

## Prose Passage Essay

### “Welding with Children” by Tim Gautreaux (pp. 198-211 in Roberts text)

**Prompt:** The following passage from Tim Gautreaux’s short story “Welding with Children” relates an interaction between Bruton (the first-person narrator) and Mr. Fordlyson. Bruton is lamenting his family situation—his four daughters have not been exemplary mothers to their illegitimate children. Read the passage carefully. Write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how Gautreaux conveys a theme in this passage.

## LIDLIPS

**Literal content**—Be sure you understand what is actually happening in the passage. If necessary, briefly note this in the margins.

**Important Details**—What has been included? What has clearly been excluded? This lends itself to theme considerations, understanding characters, studying the authorial voice, etc.

**Diction**—the connotation or associations of word choice

Different words for the same thing often suggest different attitudes toward that thing. (content vs. happy vs. ecstatic)

- a. monosyllabic or polysyllabic?
- b. colloquial (slang), informal (conversational), formal (literary), or archaic?
- c. denotative (exact meaning) or connotative (suggested meaning)
- d. concrete (specific) or abstract (general or conceptual)
- e. cacophonous (harsh sounding—k, t, p, ch, ow—croak) or euphonious (pleasant sounding—m, n, sh, l, ah—languid, murmur)
- f. overall use of language through narrator and/or character(s)

**Literary Devices** (tone, allusion, imagery, symbolism, metaphor, simile, etc.)

**Ideas**—What themes emerge in the passage? Are they complete? Or are they the beginnings of ideas the author is exploring? Are they present in characters or situations? How do they connect to other ideas in the passage?

**Patterns**—Consider patterns that exist as well as those that begin to form and are then broken. Look for patterns in images, characters, relationships, dialogue, figurative language, etc.

**Sentence Structure**—Are they long and flowing? Short and choppy? Fragments? How do they begin? Is there unusual punctuation? Is an emphasis placed on one or more? What effect does the sentence structure have on the tone?