**Paper Assignment #1**

Write an extended analysis of a poem in one of our assigned poetry packets, a Hemingway short story in *In Our Time* not discussed in class, or Zora Neale Hurston’s “The Gilded Six Bits.” If you choose to write on "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock,” talk with me about the section(s) on which to focus your analysis.

**Length of paper**: 1500 words

**Complete typed first draft**:

* Due **Mar 1** at the beginning of class.

**Complete Works Cited list** (3 items that meet assignment criteria)

* Due **Mar 3** at the beginning of class

**Final draft:**

* Due **Mar 8** at the beginning of class

**What is a rough draft?**

Let’s begin with what it’s not:

* It’s not a bunch of ideas written in a rush with no revision. That would be what’s called a zero draft.

So what is it?

* It’s your best attempt to write out your ideas and to give them a bit of structure.
* It’s a work in progress that is open to expansion and significant revision.

**Steps for generating a rough draft**

1. Reread the story or poem that you will write about, making notes as you go.
   1. Mark passages that are of particular interest and that would sustain a focused reading.
   2. Circle, underline, or otherwise mark literary devices as you go (images, diction, figurative language, symbol, etc.)
2. Sit back and reflect on what you’ve read and the notes you’ve made.

Identify potential topic areas for your paper. E.g., you could focus on natural imagery in “The Three-Day Blow,” considering how the narrator’s descriptive passages underscore or amplify a theme or idea in the story.

1. Select the passages that you will closely analyze in your paper.

Selected passages should have some kind of relationship to one another, based on your topic idea.

1. Next, write at least one substantial paragraph of close reading for each passage you will analyze in your paper.   
   1. By closely reading each of the passages, you will deepen your understanding of how literary devices work to convey meaning.
   2. If writing about poetry:
      1. Look for patterns of sound, making note of stressed syllables in particular. Long vowel sounds, consonants surrounding long vowel sounds, and multisyllabic words all take more time to say.
      2. Pay attention to the appearance of the poem on the page, focusing on individual lines as well as patterns that develop throughout the poem.
   3. If you are writing on a computer, print out what you’ve written thus far.
2. Take a break.
   1. Have a cup of your favorite non-alcoholic beverage. Take a nap, take a walk, take a bath. Basically, clear your head.
3. Return to what you’ve written and read it in its entirety.
   1. Look for any patterns that emerge in your close readings. These might be material for topic sentences in your paper.
   2. Go back to your chosen poem or short story, rereading your chosen sections.
   3. Make notes of any thoughts you have for developing your ideas further.

*NOTE:* If you’ve been writing by hand thus far, now is a good time to switch to a computer.

1. Bang out a draft.
   1. Try to group similar ideas to together.
   2. Try to generate a sequence of paragraphs that makes some kind of sense.
   3. Conclude with some ideas about the overall work the poem/story is doing.
2. Spell check and print out your rough draft.
3. Take a break. (See above for suggested activities.)
4. Read your printed paper with pen or pencil in hand
   1. Indicate places where you need more textual evidence to support your ideas.
   2. Monitor for similar or repeated ideas in different sections of the rough draft. Use numbers or some other system to indicate how these ideas can be combined.
   3. Jot down some ideas for concluding thoughts or a potential thesis.
      * Be careful here. Don’t formulate a thesis too soon. If you do that, you run the risk of writing an analysis that conforms to your idea of the poem or story rather than what’s actually there on the page.
5. Want help?
   1. Contact Professor McSharry to schedule an individual appointment.
   2. And/or make an appointment with a peer tutor at the Writing Center.