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### Constance Rooke, author of *The Clear Path: A Guide to Writing English Essays*, and Home Inspection consultant Brad LaBute converse, with rude interruptions by Walt Whitman

Susan Holbrook  
*University of Windsor*

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# Constance Rooke, author of *The Clear Path: A Guide to Writing English Essays*, and Home Inspection Consultant Brad LaBute converse, with rude interruptions by Walt Whitman

Susan Holbrook

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There is copper, cast iron, galvanized and ABS piping in the home.

But I find this version hard to grade because it would be extremely unusual to find an essay so free of technical errors that is also so weak in argumentation.

The main water supply pipe to the home is galvanized and the shut-off valve is located in the basement.

You should not conclude, however, that the 20-percent spread between 40 percent in Version 1 and 60 percent in Version 2 represents the amount that technical errors can count in an assessment of your work.

Although galvanized piping has a life expectancy of 40 to 60 years, rust accumulates inside the pipes and chokes down the diameter.

Who goes there! Hankering, gross, mystical, nude?

Bi-metallic connections should be avoided as galvanic corrosion often occurs between pipes and fitting of different metals.

The correction of errors in this case raised the mark by 20 percent, but if you were to *commit* errors as serious and plentiful as these in an essay that might otherwise have earned 85 percent, your essay would still fail.

How is it I extract strength from the beef I eat?

Technical errors can make the difference between an A and an F, but an essay that is totally free of technical errors could still be a failing essay.

What is a man anyhow? What am I? and what are you?

Some insurance companies have an issue with galvanized piping – it is recommended that you contact your insurance company regarding their policy on this type of piping.

I do not snivel that snivel the world over,

The cleaned-up copy of Version 2 makes it easier for us to see what the writer of the essay might be trying to say and how the argument can be improved.

The average life expectancy of cast iron piping is 50 years.

Notice that I have used the word “argument” – but what *is* the argument of the essay?

That months are vacuums and the ground but wallow and filth,

That life is a suck and sell, and nothing remains at the end but Threadbare crape and tears.

What is the writer trying to prove?

The flapper to the toilet on the upper level of the home stays open and therefore requires repair/adjustment.

Here is what I think might have gone on in the mind of the student who submitted Version 1.

Press close barebosomed night! Press close magnetic nourishing night!

The aluminum fascia is in good condition.

Whimpering and truckling fold with powders for invalids . . . .

Conformity goes to the fourth-removed,

I cock my hat as I please indoors or out.

(I'll assume that the student was female.)

The roof was examined from the ground.

Shall I pray? Shall I venerate and be ceremonious?

In reading the story, she noticed that this very old woman was doing some peculiar things– talking to shrubs, hallucinating about marble-cake, and so on.

There are three layers of asphalt shingles on the roof.

I have pried through the strata and analyzed to a hair,

She relied on the repeated question (“Is she senile?”) to establish an easy structure for the essay.

And counselled with doctors and calculated close and found no Sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones.

As discussed on site, the shingles are generally in poor condition and there are missing shingles – this should be corrected to deter water penetration.



The technical carelessness of Version 1 is a symptom of the student's hurried approach to the task at hand; it is matched by her lack of care with the argument.

Improper roof ventilation may cause attic heat build-up causing cracked, buckled or leaking shingles and leaks from water backed up under the shingles by ice dams, which are formed when snow melts and freezes at the eaves.

Mainly, it feels like plot summary.

In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barleycorn less,

And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them.

These two references are introduced by the statement that the people Pheonix meets "denote her as inferior" – presumably because she is old, since the student goes on to say "a grand-ma, granny, and old woman."

As discussed on site, the block chimney is spalling due to the application of tar – this should be monitored.

And I know I am solid and sound,

To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow,  
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.

Can you see that "denote" is the wrong word here?

There are no roof vents and the aluminum soffit is not vented  
– as discussed on site,

I wonder why the marble-cake hallucination doesn't come here  
(rather than in the second paragraph).

The roof venting is poor.

And I know I am deathless,

I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's  
compass,

Another problem with paragraph unity is that

A chimney screen be installed in order to deter birds/rodents  
from entering the home.

I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with a burnt  
stick at night.

Areas of the eaves trough require securing for better water  
control.

I know I am august,

I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house  
by

After all.

Notice that the word "eaves trough" is wrong. Do you see how this sentence snaps into focus if you substitute "illusion"?

I exist as I am, that is enough,

However, as discussed on site, the wood sills are rotted and

The student hasn't given any interpretation of the dialogue she quotes

My foothold is tenoned and mortised in granite,

There is some mold at the lower walls

I laugh at what you call dissolution,

Enclosed is an information sheet on mold.

One 30-amp fuse and one 25-amp fuse in the subpanel are over-rated

My criticism of Version 2 is not so much that the essay lacks a thesis

And I know the amplitude of time.

as that the implicit thesis is not sufficiently interesting from a literary point of view.

Unscrew the locks from the doors!

Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!

The S-trap should be upgraded to a P-trap.

The topic of this paragraph is love.