The Wonder Woman Who Flew Away

In the story “Shiloh” by Bobbie Ann Mason, the antagonist Norma Jean Moffitt intrigued me from the very first line. During the exposition, Norma Jean is described as “working on her pectorals” by lifting weights in the stance that reminds her husband Leroy of “Wonder Woman” (560). This description is not one that many would use to describe a dainty woman. Though later Leroy, the protagonist, states that Norma Jean talks to him extensively about “complexion care” which usually more feminine women are concerned with (570). This irony begins the questioning of Norma Jean’s interests.

Leroy is a truck driver out of work due to an accident that injured his leg. After so much time spent away, he has a revelation of feeling more affection and tenderness for his independent wife. This event and the characters in the story remind me of my grandparents so vividly that Mason could have been looking at their past when writing the story. My grandfather was a truck driver for a meat packing company and my grandmother worked various part-time jobs. When my grandfather retired, his truck also sat like a “gigantic bird that has flown home to roost” (570). One day, after my grandfather’s retirement, my grandmother went back to school just as Norma Jean did.

Norma Jean is described by Leroy throughout the story. Through time she begins to change in his eyes; she stops playing the organ and sleeping so much. Her attitude towards him changes as she begins night school, quits the organ, and starts to cook unusual food. This change

Comment [L1]: Here is where the reader needs to know a tad more, helping to make a stronger connection between the characters in the story and your grandparents. It would only take another sentence or two.

Comment [L2]: The semicolon is not the best punctuation choice here. The colon is.
makes her a dynamic character. Among these changes the biggest one is her decision to leave Leroy. From sentence one this “Wonder Woman” was depicted to be independent and unique, then as the resolution closes she steps away from Leroy leaving the reader to guess whether she is just ending her marriage or also her life (569). In contrast though, my grandmother did not leave my grandfather; they built their own “log cabin” (576) together, a nursery in Florida.

Works Cited

Comment [L3]: Here again, this seems to end too abruptly without a full description, helping to provide a not-so-abrupt closure to your response.

XXX, I REALLY enjoyed your response to Mason’s story. You write very well as you employ the text to aid you in developing your ideas. As noted within the essay, I really was fascinated with your connection between the characters in “Shiloh” and your grandparents. This is what Reader Response Journaling is all about!! However, as I commented, if you’re going to take that tactic when doing this type of reflection, with a little bit of literary analysis thrown in, you also need to make sure that you also develop the other part of your narrative as completely. One more paragraph with fewer than five more sentences might have done that for you. Nice work! Please refer to the Essay Rubric for further feedback and scoring.

C/O=17; D=17; S/S=17; G/M=17; R/D=16 TOTAL=84 B