

## Exercise 1: Poem about “When I am old...”

### Prompt 1 given to class:

Warning  
by Jenny Joseph

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple  
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't  
suit me.  
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and  
summer gloves  
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for  
butter.  
I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired  
And gobble up samples in shops and press  
alarm bells  
And run my stick along the public railings  
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.  
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain  
And pick flowers in other people's gardens  
And learn to spit.

You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat  
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go  
Or only bread and pickle for a week  
And hoard pens and pencils and beermats and  
things in boxes.

But now we must have clothes that keep us dry  
And pay our rent and not swear in the street  
And set a good example for the children.  
We must have friends to dinner and read the  
papers.

But maybe I ought to practice a little now?  
So people who know me are not too shocked  
and surprised  
When suddenly I am old, and start to wear  
purple.

### Prompt 2 given to class:

When I Am An Old Man  
by Robert N. McWilliams

When I am an old man, I will wear plaid trousers,  
let my shirt tail hang out on one side on Tuesdays,  
and wear ties that clash with everything.  
I'll carry a cane whether I need it or not,  
to waggle at people who ask stupid questions  
and poke pretty young girls.  
I'll have my ear pierced, the one that says you're gay  
(whichever that is) and grin if someone mentions it.  
I won't smile on Thursdays, even if I'm chuckling  
inside,  
I'll never be angry on Sundays,  
except in months when the sun doesn't shine.  
Maybe I'll shave, and maybe I won't,  
depends on which eye I open first in the morning.  
I'll spit in public places, but not on people's shoes,  
unless they deserve it, and belch from both ends when  
the spirit moves me.  
I'll eat tacos for breakfast, ice cream with salad,  
drink tea with honey, coffee with maple syrup,  
and rum with nothing at all.  
I'll stare everyone straight in the eye,  
give my opinion on everything under the sun if I'm  
asked, and especially if I'm not.  
I'll forget how to spell "rules" but not "integrity",  
"obligations", but not "responsibility",  
"expectations", but not "honor".  
I'll speak to God direct, help him out when he needs it,  
but gently, cause mainly he does good work,  
when people leave him alone, that is.  
I'll cry at movies and funerals,  
laugh at my own mistakes, if I make any,  
hug my sons and my daughters every chance I get,  
raise my hat to any woman wearing purple.  
I think I'll have more fun  
saying what I think,  
being who I am,  
staring at the stars,  
when I am an old man, wearing plaid trousers.

## Exercise 2: Poems about Activity vs. Disengagement Theory

### Prompt given to class:

Mr. Flood's Party  
by Edwin Arlington

Old Eben Flood, climbing alone one night  
Over the hill between the town below  
And the forsaken upland hermitage  
That held as much as he should ever know  
On earth again of home, paused warily.  
The road was his with not a native near;  
And Eben, having leisure, said aloud,  
For no man else in Tilbury Town to hear:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have the harvest moon  
Again, and we may not have many more;  
The bird is on the wing, the poet says,  
And you and I have said it here before.  
Drink to the bird." He raised up to the light  
The jug that he had gone so far to fill,  
And answered huskily: "Well, Mr. Flood,  
Since you propose it, I believe I will."

Alone, as if enduring to the end  
A valiant armor of scarred hopes outworn,  
He stood there in the middle of the road  
Like Roland's ghost winding a silent horn.  
Below him, in the town among the trees,  
Where friends of other days had honored him,  
A phantom salutation of the dead  
Rang thinly till old Eben's eyes were dim.

Then, as a mother lays her sleeping child  
Down tenderly, fearing it may awake,  
He set the jug down slowly at his feet  
With trembling care, knowing that most things  
break;  
And only when assured that on firm earth  
It stood, as the uncertain lives of men  
Assuredly did not, he paced away  
And with his hand extended paused again:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have not met like this  
In a long time; and many a change has come  
To both of us, I fear, since last it was  
We had a drop together. Welcome home!"  
Convivially returning with himself,  
Again he raised the jug up to the light;  
And with an acquiescent quaver said:  
"Well, Mr. Flood, if you insist, I might.

"Only a very little, Mr. Flood—  
For auld lang syne. No more, sir; that will do."  
So, for the time, apparently it did,  
And Eben evidently thought so too;  
For soon amid the silver loneliness  
Of night he lifted up his voice and sang,  
Secure, with only two moons listening,  
Until the whole harmonious landscape rang—

"For auld lang syne." The weary throat gave out,  
The last word wavered; and the song being done,  
He raised again the jug regretfully  
And shook his head, and was again alone.  
There was not much that was ahead of him,  
And there was nothing in the town below—  
Where strangers would have shut the many  
doors  
That many friends had opened long ago.

### Exercise 3: Poem about an Important Mentor

*Prompt given to class:*

My Father - My Mentor  
by Gajanan Mishra

My father is the best singer  
My father is the best story-teller  
My father is my hero and best adventurer  
I love my father and placed him first  
As my life's torch-bearer  
It is for my father I see the world  
And I am here  
When I am with my father  
I am world the conqueror  
I am closer to my father  
I know my father is my guide  
And my mentor my philosopher.

## Exercise 4: Establishing A Personal Brand

### Prompt given to class:

*Starting from scratch: College students should build their personal brands*

Patriot News Op-Ed by David Hagenbuch, published August 12, 2012 on Pennlive.com

As college students nationwide return to campus, many will carry the most popular electronic devices and wear the trendiest names in fashion. They purchase these items because they like what the products do for them, either in a functional way or in an emotional sense. Steve Jobs created one of the most iconic personal and professional brands in the world.

Regardless of the motive, specific tablet computers, sneakers and smartphones are highly sought after because they are reputable brands. The companies that own such brands have gone to great lengths to establish that recognition and equity.

One of the most useful lessons that college students can learn comes from these same brands they find on their person. A college student should look, for instance, at the notebook computer on which she is typing and ask: Why did I choose this brand? Why do I like using it? And why would I recommend it to a close friend?

Likely answers will be: It has great quality. It does everything I ask it to do, it looks nice, it has incredible features, it's reliable. The student should then ask himself or herself, can I say the same things about me? Or more importantly, would others make these comments about me?

At the risk of unintended dehumanizing, each of us should recognize that we represent a personal brand. That is to say, by virtue of our interactions and relationships with others, we are continually developing an image, or reputation, in the minds of others that they use to form attitudes and make decisions about us.

For instance, "I want her on our team because she's intelligent and hard-working." Or, "I would never share that information with him because he's untrustworthy." Not only do people make their own such decisions about us, they also choose whether to introduce and refer us to others based on our personal brands, not unlike the way we might recommend a favorite restaurant to a friend.

The unique and important aspect for college students, especially new ones, is that higher education is prime brand-building territory, for at least three reasons. First, students often enter college not knowing many others, which means few preconceptions about who someone is and what his strengths or weaknesses might be. This opportunity to build a personal brand nearly from scratch is a luxury not often afforded in life — some people build personal brands over time that they would love to change. Fortunately, even deeply entrenched brands can be repositioned, but it's usually difficult.

Second, college provides an unparalleled opportunity to learn and grow in a variety of ways, including intellectually, emotionally and socially. Those individual transformations build the core of a strong personal brand.

Third, unless you work at a college such as I do, higher education is a starting point, not an ending point. Students who attend college are hoping to eventually go somewhere else, for instance, to graduate school or into the job market. That passage will be shaped, sometimes to a great extent, by those they meet and impact during their college careers.

A professor, for example, might be glad to write a letter of recommendation for a student who demonstrated great character and excelled in his courses. On the other hand, a fellow alum might decline to extend a job interview to a former classmate who is remembered for failing to carry her weight in group projects.

In short, college provides individuals with one of their most important networks — one in which they are behooved to have a strong personal brand, especially in a tight job market and increasingly competitive global economy.

Finally, the building of one's personal brand certainly involves some self-interest, but that doesn't need to be the only motivation. Many individuals can and do lend their strong personal brands to the advancement of worthwhile organizations and to helping others. For instance, by serving in a leadership role or acting as a personal reference, individuals share their brand equity.

Many of us have been firsthand recipients of such kindness, which is another great lesson for college students and the rest of us to learn.

*David Hagenbuch is associate professor of marketing at Messiah College.*

## Exercise 5: Write A Legacy Letter (Glen Dunbar)

### Start the letter as follows:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

At the age of \_\_\_\_, I am writing this letter to you to share some thoughts about my life that you may find interesting and possibly helpful to your own journey through life. My intention is to let you know my thoughts and feelings about challenges and relationships that have enriched my life (even if I didn't realize it at the time), and to express my gratitude for \_\_\_\_\_.

Consider the following as suggestions to start the flow of ideas. Whatever you ultimately write about is what you personally find meaningful:

### **Reflections on values and life lessons:**

*What I have valued most in my life is...*

*My life experience has taught me...*

*I am happy and at peace at this stage of my life because...*

### **Special memories and cherished moments:**

*Some of my special memories are of...*

*I especially cherish the moments when...*

### **Reflections on spiritual beliefs:**

*What has given me strength in difficult times is my faith in...*

*I believe...*

*I accept that I am powerless...*

### **Expressions of regrets and forgiveness:**

*I regret the time when...*

*I forgive...*

*I ask your forgiveness for...*

*We have had our issues, but I want you to know...*

### **Future hopes and wishes:**

*My hopes for you include...*

*I ask that you... (any special requests) ...*

### **Last thoughts and blessings:**

*If I were saying "good-bye" to you today for the last time, I would want you to know...*

*May your life be blessed with....*

Expect this process to stimulate emotions, as well as insights about what is most important to you at this stage of life.