Examine the following poem very closely.

- For the first 10 minutes of the class, look at the poem yourself. WRITE COMMENTS DIRECTLY ON YOUR SHEETS. Write anything that occurs to you, if you don't know the meaning of words look them up. Remember, before you look for anything *deeper,* make sure you understand what is taking place **literally** in the poem. Use all the knowledge and skills you've learned about ***close readings***.
- For the next 10 minutes of class choose a partner and discuss the poem. Ask each other questions. First, make sure that you have a grasp of what's taking place (plot wise), then discuss your opinions of larger issues and ideas. Make sure you keep coming back to the **actual words of the poem;** if you describe an idea, issue, or understanding — go to the part of the poem that supports what you are saying.

Consider the following ideas (among whatever else you wish to) - How does the poem fit in with what we've talked about so far in this class? Who is the persona (the speaker of the poem)? Do they change in the story? Why *this* title? Who changes the most, the persona or the mother? How does this fit in with our lives – right now – in the past?

REMEMBER: 1) Literal before figurative 2) know the meaning of every word
3) know the antecedent of every pronoun.

The Truth by Randall Jarrell

When I was four my father went to Scotland.
They *said* he went to Scotland.

When I woke up I think I thought that I was dreaming –
I was so little then that I thought dreams
Are in the room with you, like the cinema.
That's why you don't dream when it's still light—
They pull the shades down when it is, so you can sleep.
I thought that then, but that's not right.
Really it's in your head.

And it was light then—light at *night*.
I heard Stalky bark outside.
But really it was Mother crying—
She coughed so hard she cried.
She kept shaking Sister.
She shook her and shook her.
I thought Sister had had her nightmare.
But it wasn't barking, he had died.
There was dirt all over Sister.
It was all streaks, like mud. I cried.
She didn't, but she was older.
I thought she didn't
Because she was older. I thought Stalky had just gone.
I got *everything* wrong.

I didn't get one single thing right.
It seems to me that I'd have thought
It didn't happen, like a dream,
Except that it was light. At night.
They burnt our house down, they burnt down London.
Next day my mother cried all day, and after that
She said to me when she would come to see me:
"Your father has gone away to Scotland.
He will be back after the war."

The war then was different from the war now.
The war now is nothing.

I used to live in London till they burnt it.
What was it like? It was just like here.
No, that's the truth.
My mother would come here, some, but she would cry.
She said to Miss Elise, "He's not himself";
She said, "Don't you love me any more at all?"
I was *myself*.
Finally she wouldn't come at all.
She never said one thing my father said, or Sister.
Sometimes she did,
Sometimes she was the same, but that was when I dreamed it.
I could tell I was dreaming, she was not the same.

That Christmas she bought me a toy dog.

I asked her what was its name, and when she didn't know
I asked her over, and when she didn't know
I said, "You're not my mother, you're not my mother.
She *hasn't* gone to Scotland, she is dead!"
And she said, "Yes, he's dead, he's dead!"
And cried and cried, she was my mother,
She put her arms around me and cried.