McKenzie Smith Smith 1

Salamone

English 9 Honors

Deeper Meaning of The End

There comes a time in a child’s life that we need to grow up or accept the harsh realities of the world. In the poem End by Elizabeth Alexander this is concept that is introduced to young African American girls for too early in their lives. End by Elizabeth Alexander starts off in explaining the harsh conditions young African American females go to school in. The poem then shifts into the narrator explaining how she can no longer shield her students from the harsh reality of the world and how they may never receive the same treatment as others in society.

In stanza one “Broken slates. Liberator burned to ash. Ninety panes of first-floor windows smashed. Frame wood splintered and jagged as tinder” shows a time of event were a school is burned or vandalized due to their color or race. Liberators burned to ash represents how a person of African American race were to speak out or stick up for themselves, they would be punished in an extreme way. This stanza is a way for the reader to really but themselves in an African Americans shoes during this time period.

Stanza two represents the narrator coming to terms with the fact that these types of violent things in the world cannot be shielded from her students.” Strangely, it is not god’s words that ring in my head as I search for understanding rather, words that I saw on charred reader” In this quote Elizabeth Alexander is saying that the charred

Smith 2

reader are her students that she looks to for strength to overcome discrimination towards her race, she uses her young naive students as a way to motivate herself.

There comes a time in a child’s life that we need to grow up or accept the harsh realities of the world. In the poem End by Elizabeth Alexander this is concept that is introduced to young African American girls for too early in their lives. Elizabeth Alexander is portraying an amazing message that deserves to be heard.

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