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Section 4

Best Poem: "Dangerous Astronomy"

The poem "Dangerous Astronomy" by Sherman Alexie puts into perspective the reality of familial relationships, and, by doing so, speaks to a much more profound truth about the progression and advancement of human society. Jealousy, a prominent component of this poem that makes the father of the family feel like he is the "smallest part / Of the whole" and "less important than the farthest star," quite contrarily to its connotation, works as a beneficial impetus for the father in his understanding and acceptance of the very reality that he lives (10-12). He not only transforms from being alarmed at his own jealousy to accepting his own faults and asking for forgiveness, but he also changes from thinking that he is "more important than the stars" to coming to terms with his selfhood and limitations as a father (19). This poem is definitely personally significant to me, as it depicts the feelings of inadequacy and insufficiency that arise from isolation and being separated from others. Personally, as a diligent student focused primarily on school, academics, and extracurricular activities, I have found myself feeling left in the shadows at social events and gatherings because people either do not know me or do not care to know me, severely deteriorating my self-esteem and individual confidence. "Dangerous Astronomy", however, has poetically helped to turn around my attitude and to force me to accept the actuality of my surroundings with the understanding that reality is ultimately uncontrollable. This poem is also clearly poetic because it not only urges the reader to recognize and acknowledge the natural and inherent occurrences in his life, but because it almost also seems to permit feelings of imperfection and inferiority, as if people themselves always possess the

potential to develop and mature into greater, more competent human beings. Moreover, the poem never loses its motivational and inspirational influence as it communicates to the reader the eventual fineness that results from the tolerance and acceptance of the world around him. Finally, “Dangerous Astronomy” significantly correlates with the general storyline of the novel *The Once and Future King* by T.H. White. As Arthur takes the throne of the utterly corrupt, immoral, and indecent kingdom in Britain, he faces the enormous task of transforming and directing society towards a more civilized future. Rather than denying and putting off the problems rampant in society, King Arthur not only comes to terms with the evil and wickedness within the realms of his kingdom, but he also confronts the indecency in such a way that permits the development and growth of his dominion towards enlightenment and sophistication.