop marching and saluting.

There's a swish of habit and click of beads and then Sister Rita's voice. Now, now, what's this? There's to be no talking between two rooms especially when it's a boy and a girl. Do you hear me, Patricia?

I do, Sister.

Do you hear me, Francis?

I do, Sister.

You could be giving thanks for your two remarkable recoveries. You could be saying the rosary. You could be reading *The Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart* that's beside your beds. Don't let me come back and find you talking.

She comes into my room and wags her finger at me. Especially you, Francis, after thousands of boys prayed for you at the Confraternity.[1] Give thanks, Francis, give thanks.

She leaves and there's silence for awhile. Then Patricia whispers, Give thanks, Francis, give thanks, and say your rosary, Francis, and I laugh so hard a nurse runs in to see if I'm all right. She's a very stern nurse from the County Kerry and she frightens me. What's this, Francis? Laughing? What is there to laugh about? Are you and that Madigan girl talking? I'll report you to Sister Rita. There's to be no laughing for you could be doing serious damage to your internal apparatus.

She plods out and Patricia whispers again in a heavy Kerry accent, No laughing, Francis, you could be doin' serious damage to your internal apparatus. Say your rosary, Francis, and pray for your internal apparatus.

Mam visits me on Thursdays. I'd like to see my father, too, but I'm out of danger, crisis time is over, and I'm allowed only one visitor. Besides, she says, he's back at work at Rank's Flour Mills and please God this job will last a while with the war on and the English desperate for flour. She brings me a chocolate bar and that proves Dad is working. She could never afford it on the dole. He sends me notes. He tells me my brothers are all praying for me, that I should be a good boy, obey the doctors, the nuns, the nurses, and don't forget to say my prayers. He's sure St. Jude pulled me through the crisis because he's the patron saint[2] of desperate cases and I was indeed a desperate case.

Patricia says she has two books by her bed. One is a poetry book and that's the one she loves. The other is a short history of England and do I want it? She gives it to Seamus,[3] the man who mops the floors every day, and he brings it to me. He says, I'm not supposed to be bringing anything from a dipteria room to a typhoid room with all the germs flying around and hiding between the pages and if

1. A *confraternity* is a group of people dedicated to a religious cause.

Literary Element Voice *What does McCourt's use of voice convey about Patricia's personality?*

2. A *patron saint* is a saint to whom a craft, activity, or the protection of a person or place is dedicated.
3. *Seamus* (shā′ mus)

Reading Strategy Analyzing Style *McCourt blends narration and dialogue here. What is the effect of this stylistic technique?*

Mary Evans Picture Library

Bernadette Soubirous, Visionary of Lourdes, 1844–1879. Artist unknown.

Viewing the Art: Does the painting capture the personality of Sister Rita? Support your opinion.

you ever catch dipteria on top of the typhoid they'll know and I'll lose my good job and be out on the street singing patriotic songs with a tin cup in my hand, which I could easily do because there isn't a song ever written about Ireland's sufferings I don't know.

Oh, yes, he knows Roddy McCorley. He'll sing it for me right enough but he's barely into the first verse when the Kerry nurse rushes in. What's this, Seamus? Singing? Of all the people in this hospital you should know the rules against singing. I have a good mind to report you to Sister Rita.

Ah, God, don't do that, nurse.

Very well, Seamus. I'll let it go this one time. You know the singing could lead to a relapse in these patients.

When she leaves he whispers he'll teach me a few songs because singing is good for passing the time when you're by yourself in a typhoid room. He says Patricia is a lovely girl the way she often gives him sweets from the parcel her mother sends every fortnight. He stops mopping the floor and calls to Patricia in the next room, I was telling Frankie you're a lovely girl, Patricia, and she says, You're a lovely man, Seamus. He smiles because he's an old man of forty and he never had children but the ones he can talk to here in the Fever Hospital. He says, Here's the book, Frankie. Isn't it a great pity you have to be reading all about England after all they did to us, that there isn't a history of Ireland to be had in this hospital.

The book tells me all about King Alfred and William the Conqueror and all the kings and queens down to Edward, who had to wait forever for his mother, Victoria, to die before he could be king. The book has the first bit of Shakespeare I ever read.

*I do believe, **induced** by **potent** circumstances*
That thou art mine enemy.

The history writer says this is what Catherine, who is a wife of Henry the Eighth, says to Cardinal Wolsey, who is trying to have her head cut off. I don't know

Big Idea The Power of Memory *Why might McCourt remember this so many years later?*

Vocabulary

induce (in dōōs′) *v.* to lead or move by persuasion; to bring about

potent (pōt′ənt) *adj.* having strength or authority; powerful

Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY

Stained Glass window of Saint Elizabeth healing the sick. Gothic, 13th CE. Location: St. Elizabeth, Marburg, Germany.

what it means and I don't care because it's Shakespeare and it's like having jewels in my mouth when I say the words. If I had a whole book of Shakespeare they could keep me in the hospital for a year.

Patricia says she doesn't know what induced means or potent circumstances and she doesn't care about Shakespeare, she has her poetry book and she reads to me from beyond the wall a poem about an owl and a pussycat that went to sea in a green boat with honey and money and it makes no sense and when I say that Patricia gets huffy and says that's the last poem she'll ever read to me. She says I'm always reciting the lines from Shakespeare and they make no sense either. Seamus stops mopping again and tells us we shouldn't be fighting over poetry because we'll have enough to fight about when we grow up and get married. Patricia says she's sorry and I'm sorry too so she reads me part of another poem which I have to remember so I can say it back to her early in the morning or late at night when there are no nuns or nurses about,

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,

Literary Element Voice *What does the McCourt's use of voice in this sentence tell you about his personality as a child?*

The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,

The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,[4]

And the highwayman came riding

Riding riding

The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

He'd a French cocked-hat[5] *on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin,*

A coat of the claret[6] *velvet, and breeches*[7] *of brown doe-skin,*

They fitted with never a wrinkle, his boots were up to the thigh.

And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,

His pistol butts a-twinkle,

His ***rapier*** *hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.*

Every day I can't wait for the doctors and nurses to leave me alone so I can learn a new verse from Patricia and find out what's happening to the highwayman and the landlord's red-lipped daughter. I love the poem because it's exciting and almost as good as my two lines of Shakespeare. The redcoats are after the highwayman because they know he told her, I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way.

I'd love to do that myself, come by moonlight for Patricia in the next room, though hell should bar the way. She's ready to read the last few verses when in comes the nurse from Kerry shouting at her, shouting at me, I told ye there was to be no talking between rooms. Dipthteria is never allowed to talk to typhoid and visa versa. I warned ye. And she calls out, Seamus, take this one. Take the by. Sister Rita said one more word out of him and upstairs with him. We gave ye a warning to stop the blathering but ye wouldn't. Take the by, Seamus, take him.

Ah, now, nurse, sure isn't he harmless. 'Tis only a bit o' poetry.

Take that by, Seamus, take him at once.

He bends over me and whispers, Ah, God, I'm sorry, Frankie. Here's your English history book. He slips the book under my shirt and lifts me from the bed. He whispers that I'm a feather. I try to see Patricia when we pass through her room but all I can make out is a blur of dark head on a pillow.

Sister Rita stops us in the hall to tell me I'm a great disappointment to her, that she expected me to be a good boy after what God had done for me, after all the prayers said by hundreds of boys at the Confraternity, after all the care from the nuns and nurses of the Fever Hospital, after the way they let my mother and father in to see me, a thing rarely allowed, and this is how I repaid them lying in the bed reciting silly poetry back and forth with Patricia Madigan knowing very well there was a ban on all talk between typhoid and diphtheria. She says I'll have plenty of time to reflect on my sins in the big ward upstairs and I should beg God's forgiveness for my disobedience reciting a pagan English poem about a thief on a horse and a maiden with red lips who commits a terrible sin when I could have been praying or reading the life of a saint. She made it her business to read that poem so she did and I'd be well advised to tell the priest in confession.

The Kerry nurse follows us upstairs gasping and holding on to the banister. She tells me I better not get the notion she'll be running up to this part of the world every time I have a little pain or a twinge.

4. A *moor* is a wide, boggy expanse of land.
5. A *French cocked-hat* is a triangular hat with its brim turned upward in three places.
6. *Claret,* also the name of a red wine, is a dark, purplish red color.
7. *Breeches* are an old term for pants.

Literary Element Voice *What does this statement tell you about the narrator's personality?*

Vocabulary

rapier (rā′pē ər) *n.* a narrow, long-bladed, two-edged sword

Big Idea The Power of Memory *Why do you think McCourt remembers and is able to recreate details like this?*

There are twenty beds in the ward, all white, all empty. The nurse tells Seamus put me at the far end of the ward against the wall to make sure I don't talk to anyone who might be passing the door, which is very unlikely since there isn't another soul on this whole floor. She tells Seamus this was the fever ward during the Great Famine[8] long ago and only God knows how many died here brought in too late for anything but a wash before they were buried and there are stories of cries and moans in the far reaches of the night. She says 'twould break your heart to think of what the English did to us, that if they didn't put the blight on the potato they didn't do much to take it off. No pity. No feeling at all for the people that died in this very ward, children suffering and dying here while the English feasted on roast beef and guzzled the best of wine in their big houses, little children with their mouths all green from trying to eat the grass in the fields beyond, God bless us and save us and guard us from future famines.

"...have a good sleep for yourself now that you're away from the chatter with Patricia Madigan below who will never know a gray hair."

Seamus says 'twas a terrible thing indeed and he wouldn't want to be walking these halls in the dark with all the little green mouths gaping at him. The nurse takes my temperature, 'Tis up a bit, have a good sleep for yourself now that you're away from the chatter with Patricia Madigan below who will never know a gray hair.

She shakes her head at Seamus and he gives her a sad shake back.

Nurses and nuns never think you know what they're talking about. If you're ten going on eleven you're supposed to be simple like my uncle Pat Sheehan who was dropped on his head. You can't ask questions. You can't show you understand what the nurse said about Patricia Madigan, that she's going to die, and you can't show you want to cry over this girl who taught you a lovely poem which the nun says is bad.

The nurse tells Seamus she has to go and he's to sweep the lint from under my bed and mop up a bit around the ward. Seamus tells me she's a right oul' witch for running to Sister Rita and complaining about the poem going between the two rooms, that you can't catch a disease from a poem . . . . He never heard the likes of it, a little fella shifted upstairs for saying a poem and he has a good mind to go to the *Limerick Leader*[9] and tell them print the whole thing except he has this job and he'd lose it if ever Sister Rita found out. Anyway, Frankie, you'll be outa here one of these fine days and you can read all the poetry you want though I don't know about Patricia below, I don't know about Patricia, God help us.

He knows about Patricia in two days because she got out of the bed to go to the lavatory when she was supposed to use a bedpan and collapsed and died in the lavatory. Seamus is mopping the floor and there are tears on his cheeks and he's saying, 'Tis a dirty rotten thing to die in a lavatory when you're lovely in yourself. She told me she was sorry she had you reciting that poem and getting you shifted from the room, Frankie. She said 'twas all her fault.

It wasn't, Seamus.

I know and didn't I tell her that.

8. The *Great Famine* refers to the Irish potato famine of the 1840s, during which many Irish citizens died from starvation and disease.

9. *Limerick* is the town in Ireland which the story takes place. The *Limerick Leader* is a local publication, probably a newspaper.

Literary Element Voice *What does this tell you about the narrator's level of maturity?*

Big Idea The Power of Memory *How do you think Patricia's death and her sorrow over McCourt's departure affected McCourt?*

RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond

1. (a)How did you feel after reading the selection? (b)What specifically about the selection made you feel this way? Explain.

Recall and Interpret

2. (a)What is the first reason Sister Rita gives for telling Frank and Patricia not to talk to each other? (b)What does this tell you about the time period and setting in which this selection takes place?

3. (a)What are the subjects of McCourt's and Patricia's poetry? (b)What does their love for these written passages tell you about their different tastes in literature?

4. (a)Which patients had Frankie's new ward previously housed? (b)How does this knowledge affect the mood of the selection?

Analyze and Evaluate

5. Does Frank and Patricia's dialogue sound like the dialogue of a ten-year-old and a fourteen-year-old? Illustrate your answer with examples from the text.

6. Describe the adults that appear in the excerpt. What kind of effect do you think the portrayal of the adults has on the excerpt as a whole?

Connect

7. **Big Idea** **The Power of Memory** In memoirs, authors have the chance to present their past using a narrative style and structure. Do you think this selection reads more like fiction or nonfiction? Explain.

PRIMARY SOURCE QUOTATION

A Child's Perspective

McCourt waited many years to write *Angela's Ashes* because he needed time to understand his painful childhood. As he says, "I couldn't have written this book fifteen years ago because I was carrying a lot of baggage around. . . . and I had attitudes and these attitudes had to be softened. I had to get rid of them, I had to become, as it says in the Bible, as a child. . . . The child started to speak in this book. And that was the only way to do it, without judging."

Group Activity Discuss the following questions with classmates. Refer back to the question and cite evidence from the selecion for support.

1. Why do you think it was important for McCourt to become "as a child" in *Angela's Ashes?*
2. What are some ways in which the excerpt reflects the perspective of a child? Be specific in your answer.

A Swimming Lesson

Jewelle L. Gomez

At nine years old I didn't realize my grandmother, Lydia, and I were doing an extraordinary thing by packing a picnic lunch and riding the elevated train from Roxbury[1] to Revere Beach. It seemed part of the natural rhythm of summer to me. I didn't notice how the subway cars slowly emptied of most of their Black passengers as the train left Boston's urban center and made its way into the Italian and Irish suburban neighborhoods to the north. It didn't seem odd that all of the Black families stayed in one section of the beach and never ventured onto the boardwalk to the concession stands or the rides except in groups.

I do remember Black women perched cautiously on their blankets, tugging desperately at bathing suits rising too high in the rear and complaining about their hair "going back." Not my grandmother, though. She glowed with unashamed athleticism as she waded out, just inside the reach of the waves, and moved along the riptide[2] parallel to the shore. Once submerged, she would load me onto her back and begin her long, tireless strokes. With the waves partially covering us, I followed her rhythm with my short, chubby arms, taking my cues from the powerful movement of her back muscles. We did this again and again until I'd fall off, and she'd catch me and set me upright in the strong New England surf. I was thrilled by the wildness of the ocean and my grandmother's fearless relationship to it. I loved the way she never consulted her mirror after her swim, but always looked as if she had been born to the sea, a kind of aquatic heiress.

None of the social issues of 1957 had a chance of catching my attention that year. All that existed for me was my grand-

1. Boston's *Roxbury* neighborhood is southwest of downtown

Literary Element Narrative Essay *From this sentence, what do you learn about the relationship between white and African American people at Revere Beach?*

2. The *riptide* is the strong surface current that flows rapidly away from shore, returning to sea the water carried landward by waves.

Big Idea Quests and Encounters *How does the author's grandmother seem to feel about the ocean?*

mother, rising from the surf like a Dahomean[3] queen, shaking her head free of her torturous rubber cap, beaming down at me when I finally took the first strokes on my own. She towered above me in the sun with a **benevolence** that made simply dwelling in her presence a reward in itself. Under her gaze I felt part of a long line of royalty. I was certain that everyone around us—Black and white—saw and respected her magnificence.

Although I sensed her power, I didn't know the real significance of our summers together as Black females in a white part of town. Unlike winter, when we were protected by the cover of coats, boots and hats, summer left us **vulnerable** and at odds with the expectations for women's bodies—the narrow hips, straight hair, flat stomachs, small feet—handed down from the **mainstream** culture and media. But Lydia never noticed. Her long chorus-girl legs ended in size-nine shoes, and she dared to make herself even bigger as she stretched her broad back and became a woman with a purpose: teaching her granddaughter to swim.

My swimming may have seemed a **superfluous** skill to those who watched our lessons. After all, it was obvious that I wouldn't be doing the backstroke on the Riviera[4] or in the pool of a penthouse spa. Certainly nothing in the popular media at that time made the "great outdoors" seem a hospitable place for Black people. It was a place in which we were meant to feel comfortable at best and hunted at worst. But my prospects for utilizing my skill were irrelevant to me, and when I finally got it right I felt as if I had learned some **invaluable** life secret.

I was thrilled by the wildness of the ocean and my grandmother's fearless relationship to it.

When I reached college and learned the specifics of slavery and the Middle Passage,[5] the magnitude of that "peculiar institution"[6] was almost beyond my comprehension; it was like nothing I'd learned before about the history of my people. It was difficult making a connection with those Africans who had been set adrift from their own land. My initial reaction was "Why didn't the slaves simply jump from the ships while they were still close to shore, and swim home?" The child in me who had learned to survive in water was crushed to find that my ancestors had not necessarily shared this skill. Years later when I visited West Africa and learned of the poisonous, spiny fish that inhabit most of the coastal

3. *Dahomean* (də hō′mā ən) refers to Dahomey, a country in western Africa now called Benin (ben in′). Several kingdoms flourished in this region from the 1300s to the 1600s.

Reading Strategy Connecting to Personal Experience *Think about an adult whom you admire. How do you identify with the author's feelings here?*

Vocabulary

benevolence (bə nev′ ə ləns) *n.* kindness; generosity

vulnerable vulnerable (vul′ nər ə bəl) *adj.* easily damaged or hurt

mainstream (mān′ strēm′) *adj.* representing the most widespread attitudes and values of a society or group

superfluous (soo pur′ flōō əs) *adj.* not needed; unnecessary

4. A popular resort area, the *Riviera* lies along the Mediterranean coasts of Italy and France.
5. The *Middle Passage* was the route followed by slave traders from Africa to the Americas. Through the months-long voyage, slaves suffered filth, disease, abuse, and death.
6. Prior to the Civil War, Southerners referred to slavery as their *peculiar institution*, meaning that they considered it to be vital to their economy and way of life.

Literary Element Narrative Essay *Why does the author move ahead in time from her childhood to her college days at this point in the essay?*

Vocabulary

invaluable (in val′ ū ə bəl) *adj.* very great in value

Private Collection/Bridgeman Art Library

Southwold, July Morning. Hugo Grenville (b. 1958). Medium oil on canvas, 71.1 x 91.4. Private Collection.

waters, I understood why swimming was not the local sport there that it was in New England. And now when I take to the surf, I think of those ancestors and of Lydia.

The sea has been a fearful place for us. It swallowed us whole when there was no escape from the holds of slave ships. For me, to whom the dark fathoms of a tenement hallway were the most unknowable thing so far encountered in my nine years, the ocean was a mystery of terrifying proportions. In teaching me to swim, my grandmother took away my fear. I began to understand something outside myself—the sea—and consequently something about myself as well. I was no longer simply a fat little girl: My body had become a sea vessel—sturdy, enduring, graceful. I had the means to be safe.

The sea has been a fearful place for us.

Before she died last summer I learned that Lydia herself couldn't really swim that well. As I was splashing, desperately trying to learn the right rhythm—face down, eyes closed, air out, reach, face up, eyes open, air in, reach—Lydia was brushing the ocean's floor with her feet, keeping us both afloat. When she told me, I was stunned. I reached into my memory trying to combine this new information with the Olympic vision I'd always kept of her. At first I'd felt disappointed, tricked, the way I used to feel when I'd learn that a favorite movie star was only five feet tall. But then I quickly realized what an incredible act of bravery it was for her to pass on to me a skill she herself had not quite mastered—a skill that she knew would always bring me a sense of accomplishment. And it was more than just the swimming. It was the ability to stand on any beach anywhere and be proud of my large body, my African hair. It was not fearing the strong muscles in my own back; it was gaining control over my own life.

AFTER YOU READ

RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond

1. (a)Why do you think Lydia hid the fact that she was walking on the ocean floor from her granddaughter? (b)What is your reaction to Lydia's deception?

Recall and Interpret

2. (a)What is Lydia's attitude toward the sea and toward her own body? (b)How does this attitude seem to affect the author's feelings for her grandmother?

3. (a)According to Gomez, why might observers have considered her swimming lessons a waste of time? (b)Why do you think Gomez views the lessons differently than what she speculates the observers think?

4. (a)What historical information has helped Gomez understand her ancestors' attitude toward the sea? (b)Compare Gomez's own attitude with that of her ancestors.

Analyze and Evaluate

5. (a)Assess whether or not Lydia is a positive role model for her granddaughter. (b)Are role models important for young people? Explain your opinion.

6. (a)What are the "social issues of 1957" to which Gomez refers in this essay? (b)How does her adult view of these issues differ from her childhood view of them?

7. What is the theme, or main idea, of this essay? Explain.

Connect

8. **Big Idea** **Quests and Encounters** Have you ever conquered a fear, as Gomez did with Lydia's help? Describe your experience.

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary Element Narrative Essay

A good narrative essay, or nonfiction story, contains all the elements of any good narrative: characters, setting, and plot. Like short stories, most narrative essays include a central conflict or problem and have a climax and resolution. Many narrative essays are autobiographical, and the author's purpose is to tell about life experiences and life lessons.

1. Compare and contrast Gomez's essay with a short story. Use details from the essay to support your answer.

2. Authors typically write for one or more of the following purposes: to inform, to persuade, to describe, to explain, to entertain. What do you think Gomez's purpose was in writing her essay? Explain.

Review: Anecdote

As you learned on page 389, an **anecdote** is a brief, personal account of a remarkable incident or event. Essayists often use anecdotes to support their opinions, to clarify their ideas, to entertain, or to get the reader's attention.

Group Activity With two other students, share anecdotes from your own lives. After each student has shared an anecdote, discuss what opinions or ideas the anecdote could be used to support in a narrative essay. Use the chart from "A Swimming Lesson" as a model for your personal examples. Then make a chart using your own anecdotes.

Anecdote	Ideas and Opinions
I loved the way she never consulted her mirror after her swim.	Lydia was comfortable with her appearance.

BEFORE YOU READ

Terwilliger Bunts One from *An American Childhood*

Rollie McKenna

MEET ANNIE DILLARD

As a child, Annie Dillard was encouraged by her parents to investigate the world around her. That keen attention to detail and fascination for living things is reflected in Dillard's writing, whether she is describing a grasshopper on her window or discussing her family's idiosyncrasies.

"The dedicated life is worth living. You must give with your whole heart."

—Annie Dillard

An American Childhood Annie Dillard, the oldest of three daughters, had an unusual childhood. Her parents, the Doaks, were creative thinkers who encouraged and inspired creativity in Dillard and her sisters. The world was open to the Doak sisters to explore, question, and discover. During adolescence, Dillard began experimenting with writing poetry. She read poets of all kinds and particularly admired the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Dillard wrote poetry in her own style as well as in the style of her favorite poets. She was also a voracious reader; she notes that, at the age of thirteen, "I was reading books on drawing, painting, rocks, criminology, birds, moths, beetles, stamps, ponds and streams, medicine." In fact, Dillard reread her favorite book—*The Field Book of Ponds and Streams*—every year.

Tinker Creek and Beyond Dillard received both her bachelor's and master's degrees in English from Hollins College near Roanoke, Virginia. She enjoyed reading such authors as Henry James, Thomas Hardy, and Ernest Hemingway. Dillard wrote a 40-page paper in college about Henry David Thoreau, and her book, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek,* is often compared to Thoreau's *Walden; or Life in the Woods.* Like Thoreau, Dillard spent time living in nature next to Tinker Creek in Virginia's Roanoke Valley. Just as Thoreau described life in the woods in *Walden,* in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek,* Dillard examines the beautiful and sometimes brutal natural world. Dillard, like Thoreau, uses her observations to reflect on identity and her place in the world. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* won the Pulitzer Prize for Nonfiction in 1975, when Dillard was only thirty years old.

After writing a novel and several books about writing, Dillard was inspired by the birth of her first daughter to complete a memoir, entitled *An American Childhood.* Dillard describes growing up with eccentric parents: a father who quit his lucrative job to mimic Mark Twain's journey down the Mississippi River and a mother who encouraged her daughters to explore the world outside the family home as soon as they could remember their phone number. Dillard's mother, who was allowed to edit the manuscript for the book, wryly observed that "Annie loves us very dearly, but she doesn't particularly like us."

According to Michael J. Farrell, "Dillard urges us not to turn away, coaxes us instead to look Life in the eye." Whether writing about the natural world or the human one, Dillard observes with an unflinching gaze.

Annie Dillard was born in 1945.

Literature Online **Author Search** For more about Annie Dillard, go to www.glencoe.com.

LITERATURE PREVIEW

Connecting to the Memoir

In *An American Childhood,* Dillard recounts stories about her childhood. The author's intent in this excerpt is to reveal her mother's depth and wit through a series of humorous family memories. Before you read, think of someone in your life who reminds you of Dillard's mother.

- How do you use humor in your daily life?
- How does humor affect your mood and how you go about your day?

Building Background

An American Childhood is set in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in the 1950s. At that time, most middle-class married women did not work outside the home or pursue their own careers. Women who were fortunate or wealthy enough to attend college were generally assumed to be looking for a husband. Even a well-educated married woman of the 1950s was expected to be content to take care of her husband and children.

Setting Purposes for Reading

Big Idea The Power of Memory

As you read this selection, notice how Dillard links her humorous memories of her mother to incidents in childhood that helped her to develop her insights as a writer.

Literary Element Anecdote

An **anecdote** is a brief account of an interesting occurrence. Anecdotes add depth and variety to the flow of text and help the reader to better visualize the characters and events. As you read the story, notice how Dillard uses anecdotes to deepen our understanding of her mother's approach to life.

- See Literary Terms Handbook, p. R1.

Interactive Literary Elements Handbook To review or learn more about the literary elements, go to www.glencoe.com.

READING PREVIEW

Reading Strategy Connecting to Personal Experience

Often authors write about situations, settings, or characters to which or whom the reader can relate. **Connecting to personal experience** can help you better understand the author's message. As you read, find situations in the text that remind you of instances in your own life.

Reading Tip: Making a Chart You might choose events, characters, or something else from the excerpt that seems familiar to compare to your personal experiences. Record your thoughts on a chart like the one below.

Interactive Graphic Organizer

Situations in the text	Reminds me of . . .
Mother rolled down the hill at the beach.	I have an aunt who was like that when she was younger.

Vocabulary

tremulously (trem´yə ləs lē) *adv.* in a trembling or vibrating way; p. 391 *After he heard the knock at the door, he tremulously asked, "Who's there?"*

eschew (es chōō´) *v.* to keep apart from something disliked or harmful; avoid; p. 391 *Because I dislike music with violent lyrics, I eschew it.*

advocate (ad´və kāt´) *v.* to publicly support; p. 393 *I advocate the passing of that law, and I will be sure to vote for it.*

stolid (stol´ id) *adj.* showing little or no emotion; p. 394 *Her face was stolid after hearing the bad news; we never knew how sad she was.*

Vocabulary Tip: Word Parts Word parts are prefixes, suffixes, and base words or roots.

OBJECTIVES
In studying this selection, you will focus on the following:
- analyzing the author's use of anecdote
- connecting literature to personal experience
- analyzing the author's use of voice
- writing an essay analyzing comic devices

Terwilliger Bunts One

from An American Childhood

Annie Dillard

S&H Green Stamps, 1965. Andy Warhol.
The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

One Sunday afternoon Mother wandered through our kitchen, where Father was making a sandwich and listening to the ball game. The Pirates were playing the New York Giants at Forbes Field. In those days, the Giants had a utility infielder[1] named Wayne Terwilliger. Just as Mother passed through, the radio announcer cried—with undue drama—"Terwilliger bunts one!"

"Terwilliger bunts one?" Mother cried back, stopped short. She turned. "Is that English?"

"The player's name is Terwilliger," Father said. "He bunted."

"That's marvelous," Mother said. "'Terwilliger bunts one.' No wonder you listen to baseball. 'Terwilliger bunts one.'"

For the next seven or eight years, Mother made this surprising string of syllables her own. Testing a microphone, she repeated, "Terwilliger bunts one"; testing a pen or a typewriter, she wrote it. If, as happened surprisingly often in the course of various improvised gags,she pretended to whisper something else in my ear, she actually whispered, "Terwilliger bunts one." Whenever someone used a French phrase, or a Latin one, she answered solemnly, "Terwilliger bunts one." If Mother had had, like Andrew

1. In this context, *utility* means "useful generally rather than in a specialized function." So, a *utility infielder* is capable of playing shortstop or first, second, or third base.

Literary Element Anecdote *How does this opening anecdote draw the reader in?*

Carnegie,[2] the opportunity to cook up a motto for a coat of arms,[3] hers would have read simply and tellingly, "Terwilliger bunts one." (Carnegie's was "Death to Privilege.")

She served us with other words and phrases. On a Florida trip, she repeated **tremulously**, "That . . . is a royal poinciana." I don't remember the tree; I remember the thrill in her voice. She pronounced it carefully, and spelled it. She also liked to say "portulaca."[4]

The drama of the words "Tamiami Trail" stirred her, we learned on the same Florida trip. People built Tampa on one coast, and they built Miami on another. Then—the height of visionary[5] ambition and folly—they piled a slow, tremendous road through the terrible Everglades to connect them. To build the road, men stood sunk in muck to their armpits. They fought off cottonmouth moccasins and six-foot alligators. They slept in boats, wet. They blasted muck with dynamite, cut jungle with machetes; they laid logs, dragged drilling machines, hauled dredges, heaped limestone. The road took fourteen years to build up by the shovelful, a Panama Canal in reverse, and cost hundreds of lives from tropical, mosquito-carried diseases. Then, capping it all, some genius thought of the word Tamiami: they called the road from Tampa to Miami, this very road under our spinning wheels, the Tamiami Trail. Some called it Alligator Alley. Anyone could drive over this road without a thought.

Hearing this, moved, I thought all the suffering of road building was worth it (it wasn't my suffering), now that we had this new thing to hang these new words on—Alligator Alley for those who like things cute, and, for connoisseurs like Mother, for lovers of the human drama in all its boldness and terror, the Tamiami Trail.

Back home, Mother cut clips from reels of talk, as it were, and played them back at leisure. She noticed that many Pittsburghers confuse "leave" and "let." One kind relative brightened our morning by mentioning why she'd brought her son to visit: "He wanted to come with me, so I left him." Mother filled in Amy and me on locutions we missed. "I can't do it on Friday," her pretty sister told a crowded dinner party, "because Friday's the day I lay in the stores."[6]

(All unconsciously, though, we ourselves used some pure Pittsburghisms. We said "tele pole," pronounced "telly pole," for that splintery sidewalk post I loved to climb. We said "slippy"—the sidewalks are "slippy." We said, "That's all the farther I could go." And we said, as Pittsburghers do say, "This glass needs washed," or "The dog needs walked"—a usage our father **eschewed**; he knew it was not standard English, nor even comprehensible English, but he never let on.)

"Spell 'poinsettia,'" Mother would throw out at me, smiling with pleasure. "Spell 'sherbet.'" The idea was not to make us whizzes, but, quite the contrary, to remind us—and I, especially, needed reminding—that we didn't know it all just yet. "There's a

2. Based in Pittsburgh, *Andrew Carnegie* (1835–1919) made a fortune in the steel industry and donated $350 million to social and educational institutions.
3. A *coat of arms* is an arrangement of symbols on a shield that, along with a motto, represents one's ancestry.
4. Both the *royal poinciana* and the *portulaca* (pôr´chə la´ kə) are native to the tropics and bear bright flowers.
5. Here, *visionary* refers to imagining something in perfect but unrealistic form. People had foreseen the benefits of connecting the two cities but overlooked practical considerations involved in constructing the road.
6. *Locutions* are forms or styles of verbal expression. Where this woman said she had to *lay in the stores,* Mother might have said she had to go grocery shopping.

Reading Strategy Connecting to Personal Experience *What does the author reveal here about her mother's personality?*

Big Idea The Power of Memory *Why do you think her mother is trying to remind the author that she does not "know it all just yet"?*

Vocabulary

tremulously (trem´ yə ləs lē) *adv.* in a trembling or vibrating way

Vocabulary

eschew (es chōō´) *v.* to keep apart from something disliked or harmful; avoid

Scala / Art Resource, NY

Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey—Trains. Artist unknown.
Viewing the Art: What idea in the selection does this advertisement help illustrate?

deer standing in the front hall," she told me one quiet evening in the country.

"Really?"

"No. I just wanted to tell you something once without your saying, 'I know.'"

Supermarkets in the middle 1950s began luring, or bothering, customers by giving out Top Value Stamps or Green Stamps.[7] When, shopping with Mother, we got to the head of the checkout line, the checker, always a young man, asked, "Save stamps?"

"No," Mother replied genially, week after week, "I build model airplanes." I believe she originated this line. It took me years to determine where the joke lay.

Anyone who met her verbal challenges she adored. She had surgery on one of her eyes. On the operating table, just before she conked out, she appealed feelingly to the surgeon, saying, as she had been planning to say for weeks, "Will I be able to play the piano?" "Not on me," the surgeon said. "You won't pull that old one on me."

It was, indeed, an old one. The surgeon was supposed to answer, "Yes, my dear, brave woman, you will be able to play the piano after this operation," to which Mother intended to reply, "Oh, good, I've always wanted to play the piano."This pat scenario bored her; she loved having it interrupted. It must have galled[8] her that usually her acquaintances were so predictably unalert; it must have galled her that, for the length of her life, she could surprise everyone so continually, so easily, when

7. *[Top Value . . . Stamps]* Stores gave customers a certain number of stamps per dollar spent. These stamps were saved up and later exchanged for merchandise.

8. Here, *galled* means "irritated."

she had been the same all along. At any rate, she loved anyone who, as she put it, saw it coming, and called her on it.

She regarded the instructions on bureaucratic forms as straight lines.[9] "Do you **advocate** the overthrow of the United States government by force or violence?" After some thought she wrote, "Force." She regarded children, even babies, as straight men.[10] When Molly learned to crawl, Mother delighted in buying her gowns with drawstrings at the bottom, like Swee'pea's, because, as she explained energetically, you could easily step on the drawstring without the baby's noticing, so that she crawled and crawled and never got anywhere except into a small ball at the gown's top.

Visual Vocabulary
Swee'pea is the baby in "Popeye" cartoons.

When we children were young, she mothered us tenderly and dependably; as we got older, she resumed her career of anarchism.[11] She collared us into her gags. If she answered the phone on a wrong number, she told the caller, "Just a minute," and dragged the receiver to Amy or me, saying, "Here, take this, your name is Cecile," or, worse, just, "It's for you." You had to think on your feet. But did you want to perform well as Cecile, or did you want to take pity on the wretched caller?

9. *Bureaucratic* refers to the rigidly formal paperwork and procedures involved in dealing with government officials and agencies. For Mother, these things were setups for jokes—the *straight lines* that led to punch lines.
10. *Straight men* are people who assist comedians by feeding them straight lines or serving as objects of fun.
11. Here, *anarchism* refers to active resistance against what is oppressive and undesirable.

Literary Element Anecdote *What does the exchange with the surgeon reveal about what Dillard's mother values in life?*

Reading Strategy Connecting to Personal Experience *Which option do you think the author might have chosen in this situation? Why?*

Vocabulary
advocate (ad′ və kāt′) *v.* to support publicly

During a family trip to the Highland Park Zoo, Mother and I were alone for a minute. She approached a young couple holding hands on a bench by the seals, and addressed the young man in dripping[12] tones: "Where have you been? Still got those baby-blue eyes; always did slay me. And this"—a swift nod at the dumbstruck young woman, who had removed her hand from the man's—"must be the one you were telling me about. She's not so bad, really, as you used to make out. But listen, you know how I miss you, you know where to reach me, same old place. And there's Ann over there—see how she's grown? See the blue eyes?"

And off she sashayed,[13] taking me firmly by the hand, and leading us around briskly past the monkey house and away. She cocked an ear back, and both of us heard the desperate man begin, in a high-pitched wail, "I swear, I never saw her before in my life. . . ."

On a long, sloping beach by the ocean, she lay stretched out sunning with Father and friends, until the conversation gradually grew tedious, when without forethought she gave a little push with her heel and rolled away. People were stunned. She rolled deadpan and apparently effortlessly, arms and legs extended and tidy, down the beach to the distant water's edge, where she lay at ease just as she had been, but half in the surf, and well out of earshot.

She dearly loved to fluster people by throwing out a game's rules at whim[14]—when she was getting bored, losing in a dull sort of way, and when everybody else was taking it too seriously. If you turned your back, she moved the checkers around on the board. When you got them all straightened out, she denied she'd touched them; the next time you turned your back, she lined them up on the rug or hid them under your chair. In a betting rummy game called *Michigan*, she routinely played out of turn, or called

12. *Dripping* here refers to using excessive charm or appeal.
13. She *sashayed* or walked in a way that showed a seeming lack of interest.
14. The phrase *at whim* means "suddenly and unexpectedly."

Ivory Soap Advertising Poster, 1898. Artist unknown. **Viewing the painting:** What details in this reproduction evoke the era in which Dillard grew up?

CORBIS

out a card she didn't hold, or counted backward, simply to amuse herself by causing an uproar and watching the rest of us do double takes and have fits. (Much later, when serious suitors came to call, Mother subjected them to this fast card game as a trial by ordeal; she used it as an intelligence test and a measure of spirit. If the poor man could stay a round without breaking down or running out, he got to marry one of us, if he still wanted to.)

She excelled at bridge, playing fast and boldly, but when the stakes were low and the hands dull, she bid slams[15] for the devilment of it, or raised her opponents' suit to bug them, or showed her hand, or tossed her cards in a handful behind her back in a characteristic swift motion accompanied by a vibrantly innocent look. It drove our **stolid** father crazy. The hand was over before it began, and the guests were appalled. How do you score it, who deals now, what do you do with a crazy person who is having so much fun? Or they were down seven, and the guests were appalled. "Pam!" "Dammit, Pam!" He groaned. What ails such people? What on earth possesses them? He rubbed his face.

She was an unstoppable force; she never let go. When we moved across town, she persuaded the U.S. Post Office to let her keep her old address—forever—because she'd had stationery printed. I don't know how she did it. Every new post office worker, over decades, needed to learn that although the Doaks' mail is addressed to here, it is delivered to there.

Mother's energy and intelligence suited her for a greater role in a larger arena—mayor of New York, say—than the one she had. She followed American politics closely; she had been known to vote for Democrats. She saw how things should be run, but she had nothing to run but our household. Even there, small minds bugged her; she was smarter than the people who designed the things she had to use all day for the length of her life.

"Look," she said. "Whoever designed this corkscrew never used one. Why would anyone sell it without trying it out?" So she invented a better one. She showed me a drawing of it. The spirit of American enterprise never faded in

Literary Element Anecdote *What does this sentence reveal about how some women of that generation may have felt?*

Vocabulary

stolid (stol´ id) adj. showing little or no emotion

15. When she *bid slams,* Mother "went for broke," betting that she would win every or all but one of the tricks in a round of play.

Mother. If capitalizing and tooling up[16] had been as interesting as theorizing and thinking up, she would have fired up a new factory every week, and chaired several hundred corporations.

"It grieves me," she would say, "it grieves my heart," that the company that made one superior product packaged it poorly, or took the wrong tack[17] in its advertising. She knew, as she held the thing mournfully in her two hands, that she'd never find another. She was right. We children wholly sympathized, and so did Father; what could she do, what could anyone do, about it? She was Samson[18] in chains. She paced.

she was smarter than the people who designed the things she had to use all day

She didn't like the taste of stamps so she didn't lick stamps; she licked the corner of the envelope instead. She glued sandpaper to the sides of kitchen drawers, and under kitchen cabinets, so she always had a handy place to strike a match. She designed, and hounded workmen to build against all norms,[19] doubly wide kitchen counters and elevated bathroom sinks. . . . She drew plans for an over-the-finger toothbrush for babies, an oven rack that slid up and down, and—the family favorite—Lendalarm. Lendalarm was a beeper you attached to books (or tools) you loaned friends. After ten days, the beeper sounded. Only the rightful owner could silence it.

She repeatedly reminded us of P. T. Barnum's dictum:[20] You could sell anything to anybody if you marketed it right. The adman who thought of making Americans believe they needed underarm deodorant was a visionary. So, too, was the hero who made a success of a new product, Ivory soap. The executives were horrified, Mother told me, that a cake of this stuff floated. Soap wasn't supposed to float. Anyone would be able to tell it was mostly whipped-up air. Then some inspired adman made a leap: Advertise that it floats. Flaunt it. The rest is history.

She respected the rare few who broke through to new ways. "Look," she'd say, "here's an intelligent apron." She called upon us to admire intelligent control knobs and intelligent pan handles, intelligent andirons and picture frames and knife sharpeners. She questioned everything, every pair of scissors, every knitting needle, gardening glove, tape dispenser. Hers was a restless mental vigor that just about ignited the dumb household objects with its force.

Torpid[21] conformity was a kind of sin; it was stupidity itself, the mighty stream against which Mother would never cease to struggle. If you held no minority opinions, or if you failed to risk total ostracism for them daily, the world would be a better place without you. . . .

She simply tried to keep us all awake. And in fact it was always clear to Amy and me, and to Molly when she grew old enough to listen, that if our classmates came to cruelty, just as much as if the neighborhood or the nation came to madness, we were expected to take, and would be each separately capable of taking, a stand.

16. *Capitalizing* and *tooling up* has to do with providing the finances and equipment necessary to start up a new business or factory.
17. The company took the wrong course of action or *tack.*
18. In the Bible, *Samson* is powerful and mighty until an enemy tricks him. Soon Samson is chained up in prison.
19. Here, the *norms* are rules, standards, and accepted practices.
20. In the 1800s, *Barnum* presented many popular entertainments, including what is now the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus. The actual words of his famous saying *(dictum)* were "There's a sucker born every minute."
21. Something that's *torpid* is dull and lifeless.

Reading Strategy Connecting to Personal Experience *Why do you think people like Dillard's mother may prefer theorizing and inventing to running a business?*

Big Idea The Power of Memory *Why do you think the author used the words "and would be each separately capable of taking" here?*

AFTER YOU READ

RESPONDING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

Respond

1. What questions would you like to ask the author about her mother?

Recall and Interpret

2. (a)Why does Dillard's mother enjoy the phrase "Terwilliger bunts one"? (b) What does her mother's reaction to and use of this phrase suggest about her personality?

3. (a)Dillard's mother finds humor in situations that ordinarily would not be considered funny. Give an example and explain why the situation is comical. (b)What can you infer about her mother's philosophy of life from the way she responds to rules and regulations?

4. (a)Describe two incidents that illustrate how her mother's unexpected behavior flusters people. (b)Do you think the author's mother cares about the consequences of her actions?

Analyze and Evaluate

5. Explain what Dillard means when she says that the "spirit of American enterprise never faded in Mother."

6. (a)Identify places in the selection that illustrate the author's attention to detail. (b)How do these details enhance your appreciation of the selection?

7. (a)How do you think most people would react to the mother's treatment of the young couple at the zoo? (b)Does this incident make you respect Dillard's mother more, or less?

Connect

8. **Big Idea** **The Power of Memory** How does the author's mother compare with your mental picture of an ideal mother? Explain.

YOU'RE THE CRITIC: Different Viewpoints

How Successfull is Dillard's Memoir?

Some critics have compared Dillard to Henry David Thoreau, since both authored detailed accounts of their time spent observing nature. Read the following two excerpts of literary criticism. As you read, compare and contrast the opinions of the two critics.

"Ms. Dillard has written. . . . an exceptionally interesting account. She is one of those people who seem to be more fully alive than most of us. . . . She is a stunning observer. . . . And yet, An American Childhood *is not quite as good as it at first promised to be. By choosing to make the book an account of the growth of her mind, an inner rather than an outer narrative, Ms. Dillard almost necessarily forfeited plot. Except at the end, the book does not build; there is no continuous narrative. And though scores of people appear, only two of them are real characters: Annie Dillard herself and, for one wonderful chapter, her mother."*

—Noel Perrin

"[Annie Dillard] preaches Thoreau's doctrine and her own—"Do what you love"—and like Thoreau she takes pains to clarify how that is done, how passionately she loves what she is about. . . . The principle is the same for all, though it would take enormous energy and curiosity as well as clear thinking to live as Annie Dillard does. She makes it sound like a profitable enterprise."

—Helen Bevington

Group Activity Discuss the following questions with your classmates. Consider the two excerpts and use evidence from *An American Childhood* to support your answers.

1. (a)How do Perrin's and Bevington's assessments differ? (b)What do their assessments have in common?

2. Bevington writes that Dillard preaches Thoreau's doctrine as her own: "Do what you love." How is this doctrine demonstrated in *An American Childhood?*