

Resilience with Hayden

This week's reflective writing will focus on analyzing poetry through the concept of resilience.

Assignment Objective

- To practice the important skill of "close reading" in literature, which means examining words, phrases, and ideas in sentences and considering their importance
 - To understand more about the concept of "resilience" as expressed in poetry
 - To practice formal writing through a low stakes, short analytical writing assignment
-

Directions

- We have learned about “constructive resilience” as a powerful concept in the work of psychologist Michael Penn. Let's use this concept to help us analyze the poetry of Robert Hayden, who was the first African-American poet laureate in the US.

"Those Winter Sundays"
by Robert Hayden, 1966

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with cracked hands that ached
from labor in the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,
and slowly I would rise and dress,
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere and lonely offices?



For this reflective writing assignment, respond to the question below in 200 words (formal paragraph format). Make sure to include a topic sentence and refer to specific lines in Hayden's poetry and words or phrases from Penn's article. Please answer all the questions below :

- Hayden's poem is told from the perspective of a child thinking back to the relationship he had with his father. What images or language does the poem include that give us an idea of what their relationship was like?
- Why does the speaker end with the question: "What did I know, What did I know/Of love's austere and lonely offices"? What does Hayden use the word "austere" and "offices"?

Integrative (short) Writing

- Make sure to refer and use quoted phrases from Penn's article on resilience.
How does the concept of resilience help us understand this poem from a new and rich perspective? How is this a poem about resilience?
-