

POSITION 3 (Set 2)

Analysis: Lit - Baca. Always Here

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY:

While the thesis statement has severe problems in concision, it is defensible and understandable. Assertions are sound, defensible, and clarified in scope. However, the thesis statement is not clarified in scope, and therefore does not provide an ample frame for the assertions. This issue prevents the thesis statement from scoring a 4.

CRITERION 1: THESIS

The lengthy thesis statement must be considered the following *three* sentences:

In I Am Offering This Poem, by Jimmy Santiago Baca, the poet is giving the idea that love is providing you with all that you need, for example guidance and comfort. When in love, humans tend to feel safe and as if they belong, knowing there is someone that's always there that cares for them. Love is not something humans can just dispose of: it most likely will always be there.

This thesis statement has several problems. First of all, it is long-winded and unclear. (Writing is *understandable*, but not clear.) The second and third lines of the thesis (where the thesis traditionally lies) do not discuss the poem at all, but give a general impression of love. The writer does not clearly state that the poet believes these values.

Moreover, these three statements mirror the three assertions, and mostly rephrase the assertions instead of presenting ONE clear idea that is an umbrella for the assertions. This indicates that the thesis statement is not clarified in scope; the reader does not clearly see the limits of the argument.

A better thesis statement would read as follows:

In "I Am Offering This Poem" by Jimmy Baca, the speaker uses poetic devices to make his declarative definition of love: neither passionate or consuming, true love ultimately gives humans safety, comfort, and most importantly, permanence.

While hardly flawless, this re-written thesis statement more clearly articulates the position of the paper (that the speaker offers a specific definition of love) and offers a clearer umbrella statement which the assertions can (and do) prove. This rewritten thesis statement is clarified in scope; the original one is not. It is also important to note that this revised thesis *completely addresses the prompt* (level 4 in thesis) while arguments can be more for and against this criterion for the original thesis.

The student's thesis *is* vaguely defensible because it states an argument—namely, that the poem presents the central idea that love is permanent and provides a sense of safety and comfort. This is not an obvious truth about the poem (claiming that the poem is about love would be), but an argument and conclusion based on analysis of the poetic devices. (It is not, however, insightful or nuanced.)

CRITERION 2: ASSERTIONS

The major limiting factor of these assertions is their arbitrary order thereby also receiving a three in assertions. Paragraphs are interchangeable and do not build on each other. If the writer thought more

clearly about how her arguments built on each other, she could make a stronger point. For example, the paper might have been better served by an organizational structure that started with the most foundational device and progressed to the most nuanced. A chronological sequence of assertions would most likely be strongest as it would allow the author to analyze the intentional shifts in meaning, language, and craft throughout the poem.

With the exception of an arbitrary order (explained more thoroughly in Organization), assertions are defensible, and ideas and writing are understandable (but not clear, which is a level 5).

The assertions are not complex because their meaning needs to be teased out and is not particularly focused:

- The idea that love makes you feel safe and as if you belong is conveyed by the author's use of imagery.
- Love is knowing that there is that one person who will always be there to protect and care for you is illustrated by the poet's use of sound devices.
- The speaker's employment of figurative language produces the idea that love is feeling sheltered, and not something that you can just dispose of.

These are sound and strong assertions, but they are missing a specific qualifier to connect the poetic device to the claim: what *about* the imagery? What *about* the sound devices? *How* does the poem use imagery to present the idea that love is safety? The reader doesn't know the core of the argument by reading these assertions. While not every assertion in all papers need to give the entire reasoning behind a claim, in *this instance* the reasoning's absence hampers the strength of the assertions, making them too simplistic.

Complex assertions would present the information immediately, clearly, and without ambiguity in a single sentence. *Then*, the paragraph would provide evidence to back up the assertion made. (See the *Yeats* paper for examples of this.)

If the first assertion was rewritten to be more complex, it might look like this:

The author's use of *warm, comforting* imagery reveals love as steadfast and safe.

This was written based on ideas that are *already* in this paragraph; however, it makes the assertion more specific so that the reader knows what the paragraph will prove. (Note that this is also a very small but important change.) It's not just that the author uses imagery; it's that the author uses a specific *type* of imagery (warm and comforting) to convey a specific idea (love is steadfast and safe) that connects with the larger thesis (love is permanent).

Essay: Lit - Baca. Always Here

Essay #2

Prompt: How does the author use poetic devices to illuminate the theme of the poem?

Always Here

Love is knowing someone cares and will always be there. Moreover, it is that warm feeling you get when your loved one embraces you. However, it doesn't have to be based on a relationship, it can be based on a mother and daughter connection. For many humans love is a deeper connection that we are all looking for in life. In I Am Offering This Poem, by Jimmy Santiago Baca, the poet is giving the idea that love is providing you with all that you need, for example guidance and comfort. When in love, humans tend to feel safe and as if they belong, knowing there is someone that's always there that cares for them. Love is not something humans can just dispose of: it most likely will always be there.

The idea that love makes you feel safe and as if you belong is conveyed by the author's use of imagery. Throughout the poem, the poet helps express the idea of feeling safe by letting us see, taste, and smell what satisfies us. Baca states in the third stanza, "it is a pot full of yellow corn/ to warm your belly in the winter" (9-10). The comforting smell of corn helps to create the thought of feeling calm, warm, and replete. Moreover, when the composer talks about the bright color he is comparing it to the dull white outside. This image is purposely created to help the reader feel that tender, secure sensation of protection. This is illustrating how love makes you feel safe and comfortable. In the fifth stanza, the author portrays the idea that love makes you aware that you belong. He does this by allowing us to feel, see, hear, and smell what soothes us. Baca states, "and let you warm yourself by this fire/rest by this fire, and make you feel safe" (21-22). The warmth of the fire makes you want to be there. The image of the fire, hearing it cracking, and smelling the wood burning lets you know how safe you are, and how much you belong there. The author intentionally placed this image in the poem to help the individual reading experience that warm sensation. This is exhibiting how love places you out of harm's way and makes you want to stay, as if you belong. All in all, this portrays the idea that the author's use of imagery conveys that love makes you feel safe and as if you belong.

Love is knowing that there is that one person who will always be there to protect and care for you is illustrated by the poet's use of sound devices. At some point in the poem, the artist provokes the idea of feeling protected by using alliteration. Baca states in the first stanza, "the cold cannot bite through" (6). The hard "c" sound is putting an end to something. It's showing that every bad thing that is being done to them will not bring them down. The composer purposely created this use of the alliteration because he wants to express to the reader that he will protect them from everything that's trying to bring them down. This is showing how love can protect you from oppression. In the seventh stanza, the author perpetuates the idea that love is also knowing that there is someone that always cares for you. He suggests this by using a rhyme scheme. Baca states, "and to go on living inside/ when the world outside/ no longer cares if you live or die" (26-28). The rhyme scheme was intentionally placed in this poem to show how harsh reality really is, but knowing there is someone you can always count on to be there for you. This is displaying the idea that love is being aware that somebody until the end of time will care for you. In conclusion, this

conveys the idea that the author's use of sound devices illustrates that love is knowing that there is that one person who will always be there to guard you and care for you.

The speaker's employment of figurative language produces the idea that love is feeling sheltered, and not something that you can just dispose of. In the third stanza, the poet conveys his idea that love's warmth makes you feel protected by the use of a metaphor. Baca states, "it is a scarf for your head, to wear/over your hair, to tie up around your face" (11-12). The author is comparing the scarf's intensity to his love, and power to make you feel protected. His love is warmhearted, which means he can make you feel sheltered. In the fifth stanza, the author is expressing the idea that love is not something you can throw away by the use of a simile. Baca states, "tucked away like a cabin or a hogan." (6) The artist is contrasting a hidden cabin in the forest to how his love is not something that will just go away. The author intended this simile to show how much he cares, and to let the reader know he is always there. This is showing that love is something you can save but not something you can dispose of. All in all, this illustrates the idea that the author's use of figurative language shows that love creates a feeling of being sheltered, and not something that you can just toss away.

Throughout the poem, the poet continues to illustrate the idea of humans tending to feel secure and as if you belong, knowing there is someone that always cares. The composer demonstrates this by employing imagery, sound devices and figurative language. Having realized this about life, humans learned that without knowing that there is someone that's always there to pick you up when you're down. In conclusion, humans may realize how deep and important love really is.