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Ms. Giknis

English 4

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Author Emulation

(This emulated passage takes place in the story during the time between when they're starving and before they find the bunker)

They searched through the patches of woods they had not looked through before and found nothing. There was a large pile of ash and the boy put his hand through it. He took it out with nothing in it and kept moving. Every step their feet would sink into the soggy dirt mixed with ash and it was a struggle to move. The trees dead with no leaves or nuts or fruit. Above them was a corpse impaled on a tree branch and the man noticed it but didnt look at it so the boy wouldnt see it but the boy could feel its presence. The amount of ash was so great and when they reached drier ground there was only ash and their feet dusted it up into the air and the man inhaled it which almost made him cough. They spent the night in the woods wrapped in blankets and chewing on the few blades of toxic grass they could find. In the middle of the night the man had to get up and cough and went away to not wake the boy. He coughed so much blood he thought he would die and when he went back the boy was awake and staring at him. Did I wake you? he said.

Yes.

Could you hear me?

Yes.

Im okay. Dont worry about me.

Are you dying?

No.

Then what was that?

I inhaled too much ash. I'm fine. I'm not dying. Okay?

Okay.

Where are we going?

What do you mean?

We're going nowhere.

We're going to find food.

Are we?

Yes. We are. We'll find lots and lots and fill our bellies. This will all be worth it. Okay?

The boy did not respond but nodded his head and went back to sleep. The man could not sleep for the rest of the night.

Explanation:

While writing this passage, I wanted to try and emulate McCarthy's style of description and dialogue. While they're walking through the woods, I tried to emulate the simplistic yet visceral way McCarthy describes the surroundings. I noticed how often dead bodies are used as part of the description of the location in the story, how they're just casually mentioned like they're a natural part of the environment, highlighting the state of the desolate world the story takes place within. I wanted to highlight the ash specifically not only because it's already an often recurring thing in the book, but it's been implied to be a component to solving the mystery of what the catastrophe that started the apocalypse was, so I thought it was important to include it, and also tie it into the man's health problems, which is another mystery. I wanted to highlight the character's worries through their dialogue, specifically the boy's worries for their survival and the man's uncertainty of them finding food. The boy is often shown to be worried for the man's health and doesn't want him to die, or worried they won't find food, but the man always reassures him without hesitation, even in situations where he isn't sure about everything. Their numerous dialogue exchanges throughout the story highlight those core dynamics of their relationship, and I wanted to try

and hit those same beats with my passage. Also, it felt oddly smooth to write without having to worry about run-on sentences, or proper grammar. Despite how crude it might look, it felt almost addicting to write so free of restrictions, I can see now why McCarthy chooses to write his stories that way. He likes to hide little details within his writing which can be harder to spot with his style of writing, so besides the convenience, I discovered while writing my own passage how McCarthy uses his unique style to enrich his writing as well.