

Alex Lemus,
Period 3
Room 201

I'm not a student.
Not me.
Reading, writing, 'rithmetic?
Nah.
The teachers ask.
And ask.
And ask.
But I just shrug.
Not me.
You see, I read.
I write.
I think.
But school? Homework?
No gracias.
You see,
I'm not a student.
School's not my thing.
Not me.

Omar Clarkson: Sophomore

Things teachers say to me all the time:

"Why are you late?"

"Take out paper for a pop quiz."

"You get a zero."

"Where's your homework?"

"Open your book to page . . ."

"Where's your textbook?"

"The homework for tomorrow is . . ."

"There will be a test on Friday."

"May I have your attention, please?" I swear,

Teachers must get together

To rehearse these things.

It's about time they got some new lines

To play back as their recorded messages.

by Mel Glenn

Lineage

My grandmothers were strong.
They followed plows and bent to toil
They moved through fields sowing seed.
They touched earth and grain grew.
They were full of sturdiness and singing.
My grandmothers were strong.

My grandmothers are full of memories.
Smelling of soap and onions and wet clay
With veins rolling roughly over quick hands
They have many clean words to say.
My grandmothers were strong.
Why am I not as they?

Margaret Walker

Paul Hewitt

Please, sir, I don't mean to be disrespectful.
I did raise my hand.
I mean, who cares if Macbeth becomes a monster,
if Huck Finn rescues Jim,
if Willie Loman never finds happiness?
They're just characters in books.
What have they got to do with me?
I mean, I'm never going hunting for white whales.
I'm never going to fight in the Civil War.
And I certainly don't live in the Dust Bowl.
Tell me instead how to
Make money, pick up girls.
Then maybe I'll listen.
You got any books that deal with real life?

Mel Glenn

After English Class

I used to like "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening."
I liked the coming darkness,
The jingle of harness bells, breaking—and adding to—the stillness,
The gentle drift of snow...

But today, the teacher told us what everything stood for.
The woods, the horse the miles to go, the sleep—
They all have "hidden meanings."

It's grown so complicated now that,
Next time I drive by,
I don't think I'll bother to stop.

Jean Little