

# AP Literature Pieces

## 2018-2019

### **Knight of Shades**

by Paige Robnett

Questions -- past and present -- all but left unsaid:  
from now 'til then, what's my path foretold?  
Uncertainty rings through my muddled head.

The reading proceeds, the past confirmed, as dead.  
Wrongful sweethearts to whom I unjustly sold,  
my dignity, my joy. On my heart, they did tread.

Dark bygones vanish into light; new successes pled  
to emerge. My new present, oh behold:  
like lightning's flash; parting of the sea; shiny happiness;  
my daily bread.

Now within, spiritual soundness resides instead.  
Past alliances were not gold.  
My dignity, my joy; restored with a charming thread.

Past times I must unwed,  
In this present, good thoughts I must uphold.  
Future is uncertain, there's room to be mislead.

Peaks and Valleys forge my path over this highest  
mountain: I must climb ahead.  
Answering my questions, questions: these cards are my  
new gold.  
Musing over that reading, the past I decide to shed.  
I am The Empress. The Tarot: my charming thread.

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### **Only One Muse**

by Maddy Hinson

He must be midsummer born,  
a lovely and warm-hearted  
constellation: a fierce  
lion. Compatibility  
like none other:  
the lion and the archer. Some would say  
a dangerous pairing.  
Positive and negative electrons attract;  
summer and winter, light  
and dark go nowhere.

### **Last Resort**

by Maddy Hinson

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illnesses in the U.S. More than 40 million adults -- 18.1% -- in the United States are diagnosed with anxiety every year. Anxiety prevents people from living their everyday lives to the fullest, and is very costly. People with anxiety are six times more likely to be hospitalized each year for psychiatric care than those who are not affected. Genetics, brain chemistry, personality, and life events can all cause anxiety. I have moderate to severe anxiety, and I blame my disorder on family members who suffer from it too. To say having anxiety is inconvenient is an understatement. No matter how many counselors I see, how much positive-thinking I do, or how many anxiety meds I pop, my self-deprecating state of mind remains as the little devil on my shoulder.

Many people who are treated for anxiety are prescribed some sort of daily, oral pill to numb their mental pain. Although this is a relaxing way out, some believe that relying on drugs to alleviate mental illnesses is unproductive. Some of the smartest people with the largest potential to change the world are being numbed to their own genius by anxiety meds. Furthermore, children and teens diagnosed with anxiety are more likely to struggle with reckless behavior. A majority of people who receive treatment for anxiety feel there will never be a lasting solution to their mental torment. For this reason, I have a small proposal.

When people are officially diagnosed with anxiety, they should have the option to attend an anxiety-integrated boot camp for a fortnight. These camps would be government-funded, but insurance policies that cover behavioral health will also assist with costs. Located across America in different capitals, the boot-camp closest to each sufferer will be selected. Don't confuse these camps with the fun summer camps you attended as a child. No friends to be made at this boot camp, no braiding each other's hair, no skittles, and especially no rainbows. These two weeks will be the hardest of the attendees' lives. Multiple different simulations -- all extreme, high-stress situations -- will acclimate victims of anxiety to the most profoundly-distressing experiences. Many people will believe this camp is much too harsh or will create PTSD; however, all participants know that they are safe in every simulation. Replicating frightening real-life situations, these anxiety

He cannot be a simple blossom,  
two-faced. A mere sequence of incandescent  
lights is that of twins.  
Signs too analogous. Repelling  
one another is only natural.  
Too many similar connections  
entwining our love, forcing  
termination.

Only zodiac matches can be reliable  
predictions. No other honest fate, if I truly  
want my Earnest.

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### **Start Em' Young**

by Paige Robnett

Alcohol plays a very big part in many people's lives. If enjoyed safely and responsibly, people can have the time of their lives, but often things can go awry. Within the United States alone, twenty-nine people die every day from drunk driving. The sad news is 25% of those fatalities are intoxicated teenagers. Unsurprisingly, one in ten teenagers has admitted to drinking and driving within the past thirty days. In 2011, nearly one million teenagers were behind the wheel while intoxicated.

This problem is becoming too costly to continue any longer. Teenagers obviously will drive drunk; there's no true way to monitor that. Our brains have not yet made the connections to understand that this activity is very dangerous. We think we can control ourselves when intoxicated but the truth is, we have not had enough practice. So, I am proposing an eighteen-year plan, starting from the moment of birth, which spans the years until high school graduation. This plan entails a slow introduction of hard liquor into a baby's system, increasing the amount in such a manner so that by the time he goes to high school, he can safely operate any vehicle while under the influence. This innovative plan is the smarter, brighter future for your children.

It has been said by almost every person ever, that drinking heavily impairs anyone's driving ability. But one simply cannot become an Olympic gymnast if she's never practiced. Step one of my plan begins on the day of birth and spans through the end of the breastfeeding stage, when a toddler is around two years old. There are two ways to go about step one, as follows: simply keep the mother heavily intoxicated at all times so the alcohol may go through her system straight to the infant. OR, an easier, more practical and logical option is to put a less than one-

simulations are much more intense than everyday problems. They acclimate victims of anxiety to be less sensitive and know their capabilities. Camp-goers will ultimately realize that their day-to-day anxiety is minuscule, if not irrelevant. Not to fret, though -- anxiety camp will be the experience of a lifetime.

Stage One will start off easy. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, public speaking is one of the most common triggers of anxiety, including my own. Each camper will travel to complete some "volunteer work," but will not be informed about what they need to do. Not being told what tasks they must do increases their levels of anxiety due to uncertainty and the pressure to do everything well. In actuality, each participant will be locked inside a compressed, hot conference room with no windows, an extremely uncomfortable environment.

Waiting for them impatiently inside that room will be strangers of their own age, all poised, polished, intimidating, and well-dressed. Extremely confused, attendees will feel terror flooding into their hearts. They don't even know what is yet to come! In front of their crowd, they must give a detailed introduction. Then, they must give a 20-minute impromptu speech on a random topic. This simulation will most likely trigger anxiety-filled participants to go into full panic attack mode. However, there is no escaping until the task is done. Some are expected to shut down and go completely mute; some may even pass out. Participants will be forced to adapt to this stressful situation. However, the peers witnessing their speech will be supportive and only tell each participant how well they are doing. Difficult as it will be, the enforced public performances will provide confidence from all the good reviews.

Stage Two of camp will cure people who are especially triggered by parties and social events. For some, this simulation may not be that bad; however, many will be triggered by their insecurities over social blunders. First, participants must fill out a survey that asks what they dislike when it comes to appearance. A woman might answer that she would hate to be bald, fat, and wear gothic-style clothes. Next, each camper will receive a complete makeover, transforming them into their most repulsive appearance. So, that woman would be transformed into her image of grotesque: bald, fat, and gothic. For some, image is everything. Not being able to control how they convey themselves will trigger distress.

Next, the participant will be forced to attend a social event inside an auditorium full of thousands of people. Better yet, by their side will be their favorite celebrity whom they

half ounce of any desired alcohol into the baby's bottle. This is best done before bedtime, as your baby will then sleep like a rock. In this stage it is very important to remain cautious: an infant zero to two years old ingesting more than two ounces of alcohol can cause low blood pressure, seizure, coma, or fatal side effects like death. If done properly, this gradual introduction of the substance into the baby's system will allow her to become immune at a young age.

Step two starts at the toddler stage. Two to three-year-olds are just learning how to walk. So, affording them roughly one ounce of hard liquor once a day will help them get over the fear of walking, and will also help them successfully "walk the line" if need be in the future. This step is very simple. Just maintain one ounce a day in juice or milk until the children reach preschool. In stage three, the most progressive stage of the plan, the parent or legal guardian will up the alcohol content to 1.5-2 ounces per day depending on the child's tolerance. During this stage, 4 to 6-year-old children will be put through a checkpoint to evaluate their progress as a young drunkard.

Test one involves motor skills and requires a kids' electric drivable toy car. In this test, the child will be performing a series of driving tasks while intoxicated. This allows her to practice reaction time, ability to drive straight, spotting pedestrians and/or animals in a timely manner, and parking. It is recommended that your children be modestly protected with elbow pads and bike helmets since they don't actually know how to drive yet. Your child will also go through speech therapy while under the influence, to rid him of that annoying drunk-giveaway: slurred speech. Dragging on until the age of twelve, this system will increase a child's tolerance as parents up the amount of alcohol given to their child, but only within the parameters of safe toy car driving.

At the age of thirteen, step four comes into play. This is roughly the age where puberty and moodiness kicks in. By this age, children are mostly independent and knowledgeable of their own limits. At this point, my proposal helps teens get through the pain of puberty by allowing them to use alcohol as a sort of *liquid comfort* through those troubling and confusing times. By now, the young teen has become dependent on alcohol and knows her own limits. She will have the ability to appropriately function in school settings, family events, and at church, all while having a blood alcohol content of roughly .16-.19%. Teens' tolerance will only continue to rise as they finally reach the last step of the plan.

The final stage includes rigorous drunk driving practice outings, like off-roading, freeway driving, and driving in

highly respect, just the two of them! The only comfort the participant will have is her own being. Totally alone, surrounded by thousands of people they do not know, accompanied by somebody who intimidates the living daylights out of them, each camper's last microscopic shard of self-esteem will evaporate. This exercise will force participants to improvise, adapt, and overcome, because God forbid they embarrass themselves in front of their favorite celebrity!

Stage Three is targeted specifically for PTSD symptoms, which are triggered from entrapment and critical situations. The participant will be put in a completely empty, temperature varying room for twenty-four hours with limited food and water, no windows, and a small bucket. The room will become extremely hot, causing them to drink a majority of the available water in the first few hours. The heat will also make them extremely claustrophobic. The room will then become extremely cold, not allowing participants to sleep. Instead of sleeping, they will eat most of their food in the first sitting. This extremely miserable experience will cause them to fear being trapped in that room as death approaches.

Little do the participants know, this room has been shrinking little by little during the dark, cold night. In the morning, the room feels more like a cage. They begin to fear insanity, and question whether their surroundings are real. Many will experience panic attacks by this stage. However, they still have a fragment of hope, knowing their time in the cage will end soon, since they were told the simulation would last twenty-four hours. However, time passes and nobody unlocks the room. The room continues to become smaller and smaller and soon night approaches again. The participants begin to fear that they have been forgotten and question whether they can survive. Suffering and weeping in the darkness until morning, they are finally set free, exhausted and deprived of any substances.

By this time, victims of anxiety should think of their everyday lives as luxurious retreats from everyday problems. I specifically do not need this camp because I am improving on handling my anxiety myself, and my symptoms are slowly getting less and less severe as I grow older. However, this camp will benefit America by creating stronger-minded people who have the potential to be problem-solvers and be able to work in stressful situations. This will also benefit adults of America because kids after this camp will be less likely to act out at school and home due to perceived mental torment. This anxiety boot camp is the best solution for victims of anxiety because it does not rely on artificial medications, and it is almost guaranteed to make a positive impact on people

blizzards, rain, and hail. Binge drinking on weekends will up their forbearance, so parents are encouraged to provide these opportunities, as well as more drunken speech therapy. This hands-on parenting will prepare teens of 2035 to be unlike those of any generation before. Around the time of eighth grade, each child will obtain tolerance similar to Andre the Giant's. Their BAC should exceed well beyond the legal limits, so they can be prepared for any driving circumstances at any party. For an untrained degenerate like myself, a BAC of .35% would cause a coma or imminent death. But a trained child, who has dedicated her life to be immune to all drunk driving accidents, will be able to promptly drive and function with a BAC of .24-.35%+.

This plan will not only reduce drunk driving fatalities and injuries at immense levels, but it will be an economic boost to the alcohol industry. The current alcoholic beverage industry allows the US economy to rake in 70 billion dollars in annual tax revenue and provides roughly four million jobs in America alone. This only accounts for the twenty-one and over adults. Every year, four million babies are born, so if every newborn child hopped on my plan, four million new and loyal customers will bolster both the alcohol production industry and the US economy each year. Not only will this boost the beverage industry, it will also increase local liquor sales within restaurants and stores, and that will help local economies too. This plan provides logical solutions to the sad reality of teenage drunk driving. We will equip the future generation with the skills, street smarts, and tolerance that they need to safely maneuver the roads while plastered.

There are a few shortcomings to this plan that have been considered. A number of things come up, such as death from alcohol consumption, brain damage, premature liver failure, type-two diabetes, and alcoholic hepatitis. But in most cases these outcomes are rare, and with the proposed plan providing a safe, gradual drinking schedule, immunity to negative consequences will be safe and effective. This plan will equip your child to avoid death in all circumstances.

This plan is my own brainchild. And I will say, as I have been unsuccessfully driving drunk for around two years now, I know the dangers of inexperienced intoxicated driving. I hope that all future generations will appreciate my freshened thoughts on this controversial subject. This is my gift to posterity: a new, modernized plan that doesn't involve abstinence from alcohol, but embraces the euphoria of teenage freedom and handles it in a responsible way, which every parent can embrace.

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who experience anxiety. Most fear is created within, and half of the time goes unrecognized. Giving them exaggerated support and showing that they are capable of overcoming their fears can be all it takes to make a difference in anxiety symptoms.

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### Catching Joy

by Maddy Hinson

*Sniff, sniff.* . . today. . . is the day!  
Heart pounds at the sight of  
a highlighter-yellow sphere  
gliding along freshly-cut emerald  
carpeting, covering this play ground.  
Legs race *fast, fast, fast*, keep going!  
Those two-legged creatures circle  
'round and 'round again,  
on that scratchy, hot, obsidian oval just across the way.  
Finally!  
Friction allows the meeting to take place:  
I retrieve my prize,  
trotting back to a jubilant lad.  
This place,  
so open and crisp:  
let's go again!

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### Living Façades

by Paige Robnett

Having no thrust, no bona-fide, no frank intent -- we babble,  
and in the famine of principle and intelligence -- we pronounce.  
We prate with **pulp**-packed mouths,  
bask within our **fiction**-brimmed lives.  
In the script of life's penmanship --  
we speak in tongues.

Point blank -- *we yack of bullshit.* . . .  
trying to outwit uncanny silences.  
Every clause is fruitless and sterile,  
tucking in hypothetical links.  
Bidding to botch a coupling, your shallow heart-to-heart  
tacked by mere grit and counterfeit feelings brews  
casualty in dilation.

Uncover your congenial soul!  
Mesh those kinked waves

that surge, swell, and digress behind a pair of  
latched muzzles, united eyes, and irked noses.  
Experience all breaths rescued from nonsense.  
Find profundity in pulsing  
fattened fusion.  
Steal a compatible soul and --  
*comfortably*  
*share silence.*