



## Millennium High School

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Colin McEvoy, Principal

Dear Rising 10<sup>th</sup> Graders,

First off, welcome! We look forward to getting to know you better as students and learners, and so for your summer assignment, we want you to read a variety of personal essays. The goal is for you to get a sense of how writers tell stories about their lives in ways that are intellectually and emotionally compelling. In addition to reading, we're asking you to write in response so that we can see how you've thought about the essays you've chosen. In case you're wondering, in your first quarter, you will have the opportunity to write your own personal essay on a subject of your choosing. What better way to introduce yourselves to us and each other?

**All essays are on Jupiter Ed. Go to "Materials" and then "Grade 9" in the Rising 10 English Summer Assignment Folder.** There are pdf copies of all the for this assignment. The essays are in these categories:

1. **Growing Up & Family**
2. **Education & Learning**
3. **Existential Absurdity**
4. **Humor**
5. **Identity, Community, & Social Justice**

**There are 7 essays that we will require you to read:**

1. "Under the Influence" by Scott Russell Sanders (Growing Up & Family)
2. "Beauty when the Other Dancer is the Self" by Alice Walker (Growing Up & Family)
3. "Such, Such Were the Joys" by George Orwell (Education & Learning)
4. "Death of a Moth" by Virginia Woolf (Existential Absurdity)
5. "The Pony Problem" by Sloane Crossely (Humor)
6. "To Speak is to Blunder" by Yiyun Li (Identity, Community, & Social Justice)
7. "Busted in New York" by Darryl Pinckney (Identity, Community, & Social Justice)

**And then choose 3 additional essays from any of the themes below.**

We're encouraging (but not requiring) you to pick from multiple themes just to build up your own "mental library," which will be useful when you write your own essay in the fall.

### **Growing Up and Family:**

- "Beauty When the Other Dancer is the Self" by Alice Walker
- "Once More to the Lake" by E.B. White
- "Under the Influence" by Scott Russell Sanders
- "Surfing into Adolescence" by William Finnegan
- "There's No Recipe for Growing Up" by Scaachi Koul
- "Goodbye to all That" by Joan Didion

### **Education and Learning:**

- "A Psychotronic Childhood" by Colson Whitehead
- "Such, such were the Joys" by George Orwell
- "Whipping Boy" by Allan Kurzweil
- "My Life as a Child Chef" by Adam Shatz
- "Tongue Tied" by Maxine Hong Kingston

- “The Empathy Exams” by Leslie Jamison

**Existential Absurdity:**

- “The Death of a Moth” by Virginia Woolf
- “Feet in Smoke” by Jedediah Purdy
- “I Had a Stroke at 33” by Christine Hyung-Oak Lee

**Humor:**

- “The Pony Problem” by Sloane Crosley
- “I’ve Quit Writing Personal Essays” by Jake Tuck
- “My Face” by Robert Benchley
- “Me Talk Pretty One Day” by David Sedaris
- “My High School Commute” by Colin Jost
- “Lessons from Late Night” by Tina Fey

**Identity, Community, & Social Justice:**

- “Busted in New York” by Darryl Pinckney
- “A Year Without a Name” by Cyrus Grace Dunham
- “Why I Fast” by Wole Soyinka
- “Aria” by Richard Rodriguez
- “To Speak is to Blunder” by Yiyun Li
- “Split at the Root” by Adrienne Rich
- “Letter from a Region in my Mind” by James Baldwin
- “Why I’m a Bad Feminist” by Roxanne Gay
- “Revealing and Obscuring Myself on the Streets of New York” by Hilton Als

For the writing portion of this assignment, use double-entry notes (aka DENTS) and organize your responses accordingly.

**Important: You will need 1 quote for each essay that you read.**

Essay Title (Place in Quotes)	Favorite Quote + page # (You can either use the pdf thumbnails or the actual page # from the scan)	Response This got me thinking.... I was wondering why.... I noticed that....

**DUE DATE: This summer assignment will be due the first full day of school. Print your DENTS (not the essays). You will also submit your writing to Turnitin.com, so make sure that your writing is your own.**

→By the way, as you do this reading, consider which category appeals to you the most and which reflects an aspect of your life best. That way you’ll be ready to hit the ground running with your own writing.

Happy reading and we look forward to seeing you next year!

All the best,

Ms. Kushner, Ms. Lumetta, and Mr. Garfinkel