

Creative Writing Cannibalized: The Influences of various authors in the creative  
writing of a Northwest author.

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FACULTY APPROVAL

Creative Writing Cannibalized: The Influence of various authors of the creative writing of a northwest author.

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## Abstract

The goal of this study is to analyze certain original works and to determine how much a work is influenced by another author versus a work being derivative of the work. In addition to an analysis of the original works, my study will make references to authors who have influenced my writing style. My thesis is that these works influenced my writing without the writing itself being derivative of the various authors.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

In the creative process, our influences become our guide. In the case of writing, authors have openly pointed to whom their influences were praise those authors and offer what influenced them to go into writing. To account for how much these creators of prose and poetry have influenced a writer's work can be quite the test of a writer. The writer must go through much self-examination of their favorite works and their own writing to determine where certain ideas, words, and writing patterns may have come from. The degree to which a writer's work is far too derivative of an author he or she may be influenced by becomes serious question for the writer. The goal of this study was not only to analyze certain original works, but also to determine how much a work influences the creative origins of a work, versus being derivative of the work. This study analyzed an original children's story, and three original poems. A written analysis was done of each. The children's story will be "Pedro the Purple Parrot" about 13 pages long. The poems will be "A Candle for Yakima", "When My Father Became the Heavyweight Champion of the World", and "God I Hate Kids".

In addition to an analysis of the original works, the study will make references to authors who have influenced my writing style. My thesis is that these works influenced the ideas of my writing without the writing itself being derivative of various authors, such as Sandra Cisneros, Johnny Cash, Raymond Carver, and Sherman Alexie. The works of Sandra Cisneros will be compared with the story "Pedro the Purple Parrot." The Poem "A Candle for Yakima" will be carefully explicated due to its unique regional references and compared with the Cash song "That Ragged Old Flag." The poem "When My Father Became the Heavyweight Champion of the



World, was compared to Raymond Carver's "Photograph of my Father in his 22<sup>nd</sup> year." The poem "God I Hate Kids" was compared to the poetry of Sherman Alexie and Raymond Carver's "Cathedral. The short stories and the poems are for the most part analyzed separately.

The first work to be presented will be the children's story Pedro the Purple Parrot. Here is the story in its entirety.

Pedro the Purple Parrot

Experimental Fiction

By Carlos Mendez A.K.A. Manfriedo Garza

Edited by Sarloc Denzem PhD

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Pedro was a little purple parrot.

Pedro lived with the Ramirez family.

The family loved the parrot.

The family member who loved Pedro most of all was Manuel, the youngest who named the Parrot and took care of him most of the time.

Every morning they ate breakfast together.

Manuel would hold Pedro in his cage when the family took him in the car.

Some nights, Pedro would sleep in Manuel's room

They were best of friends. Sometimes the family would sit around while Manuel played with the bird.

“Un perico purpura,” the older Aunt said about the color of Pedro during her visit.

“Morado,” the father said.

The family all had a good laugh.

Pedro would sit would often sit on Manuel’s shoulder as he would use the internet.

Manuel would put pictures of his bird on his camera and E-mail them.

Pedro felt like a star.

Manuel would take Pedro out on the patio sometimes. Pedro loved the fresh air and Manuel and his father would clip the bird’s wings to not let him fly away.

Pedro did not mind being pampered.

One day after being clipped, Pedro was outside on the wall, where a gull and a pigeon landed near him.

"Hola," Pedro said happily to the two birds.

"Whatever," The gull said to Pedro. The Pigeon said nothing at first and looked around the place

"Do you live with these people in the house?" the Pigeon said angrily.

"Yes I do," Pedro replied happily they are my family.

"They are not your family!" the gull replied.

"Yeah" said the pigeon still in a mad voice.

"These people keep you around as a pet," said the pigeon.

"Well yes," Pedro replied "that is why I am here. They tell me I am one of the family."

"You are not one of the family" said the Pigeon. "You were taken away by force from some island; you do not belong indoors as their pet. You belong free like us."

"Yes." said the gull "I live in the marshy area off the highway, behind a rusty old warehouse."

Then the pigeon said, "Yeah, and I live in an old brick feed building. We birds fly around all day free and eat whatever food we find. Sometimes in the fields and sometimes we eat the French fries people throw in the parking lot of a hamburger place. Nobody pays attention to the sign 'Please do not feed the birds'"

"Come with us." The pigeon said. "You can be free."

Pedro looked at the birds and thought about what they said. He had never just flown freely as they did. He had lived with the family his whole life. He heard Manuel coming and the gull and pigeon flew away. "Remember what we said," the pigeon chirped as he flew away. Pedro just sat and watched them fly away into the sky as the sun was going down.

"Did you make some friends?" Manuel said to Pedro as he carefully took him back in the house. Pedro flapped his wings a little and sighed as he felt himself be put back on his pedestal. As he watched the cover being put over his cage for the night, he wondered to himself what it would be like to be free.

Several weeks passed and Pedro began to think more and more about what the pigeon and gull said. Manuel sensed the bird seemed sad and wanted to do something to make him

happy. Manuel got him a little mirror, but this just made Pedro even sadder. He looked at his cage and his family's home and wondered still about what it was like outside his home.

The day came that Pedro needed his wings clipped again. The father usually did this with the help of Manuel. Manuel would gently hold the bird while the dad clipped the feathers. Pedro usually held still, but before they could get started the phone rang. The father went to get the phone, and Manuel held the bird. Pedro looked around and saw the deep blue April sky. It was so full and lush. He flapped his wings a bit and Manuel thought he wanted to play. Then, Pedro spread his wings farther than he ever had. Manuel, excited by the bird's actions, let go for a moment and Pedro felt his little body float in fresh air. Soon he began to flap his wings harder and faster and more he flapped the further and further he rose away from Manuel's grasp

"Pedro come back!" Manuel cried in fear he would lose his bird, but Pedro heard nothing. Pedro was too excited with the power of flight. He flapped his wings even harder and soon was soaring in the clear northwest sky. With the cool wind flowing through his rich purple wings and with only the sun to break the canvas of blue, Pedro flew and flew. Pedro soared over the little valley before him. With his eyes ablaze with joy he looked out from among billowy clouds to see the mountains and rivers that surrounded the city. Pedro laughed as he saw the tiny city below. The many houses and cars looked like the little toys that Manuel would play with at home on the *carpeta*.

Looking down at the city below with the long train of sloping hills and snow capped mountains, Pedro thought to himself about the gull and the pigeon. He wanted to show them what he had done. He wanted to let them know he was free like they were. He saw a marshy area behind an old warehouse and he flew to it. Still not accustomed to flight, Pedro struggled as he

got closer, and saw a large group of gulls on a tree behind a building. As Pedro got closer, he saw the warehouse was a run-down old building with faded paint, broken windows, and piles of junk in the front. As we flew to where the birds were, he noticed the gull he had met on the other day.

"Hola!" The Parrot said, calling out to the Gull.

"Hey." The gull said without an expression on his face. Pedro came over to rest next to the gull. The gull moved over slightly and looked away. Pedro tried to tell him of how he flew away and was free and his story of the excitement of flight.

"I am free like you said." Pedro exclaimed. "I stretched out my wings and flew in the air!"

The gull however was disinterested. He ignored Pedro and went off with the other gulls to feed in the marshy area. Pedro tried to join them, but the marsh area was wet and cold and the seeds were few and far between. He tried to make friends with the other birds, but the gulls seemed distant and unfriendly. He tried once more to speak to the Gull, but the Gull wanted only to be with the other gulls and peck around for food.

Pedro felt disappointed. He looked around at the marsh area, which was lifeless and cold. The trees behind the old warehouse looked bare and twisted. The piles of junk seemed to go on as far as the eye could see. Everything looked so rusted and abandoned. He did not like this place.

When he saw the exposed bricks of the building, he remembered what the pigeon had said that he lived in a red brick building. He imagined that it would be warmer and cozier in that place than the area behind the warehouse.

"Mr. Gull" Pedro yelled out to birds in the marsh. "I am going off to find the Mr. Pigeon and say hello to him."

The other gulls barely looked up to hear Pedro's words and the gull Pedro came to see only watched in disinterest as Pedro flew away as quick as he came.

As Pedro flew, he saw the many houses in the valley below and began to think of Manuel and the family he left behind. He missed them very much and he did not want to hurt Manuel or the rest of the family by leaving. Pedro however loved the feeling of flight. He loved that feeling of the wind whipping through his wings as he soared in the deep blue sky.

From his bird's eye view, Pedro spotted a building made of old red brick. It was a tattered old building with many gaps on the top with pigeons moving quickly in and out of the spaces. Pedro immediately thought to himself that this was the place the pigeons lived.

He flew into one of the open spaces, and in no time he saw Mr. Pigeon among a large group of other pigeons and he was greeted by the large bird.

"Hey look at this! It's the parrot from the patio." Mr. Pigeon said laughingly.

"Me llamo Pedro, Mr. Pigeon," Pedro said as he looked about the place. It was a much warmer place than the cold marsh of the gulls, but much smaller and darker. It was a cramped dark place, and through the gaps of the floor beneath him he could see the large building underneath. It was a harsh old room filled with big bags on a rough floor and was lightened by only a few rays shining through to show the dust in the air. The dust shone like gold in the darkness of this old building, but that was the only sight of anything golden in this tattered building.

"I see you made it out," the Pigeon yelled to Pedro. Pedro was about to answer but before he could, a wave of pigeons started moving behind him.

"You better start moving" Mr. Pigeon said as he moved along with Pedro among the flock of birds. "We all move around in circles inside the crawlspace of the building and take

turns bumping into one another. Unless we are going somewhere, then suddenly we all take off in the same direction."

"Why do you do this?" Pedro asked as he tried to keep up with the Pigeon among the other birds. The pigeon paused and thought to himself "I never really thought about it much. It is just something we Pigeons do. Here we go!" and another swarm of pigeons came in pushing and shoving

Pedro tried to make his way though and say hello to the many birds, but they were too numerous and too fast.

"It is hard to say hello." Pedro said "and make friends."

"Oh we are all friends here," another yelled out among the crowd. Soon the crowd got thicker and thicker and Pedro found himself surrounded by pigeons. He grew confused, and overwhelmed. He felt himself get pushed around, and he got separated from his new friend the pigeon.

Soon, Pedro grew scared and alone against the teeming crowds of birds. His ears were deafened by the sounds of their many coos. As the air got thinner and warmer, he struggled to take a full deep breath. His little heart began to race as he felt lost in this crowd of strange birds.

Suddenly, Pedro saw a streak of light out of the corner of his eye. This was an opening for sure. He dove forward with his beak, and breaking the pattern of the many circling birds he made his way through them in a clumsy manner. Eventually he made his way outside and onto the brick facade of the building. He saw other birds there milling in the sunlight.



"Hey you made your way out. Good." a voice yelled to him from the side of building. It was his friend Mr. Pigeon.

"Yes, I did" Pedro said, almost out of breath. Pedro struggled to stay on the brick and looked out upon the beautiful valley below. It was such a difference from inside.

"It takes work to get out sometimes," Mr. Pigeon said laughingly. "I think you will fit in here. Hey, Pedro, a bunch of us birds are going to fly off to that old Hamburger drive in place to eat some fries. You should come."

"Well I really do not know the way there..." and before Pedro could finish his sentence, Mr. Pigeon and a flock of other Pigeons from the building took off like a shot. Pedro flapped his wings and began to follow them. He had a hard time keeping up, but Pedro soon got up to speed and flew with the other birds. He could not enjoy the sight of the city as he did when he flew on his own, but he was surprised by his own speed.

Flying over the large sloping hills below him, Pedro realized that he did not really like staying in the red brick building the pigeons lived in, no more than he liked the marsh area of the gulls. He hoped that this place where the birds ate the fries would finally be the place where it felt like home.

### Act 3

Following the pigeons in flight, Pedro saw the little drive-in from the distance. It was a nice little brown and orange restaurant with lots of people going in and out with their food. The parking lot was filled with old-fashioned cars that people fixed up to look new. The parking lot also had tour and school busses and there was a little park nearby where families were eating

their food under the trees and children played. Pedro looked upon this nice little spot of activity and thought he had finally found a home.

He followed a large group of pigeons flying to what looked like sand next to little park of the drive-in. Pedro noticed the gull he had tried to be friends with back at the marsh was there with a group of other gulls. Pedro did not go off to say hello to Mr. Gull though. He went off to feed with the rest of the pigeons where the people were throwing fries to the birds. The sand was strangely gray and felt weird under Pedro's feet, but he hopped along with the rest of the birds to catch some fries. The fries were delicious, cold, but delicious.

Pedro remembered how Manuel used to feed him fries back home, but they were warm and Manuel would feed Pedro with his fingers. Manuel's mom and dad often told him that it is not good to feed fries to a parrot, but Manuel said to them he would only give Pedro a couple. Pedro missed Manuel, and as he moved about and saw the children with their families so happy together he missed home even more.

Then, Pedro suddenly heard a loud car pulling in and burning its tires in the parking lot. Several other people turned around to watch a bullish man with wet looking, curly hair test his car alarm over and over again. This caused some people to leave and the birds to scatter. Pedro moved with them and noticed a little boy and girl throwing fries trying to call him over.

"Look it's a parrot," the little girl said to her brother as she threw fries to him.

"Yeah a parrot," the little boy said to his sister.

"Here boy," the girl said to Pedro. Pedro started to come over, but suddenly out of nowhere the bullish man with the loud car came running after Pedro!

"I am going to catch that parrot and sell it!" The man yelled. Before Pedro knew it, the man almost had his hands around him. He could feel the awful man's pudgy fingers touch his feathers. Scared, Pedro flapped his wings and scattered the sand all about and took off like a shot into the air. He could hear the voices of others telling the man to leave the bird alone. As he flew away and into a tree, he heard the man say he would take a pellet gun and shoot the bird out of the tree to catch him. Pedro was terrified.

Pedro knew he could not stay at that drive-in, and he flew away as far as he could into a group of trees by a river. Relieved he was safe, he was surprised to see the pigeon and the gull flying out to see him.

"Wow, he almost caught you," the pigeon said, laughingly.

"Yeah," the gull said as he also laughed.

"You have to be careful the next time you come to the drive-in," the pigeon said.

"I am not going back to that drive in, that old brick building, or that marsh," Pedro said furiously, "I am going back to my family. I am going back home."

"You are home!" The Pigeon said. "You are free. You can go anywhere you want."

"Yeah," the gull said, siding with the pigeon.

"Free?" The Parrot yelled. "What good is all this freedom if I have to live in frustration and fear? What good is all this freedom if it has no purpose? What good is all this freedom if I have no one I care about to share it with? What does a pigeon and gull know about what is best for a parrot? I am going home!"

The parrot flew away and the wind drowned out the sound of the pigeon and gull mocking him from the tree. As he flew over the city, he noticed how different it looked from before and he wondered whether or not he could find his way back to his family.

#### Act 4

As Pedro began to fly higher to rise over the sandy foot hills of the pass, he looked to his left and saw an amazing sight. It was an eagle! He had seen pictures of eagles on-line that Manuel showed him, but no picture could match this sight. The eagle was a sleek majestic animal. He flew with such distinction and purpose that Pedro lost focus on his own flying and almost fell out of the sky. This eagle was the image of power with his piercing eyes, chiseled yellow beak, helmet of white feathers, his armor of brown feathers, and his talons of iron. Over the sandy hills of the pass, he sped through the sky at breakneck speed.

When the Eagle noticed Pedro, Pedro did not know what to do. Then, the Eagle glanced at Pedro and nodded respectfully to the little parrot. Pedro nodded back before Mr. Eagle took off again into the horizon. Suddenly, Pedro understood this amazing bird. The sky was his home. The hills and the land surrounding it were Mr. Eagle's domain. The ground was where he drew his strength, but the sky was his world. Mr. Eagle did not need to be told where to live, or how to think. Mr. Eagle did not even need the help of others, but only to be left to be in his domain with other eagles. He was power and he was glory and did not need to display a bullish act to show this to others. As Pedro watched him fly off into the distance, he was overcome by his experience with this amazing bird.

Anxious as he was about to fly over the top of the hill, Pedro was suddenly overcome by a huge plume of thick, ashy smoke. Soon his eyes and lungs were filled with smoke and red hot

embers burned the ends of his feathers. Pedro began to panic and through the gaps in the smoke he could see thick clouds of cinder streaming from the orchards. It was the smudge pots of the orchards burning like furnaces and spewing smoke into the sky. As far as Pedro could see, hundreds of little tubes of fire sent smoke into the air. Having become a more experienced flyer, Pedro flapped his wings and tried to out run the smoke. Soon, he was flying higher and higher. Soon Pedro rose beyond the plume of smoke and higher in the sky than he had ever been before. Shaking his little head from the smoke, he took a deep breath of the thin air and saw before him a dark and stormy sky.

So far from home and so weary and scared, Pedro found himself in the path of a storm front moving over the valley. Clouds that had looked so soft and gentle before looked rough and brutal. Like a band of angry ghosts blaring a trumpet of fierce wind and causing thunder as if their fists were banging against the walls of the sky.

For Pedro it seemed like the end. He could not go forward into the eye of the storm, nor did it seem could he go backward into the clouds of fire. He could not suffer anymore hardship. He could not suffer any more pain. Tears mixed with rain as it fell into the birds' eye as he became soaked by the downpour. With thunder and lightning flashing upon him, and the plume of fiery ash to his back, Pedro was convinced he would never see Manuel and his family ever again.

Suddenly, something inside Pedro moved him. He suddenly could not accept the fate that seemed in store for him. He could not accept the loss of his family and his home to fear. Pedro also remembered the Eagle and how noble and strong he was. Pedro then discovered his will to

return home, no matter the risk. Pedro may have been a little parrot, but at that moment he had the spirit of an Eagle.

Turning from the storm clouds, the little parrot spread his rain soaked wings and dove head first back into the cloud of ash. Pedro wondered if he could fly into the cloud of cinder could he find a gap and soar beneath the smoke far enough to find his way back home? As he dove further into the cauldron, Pedro felt his little eyes burn with pain, his lungs filling with the black smoke as he struggled to fly, and his wings flapping so hard he felt them go numb with pain. Was it faith that drove him? He wanted more than anything else to see Manuel again.

In the blanket of darkness, Pedro could not breathe, nor feel, nor even know what direction he flew. In the heart of that burning ash, Pedro felt his little body spin and spin and spin out of control. Then, in a flash he heard silence and nothing more, like the stillness of a potter's field.

With tiny lights flashing before his watery eyes, Pedro saw the little city below. He saw no more of the smoke, but a small house with patio with a little boy crying under the pale streetlight. He saw the image get larger and soon the boy looked up with tears in his eyes and a surprise on his face.

"Pedro," the boy shouted in joy as bird landed into the patio. Though he was exhausted, Pedro flapped his tattered wings in the pale light in joy as he came to rest in the boys out stretched hands. "*Como una angel en la noche,*" the boy cried. Like an angel in the night. Manuel took him in his gentle hands. Hearing the boy's cry, Manuel's mother and father ran into the patio and were overjoyed at the bird's return.

"See Mijo," the father said, rubbing the son's head, "I told you he would come back." The room was aglow with light as the little purple parrot choked back his tears. Manuel gave him some water and food, but Pedro felt no hunger in his belly or any pain from his singed wings. He was home. He was home.

## Chapter 2 Analysis

The story was overall judged a delight to read by many of the developmental English and Ethnic Literature students, although all of them had no idea that the instructor Carlos Mendez was the author of the work. The story was written under the pseudonym Manfriedo Garza with the editor Sarloc Dezmen being an anagram of the author's real name Carlos Mendez. No student ever figured out the anagram. Some of the students even read the story to their school aged children. The discussion that followed the reading of the story centered on a student's observation that good literature does not have a happy ending, and in the case with Pedro, it did not. According to her observation, the little purple parrot did not make its way home, but rather it may very well have died on the way. Consider the line on page 13, "Silence and then nothing, the stillness of a potter's field ". The potter's field reference served actually as a metaphor for death.

This issue had become a major sticking point in the class and lead to a larger debate, as the student debated that the parrot had died in a field and the sequence where the parrot was home and surrounded by family was simply the parrot going to heaven. This part of the debate them moved to the philosophical issue as to whether animals went to heaven. Literature is known for sparking good debates. However, the analysis for the study will begin with the very wording of the story itself. The opening words of the story was written in a manner that is was

created for young children. The phrases are short and sharp that name the protagonist of the story. Originally story was meant to show the differences between as story that was written in English, Spanish, and Spanglish. Spanglish is a dialectical blend of English and Spanish. The objective of the study was to show that there was enough of a difference between formal Spanish and Spanglish that Spanglish was its own language, but the early part of the study however showed only subtle differences between the Spanish and the Spanglish sections. However, there were enough differences in certain words that provided insiders with a Spanglish joke between the use of the word *Purpura* the Spanglish word for purple, verses the formal Spanish word *Morado* . Other Spanglish words are placed in this story, including some code switching with the line *See Mijo* and *Como un angel en la noche*, like an angel in the night.

The story offered more information on the bird's place in the family and the boy's closeness to the bird. The author also crafted the story to show the closeness the between father and son. This section focused on the role of the father in a Hispanic family which is often missing in the media. The primary discussions about the bird and his care and feeding revolved around the father and son. This focus created a sense of a safe and warm existence for the bird, but this safe and warm existence would be challenged with the arrival the antagonist birds, The Gull and the Pigeon. The Gull and the Pigeon were selected not only as they were the bird peers, and he peer pressure that would follow, but also the birds themselves represent nuisance birds. The gull is meant to represent a colorless scavenger, acerbic and cold, and the Pigeon though superficially charming is known as being a flying rat. Here are the antagonists, two birds who knew nothing about Pedro's life, yet insisted that knew what is better for him. They have lived free out in the elements and who work out to be the perfect antagonists of the outside world. Through their conversations, they used their sociopathic superficial style of charm that placed



some doubts in the bird's mind. The author used careful wording to appeal to the reader's sense of justice and freedom. The antagonists used their stirring words to evoke romantic images of freedom of the outside worlds. Pedro heard their words and it gave him some food for thought. The lonely scene of the bird placed his blanket covered gilded cage added to both the protagonist's arguments, and the readers curiosity of what would it be like to soar beyond the confines of Pedro's world.

It is here where the influences of author Sandra Cisneros's writing should be considered as they hold the high influence to the writing. In her popular story, "The House on Mango Street" Cisneros's assumed the perspective of a little girl who spoke about the dream house she wanted to live in, versus that house her family had lived in for some time. Cisneros gave us great detail about how she wanted that dream home to be, but contrasted this with her unfortunately reality. In this similarity lies the great contrast. In "The House on Mango Street" Cisneros leads with the ideals of what her dream house would be like, and what follows is the cold unfortunate reality. For Pedro he has no real ideal of what it would be like to be free, but expresses his first experience with open flight, with the cold reality coming later as he attempts to commune with the Gull and the Pigeon.

The challenges the bird faces represent the three challenges that a protagonist would usually face. In the case of Pedro, he faces the first challenge of not fitting in and living in an unpleasant environment. In the second challenge, he faces getting lost in a large crowd and being lost in the process. All the while he feels alone and estranged from his family. The outside world was not as alluring as he thought it would be. His final challenge would be a dangerous experience with the elements both from man-made and natural forces. Between the challenges, Pedro had a great personal epiphany when he saw the eagle. Although scared at first, he saw the bird in his

natural surroundings living in his own existence. The bird does not need any external forces to tell it how to live. It lives in relative harmony with its surroundings. It is here where Pedro makes his epiphany about his own choices he needs to make in his life. He listened to the Gull and the Pigeon and tried to fulfill their image how he should live. In the end, he found the life unsatisfying. He had a support group at home and he wanted to keep that support. He did not need to satisfy the demands of others.

Peer pressure has historically been very strong among young people and the pull of their peers often have challenged the teachings young people receive in their home life. The scene of Pedro flying away personified this bend toward peer pressure. The scene where he realizes he had a good thing to begin with personified his growth. Perhaps one of the more noteworthy moments in the story was when Pedro realized he had power. Pedro had the power to make decisions and fly through even the most dangerous situations. This was placed to show the character had more strength than he even knew he had. **This is an epiphany in of itself, and this scene is another story similarity to the writings of Sandra Cisneros.** The story talked about how their girls had tried on high heeled shoes for the very first time, and discovered they did indeed have legs. “Look were have legs scarred with satiny scabs, but we have legs” This joy of discovery had to be tempered with the new attention the girls had gotten with their new attire. Most specifically the attention of drunken homeless man who does his best to compliment the girls, “Hey little girl you look as pretty a yellow taxi cab.” Granted the coming of age factors are different with their girls discovering puberty, and Pedro discovering his power to face up to difficult situations. However, the discovery of power that the protagonists did not know they had was there and should be recognized. It was important to show that Pedro was indeed powerful. Young people are powerful.

The ending of the story is a test of Pedro's new resolve and it was important to create a literal fire and brimstone final challenge to Pedro to test his new sense of courage. The ending started as the epiphany is made with his exposure to the eagle, and then Pedro was rushed into danger as the large billows of smoke from the smudge pots burned away and created a breathing hazard for the little bird. This section proved most troublesome as the details had to be thorough enough to show a complicated and dangerous situation, but not too complex as to confuse the reader. Many lines were borrowed from scripture "And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up every man straight before him (Joshua 6:1-5 RSV)." This was turned into "Like a band of angry ghosts blaring a trumpet of fierce wind and causing thunder as if their fists were banging against the walls of the sky" (Mendez 14).

The personification of the ghosts in the sky came from Indian stories of clouds taking human faces. A bit Poe oriented imagery was also used, though no specific line could really be pointed to provide a direct influence.

The ending called for the most creative of writing as a simple solution would have robbed the work of its unpredictability. A point of uncertainty needed to be created as to whether or not the bird would in fact make it home. The uncertainty was expanded even though a specific ending was created were it seemed the bird had made it home. This was the argument introduced at the beginning of the analysis and asked the larger question of the work, did the bird actually make it home. This is the point where literature can take a life of its own. It is up to the reader to decide this aspect of the story. The writer has already created the work, and now the work must stand on its own.

The final question that must be asked is whether or not “Pedro the Purple Parrot” is in fact a children’s story, or is it in fact a short story with some characteristics of a children’s story. That is a question that must be answered by the reader. It is difficult even to describe what constitutes a children’s story. One of the most lauded children’s stories of all time was Mark Twain’s Huckleberry Finn, though the book was not intended to be a children’s story at all. It was originally aimed at an adult audience. In the case with “Pedro the Purple Parrot,” we have a story aimed at a multigenerational audience.

### Chapter 3

The next work to be explicated is the poem “A Candle for Yakima.”

A Candle for Yakima  
By  
Carlos Mendez

As I look out into the night sky,  
I light a candle for Yakima.  
The skyline made up of Red, White, and Blue lights.  
Old icons that hold so many memories.  
Some long since taken down.  
Passed into history.  
So bittersweet.  
They disarmed The Armory.  
Ring a Ding Drive in, Rings no more.  
I rocked the Moo Moo Room.  
The Coney Island café,  
has taken its last order  
The Big Boy with his pompadour could not even survive.  
Montgomery Wards;  
Never again will I stroll down Electric Avenue.  
Nordstroms; always the hottest girls to see.  
The Country Store,  
I loved the smell of those cheap rubber boots, and I remember the monkeys and the chicken who  
played electric tic tac toe.  
The Miller Building is long since gone, as our last connection to gilded age.  
The Dragon Inn has lost its fire.

I can still see the Great Western Building.  
 It outlasted the Yakima Mall.  
 Never let us forget that old Mall.  
 The Squire Shop  
 The Jolly Joker  
 Hazel's Candy  
 Hole-in-one  
 I can still smell the donuts my father loved.  
 The Larson Building...still stands proud and tall,  
 like a silent sentinel  
 an elegant old gentleman.  
 And we can't cruise the ave any more.  
 Only once a year, but what is there to see?  
 As I walked into the Sportscenter, I saw the ghost of Raymond Carver bellying up to the bar.  
 I like the new benches, lights, and freshly painted buildings,  
 but I miss the Blue Banjo and all the riff-raff that came with it.  
 Echoes of the rough and tumble days of Yakima,  
 where you could see a B-movie at the Country Drive-in that nobody even watched.  
 We just moved it all to Union Gap.  
 I miss the Valley Mall's old tacky red carpet.  
 You can order mochas and wine at Columbia Steppe,  
 but you can't get one of those frozen bananas covered with chocolate and nuts on them.  
 Fear not, for Miner's and Peppermint Stick are still there.  
 Yakima will change.  
 A bigger convention center.  
 A five star hotel.  
 Let's jam in a closed street on a Saturday among the vacant buildings,  
 though I still can't find a parking space.  
 As I look out into the night sky,  
 I light a candle for Yakima.  
 I love my home.

The entire poem was written free verse with no focus on a particular pentameter. The poem was written one evening after an Ethnic Literature 200 class where the class had discussed the works of Raymond Carver. The class had discussed that Carver had mentioned several Yakima landmarks in his works, some of which had been closed, or renovated. The caused me to consider the many Yakima landmarks that had come and gone. Some ideas had been written down, but the realization of the poem had not come till New Year's evening after leaving a New Year's celebration. Hence the line, "As I look out into the night sky, I light a candle for Yakima"

(Mendez 21). Many laugh at this first line, which is fine, but it establishes the very focus of the poem the past, the present, and the future of Yakima. Yakima's future has been a heavily debated subject among many long time residents of Yakima. "The sky line made of Red, White, and Blue lights" (Mendez 21). This is obvious a reference to the patriotic sentiment of the city. Yakima has received the title of an All American City. Note the words Red, White, and Blue in the line are capitalized. The next line "Old icons that hold so many memories," sets the tone for the sentimental quality of the poem. (Mendez 21) The following lines intensify this sentiment. "Some long since taken down, passed into history, so bitter sweet" (Mendez 21).

The poem originally was crafted to account for the loss of certain landmarks in chronological order, but this did not last too long. The poem seemed to work better by mentioning whatever landmarks came to mind. The poem also began with some sarcastic words plays, but this did not last too long either. The point was made regarding the frustration the author had regarding the demolition of these landmarks. Consider the earliest lines in the poem about the loss of certain landmarks. "They disarmed the Armory. Ring-a-ding drive-in Rings no more" (Mendez 21). Who is they? They are the powers that be that make those decisions about what structures stay and what gets demolished. Rather than make a pointed statement about the continual destruction of certain landmarks, the statement is subtle. The line "Ring-a-ding drive in rings no more" offer a line of humor to balance the line of frustration regarding the armory (Mendez 21). The humor aspect of the poem was again demonstrated with the line that celebrates modern American pop culture with the line "I rocked the Moo Moo room" (Mendez 21).

The reverence and the lamentation for lost Yakima landmarks continue with the reference to one of the greatest of losses, the Coney Island Café. The reference of this in the poem causes

the reader to pause as they either try to remember the café, or they attempt to get a visual image in their heads as to what the café looked like. Either way, when they hear that this little cafe has taken its last order, it creates that wistful feeling of remembering a loss. The café was gone before they can even imagine what the Coney Island dogs tasted like. The line that followed also had that sense of bitter sweet sentiment. “The Big Boy with his pompadour could not even survive” (Mendez 21). For the readers who know who The Big Boy was, they get this image of this heavy set young man with this huge hairstyle that looks as if he could eat several double burgers with cheese with no problem. With such a powerful and well fed young man, what could possibly be the force to bring him down? However, be it the changing tastes of American society or just the competition from huge corporations with drive up windows, the JB Big Boy restaurants would not survive the franchise wars. The Big Boy would be remembered largely as an icon from a bye gone era. This line was to show that nothing and no one was safe from time and change. Even those things that seem the most durable and indestructible could be brought to end with time and change. The next line of the poem, intensifiers this sentiment.

“Montgomery Wards...never again will I stroll down Electric Avenue” (Mendez 21).

This line is perhaps of saddest of all in that it speaks of a large corporation that was in business for decades and was a part of American society and pop culture, and yet it went bankrupt and closed its doors. The store had become outdated and could not compete in price or style with new big box stores such as Target and Wal Mart. The line “never again will I stroll down Electric Avenue,” again is sarcasm to show that Montgomery Wards was trying to update its image by giving its departments certain trendy names, but the effort turned out to be weak and in vain (Mendez 21) . The next line provided some needed comic relief.

“Nordstoms, always the hottest girls to see,” this line is important in that it broke the sad sentiment of the poem and moved it to a more informal work (Mendez 22). The store Nordstorms did not go out of business, but rather it left the valley. The line about the hot girls, served to wake up the unengaged listener to a word image that seemed to come out of nowhere in a poem such as this. The poem did provide comic relief at the same time and serve to remind the reader that anything could happen in a poem such as this. Also the reader is provided with some visually image of some well dressed career woman on the go walking out of the high priced store and crossing the street to host of male onlookers. The unexpected quality of the line also sets the tone for the next line as the poem expanded in meaning.

“The Country Store, I loved the smell of those cheap rubber boots, and I remember the monkeys and the chicken who played electric tic tac toe” (Mendez 22). Perhaps the oddest line in the entire poem as it speaks about a kitschy little run down shopping center styled in an old western motif. The old Country Store had become weathered in time, but never lost its old west style and rugged individualist atmosphere. Mentioning the games that involved putting animals in precarious conditions for the amusement of customers at the price of a quarter only added to the visual images of antiquated forms of entertainment of questionable taste and morality. The kitsch becomes apparent when one takes a post modernist view. The era based perspective the reader is asked to look as the subjects in the poem is especially strong in the next line.

“The Miller Building is long since gone, as our last connection to Gilded Age” (Mendez 22). The Miller Building was a glorious old building of classical construction with marble floors and hand sculpted adornments. Its lavish and ambitious designs were a direct influence of the gilded era, of America’s new move toward extravagant displays of riches and excess. The Miller Building was the earliest example of that move. A small orchard town like Yakima was



immediately brought uptown by such a posh new building. The building spoke to that ambitious new perspective that the town would grow, and so it did but not into the sprawling metropolis that such a building would have indicated. In later years, the building would be run down with its candy striped awnings hanging in shreds. It still maintained a sense of classical elegance, but with its demolition the community lost a living icon of its past. Readers may only have a nodding acquaintance with the gilded era, but they get the image that a rare cultural icon is gone that further distanced us from our own past. A more recent Yakima icon was mentioned in the next line to give the poem some flavor.

“Even The Dragon Inn has lost its fire” (Mendez 22). The Dragon Inn was once the preeminent Yakima hot spot. Wine, hard-spirits, and great music were served along with the best Italian food in town. Odd that a place called the Dragon Inn would be serve Italian rather than Asian food even with statues of dragons in the front, but who is to argue with the blending of cultures that makes up Americana. The next line speaks to both to era based structures and modern Americana.

“I can still see the Great Western Building. It outlasted the Yakima Mall.” The reference to the Great Western Building and how still remains to this day, is to show to how some of the classical structures have remained in the city of Yakima. The Great Western Building was to be demolished to make more room for the mall, but as the nature of business in the downtown area changed, the mall found itself in financial danger. It is here that the jewel in the crown of the poem is inserted as the poem takes about a major Yakima landmark that closed in 2003.

The Yakima Mall was the largest mall ever built in Yakima, Washington. It out sized the Valley Mall in terms of its number of stores, multiple levels, and covered parking that held a maximum of 1500 cars . It housed three anchor stores, JC Penny, Mervyns (formally Peoples),

and the Bon Marche. Construction was finished in 1972 in the very heart of Yakima's downtown area. Thousands of Yakima residents and tourists regularly visited the mall, and generations of long time residents held fond memories of this shopping center. The mall's down turn came about partly when again the big box stores such as Target and Wal-Mart came to the valley. The downturn of the local economy and the renovations to the Valley Mall that lured the Yakima Mall stores from their location, including the Bon Marche now called Macy's, also contributed to the downturn. By 2003 the mall was reduced to hall after hall of vacant stores. The store was a shell of its former self with only a handful of stores open till it finally closed.

Personally, I was saddened at the malls closing. The line "let us remember that old mall" is invitation to the reader to join the many with fond memories of that mall and immerse ourselves fully into the nostalgia that is at the very heart of the poem itself. The roll call of the various stores that had come and went is a direct invitation to many knew of the mall's past and remembered those old stores. The poem's obscure references also force younger or uninitiated readers to wonder what those odd sounding stores must have been like. This only adds to the poems unique effect on the readers.

The poem then takes an even more personal turn as I mentioned the a little eatery and doughnut shop called Hole-in-One, and how I could still smell the doughnuts my father loved. This is especially personal as my father passed away the very same year and month that the mall had closed. An eerie coincidence as so many memories of my father was tied to visiting that mall as a child. Given that connection, it was incumbent on me to make mention of my father in the poem.

The poem was not intended to be purely a sad poem as the next line celebrated the fact that another building from Yakima's past had survived to the present. "The Larson Building still

stands proud and tall, like a silent sentinel an elegant old gentleman.” The goal of the poem was not to merely criticize Yakima for its actions, but rather to document the many changes our community had gone through. With all that had come and gone, the art deco designed Larson Building still stood just as glorious as it did when it had first rose in the Yakima Valley. The changes in the Yakima Valley not only manifested themselves in the manner of the loss of certain businesses, but also in the laws regarding public recreation. “And we can’t cruise the ave any more. Only once a year, but what is there to see? Anti-cruising laws were put into effect in the mid 90s and this was not only a strike at the nightlife of the young people of Yakima, but also the life of the downtown area. The lost revenue was felt in the downtown and was another factor towards its downturn. It was years later as part of downtown renewal the cruising was legalized again for one to two weekends a year.

The poem was to be a careful balance of icons that were lost forever and icons that remained. This careful balance was found with the mention of the Yakima Sportscenter, which was an old bar and grill and betting parlor. The Sportscenter was still another victim of the downtowns economic decline, as it would close in 2003. However, unlike the mall, it was fully renovated and reopened in 2005. The Sportscenter also has the distinction of having been a former haunt of the late Raymond Carver, the legendary blue collar American writer who spent his formative years in Yakima. Carver’s unique writing style and untimely death created a mystical quality about the writer, and it is here were that mystical quality is enhanced by presenting Carver as a ghost in the poem. “As I walked into the Sportscenter, I saw the ghost of Raymond Carver bellying up to the bar.”

The renovation and reopening of the Sportscenter were signs that the city fathers of Yakima were acting to revitalize the downtown area. I recognized this in the poem with the line

“I like the new benches, lights, and freshly painted buildings,” but I felt this revitalization came at the price of the losing some unconventional landmarks and a sense of danger that the streets of Yakima used to hold. Hence the line “but I miss the Blue Banjo and all the riff-raff that came with it. Echoes of the rough and tumble days of Yakima, where you could see a B-movie at the Country Drive-in that nobody even watched.”

With the downturn of the downtown Yakima came in contrast the upswing of commerce in the Union Gap area. Its proximity of being closer to the highway for tourist trade was a major factor in its current success. Union Gap with its Valley Mall however was not always so dominant as it used to be seen and the lesser of the city of Yakima and by extension the Yakima Mall. The Valley Mall was seen as the inferior counterpart of the Yakima Mall with a certain kitsch quality. That kitsch quality is long since changed since its sweeping renovation and new stores, hence the line “We just moved it all to Union Gap. I miss the Valley Mall’s old tacky red carpet. You can order mochas and wine at Columbia Steppe, but you can’t get one of those frozen bananas covered with chocolate and nuts on them.” With the renovations of the mall and the new more upscale products, the mall lost a sense of that kitschy Middle American charm. I assured readers that the homespun Middle American charm was not totally lost with the next line about the long time favorite eateries that have now become legend in Union Gap “Fear not, for Miner’s and Peppermint Stick are still there.”

After a long list of various places that have come and went, it was important to steer the reader toward the climax of the poem by bringing them closer to the main idea of the poem and the future of Yakima. This was done by the acceptance of the fact that Yakima will change and to list the many new improvements that had already begun. The following lines show these changes. “Yakima will change. A bigger convention center. A five star hotel. Let’s jam in a

closed street on a Saturday among the vacant buildings, though I still can't find a parking space.” The mention of certain urban realities and comic relief allowed the reader to consider the good and bad aspects of the present. It also allowed for the poem to come full circle back to the beginning. “As I look out into the night sky, I light a candle for Yakima. I love my home.” By coming back full circle, I allowed the reader to gently return back into their world. Also, I gave the reader a chance to step back mentally and look back at what he or she has just read. The end line is rather schmaltzy by some standards, but the ending provides a warm and sentimental touch to leave the reader feeling good.

#### Chapter 4

Candle for Yakima had host of influences, but its chief influence was perhaps the song “That Ragged Old Flag” by country singer songwriter Johnny Cash. “That Ragged Old Flag” told the story of a walk Cash took through the courthouse square of an old town. It was here where Cash met an old man sitting on a park bench. Cash had mentioned to the old man how the old courthouse was rather run down and how there was a ragged old flag hanging from the flag pole. It is here where the old man asks Cash to take a seat and he explains to him the significance as to why they let a ragged old flag hang from their flag pole. The following is the lyrics to the song “That Ragged old Flag.”

I walked through a county courthouse square

On a park bench, an old man was sittin there.

I said, "Your court house is kinda run down,

He said, "No, it will do for our little town".

I said "your old flag pole kinda leaned a little bit,

And that's a ragged old flag you got hanging on it".

He said "have a seat", so I sat down,

He said, "is this your first visit to our little town"

I said, "I think it is"

He said "I don't like to brag, but we're kinda proud of That Ragged Old Flag"

"You see, we got a little hole in that flag there,

When Washington took it across the Delaware.

It got powder burned the night Francis Scott Key sat watching it, writing

"Oh Say Can You See"

It got a rip in New Orleans, with Packingham & Jackson

tugging at its seams.

It almost fell at the Alamo beside the Texas flag,

But she waved on tho.

It got cut with a sword in Chancellorsville,

Got cut again at Shiloh Hill.

There was Robert E. Lee and Beauregard and Bragg,

And the south wind blew hard on

"That Ragged Old Flag"

"On Flanders Field in World War I

She got a big hole from a Bertha gun.

She turned blood red in World War II

She hung limp and low by the time it was through.

She was in Korea and Vietnam.

She went where she was sent by her Uncle Sam."

"She waved from our ships upon the briny foam,  
And now they've about quit waving her back here at home.

In her own good land she's been abused--  
She's been burned, dishonored, denied and refused."

"And the government for which she stands  
Is scandalized throughout the land.  
And she's getting threadbare and wearing thin,  
But she's in good shape for the shape she's in.  
'Cause she's been through the fire before  
And I believe she can take a whole lot more."

"So, we raise her up every morning,  
Take her down every night.  
We don't let her touch the ground  
And we fold her up right.

On second thought, I DO like to brag,  
'Cause I'm mighty proud of that Ragged Old Flag."

The similarities between Cash's "That Ragged Old Flag" and "Candle for Yakima" become apparent as both poems in long form show the larger significance of certain things that may seem innocuous to the casual reader. The significance is carefully laid out for the reader,

who takes a virtual ride through the eyes of another to see things in a new light. For its similarities, the contrasts are strong in that Cash uses one symbol, a flag. “Candle for Yakima” on the other hand uses the candle at the introduction, but then makes references to a host of places in the Yakima area. The basic structure has similarities however, as the reader is carefully guided along during each section of the poem. The poem also ends in a similar fashion, as it comes full circle back to the beginning. “On second thought, I do like to brag, because I am mighty proud of that Ragged Old Flag.” (Cash) The full circle ending allows the reader to return to from their trip to where the author has taken them and back to their reality.

Reality is a common theme among the poems as they differ greatly from the fantasy driven story of “Pedro the Purple Parrot”. The poems focus on real life and real situations of loss and remembrance of things past. In the poem “When my Father became the Heavyweight Champion of the World” the poem focuses of humorous yet true story about how my father was determined to count every dime while raising five children. In “Photograph of my Father in his 22 Year” author Raymond Carver offers us his remembrances about his father, as he looks at an old photograph of his father during a fishing trip. Both poems go beyond simple reminiscing however to take look beyond the surface to see both fathers in a disarming new light. Here are both poems in their entirety.

#### The Day My Father Became the Heavyweight Champion of the World

My father could never leave the supermarket.... without checking the receipt.

My father was a mathematical genius.

So my father could never leave the supermarket... without checking the receipt.

With the kids in the desert sage painted station wagon filled with the large, thick, razor edged, brown paper bags of food in the cargo area where I also sat, barely enough food to feed a family of 7 without many treats,



my father could never leave the supermarket... without checking the receipt.

Rain or shine, through wind and snow, and even the odd fall of volcanic ash,

my father could never leave the supermarket... without checking the receipt.

This was a man who paid attention to detail.

When he was well, he always provided for us. When he got ill, he was forced to retire.

He was a boxer in his youth, he spoke English with a stutter, wore a million keys on his key chain, and loved John Wayne movies.

He was never to be over charged, and he doubled checked things every time because you never know some day they will overcharge you.

So, my father could never leave the supermarket... without checking the receipt.

It was a lovely spring day. The cool wind blew softly in the air. When we least expected it,

...it happened!

The day finally arrived.

During the ritual accounting of figures, my father ran the faded pink numbers on the mile long cash register tape twice and confirmed the malfeasance.

I never saw the receipt.

All I could see was my father with the long coiled grocery tape in hands as he stormed back into the store to inquire as to why the numbers did not come out correctly.

With the six of us in the car, a lifetime seemed to pass until I saw the image of my father quietly contented and carrying a mysterious bag in his hands and the now infamous receipt.

I had learned from my older brothers who jumped out of the car ahead of time that dad had not only gotten his money back from the error on the receipt , but also a gallon of ice cream for his trouble.

It was a glorious day.

For people like us who never win anything, my father held that gallon of free ice cream at his side, like he had won the heavyweight championship of the world.

My family laughed and talked the whole car ride home over about how dad had gotten free ice cream just because he complained about the receipt.

For his many qualities and his many failings, I will never forget that day and the taste of the banana split ice cream was delicious.

All because....

My father could never leave the supermarket... without checking the receipt.

Raymond Carver

Photograph of My Father in His Twenty-Second Year

October. Here in this dank, unfamiliar kitchen  
I study my father's embarrassed young man's face.  
Sheepish grin, he holds in one hand a string  
of spiny yellow perch, in the other  
a bottle of Carlsbad Beer.

In jeans and denim shirt, he leans  
against the front fender of a 1934 Ford.  
He would like to pose bluff and hearty for his posterity,  
Wear his old hat cocked over his ear.  
All his life my father wanted to be bold.

But the eyes give him away, and the hands  
that limply offer the string of dead perch  
and the bottle of beer. Father, I love you,  
yet how can I say thank you, I who can't hold my liquor either,  
and don't even know the places to fish?

\

In the poem “When my Father became the Heavyweight Champion of the World,” we have a poem that is more of a short story. The poem tells of how my father was rather thrifty and careful about how his money was spent. The story begins with how my father could never leave the grocery store without checking the receipt. This became a repetitive phrase through the poem to create a humorous effect, to show the level of intensity of the memory of this action by my father.

After this pattern of frugality by my father was established, the poem then moved to show that his action was not in vain for once brief moment it happened. When the transgression occurred regarding the overbilling, my father stood not only vindicated but rewarded. It really was a special day for him and his beliefs and it stood out memory. In the end Carver and I are in the same situation. He feels a sense failure at not knowing the right places to fish, and I feel a sense of failure not being the kind of man who checks the receipt.

Both poems also make the important point of showing the human side of fathers as being more than simply strong figure heads, but also being weak with human frailties. In the case with the poem “Champion”, it was the father’s fastidious nature about the grocery receipt. In the case with Raymond Carver’s “Father in his 22<sup>nd</sup> year” in was the father’s attempt to project a masculine image that in fact revealed internal weaknesses.

In the poem “When my Father became the Heavyweight Champion of the World,” we have a father who was a boxer in his youth, who was the leader of a large family, and was not to be over charged on anything. His actions as the conscious consumer are commendable and even laudable. When we consider however that it was just a modest over charge he discovered in supermarket parking, we are left with the feeling that it was a minor event where the father over reacted and the supermarket gave him a free item to make him go away. In “Photograph of my Father in his 22 Year,” Carver paints a portrait of father putting on airs to show himself in the masculine image of a great fisherman. “He would like to pose bluff and hearty for his posterity, Wear his old hat cocked over his ear”(Carver 45). The father is projecting the image of a he-man that American society recognizes as the ideal American male. The image fades away however as Carver draws attention to the internal weakness. “But the eyes give him away, and the hands that limply offer the string of dead perch” ( Carver 45). So much of manhood is based

on the strength of a man's hands or his ability to feed his family, and it is here that the poems almost intersect as they speak to the overall strength of the men and how it is displayed.

Strengths often times reveal weaknesses.

The final poem to be analyzed will be the poem "God I hate Kids." An odd, yet straight forward poem.

God I hate kids...

God I hate kids...God I hate kids

God I hate kids...God I hate kids

I hate the kid who burns down a warehouse, and the mother who complains that they made the building too flammable.

God I hate kids...God I hate kids

God I hate kids ...God I hate kids

I hate infant car seats and baby pictures.

I hate the smell of baby oil and being told to 'shush' because the baby is sleeping.

God I hate kids...God I hate kids

God I hate kids ...God I hate kids

I hate that high piercing screech they make in the mall when I am trying to drink my favorite merlot in my favorite café.

Sinking in my chair, where I spend my glorious leisure time and disposable income.

I heard the scampering of little feet, and then the tiniest little voice on Earth.

She told me her name was Angelina, and asked if I wanted to play with her.

With her mother sitting across from me, I asked the young girl to get her mother's permission, and with a pixie like quality, she went back to get it and returned at a hundred miles an hour.

Her mother nodding kindly at me with a newborn babe in arms and the aunt helping alongside.

I played with little Angelina, so quick witted and spatial, she eagerly set up the table full of dominos. She did not play dominos, she only wanted to see them fall.

I watched her in awe as she watched in awe as the dominos fell

Here I sat, ignoring my work and attending her every action and word.

Here I was paralyzed, held captive by a child. So charmed by her vulnerability, I was compelled to tell her that she had the most beautiful hair I had ever seen in my life.

“Thank you,” was all she said.

An eternity went by before her mother and Aunt came over with the baby to sing Angelina’s praises.

Soon, it was time for Angelina to go.

I told her goodbye and watched her skip away, her little summer dress flying up behind her.

Little Angelina.

I reach out through time and space right now and wish you the happiest life.

For you gave me the greatest gift a person can give to another.

Hope.

This poem, like the others before it, takes on the form of a short story. This aspect has turned out to be a consistent pattern with the poems. This particular poem goes from one extreme to the other as the protagonist declares his hatred of children in no uncertain terms, but then relates a twist at the end that shows a metamorphosis of sorts.

The story embedded within the poem tells us about an individual so convinced of his hatred of children and so happy with his life without them, that the mere appearance of a child is a challenge to his existence. How he copes with this challenge is shown as he struggles with his inability to leave her or how to communicate with the child. “Here I was paralyzed, held captive by a child. So charmed by her vulnerability, I was compelled to tell her that she had the most beautiful hair I had ever seen in my life.” (1)

The poem cycled back to its beginning with the goodbye of the girl and the protagonist reconciling his hatred of children with his love of that child. The final lines of the poem send a message to the reader and to the rest of society regarding how he feeling about Angelina and children as a whole. “Little Angelina. I reach out through time and space right now and wish you the happiest life. For you gave me the greatest gift a person can give to another.

Hope.”

The story aspects of the poem are heavily influenced by the author Raymond Carver and his story “Cathedral.” Cathedral by Raymond Carver was a story about a man who exhibits great discomfort about a man who is coming to dinner at his and his wife’s house. The man was a former employer of the wife who worked as a reader for him in the man’s office. The man was totally blind. The beginning of the story shows his hostile the husband is about the man coming to dinner and pays much attention the personal jealousy the husband has toward the blind man. Much was made about the blind man dating and marrying his former assistant who had recently passed away. The blind man had felt and touched the woman’s neck. The husband had spent the early part of the story voicing his disdain for the blind man and his deceased wife, almost portraying himself as the villain in the story. (Carver 817-820)

The blind man eventually arrives to the house for dinner, and after dinner he engages in a conversation with the husband with the wife absent. The men not only share drinks but also a marijuana cigarette. During the conversation, the men actually bond with one another. As the T.V. set is still on, the husband attempts to describe the images of the cathedrals on the T.V. set, but is unsuccessful. The blind man then has the idea to have the husband, who he addresses as Bub, get some paper and pencils to have him draw the spires of the cathedrals as the blind man holds the top of the pen in his hands. The story ended with the blind man being able to determine

the images of the cathedrals and with the two men now bonding more than ever before. (Craver 826-827)

In “Cathedral” we have a story of a difficult and harsh man changing his manner in mid story. The husband goes from being a grouchy and bitter man, to being amenable and even likable. He becomes friends with the blind man even though he professed great hostility towards him. This is an example of metamorphosis, epiphany, and redemption. This is a pattern in many of Carver’s stories, and Cathedral is no exception. This is where the similarities lay with the poem “God I Hate Kids” in that the main characters go through a metamorphosis when a vulnerable individual is presented to them. In the case of “Cathedral” we have the blind man left to chat with the husband. In the case with “God I Hate Kids”, we have the child left in the charge with the child hating man.

During the stories, both men have found that they were rather rash in their judgment, but come to this conclusion only at the end as if they went through some sort of emotion odyssey. Even they did not realize it was happening to them. When it did, the feeling of redemption gave the reader a new image of the lead character. With literature as complex as reality, no individual is totally good or bad. In time, we see the complexity of each individual. In the end, we have two stories of complex men who go through a metamorphosis of being villains, to caregivers, to the final redemption of them as human beings.

This project has focused much on the work authors such as Sherman Alexie, Sandra Cisneros, Raymond Carver. It has also featured the writings of recording artist Johnny Cash as well as some allusions to Poe and scripture. This seems to be a most eclectic group of influences, but they serve to prove that our influences can be great and varied. As they are our influences on

how we write it should be the mark of a great writer to use them as examples to draw from rather than templates from which to launch our writing.

The story “Pedro the Purple Parrot” and poems “A Candle for Yakima”, “When My Father Became the Heavyweight Champion of the World”, and “God I Hate Kids” are original works that bear some similarity to the works of the previous authors mentioned, but are vastly different in style and content. This is an example of how works inspire us to write, yet do not need to dictate manner to write in.

The recommendation to all writers wishing to produce original work is to go back and look at the many different writing influences a writer has and to carefully examine how much of the writing is similar and different from the work that has been an influence. The writer should have that discussion with him or herself to determine how much of their influences have played a part in producing original material. This study has shown that great influences in writing can serve as inspiration, tools, and building blocks to writing. As we examine our influences to our original works, we can open new doors of understanding about writing and how great writing and build upon great writing to produce the vast amount of we see in the world of creative writing.





