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Believe

A Literacy Narrative is a favored way for writers to talk about their relationship with speaking, reading, and writing. Many literacy narratives have been written and published by several famous or not, writers in order to help their audience get to know them. In the readings of “Superman and Me” by Sherman Alexie and, “Coming Into Language” by Jimmy Santiago Baca, it shows how big of an impact these stories are to many people throughout the world who may have experienced or gone through similar situations. They both tell their stories in a unique way which allows readers to get a closer feel to the author. Such that both writers latch on to a connection with the readers through their writing.

In the short story “Superman and Me”, the author Alexie describes how he learned to read at such a young age despite having limited resources on the Native American reservation. He began reading his first comic book “Superman” and started looking at the pictures and making up dialogue based on what he saw in the pictures. While growing up in the Native American reservation it meant that you were destined to be ignorant and to fail. Alexie wasn’t privileged and had to learn by himself if he wanted to succeed. He confronted the stereotypes by being a flourishing, smart, reservation born, Indian. Rather than being powerless and falling into the peer pressure from other students into acting ‘stupid’ in class, Alexie does the complete opposite. He reads high-level books that are nowhere near his grade level and spends all of his free time either reading the back of cereal boxes or reading books during lunch and recess. The love and passion that he has for books are from his father because even though they were going through some hard times there were always books around them to gain knowledge which made Alexie happy and delighted. He lets us view the importance of family in the reading by showing that his father is an important person to him and that he considers each one of his family members a paragraph. The author’s narrative is very inspirational, and he was able to allow readers to understand his passion for learning new things no matter what the expectations are.

In “Coming Into Language”, Baca lets us into his journey of being a young Hispanic male that struggled through being racial profiled and being put in prison for false accusations as a murderer. He was such an easy target because of his lack of education, and he couldn’t speak or defend himself and didn’t know his rights to this injustice. When he was just a kid, he was always being punished for not being a good student and eventually dropped out. It’s like he gave up and believed that books were not for him. However, while he was locked up, he wanted to protest his belief in how important education and books became to him. He was eager to use his time in prison to learn, improve and to teach himself how strong his ability to read and write can make him. Then after all that hard work, he decided to create his own journal and to share his struggles as a ‘Chicano’ and to feel relieved of letting his feelings and emotions pour onto paper and into his poems. He didn’t let the isolation, medical drugs that he was forced to take because he was in the “nut-run”, and people that didn’t want him to feel like a human-being stop him from becoming who he was destined to be. I believe that Baca’s aspiration is to inform his readers about his path to becoming a writer with the hope that his story will help someone else in need.

A memorable quote that caught my eye is in the short story “Coming into Language” by Baca, “I wrote to sublimate my rage, from a place where all hope is gone, from a madness of having been damaged too much, from a silence of killing rage. I wrote to avenge the betrayals of a lifetime, to purge the bitterness of injustice; from an indestructible love of life, I wrote the way I wept, and danced, and made love.” This explains the importance of what it means to be in a heartbreaking position and being able to do nothing. It shows the hurt Baca was in while inside the prison but chose to not give up and continued to pursue his writing. I can also relate to that quote because sometimes anything or everything can be so overwhelming and scary that it’s almost as if all you can do is lay in bed, overthink and slowly giving up. But we can’t do that if we want to chase our dreams; we have to put our heads high take all of the wisdom given to us by our teachers and our peers and take it with us for the rest of our lives.

Nonetheless, both of these amazing authors showed us that having a hunger for an education and having a dream of becoming successful is something that many of us should desire and have high expectations in life. They made us see from their point of views on how some people have it hard and we should always be grateful for being able to get an education. They both self-taught themselves how to read and write and made sure that the readers understood

why they needed to learn no matter what was going on in their lives. Also, to never give up on ourselves and not let anyone tell us to lower our goals or views in life because, anything is possible when you put in work, sweat, and tears into something you believe in.