

In-Class Essay, English 111/005,
Friday, February 1, 2019, 12:00-12:50

Choose **one** of the following passages, either the passage by David Chariandy or the passage by Lawrence Hill. **Print the page** you choose on an 8 ½ by 11 sheet of paper. Bring that paper with you to the in-class essay; you may write notes on both sides of the sheet, such as an outline, brief quotations, or key points. You must NOT write out on that paper a draft of your essay in advance of the 50-minute period on Friday. The essay MUST be written in the exam booklets provided. You will have to turn in your note sheet with your completed essay. The essay is to be a close reading of the passage you choose. It must have a focused, critical argument. Locate significant themes and motifs, along with important elements of style, form and structure (possibly including, but not limited to, such figures of speech as diction, imagery, syntax, sound, repetition, metaphor, irony, tone, and rhythm). How does the style or form of the language support, or contribute to, its meaning? To focus your argument, you may wish to discuss how the author presents his sense of self, OR to consider how the passage invites us to rethink how and why we pay attention to the world. What is significant about how the author writes at this moment in the text? You may refer, if you wish, to the rest of the text from which the passage is taken.

I have loved my mother unreservedly and unequivocally for all of my 61 years on this planet. I always felt understood by her, connected to her and able to understand her. Even when I have lived in other provinces, territories and countries, Mom was present in my life.

I am heartbroken, but I am also happy. My mother got her wish, which she had expressed verbally and in writing to her family, to lawyers and to doctors for some 40 years: When it came time to die, she wanted to exit on her own terms. Dying in Switzerland was not my mother's first choice. She wanted to die in Ontario, her home of 65 years. But under Canadian law, she did not qualify for a physician-assisted death.

My mother has always known what she wanted, and has never been afraid to advocate for it. I am proud of my mother's courage and determination to die peacefully and beautifully, and proud that I helped her. For me, accompanying my mother on the last trip of her life – the only trip she ever asked of me – was the ultimate act of love.

Works Cited

Hill, Lawrence. "Act of Love: The Life and Death of Donna Mae Hill." *The Globe and Mail Toronto*, 1 June 2018,
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-act-of-love-the-life-and-death-of-donna-mae-hill/> .

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Of course, the circumstance is even less clear for both you and your brother, children of a white mother, children undeniably “of colour,” to use the ridiculous language of now and here, with brown skin, curly hair, and dark eyes—but what more specifically? I have tried to instill in both of you a strong sense of pride regarding your African and South Asian ancestry, knowing that one may very easily be made to feel otherwise. But the fact is that I’ve never actually named you, authoritatively, what you are, racially speaking. I suppose that I have imagined, at times, that you, as such complexly mixed children, might have the opportunity to choose and declare your own identity. I had forgotten that racial identity is so rarely a matter of personal choice. That it is always, in origin, a falsehood and violence, though it can become, all the same, a necessary tool for acknowledging the enduring life and creativity of a persistently maligned people. (55-56)

Works Cited

Chariandy, David. *I've Been Meaning to Tell You: A Letter to my Daughter*.
McClelland and Stewart, 2018.