**Questions for “Epitaph for a Peach”**

These are to guide your reading and improve our class discussion. No need to write down the answers, unless you want the practice.

1 The first chapter of the text *Praxis* reports that in ancient Greece, “rhetoric was an integral part of public life” (9), and the chapter presents arguments from the business and civic world—“spin” for an airline company with PR problems, public discussion of a pending law to restrict smoking, and public discussion of an unexpectedly generous act by McDonald’s. Considering that Masumoto’s essay was first published in the *LA Times* (see the note in italics below), how might the essay be considered “business writing”? How might it be considered “civic” writing, that is, part of a public discourse to decide what kind of society we want to have?

2. *Praxis* also says that rhetoric, though intended to be practical, “also has a creative element that raises it above the mundane or pragmatic” (12). What elements of creativity do we see in this essay? [Hint: Look for creative use of language, especially metaphors and personification.]

3. *Praxis* claims that “[o]ften argument is a dialogue—one person or group presenting one viewpoint and hearing another viewpoint in response”(19). How does Masumoto include parts of that dialogue in his essay? What does it add to his argument?

4. The pathos appeal is the most prominent one here. Discuss how Masumoto appeals to the reader’s emotions and values to get them to see the value of these peaches and of all they represent to him.

You have the essay as it originally appeared in print. Later it became the prologue for Masumoto’s book *Epitaph for a Peach*, which also includes this note:

*Frustrated and desperate, I wrote about my peaches and sent the story to the Los Angeles Times. It was published and syndicated across the nation. In the following weeks I received dozens of phone calls and letters, strangers urging me to “keep the last good-tasting peach.” These were city folk who care about the foods they eat and sympathized with my plight. For them, food has meaning beyond mere nourishment. They longed to be connected to farming.*

*The day the bulldozer arrived, I met it out in the fields and stopped it from entering my Sun Crest orchard. I decided to keep those trees for one more harvest.*

*[. . . .]I have been trying to farm a new way, working with, and not against, nature, which always requires a certain risk and willingness to experiment. This year will decide my fate. I can’t afford to dabble in trial and error. This year I commit myself to saving those peaches; if I fail, I will have to admit my failure as a farmer. I break the spring earth with a new resolve to redeem not only one block of peaches but also my chosen life.*

If you want to read the happy story of how the Masumoto family and the Sun Crest peaches are doing now, you can read more on the farm’s Web site: <http://www.masumoto.com/index.htm>

The family farm timeline is particularly interesting: :<http://www.masumoto.com/organic/timeline.htm>