

9.2 Collections of Poetry

My Man Blue by Nikki Grimes is a Narrative poem. Denise Johnson in The Joy of Children's Literature states that narrative poetry "Tells a story often with rapid action and a chronological order. Relates to a particular event or tale," (p. 240). One thing I noticed about the poems within *My Man Blue* is that the rhythm of each poem changes. Some will follow a strict pattern while others do not seem to follow a pattern at all. Also, the poems have a lot of voice in each of them that were told by the young boy.

My Man Blue seems to be a great piece for multicultural literature. The author Nikki Grimes is obviously from a difficult background (being from Harlem, NY) and is African American. She can depict to readers what it is like to be a young boy growing up in such an environment. And how one person can change a boy's life by keeping him off the streets and keeping him away from drugs. A role model like Blue could probably save a lot of young boys instead of the "streets becoming their friend."

Like *My Man Blue*, *Brown Honey in Broomwheat Tea* by Joyce Carol Thomas is a Narrative Poem. It is a narrative poem because it depicts the hardships a family has to go through but how they stay strong because of their heritage. None of the poems seem to have a sound pattern. This set of poems creates great imagery. For example, her parents call her brown, honey in broomwheat tree. As you are reading through the poems you are trying to picture what a girl with this skin color would look like in person. Denise Johnson in The Joy of Children's Literature states that imagery "is often used to clarify and enhance the reader's experience with the poem," (p. 242).

Brown Honey in Broomwheat Tea is also an excellent example of multicultural literature. The author Joyce Carol Thomas seems to have grown up in an African American household that did not always know where their next meal would come from and therefore was able to tell this story that could very clearly be read and understood by an outside reader. Because the little girl had such a deep connection with her family and her family's heritage she never gave up hope and states "But like the steeping brew The longer I stand The stronger I stay." Which I think is what the author wanted us to understand about the African American culture.

Brown Angels by Walter Dean Myers is different from the previous collections of poetry. For one it is not a narrative. It is more of a collection of poems inspired by the author's thoughts or photographs throughout the book. The second difference is that each poem has much more rhythm to it. Each poem usually follows some sort of sound pattern which really make them "flow." Also, this collection of poetry really has a lot of imagery. The book is mostly made up of old photographs of African American children and therefore the poems that go along with the photographs really creates a picture in the readers mind about what those children could have been doing.

Like the previous two collections, *Brown Angels* is a great example of multicultural literature. Walter Dean Myers even states in his opening to the collection of poems that "The poems were inspired sometimes by the pictures, sometimes by the memory of children I have known, and sometimes just by the joy of a summer day." These poems represent Walter Dean Myers and since he is an African American it gives an outside reader a glimpse into the life of an African American.