

One Hour of Peace

Mel Glenn captures the voice of an angry, conflicted teen in the poem “Rickie Miller”. The poem is written in first-person point of view to capture the true voice of the teen in crisis. The poem is organized as a compare/contrast as Rickie begins describing his sanctuary, ironically, school. Glenn begins with light-filled imagery of Rickie “com[ing] to school an hour before everyone” to find peace in the “early morning light” with the “[s]un slanting in through the windows. This beautiful imagery is deepened with a simile referencing the quiet like a “church”. Even the donut is “glazed”, reflecting the sun. These peaceful images show how Rickie finds solace at school, his reprieve from the darkness his home life offers. The shift in tone happens midway through the poem as Rickie describes the “battle zone” that is his home life with his parents. Glenn uses the extended metaphor of a “battle zone” to show the turmoil that Rickie faces with his parents fighting. Even the language used mimic the “rifle fire” of his parents relationship; the alliterative elements found in “arguments and accusations” and “bastard” and “bitch” are hard on the tongue, the bullets of his parents battle. Glenn ends Rickie asking an angry and bitterly sad question, “One hour of peace isn’t too much to ask for, is it?” That is Rickie’s voice, his plea, his prayer for peace.