Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Due: 10/2 Points: \_\_\_\_\_/

English I: 9/28-10/2

**Essential Questions:**

* How do we put your reader in a specific moment in your story? How do we make the reader’s experience just as intense as your actual experience of the event?
* Is it okay to lie in a memoir?

**Week Goals**

* World Cultures: Look through the eyes of a Vietnam soldier and try to understand his experiences.
* Grammar: Apply the last four comma rules to your own writing
* Writing:
  + - Show, don’t tell
    - Add dialogue instead of telling your reader what your character said.

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|  | Agenda | Tentative Homework |
| **Monday 9/28:** Critiquing memoirs | * Read “Enemies,” “Friends,” and “How To Tell a True War Story” and fill out the annotations * Critique Memoirs   + Read over “Driving Home.” Where does the author show instead of tell? Is this good?   + Time to read feedback and fix memoirs. | * Read “Enemies,” Friends,” and “How To Tell a True War Story” * Fill out the annotations and daily quote handout * Fix memoirs for Wednesday |
| **Tuesday 9/29:** Socratic Seminar | * Do Now: Last Four Comma Rules * Time in class to complete chapter questions * Socratic Seminar over chapter questions | * Read and annotate “The Dentist” and “Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong” * Answer questions |
| **Wednesday 9/30:** Show Vs. Tell in O’Brien’s novel | * Do Now: Creative Writing-Show Don’t Tell * Discuss homework * Examine where O’Brien shows rather than tells his readers what is happening. Examine why he chooses to tell and why he chooses to show in other places. | * Come with a new version of your memoir that relies more on showing rather than telling. |
| **Thursday 10/1:** Writing an intense memoir | * Do Now: Apply all eight comma rules to memoir—fix at least one sentence * Share memoirs with partner—celebrate areas of showing rather than telling * Lesson on dialogue * Time to fix/add dialogue to memoir | * Revise memoir adding dialogue and show/tell |
| **Friday 10/2:** What did we learn this week? | * Quiz   + Last four comma rules   + Correct way to format dialogue   + Strategies for showing rather than telling | * Read MY FAVORITE CHAPTERS: “Style,” “Speaking of Courage” and “Notes” |

Janna Bunosky

English I

Janna

9/28/14

Driving Home

“Bye Janna! Oh wait. Will we see you at the restaurant?” Stephanie asked. She was standing by the classroom door with her keys in her hand and her purse under her arm.

“Yep. I’m just gonna go home and change first,” I said as I sprayed down a table with Lysol.

“Okay. See you then,” she said with a smile, and she turned to go.

“Bye,” I said. I smiled at her and then wiped down the last table. The room now smelled clean, and everything was in its proper place. I liked to have the classroom nice and neat for when I returned Monday morning. A clean classroom made it feel like a fresh start, like I had wiped away all of the mistakes I had made as a student teacher the past week with my seventh grade humanities class.

When I was finished, I picked up my purse and a cardboard box full of students’ binders that I promised myself I would grade. I walked down the steps and got to my car, an old 1996 Lexus ES300. I popped the trunk and heaved the cardboard box inside.

The second I was in the driver’s seat, I let out a deep sigh of relief and happiness. I’d survived another week. I stared straight ahead at the open corridor of the school. All the kids had gone home. The school was deserted and felt eerily peaceful, like those old ghost towns that are scattered around the western parts of this country. Finally, I put the key in the ignition and began my drive home.

When I entered the on-ramp to the 805 freeway, I sped up to 80 mph. Driving on freeways made me happy. I was in control. The monotony of the freeway, the sameness of it, was a welcomed experience given my current chaotic student-teaching placement. I turned the radio up and began singing my heart out to the country song playing on the radio. I exited for the 94 West then got onto the 5 North. Traffic was minimal as usual. I looked over to the left to see cars on the 5 South creeping along, bumper to bumper.

*I’m so happy I’m not them,* I thought.

I was in one of the middle-right lanes going around 75 mph, driving on the part of the freeway just before it makes a bend around the city and then straightens out alongside the San Diego airport. I wasn’t thinking of anything, just mindlessly singing along to the current song playing on the radio, my hands gently guiding the steering wheel. The sun cast a dusty golden glow on everything at that time of the day and it was one of those rare moments that I could trick myself into believing it was fall.

The next part of this memory gets fuzzy.

The brake lights on the car in front of me suddenly flash red and stay red. I realize that I don’t have enough road in front of me to stop my car before reaching them. My brain makes a judgment call. I know the space on my left is open and I swerve into that lane, still braking hard and now maneuvering around the bend in the road. I hear my tires screeching like a ringing in my ears.

BANG

I feel a hard thud from the right side and my whole body is jolted to the right in response. I’m spinning and my eyes can’t focus. The world outside the car isn’t what it is supposed to be. I’m supposed to see a road ahead. I’m supposed to see the bumpers and rear windows of the cars in front of me. I’m supposed to see the yellow lines separating the lanes and they’re supposed to run parallel to my own vehicle. But that’s not what I see.

I see a massive blur outside of my front window and I think, with an overwhelming sense of clarity, *I’m going to die now.*

My brain has already done the calculations. These cars around me were going at least 70 mph and now I’m spinning out of control farther and farther to the left-most lane, the fastest lane. There’s no way I’m getting out of this alive. There’s no way I’m walking away. There will be blood and glass and broken bones and teeth and skin grafts and stitches. I’ve read this story before: Jaime Brandenburg, Katie Schuster, Rigo Salgado, Salvatore Mucci: their lives cut down to little black and white newspaper clippings from the Obituary section. There’s nothing I or anyone else can do, so I just let myself float. My body sways with the car like a leaf in the wind. My mind goes blank of all emotions and thoughts. I wait for whatever it is that’s coming.

I don’t remember slowing down. I don’t remember what I saw or heard or thought. The next thing I do remember is that I’m stopped and there’s a haze of smoke or maybe dust rising outside of the car. I’m in the left-most lane facing the wrong way, facing all of the cars behind me. My chest is moving up and down and I have no control of that part of my body. I reach for my phone. I know I have to get out of the left lane before another car hits me or other cars hit each other, even though I see that the cars behind me are jagged from their unexpected stops, but they’re stopped at least. For now. I call 9-1-1 and say I’ve been in an accident and I’m on the five. She asks me what exit I’m on, and I struggle to answer: Hawthorne Street. My voice is shaking and I feel myself cracking, feeling unable to hold it together much longer. I just want to go home. I don’t want to be dealing with this. I can’t process, especially knowing that it isn’t over yet. I’m still trapped in this car.

Somehow I have to get over to the side, but I’m not sure how and it makes me want to cry.

I’m still on the phone with the 9-1-1 operator when I see that there’s a cop blocking traffic up ahead. There’s another accident up there and I realize this accident must have been the reason the car in front of me slammed his brakes so hard. Another cop has cordoned off the road and he’s walking towards me waving his hands, beckoning me to drive forward. I shake my head at him and he waves his hands harder, this time anger flashes in his eyes.

I’m bewildered by his insistence and his seeming annoyance with me.

*I CAN’T DRIVE FORWARD!* I mouth to him, as if he could understand.

I have no idea what my car must look like, but there’s no way. I was hit. I was hit *hard*. He’s treating me like a stupid woman driver and that’s not what I am! But I finally heed his directions. I turn the key in the ignition and it starts. I put it in drive and do as he says. There’s a horrible scraping sound as my car lurches onward, but it’s at least moving. I get it off to a wide shoulder just before the Hawthorne exit and turn off the ignition. I get out and inspect the car. It’s smashed in at the right rear tire but other than that, it looks perfect. I lean against the back bumper and continue to hyperventilate, even though I survived and I now know it. I don’t know how. I was so sure I wouldn’t. My mind runs back to every terrible car crash I’d ever known. Jaime Brandenburg didn’t survive. She was killed instantly when she hit a big tree out by the Kankakee River. I went to her wake and saw her powdery, puffy face. I’ve been to her gravestone and know it reads 1990 - 2007. Meghan Bell survived, but not without a foot long scar down her right thigh, a scar from her shoulder to her hip and a tired limp in her step that will never go away. I remembered crying for them, and now I was crying for myself because I realize for the first time that it could have been me. Any of their accidents: it could have been me. And I never thought of that before.

The tow truck arrives and the driver gets out. He slowly walks up to me and asks if I’m okay.

I’m still hyperventilating, making this loud heaving noise that I can’t control. I’m still crying and so in between heaves I manage to say, “I should wait before I call my family, shouldn’t I?”

He looks me over--tears, mascara, shaky limbs. He scrunched up his nose, not sure what to say. Finally he nods and almost smiles. “Don’t scare them anymore than they need to be.”

I laugh.

The police officer finally calls all of the drivers over. We ask each other if we’re okay. We all take turns saying yes. We smiled these little half smiles. That’s all we can muster. Then, the officer suggests that we each tell our stories in private. That way, there will be no arguing or disagreeing.

“It’s just easier that way,” he said.

So that’s what we did.

When I finished giving my statement, that same tow truck driver came over to me and asked if I needed him to take my car some place. I told him yes, and after he strapped in my car, I got in the passenger seat and we headed down the 5 North once again. We rode in silence until he asked me where I wanted to go.

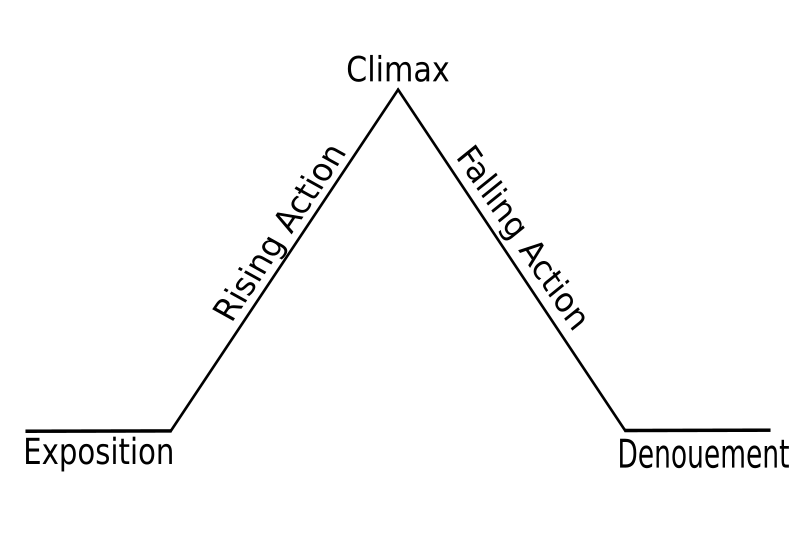
“Take me home,” I say. I tell him I live next to an auto shop and I know Pat, my mechanic and neighbor, will take care of me when he gets in tomorrow morning.

It’s been two years since the accident, almost to the day. I still drive my old 1996 Lexus ES300. My dad was nice enough to shell out the money to save it, though the repairs cost almost as much as it was worth in parts. He said he didn’t care about the money. It didn’t matter. The insurance people kept calling to get my statement and to update me on the claim. In the end, they said it was my fault. I hadn’t “maintained control of my vehicle.” They sent me the report, but I never looked at it. I didn’t care enough to fight it or argue or even to look at the diagram, the police officer’s statement or the other drivers’ statements. I was busy with my dual life as a student teacher and Master’s student, and with all of life’s little tasks like grocery shopping and wiping down classroom tables with Lysol that now seemed infinitely more important.

When I think about it, I can’t find a point to this story and that bothers me. Some stories I guess don’t have points, except maybe to show that someday, you might drive down a road and get in an accident. You might die that day, you might walk away, or you might end up somewhere in between. The police officers will come with their red and blue lights flashing to stop the traffic. The tow truck driver will take the car away. The drivers behind you will eventually drive on home. And life will resume, with or without you. Like I said, it bothers me.

**Memoir Critique**

1. Below, plot out the main events of the memoir, “Driving Home.”



1. Where did the author SHOW rather than tell what happened? Was this part engaging? Why or why not? (1 point)
2. Where could the author improve? Were you satisfied with the ending? Were you hooked right at the beginning? What would you change if this were your piece? (1 point)
3. Having read this piece, what will you do to your own memoir to make it more engaging? (1 point)

**Daily Quote**

“Enemies” and “Friends” Significant Quote (2 points):

* Write down one significant quote from the chapters, “Enemies” or “Friends.”
* Interpret the quote: what does this quote mean? What is the quote saying?
* Write two to three sentences on why this quote stood out to you. Consider discussing how it revealed a personality trait in a character, how it hit upon an important idea, how it reminded you of a past experience you’ve had, etc.

“How to Tell a True War Story” Significant Quote (2 points):

* Write down one significant quote from the chapter, “How to Tell a True War Story.”
* Interpret the quote: what does this quote mean? What is the quote saying?
* Write two to three sentences on why this quote stood out to you. Consider discussing how it revealed a personality trait in a character, how it hit upon an important idea, how it reminded you of a past experience you’ve had, etc.

**Annotations: “Enemies,” “Friends,” and “How to Tell a True War Story”**

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**Annotations: “The Dentist” and “Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong”**

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“Friends” Questions

1. “Later we heard that Strunk died somewhere over Chu Lai, which seemed to relieve Dave Jensen of an enormous weight” (63). Why does Dave Jensen seem to be “relieved...of an enormous weight” with Lee Strunk’s death? What does that say about what he was thinking or feeling? (2 points)

“How to Tell a True War Story”

1. “At its core, perhaps, war is just another name for death, and yet any soldier will tell you, if he tells the truth, that proximity to death brings with it a corresponding proximity to life” (77). How could this pose a problem for soldiers who come back from a war? (2 points)
2. Mitchell Sanders, the condom carrying, brass knuckled, kool-aid drinking, moral-obsessed soldier says, “Just came to me. The moral, I mean. Nobody listens. Nobody hears nothin” (73). **Where else in the chapter** do you see people not listening, or not understanding the real “truth” these soldiers are trying to express? (2 points)
3. “But if I could ever get the story right, how the sun seemed to gather around him and pick him up and lift him high into a tree, if I could somehow re-create the fatal whiteness of that light, the quick glare, the obvious cause and effect, then you would believe the last thing Curt Lemon believed, which for him must’ve been the final truth” (80). What do you think is the “final truth” that O’Brien is talking about here? (2 points)
4. O’Brien writes, “…because a true war story does not depend on that kind of truth…A thing may happen and be a total lie; another thing may not happen and be truer than the truth” (80). Do you agree with him, that lies can sometimes tell a greater truth? Why or why not? **Use one quote from the chapter to support your opinion.** (2 points)
5. Why does Tim O’Brien use a “How-to guide” structure for the chapter, “How to Tell a True War Story”? **Use one quote from the chapter to support your opinion.** (2 points)

“The Dentist”

1. Why does O’Brien tell this story about Curt Lemon? Why does he want to guard against getting “too sentimental about the dead” (87)? Should we all fear that when remembering loved ones? (1 point)
2. Why does Lemon have the dentist yank out a perfectly good tooth? What does that say about him and what he wants others to think of him? (1 point)

“Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong”

1. “It wasn’t a question of deceit. Just the opposite: he wanted to heat up the truth, to make it burn so hot that you would feel exactly what he felt. For Rat Kiley, I think, facts were formed by sensation, not the other way around…” (89). Do you think this is a more truthful way of describing events, or more false?
2. “What happened to her, Rat said, was what happened to all of them. You come over clean and you get dirty and then afterward it’s never the same. A question of degree” (114). What does he mean by, “A question of degree”?

**Last Four Comma Rules**

1. **Commas for Lists**
   1. Rule: Use commas to separate items in a list of three or more. Remember that an “item” may refer to a noun, verb, or adjective phrase.
      1. Example: **I need to buy eggs and milk. (correct—just two items)**

I need to buy eggs milk lettuce and bread. (incorrect)

**I need to buy eggs, milk, lettuce, and bread. (correct—commas for 3 or more)**

* 1. Practice:
     1. Carlos wants to visit Paris Italy Germany and China.
     2. My favorite colors are blue red and pink.
     3. I like to go hiking fishing swimming and camping during summer.
     4. I have to clean my room walk the dog and take out the trash.
     5. The tree is very tall old and green.
     6. I need to visit my mother wash my car and buy six stamps.

1. **Commas for Nonessential Information**
   1. Rule: Use a comma(s) to separate any word or phrase from the rest of the sentence that is not essential to the sentence's meaning.
      1. Examples:
         1. My brother, a 26 year old male, is watching TV.
         2. Amy Rivers, my best friend, is going to the mall today.
         3. I am ready for my dad, a hard working man, to come home.
      2. Example: My mother on the other hand does not like chocolate.

**My mother, on the other hand, does not like chocolate. (correct)**

* 1. Practice:
     1. Daniel Garrison a farmer wakes up very early.
     2. Tanner my teacher is wearing a gray shirt.
     3. The car a 1967 Ford Mustang is very fast.
     4. Gold watches for example are going on sale today.
     5. My favorite color navy blue is very popular.

1. **Commas Separating Cities from States or Countries**
   1. Rule: Use a comma to separate the name of a city from a country or state.
      1. Example: I live in Chapel Hill North Carolina. (incorrect)

**I live in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. (correct)**

* 1. Practice:
     1. We are moving to Spokane Washington.
     2. I visited Florence Italy last summer.
     3. The hurricanes hit Tulsa Oklahoma and Destin Florida.

1. **Commas for Dates**
   1. Rules: Use a comma to separate the day of the week, the day of the month, and the year.
      1. Example: Today is Thursday April 18 1943. (incorrect)

**Today is Thursday, April 18, 1943. (correct)**

* 1. Practice:
     1. Tomorrow will be Sunday December 2nd.
     2. George Washington was born on February 22 1732.
     3. I will be sixteen on Tuesday the 6th of July 1582.
     4. September 11 2001 is a date that will be remembered.