

EAE 0422 A	Sujet Jury	Sujet Candidat		Code Sujet	CLG 19
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Your main commentary should be focused on *subordinate clauses*. Other topics may also be addressed.

5 Nuns go by as quiet as lust, and drunken men and sober eyes
sing in the lobby of the Greek hotel. Rosemary Villanucci, our next-
door friend who lives above her father's cafe, sits in a 1939 Buick
eating bread and butter. She rolls down the window to tell my
10 sister Frieda and me that we can't come in. We stare at her,
wanting her bread, but more than that wanting to poke the
arrogance out of her eyes and smash the pride of ownership that
curls her chewing mouth. When she comes out of the car we will
beat her up, make red marks on her white skin, and she will cry
15 and ask us do we want her to pull her pants down. We will say no.
We don't know what we should feel or do if she does, but whenever
she asks us, we know she is offering us something precious and
that our own pride must be asserted by refusing to accept.

15 School has started, and Frieda and I get new brown stockings
and cod-liver oil. Grown-ups talk in tired, edgy voices about Zick's
Coal Company and take us along in the evening to the railroad
tracks where we fill burlap sacks with the tiny pieces of coal lying
about. Later we walk home, glancing back to see the great carloads
20 of slag being dumped, red hot and smoking, into the ravine that
skirts the steel mill. The dying fire lights the sky with a dull orange
glow. Frieda and I lag behind, staring at the patch of color
surrounded by black. It is impossible not to feel a shiver when our
feet leave the gravel path and sink into the dead grass in the field.

25 Our house is old, cold, and green. At night a kerosene lamp
lights one large room. The others are braced in darkness, peopled
by roaches and mice. Adults do not talk to us - they give us
directions. They issue orders without providing information. When
we trip and fall down they glance at us; if we cut or bruise
ourselves, they ask us are we crazy. When we catch colds, they
30 shake their heads in disgust at our lack of consideration. How, they
ask us, do you expect anybody to get anything done if you all are

sick? We cannot answer them. Our illness is treated with contempt,
foul Black Draught, and castor oil that blunts our minds.

35 When, on a day after a trip to collect coal, I cough once, loudly,
through bronchial tubes already packed tight with phlegm, my
mother frowns. "Great Jesus. Get on in that bed. How many times
do I have to tell you to wear something on your head? You must be
the biggest fool in this town. Frieda? Get some rags and stuff that
window."

40 Frieda restuffs the window. I trudge off to bed, full of guilt and
self-pity. I lie down in my underwear, the metal in the black garters
hurts my legs, but I do not take them off, because it is too cold to
lie stockingless. It takes a long time for my body to heat its place in
45 the bed. Once I have generated a silhouette of warmth, I dare not
move, for there is a cold place one-half inch in any direction. No
one speaks to me or asks how I feel. In an hour or two my mother
comes. Her hands are large and rough, and when she rubs the
Vicks salve on my chest, I am rigid with pain. She takes two
50 fingers' full of it at a time, and massages my chest until I am faint.
Just when I think I will tip over into a scream, she scoops out a
little of the salve on her forefinger and puts it in my mouth, telling
me to swallow. A hot flannel is wrapped about my neck and chest. I
am covered up with heavy quilts and ordered to sweat, which I do,
promptly.