

I saw Emmett Till this week at the grocery store - Selection of Detail Practice

Introduction: Emmett Louis Till (July 25, 1941 – August 28, 1955) was a 14-year-old African American who was murdered in Mississippi in 1955, after being accused of whistling at and offending a white woman (Carolyn Bryant) in her family's grocery store. Four days later, at approximately 2:30 a.m., Roy Bryant, Carolyn's husband, and his half-brother J.W. Milam kidnapped Till from his home. They then beat the teenager brutally, dragged him to the bank of the Tallahatchie River, shot him in the head, tied him with barbed wire to a large metal fan and shoved his mutilated body into the water. The brutality of his murder and the fact that his killers were acquitted drew attention to the long history of violent persecution of African Americans in the United States. Till posthumously became an icon of the civil rights movement.

The following [poem](#) pays tribute to his life. In the poem, Eve Ewing incorporates a number of details to characterize Emmett Till in an innocent, childlike manner, which not only allows her to briefly reanimate him and give him back some of the life that was ripped away from him, but also allows her to underscore the brutality and senselessness of his death.

Directions: Provided below in the left-hand column of the chart are some of the general “details” that Ewing incorporates to characterize Emmett Till in a certain light. Your job is to find the specific textual evidence from the poem that develops & expounds upon the provided detail, then explain how Ewing’s choice of details ultimately depicts Till’s youthfulness & innocence and contributes to her larger message. Use the introductory paragraph provided below to help you get started.

Introductory Paragraph

Eve Ewing’s poem “I saw Emmett Till this week at the grocery store” provides not just an alternate history, where a young black boy can walk free and express his joy, but also humanizes the real Emmett Till, whom white people tortured and murdered. Through allusion to history, image, and characterization, **Ewing accounts for and reanimates the black boyhood and joy that was denied to Emmett Till which underscores the brutality and senselessness of his murder.**

General Detail	Specific Textual Example from Poem that Develops That Detail	Discussion of How Ewing's Choice of Detail Characterizes Emmett Till and Contributes to the Poem's Larger Message <i>*Each response should be 2-3 sentences long.</i> - Try using an "effect" word (as in cause & effect) to lead into your analysis to make it more purpose driven. Consider using a word like: - By, Because, Since, As a result, Thus, Through, etc. - Then consider using the following words to help you create more meaningful commentary: - Proves, Implies, Demonstrates, Captures, Underscores, Exemplifies, Conveys, Supports, Illustrates, Confirms, Establishes, Reflects
Emmett Till's interaction with the groceries		
Emmett Till's general mannerisms		
Emmett Till's physical characteristics		
Emmett Till's clothing		
Emmett Till's reaction to being recognized by the speaker		
Emmett Till's dialogue		