

Matthew McLaughlin

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Section 4

Best Movie: *Life as a House*

The movie *Life as a House*, directed by Irwin Winkler, illustrates the processes of self-awareness and self-renewal in their most pristine forms symbolically through the construction of a new and improved home and physically through the personal transformation of the relationship between the protagonist, George, and his rebellious and nonconformist son, Sam. By means of his unfortunate contraction of a severe form of cancer as well as the demolition and destruction of his decrepit shack, George learns to leave behind the life of stagnancy that was once holding him back from existing at his greatest potential. George's fatal disease not only helps him come to a more keen awareness of his own brevity on earth, but it also invokes in him a sense of responsibility to fill his role and niche in society, ultimately causing him to accept the circumstances of his life and to move forward in a progressive manner. Although I personally have never experienced feelings of restriction or inhibition in my aspirations and pursuits, there are definitely people out there suffering from limitations placed on their desired routes of growth and development, such as those who are forced to pursue a particular occupational pathway. *Life as a House* is ultimately poetic, however, because it impels the viewer to contemplate what is actually of value and significance in his life, which, for George in this case, was his own deferred dreams and his relationship with his family and son, and to act upon the insight he achieves from observing life in hindsight. Nothing is more poetic than direct confrontation with reality while taking advantage of all of the opportunities and possibilities that life has to offer in the process. Ultimately, George serves as a poetic example of someone who lives life the way he wants to

live it, by raising his son to be selfless and compassionate, by increasing the quality of his living conditions, and so on, but his late realization of the potential of life should serve as a warning for those who procrastinate on and rescind their dreams.