

January, 2007

Dry Loaf

It is equal to living in a tragic land
To live in a tragic time.
Regard now the sloping, mountainous rocks
And the river that batters its way over stones,
Regard the hovels of those that live in this land.

That was what I painted behind the loaf,
The rocks not even touched by snow,
The pines along the river and the dry men blown
Brown as the bread, thinking of birds
Flying from burning countries and brown sand shores,

Birds that came like dirty water in waves
Flowing above the rocks, flowing over the sky,
As if the sky was a current that bore them along,
Spreading them as waves spread flat on the shore,
One after another washing the mountains bare.

It was the battering of drums I heard
It was hunger, it was the hungry that cried
And the waves, the waves were soldiers moving,
Marching and marching in a tragic time
Below me, on the asphalt, under the trees.

It was soldiers went marching over the rocks
And still the birds came, came in watery flocks,
Because it was spring and the birds had to come.
No doubt that soldiers had to be marching
And that drums had to be rolling, rolling, rolling.

Wallace Stevens

PERSONAL RESPONSE TO TEXTS ASSIGNMENT

Suggested time: approximately 45 to 60 minutes

You have been provided with three texts on pages 1 to 4. In an excerpt from the novel *Mercy Among the Children*, the narrator's father responds to Samson Votour's outrage with compassion. One interpretation of Paul Fenniak's painting "The Accident" is that it captures the decisive moment between the emotion and the response. In the poem "Dry Loaf," the speaker reflects on moral imperatives in a tragic time.

The Assignment

What do these texts suggest to you about the role self-respect plays in an individual's response to injustice? Support your idea(s) with reference to one or more of the texts presented and to your previous knowledge and/or experience.

In your writing, you must

- use a prose form
- connect one or more of the texts provided in this examination to your own ideas and impressions

Fold and tear along perforation.

Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Initial Planning

Your initial planning will assist markers in identifying the text or texts to which you are responding.

For each text you will reference, briefly identify the central idea that is most relevant to what you intend to explore.

Briefly identify what idea you intend to explore.

State your choice of prose form. You may respond using a personal, creative, or analytical perspective. Do not use a poetic form.

There is additional space for planning on pages 8, 10, and 12.