Identity
Julio Noboa Polanco

Let them be as flowers,
Always watered, fed, guarded, admired,
But harnessed to a pot of dirt.

I'd rather be a tall, ugly weed,
Clinging on cliffs, like an eagle
Wind-wavering above high, jagged rocks.

To have broken through the surface of stone,
To live, to feel exposed to the madness
Of the vast, eternal sky.
To be swayed by the breezes of an ancient sea,
Carrying my soul, my seed,
Beyond the mountains of time or into the abyss of the bizarre.

I'd rather be unseen, and if
Then shunned by everyone,
Than to be a pleasant-smelling flower,
Growing in clusters in the fertile valley,
Where they’re praised, handled, and plucked
By greedy, human hands.

I'd rather smell of musty, green stench
Than of sweet, fragrant lilac.
If I could stand alone, strong and free,
I’d rather be a tall, ugly weed.
After reading the first 2 stanzas of “Identity,” answer the questions below

1. What do the first 2 stanzas mean to you?

2. What two words stick out the most? Why?

After reading the whole poem, complete the activities below

1. Highlight what you believe to be the most powerful phrase in the poem and explain below why you believe it to be so powerful.

2. Why is the poem’s title “Identity”?

3. Fill in the boxes below with either words or drawings.

Who I am when everyone is looking

Who I am when no one is looking
4. Do you most closely resemble a “flower” or a “weed” according to Polanco’s definition? Explain your answer. **Minimum 100 words.**
Our Deepest Fear
Marianne Williamson

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves,
Who am I to be brilliant,
    Gorgeous,
    Handsome,
    Talented
    And fabulous?
Actually, who are you not to be?

Your playing small does not serve the world.
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking
So that other people won’t feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine, as children do.
It is not just in some; it is in everyone.
And, as we let our own light shine,
We consciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others.
After reading “Our Deepest Fear” complete the activities below

1. **Highlight** what you believe to be the most **POWERFUL** phrase in the poem and explain below why you believe it to be so powerful.

2. What is this poem saying? Put it into your own words.

3. Now that you have read both “Identity” and “Our Deepest Fear,” your assignment is to construct your own poem. You will use words and phrases from the two poems, only adding in your own words for understanding or transition (see example below). Your poem must be 20 lines in length and have a unique title. Use the lines provided on the next page to write your poem.

**The Problem With the World Today**

We ask ourselves,
Who am I to be brilliant?

If I could stand alone,
Strong and free.
I’d rather be
Gorgeous,
Handsome,
Talented.

I’d rather be
A pleasant-smelling flower.
Growing in clusters
Praised,
Handled,
Plucked.

I’d rather be
Watered,
Fed,
Guarded,
Admired.

I’d rather be
Powerful beyond measure.