

Portraits of the WKU WP
"To My Dearest Grandfather"

The Student:

A 10th grade student in English II at Glasgow High School.

The Teacher:

Rogerlynn Briddon teaches 9th and 10th grade English at Glasgow High School. She was a member of Project III.

The Assignment:

As a result of the Summer Writing Cluster institute poetry session, I started my school year with a poetry fest. For two weeks we were immersed in poetry. Students read, discussed, wrote, and performed poems. I too was a participant in the daily activities as a writer. Out of these exercises students crafted a poem that was really important to them. We then worked in groups with revision. We even worked with the AP senior class as responders to our work.

The Text:

To My Dearest Grandfather
What's it going to take
For you to see tomorrow?
What's it like to take
For you to live another day?
What's it going to take
For you to watch me grow older?
What's it going to take
For you to grant me one last hug?
What's it going to take
For you to sit at my graduation?
What's it going to take
For you to beam at me with pride?
What's it going to take
For you to behold my lavish wedding?
What's it going to take
For you to witness those sacred vows?
What's it going to take
For you to play with my children?
What's it going to take
For you to watch *them* grow older?
Is it going to take another heart attack
For you to just stop smoking?
Or do you want to miss out on all life's blessings
Awaiting you in years to come?

Student Commentary: What about this assignment helped me learn to write.

I realized that I can express my thoughts and emotions that I could not talk about openly

in my writing. This poem was written after I had spent a day with my grandfather and watched him "puff" away his life with cigarettes. I don't think I could confront him verbally, so I wrote this poem.

Teacher Commentary: What I do to help students learn writing.

I provided 1 to 2 days of class time for 5-6 weeks for response groups. Also, I was a participant in the groups sharing my poem too. Kids respond very well when given the time and tools for writing.