

Last Name McLaughlin
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Sec 4

English IIXL / Shakely

Original Poem Log # 3

*One log hides another, as one idea, one chore.
Many of these you'll provide, I trust.
Painful, tedious, insufferable, yet a must.*

Date 2 / 21 / 14

Title "Unexceptional" (Optional; add later? First Idea to Hit you?)

Context (Required. When/Where Written? Impetus/Catalyst/Source of Inspiration? Who or What?)

I wrote the majority of this poem in class during English 2XL while Mr. Shakely gave us time to write a poem after watching David McCullough Jr.'s commencement speech at the 2012 Wellesley High School graduation ceremony. I finished up the last bit of it at home on my iPad, as I ran out of time during class. The poem was supposed to incorporate some aspects of McCullough's speech itself, which essentially argued that nothing unique or special really defines anyone, unless, of course, someone has somehow discovered a cure to cancer or has solved one of the many other significant problems that humans face in the world, distinguishing themselves from the rest in great and noble ways. "Unexceptional" channels the insignificance of seemingly important events, such as graduation, getting accepted into college, even human life itself, and it discusses the feelings of inadequacy and loneliness this can ultimately cause.

Meaning (Required. **This is more important than poem itself**): Immediate CM re: the process, the product, your satisfaction/dissatisfaction level.

- 1 What were you trying to accomplish with poem? Theme? One-word ? CM/20 Questions?
- 2 Initial impressions once completed ("...started off good, .lost it"; Satisfaction / Dissatisfaction with it? Other?)

"Unexceptional" is meant to break open the awareness of the reader and to make the reader view things with a broader and more inclusive perspective. Many times people can become overly satisfied and content with their lives because of various accomplishments or achievements that they have attained; however, in the greater scheme of things, unless a person has solely done something extraordinary that no other human being ever has before, achievements automatically become devalued and deteriorated by the fact that they are not unique or special in any way. By forcing people to realize their inadequacy, this poem motivates and inspires people to push their envelopes and to constantly desire to achieve more rather than simply to accept their meager ways of life. The poem also hints at the indecent nature of humans, as if they too are responsible for making people feel "unexceptional" and unworthy of life, leaving people isolated and depressed. Although I intended to make this poem somewhat optimistic, the theme didn't really allow for any hopefulness or buoyancy to exist in the poem, and thus I simply resorted to extreme pessimism. I was satisfied with the majority of the poem, but it ultimately starts to lose its focus in the end with a few scientific and complex words.

Relevance / Allusions (optional): Connections? Personal experience [Micro]? Historical [Macro]? Lit allusions?

"Unexceptional" could not be more applicable and relevant to high schoolers who are applying to college, who are planning on applying to college, or even who are entering the workforce. Because of all the opportunities that society has to offer, schools, agencies, or any other institution that has to accept people from a pool of applicants have been increasingly ever more demanding in their requirements and criteria for enrollment or acceptance. Good grades and test scores, which people used to think make them stand out, are now barely even looked at because of how many high achievers exist in society. Students are finding themselves feeling unexceptional and needing to do more and more to stand out from the typical crowd.

Form (optional): Anything you tried to do? Nothing? Diction? Poetry Terms? Symbolism? Why?

I purposely made "Unexceptional" have unpunctuated gaps scattered throughout in order to bring a little bit of ambiguity and unclearness to the poem, symbolically representing the haziness that defines the majority of the human race, the unexceptional. As an amateur poet, I still have not figured out any particularly organized way to define my stanzas and the length of the lines; thus, the poem is arbitrarily formatted.

The Poem Itself (attached): (Rough Draft Perfectly Acceptable. Need not be a neat copy. Or you may attach draft work if