

## Finding your Literary Voice

Summer Reading, 2021—Dr. Marotta

### Texts:

“Bloodchild” Octavia Butler (1995), <http://english.ncu.edu.tw/Stewart/Library/ReadingPri/Bloodchild.pdf>  
[Content Warning: violence, death, birth, animal death, blood]

“The Adventure of the Speckled Band” Arthur Conan Doyle (1892), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1661/1661-h/1661-h.htm> [CW: death, ethnic slur]

“Paul’s Case” Willa Cather (1905), <https://cather.unl.edu/writings/shortfiction/ss006> [CW: Suicide]

“A Temporary Matter” Jhumpa Lahiri (1999), <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/first/l/lahiri-maladies.html> [CW: stillbirth]

Please bookmark or print these stories, so they’re easily accessible for your reading, your writing, and our class work.

This course centers on voice in literature. The authors of the above short stories use their unique voices in order to build fictional worlds filled with characters who also have distinct voices. We will be discussing the impact of, the construction of, and the importance of voice throughout the semester.

**Assignment:** After reading the stories—preferably more than once!—you will compose a brief essay (250 words).

**Due Date:** First Day of Class!

### Summer Reading Expectations:

All students who enroll on or before August 20, 2021 must read the book(s) assigned for their course and complete this summer reading assignment.

All students who enroll on or after August 21, 2021 should begin reading the summer reading book(s) upon enrollment and email the teacher for details about assignment expectations.

All new and returning students should bring a copy of the assigned novel(s) with them on the first day of class.

### Essay Instructions:

Choose ONE (1) of the following prompts to respond to in 250 words:

1. Which character’s voice do you believe was the strongest/most interesting out of the four stories? Support your answer with a detailed explanation/analysis of two quotes. Why are these quotes important? How do they show the character’s voice well?
2. Think about “voice” in terms of “speaking up.” Select one story that features a character speaking up and describe the effect that has on the plot of the story, on the audience, and on the other characters.
3. Who is permitted to speak in these stories? Who is silenced? Can you locate a pattern of this in one or more stories?

This essay should be in MLA formatting, Times New Roman font, size 12, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. You should cite the short story/stories according to MLA conventions on a Works Cited page at the end of your essay.