**American Literature II**

**English 262**

### *Invoking Family in As I Lay Dying*

“If he was to come tomorrow and tell her the time was nigh, she wouldn't wait, I know her. Wagon or no wagon, she wouldn't wait. Then she'd be upset, and I wouldn't upset her for the living world. With **that family burying-ground in Jefferson and them of her blood waiting for her there**, she'll be impatient. I promised my word **me and the boys** would get her there quick as mules could walk it, so she could rest quiet” (18-19).

“I always said Darl was different from those others. I always said he was the only one of them that had **his mother’s nature, had any natural affection**” (21).

“A **Bundren through and through**, loving nobody, caring for nothing except how to get something with the least amount of work” (22).

“Why, for the last three weeks I have been coming over every time I could, coming sometimes when I shouldn't have, **neglecting my own family and duties so that somebody would be with her** in her last moments and she would not have to face the Great Unknown without one familiar face to give her courage” (22).

“Jewel dont care about anything he is not kin to us in caring, not care-kin” (26).

“It takes two people to make you, and one people to die. That’s how the world is going to end” (39).

“I can remember how when I was young I believed death to be a phenomenon of the body; now I know it to be merely a function of the mind and that of the minds of the ones who suffer the bereavement. The nihilists say it is the end; the fundamentalists, the beginning; when **in reality it is no more than a single tenant or family moving out of a tenement or a town**” (43-44).

“It’s because **I am alone. If I could just feel it, it would be different, because I would not be alone**. But if I were not alone, everybody would know it. And he could do so much for me, and then I would not be alone. Then **I could be all right alone**” (58-59).

“It’s a judgment on them. I see the hand of the Lord upon **this boy** for **Anse Bundren’s judgment** and warning” (72).

“If you have **no son**, it’s because the Lord has decreed otherwise in His wisdom” (73).

“And **Jewel *is*, so Addie Bundren must be**. **And then I must be**, or I could not empty myself for sleep in a strange room. And so if I am not emptied yet, I am *is*” (80-81).

“**My mother is a fish**” (84).

“I cannot love my mother because **I have no mother**. Jewel’s mother is a horse” (95).

“But my mother is a fish. . . . Jewel is **my brother**. . . . Darl is **my brother**. . . . **I am. Darl is my brother**” (101).

“I told him not to bring that horse **out of respect for his dead ma** . . . when you fixes it so folks can say such about you, it’s **a reflection on your ma**, I says, not me: I am a man and I can stand it; **it’s on your womenfolks**, your ma and sister that you should care for” (105-06).

“And then **I knew** that I knew. I knew that as plain on that day as I knew about Dewey Dell on that day” (136).

“It was that boy. I said ‘Here; you better take a holt of my hand’ and **he waited and held to me**. I be durn if it wasn’t like he come back and got me; like he was saying They wont nothing hurt you. . . . and **if I just stayed with him I’d be all right too**” (139).

“When Cash speaks to me I know that he has been watching it all the time, watching it and watching Jewel ten feet ahead of us. ‘**Let the rope go**,’ he says” (148).

“God gave you **children to comfort your hard human lot** and for a token of His own suffering and love, **for in love you conceived and bore them**” (166).

“**He is my cross and he will be my salvation**. He will save me from the water and from the fire. Even though I have laid down my life, he will save me” (168).

“I could just remember how **my father** used to say that the reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time” (169).

“Now you are **aware** of me! Now I am something in your secret and selfish life, who have **marked your blood with my own for ever and ever” (170).**

“And so I **took** Anse” (170).

“Later he told me, ‘I aint got **no people**. So that wont be no worry to you. I dont reckon you can say the same.’

‘No. **I have people**. In Jefferson.’

His face fell a little. ‘Well, I got a little property. I'm forehanded; I got a good honest name. **I know how town folks are**, but maybe when they talk to me ...’

‘They might listen,’ I said. ‘But they'll be hard to talk to.’ He was watching my face. ‘They're in the cemetery.’” (171)

“I knew that it had been, not that **my aloneness** had to be violated over and over each day, but that **it had never been violated until Cash came**” (172).

“Nonsense . . . you and me aint nigh done **chapping** yet, with **just two**” (173).

“**My children were of me alone**, of the wild blood boiling along the earth, of me and of all that lived; of none and of all” (175).

“My father said that the reason for living is getting ready to stay dead. I knew at last what he meant and that **he could not have known what he meant himself**, because a man cannot know anything about the house afterward. And so I have cleaned my house” (175-6).

“**I gave Anse Dewey Dell to negative Jewel**. Then I gave him Vardaman to replace the child I had robbed him of. And now he has three children that are his and not mine. And then I could get ready to die” (176).

“God knows it. He knows in fifteen years I aint et the victuals He aimed for man to eat to keep his strength up, and me saving a nickel here and a nickel there **so my family wouldn't suffer** it to buy them teeth so I could eat God's appointed food” (191).

“I’d advise you to buy that and go back home and **tell your pa**, if you have one, and let him make somebody buy you a **wedding license**” (201).

“Me, **a respectable druggist, that's kept store and raised a family and been a church-member for fifty-six years** in this town. I'm a good mind to **tell your folks** myself, if I can just find who they are” (202).

“Jewel . . . **whose son are you**? Your mother was a horse, but who was your father, Jewel?” (212).

“You goddam lying **son of a bitch**” (213).

Jewel giving up his horse (193).

Jewel carrying Addie’s coffin from the burning barn (222).

Jewel turning on the men who insult his mother: “‘Great God . . . what they got in that wagon?’ Jewel whirls. ‘Sons of bitches’ . . . ‘**can’t no man call me that’**” (229-30).

“It’s **because me and him was born close together**, and it nigh ten years before Jewel and Dewey Dell and Vardaman begun to come along. I feel kin to them, all right, but I dont know. And me being the oldest, and thinking already the very thing that he done: I dont know” (234).

“If I’d a said it was ere a one of us **she liked better** than ere a other, I’d a said it was Darl. But when we got it filled . . . it was **Dewey Dell that was on him before even Jewel could get at him**. And then I believed I knowed how Gillespie knowed about how his barn taken fire” (237).

“God Amighty, why didn't Anse carry you to the nearest sawmill and stick your leg in the saw? That would have cured it. Then you all could have **stuck his head into the saw and cured a whole family** . . .” (240).

“She looks like a **pretty hot mamma**, for a country girl” (242).

“I have **fed you and sheltered you**. I **give you love and care**, yet **my own daughter**, **the daughter of my dead wife**, calls me a thief over her mother’s grave” (256).

“Meet **Mrs Bundren**” (261).