

Student Exemplar: Amy's 2.2 Personal Response

"To Every Thing There Is a Season" by Alistair MacLeod



The meaning of the short story, "To Every Thing There Is a Season," by Alistair MacLeod, to me, is really about losing one's childhood innocence and moving on towards adulthood. This is the main theme I'd say and the author uses a childhood memory at Halloween and Christmas. "For Christmas is a time of both past and present and often the two are imperfectly blended." Many people can relate to realizing that Santa Claus is not real but understand that Christmas is much more than that element. "I am troubled myself about the nature of Santa Claus and I am trying to hang on to him any way that I can." Another detail discussed in this story is the narrator realizes that his father is not well. "He has 'not been well' for over two years and has difficulty breathing." "He is old, we think, at forty-two." His older brother, Neil, returns at Christmas and the narrator realizes that he is taking more of a fatherly role in the family.

This story reminded me of fun holidays that I experienced as a kid, and still do. I remember snooping for Christmas presents when I was eight years old after a classmate told me that there was no such thing as Santa Claus. I didn't believe him at first, but then my heart sank when I found some packages in my parents closet. I was a little sick to my stomach. It was a sad moment when I realized the classmate was right. I felt so guilty for having snooped that I couldn't even really enjoy the presents once Christmas morning arrived. Part of growing up also means appreciating the family traditions surrounding the holidays. It's about the people not the presents.

Moving onto adulthood doesn't mean you have to say goodbye to childhood. It is important to remember the joy of being a child. Alistair MacLeod reveals this idea through his short story. Realizing that our parents won't live forever makes us sad, but thinking back to our childhood is important. We should appreciate all that our parents do for us and realize how hard they work to make Christmas and other holidays so special. There is a season and a time for everything.