

Juxtaposition and irony

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4/17/13

Sunday, as I sat reading the paper, I heard a buzz. When I looked up, I saw the first hummingbird of the season sipping at the feeder...I have no way of knowing if it was the very FIRST hummer of the season, but it was the first one I saw in my garden. The hummers fascinate me. They dart. They are fast. They are omni-directional. They are nature's engineering wonders. The extension of the good news was that the hummingbird continued to return to the feeder, providing an afternoon of delightful watching.

Later in the afternoon, as I walked out the front door, my eye caught a movement. The first frog of the season was poised on the edge of our little lily pad pond. The frog was a small, about the size of a ping pong ball. It was perfectly formed, and I was excited to see that it had survived the winter. As it plopped into the water, a small ripple ruffled the pond's surface, and then it was gone.

The bluets are blooming all over the patch of lawn beside the pond. The miracles of nature are countless.



It was an incredible Sunday afternoon.

Then came Monday.

Another beautiful day, full of promise. Kids were out of school. Families were enjoying ballgames and historic events in Boston. The famed Boston Marathon was finishing up.

Then the explosions.

People were maimed. People were killed. One runner lost his eight-year-old son, his five-year-old daughter lost a leg, and his wife suffered a brain injury. The family was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Why?

The juxtaposition of the beautiful and ugly, the good and the evil, tempers joy and pain.

CCSS: reading a personal essay

1. Which best describes the irony in the essay?

- A Evil lurks behind beauty.
- B Beauty marks spring days.
- C Marathons appeal to families.
- D Hummingbirds are incredible gymnasts.

2. What can the reader assume?

- A Bluets are a sports team.
- B Hummingbirds eat seeds.
- C Frogs hibernate in cold weather.
- D Marathons are gymnastic events.

3. How does the speaker feel about spring?

- A She ignores the signs of spring.
- B She enjoys spring's awakening.
- C She stays indoors to avoid pollen.
- D She regrets the end of winter weather.

Ans: 1=a; 2=c; 3=b

Use the News: From recent news reports, what juxtaposition of the beautiful and ugly, good and evil, joy and pain do you find? Cite evidence from text to explain what you choose from the news.