

18.

I remember a ten-year-old girl,  
With a name of Elaine  
And she went down into a ravine,  
To collect a hat that was on the ice

It was thrown over by Cordelia,  
In a hurturing form of hate,  
And they went and told Elaine's mother:  
"She's been bad, you see, she'll be late"

And Elaine goes down to the creek,  
Rumored to be filled with death  
And to be frequented by dangerous men  
But she is now on the ice, grabbing her hat

Cold shoots up and the overshoes are filling  
Now the shoes are filling and the snow pants  
Sounds of a little girl's voice echo in the ravine  
And she flounders back to shore

Lying on the snowbank, the ravine is too steep  
And up over the bridge is a lady draped in black  
She floats down from the bridge to the bank  
Her heart can be seen from her red chest

She has seen the Virgin Mary,  
And somehow and someway,  
She has touched Elaine's heart  
And Elaine climbs up the ravine

She is on the road home,  
And from there she sees her mother  
She is running forward in an evening gown  
She touches Elaine and the Virgin Mary has gone

20. The development of identity is natural, but what sets a person from the pack is not how they identify who they are, it's how they grow into one. The protagonist of *Cat's Eye* by Margaret Atwood was Elaine Risley, to whom, at the beginning of the novel, was nine-years-old and ends when she is middle aged. Elaine's life experiences will be compared to the author's through emotional development, high school years, and then the eighteenth year. Her personal development will be compared to mine and how Elaine's experiences concurred with my past as well.

**Comment [AP1]:** Solid narrative poem. See comments for specific feedback. 26/30

**Comment [AP2]:** nice

**Comment [AP3]:** interesting

**Comment [AP4]:** be careful of accidental rhyming...

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**Comment [AP5]:** good!

**Comment [AP6]:** Careful with this "she". The first "she" was Elaine... Confusing

**Comment [AP7]:** Nice work. Solid comparison. Well organized and neatly executed with the exception of a few problematic phrases and some odd word choices. For the most part, a successful essay. 42/50

**Comment [AP8]:** Problematic phrasing. I see your point, but I really have to look for it in the way this is worded.

**Comment [AP9]:** Problematic phrasing.

**Comment [AP10]:** Which author? Careful when you're writing about a novel. IT's ok to say I, me, mine.

**Comment [AP11]:** Nice outlining

**Comment [AP12]:** Word choice

Childhood for Elaine had a vexing amount of support where she would wake up, go to school with her friends, and then come back only to feel left out and hurt. Cordelia, Elaine's best friend, used mixed replies and signals to control Elaine to the point where she began to fear to be around her: "Last year I was hardly ever home, by myself, after school or on weekends. Now I want to be." (164) There was so much emotional turmoil, that Elaine began to harm herself by "[peeling] the skin off [her] feet ..." (153) and "gnawed the cuticles off from around [her] fingernails, leaving welts of exposed, oozing flesh" (153). When Elaine was in Grade Five, Cordelia threw her hat over a bridge that they would often cross when coming back from school. She threw it to tease her and when Elaine had gone down into the ravine to grab the hat, they had left and she had fallen through the ice, but had later survived. After this traumatic event, Elaine stopped speaking to her friends and she was capable of making new ones proving that this was the greatest emotional and personal development for Elaine.

Comment [AP13]: Good!

Comment [AP14]: Avoid the past passive

Comment [AP15]: Good!

My childhood was not pleasant, and therefore will not be discussed within this personal essay, but I am willing to discuss about my life in Toronto and some time before that. The greatest emotional and personal development was when I was sixteen and had dropped out of high school due to emotional stress. This event lasted for a year, but this singular situation was one major experience. It wasn't until my sixteenth year that I had left home and had chosen to live in Toronto as a homeless youth. When the seventeenth year came in, I became heavily depressed and lived by myself in transitional housing. I was not successful or personally developed within this time period; I was distraught and depressed. What I did learn about myself was that I had a large amount of hope and integrity in morally strife situations. We should have some sort of connecting sentence, tying your experience to Elaine's.

Comment [AP16]: Wow!

Comment [AP17]: Word choice...

Comment [AP18]: Good!

When Elaine was transitioning from Elementary to High School, Elaine had become friends again with Cordelia and watched herself grow as Cordelia became more and more dependent on others. She was noted throughout high school to have had "such a mean mouth that she becomes known for it" (314) and that the person she would often "use [her] mean mouth on the most [was] Cordelia." (316) Although Elaine grew up not knowing how to interact with other girls, she would get along with the boys quite well; often going out on dates with them. As the high school years accumulated, it became explicit that Elaine was personally stronger than Cordelia; "[Cordelia] doesn't have to stay locked into place, into this mournful, drawn-out, low-grade misery. She has all kinds of choices and possibilities, and the only thing keeping her away from them is lack of willpower." (348) By Grade 12, Elaine was now a talented drawer, while Cordelia had dropped out of high school.

Comment [AP19]: Interesting!

Comment [AP20]: rephrase

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Comment [AP21]: word choice

Comment [AP22]: word choice

A friend who was in the same transitional program as me was set to move out and had gotten his own apartment. His name was V.S. and he was to me as Cordelia was to Elaine and while I was living with him, I was emotionally stressed. When I initially met him, he was proactive and efficient with giving back to the community as well as finding work. Afterwards, my roommate became heavily paranoid, unsympathetic, and irresponsible in his activities and social relations. As I was leaving for Vancouver, I realized that he was falling behind in life, while I was working hard to make things better for myself. Again, if we could have the connection sentence here making the similarities between you and Elaine specific...

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Comment [AP23]: good comparison

At 18, it was first year university for Elaine and it was perhaps the largest change in her life since she fell into the river when she was ten. Within this period of time, Elaine attended a class called Life Drawing which heavily influenced her clothing style and life choices; "They wear tidy medium-heel pumps and tailored blouses, or jumpers, or little weskits with matching skirts and buttons. I wear these things too." (370) Elaine occasionally went out for drinks with several men mainly because she was socially adept at talking to men instead of women. Her life drawing teacher, Josef, was ridiculed by her male friends, while Elaine and a peer, Susie, were both, by the end of the year, in a "love affair" (383) with him. It was from her first year at university that Elaine learned how to understand the world around her and was discovering who she wanted to be.

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**Comment [AP24]:** good

When I left Toronto and came to Vancouver on the Greyhound, I was fearful that I may end up depressed and would not be productive in Vancouver. This did not occur as I pushed myself to look for work and finish my education. I received a job with a company as a data driven online marketer due to having helped someone when all of their products had fallen off of their pull cart. This, in itself, was a sign of personal development because I had always wanted to become a person who would help others when they were in need. Vancouver was the city where I discovered how much I have grown as a person and as an individual.

**Comment [AP25]:** interesting!

In this essay, Elaine and I were compared on how we developed within the emotionally significant areas of our life, our teenage years, and the latter events of our youth. From this analysis, Elaine was still developing and discovering herself, while I was discovering how my experiences had changed me. Learning to discover oneself is perhaps the most golden opportunity and later on in life, it tends to have the capacity to present its worth.

**Comment [AP26]:** good

**Comment [AP27]:** this last part weakens your conclusion. There are too many steps. By the time we read that learning to discover oneself TENDS to have the CAPACITY to PRESENT its WORTH, we've forgotten what it was we were talking about... ☺  
Strive for simplicity and clarity so that the depth of your ideas is plain to the audience.

## Works Cited

Attwood, M. (1989). *Cat's Eye* (Soft Cover ed.). Toronto: Seal Books.