

## English 12: Composition

### Scale: 6

#### Comment:

This response was awarded a 6 because of its superiority. It demonstrates maturity of style and sophisticated language. This is clearly a high 6.

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The fabric of an old shirt against my palm felt as soft and wrinkly as my father's face when he hit me. He looked at me, and I left. I walked across town, the soles of my feet bare and tough in the loose sand and warm cement.

I went to see a lady whose home was heavy with the powdery smell of old age and quiet nights. I had hated this smell when my ratty prison of a high school sentenced all seniors to thirty hours of community service. Now it was my refuge.

She was standing on the back porch, numbly buttering the freshly laundered shirts of a husband who did not recognize her. Her hands were maps of veins and age spots; roads I have not yet travelled. Stories I have not yet heard. She stopped when she saw me, scalp tensing as she studied the cracks in my skin from the salt of my tears. We didn't say much.

I helped her fold the laundry, and separate wooden clothespins from plastic ones. The air buzzed slightly with the slight scent of soapy anticipation and freshly mown grass. The blue basket contained light spring blankets, almost identical to the ones in which I had during childhood, enveloping myself in a cocoon of lavender scent.

We went inside the home for a drink. The lemonade was too sour, and the ice burned my lips. She looked at me from across the table, with eyes like cloudy oysters with pearls of wisdom. An old Johnny Cash song was playing, but I could tell where it was from.

"Four strong words that blow lonely, even seas that run high, all those things that don't change, come what may..."

The music swirled like socks in a dryer. An engine started somewhere in the distance.

I could see myself in those eyes. My hands will someday become those hands. All the ecstasies and pains I have experienced will be etched in the lines of my face in the form of cryptic codes for teenagers to decipher. My palms were hot and I wanted to laugh or throw up.

"But the good times are all gone, and I'm bound for wrong on..."

We were just doing laundry, after all.