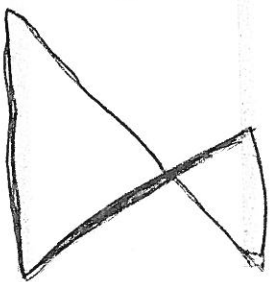


M O ' B R I E N  
LZ Gator, Vietnam,  
February 1994



I'm home, but the house is gone. Not a sandbag, not a nail or a scrap of wire.

On Gator, we used to say, the wind doesn't blow, it sucks. Maybe that's what happened—the wind sucked it all away. My life, my virtue.

In February 1969, 25 years ago, I arrived as a young, terrified pfc. on this lonely little hill in Quang Ngai Province. Back then, the place seemed huge and imposing and permanent. A forward firebase for the Fifth Battalion of the 46th Infantry, 198th Infantry Brigade, LZ Gator was home to 700 or 800 American soldiers, mostly grunts. I remember a tar helipad, a mess hall, a medical station, mortar and artillery emplacements, two volleyball courts, numerous barracks and offices and supply depots and machine shops and entertainment clubs. Gator was our castle. Not safe, exactly, but far preferable to the bush. No land mines here. No paddies bubbling with machine-gun fire.

Maybe once a month, for three or four days at a time, Alpha Company would return to Gator for stand-down, where we took our comforts behind a perimeter of bunkers and concertina wire.

There were hot showers and hot meals, ice chests packed with beer, glossy pinup girls, big, black Sony rape decks booming "We gotta get out of this place" at decibels for the deaf. Thirty or 40 acres of almost-America. With a little weed and a lot of beer, we would spend the days of stand-down in flat-out celebration, purely alive, taking pleasure in our own biology, kidneys and livers and lungs and legs, all in their proper alignments. We could breathe here. We could feel our fists uncurl, the pressures approaching normal. The real war, it seemed, was in another solar system. By day, we'd fill sandbags or pull bunker guard. In the evenings, there were outdoor movies and sometimes live floor shows—pretty Korean girls breaking our hearts in their spangled miniskirts and high leather boots—then afterward we'd troop back to the Alpha barracks for some letter writing or boozing or just a good night's sleep.

So much to remember. The time we filled a nasty lieutenant's canteen with mosquito repellent; the sounds of choppers and artillery fire; the slow dread that began building as word spread that in a day or two we'd be heading back to the bush. Pinkville, maybe. The Barangan Peninsula. Spooky, evil places where the land itself could kill you.

Now I stand in this patch of weeds, looking down on what used to be the old Alpha barracks. Amazing, really, what time can do. You'd think there would be something left, some faint imprint, but LZ (landing zone) Gator has been utterly and forever erased from the earth. Nothing here but ghosts and wind.

~~Part~~ of

In suit 2015, 3 months ago it was all gone. The land was all gone because of one selfish person, I remember a big white house, with a big backyard with lots of games in the front. Big oranges, lemons, grapes, trees. The most beautiful house on the street. Little kids will cry to come over and play in our big happy nice house.

Los

several  
years

19

on Friday

Taylor Routhier

ENGLISH 101

9/19/18

### Mixed Blood Stew

In the short except from the book “Mixed Blood Stew” by Jewel Parker Rhodes, begins with a young girl who is of a mixed skin toned is looking through her mothers belonging in a closet. The young girl stumbles upon things she hasn’t seen, while searching we learn that the girls mother abandoned her when she was an infant and returned when she was nine. This left the little girl confused, she didn’t know her mom at all thus is why she began snooping through her mothers’ things. This is vital because her mom walks in and catches her daughter she goes on to tell her about a mysterious black healthy figure was the dad. The young girl is puzzled by it as her mom leaves the room, she gets a flashback of a black man, a little mixed girl in the middle and lighter colored tan women on the horse with here hands clasping. This made her wonder.... Who is she? What is she made of? What’s the unknown within her blood? This is important cause now the author is depicting how the girl is mixed and her mom was ashamed of it. We later learn that when the mother had left, the young girl remained with her grandmother who was African American, she took her to a Methodist church with a “Black beyond midnight Reverend”. As she explains it sets up an imagine to the reader, it shows how the grandmother took her to an African American Methodist church. This is important because it shows the grandmother wants her proud to be who she is, half African American. The grandmother goes out of her way to bring awareness the young girls family background that side, she tells her about how they’re originally from Georgia and before that Africa. The girl then finally understands her grandmother’s analogy of Mixed Blood soup itself, she’s the black pepper that white people crave. African Americans have so much to offer and that the young girl should be happy of what she’s made of. “Grandmothers *tales* were better than my mothers silence.” This is important because the little girl realizes that her mother is ashamed of who she is, and her grandmother wants her to be proud, so she’s torn in the middle of it all. The girl starts to come to many realizations that she shouldn’t be ashamed of what is held in her veins and she often wonders if white people know what secrets are int here veins. The little girl started to take notice of herself too, by looking at her tight curls, her freckled skin and slanted eyes in the mirror. She wondered if she was staring at the faces in her blood mix. The little girl finds out her real family the parkers do not want her cause she is half black, that she is unwanted by them, she doesn’t care because she much rather be with her family and her real heritage. As she got older she began to get proud of being who she was, she grew more rebellious in her moms’ eyes, by hanging African American spears and such in her room. She even went on to marry a white man and her mother was disapproving of it. The girl realized as she got older her mother hid within herself, as she grew more confident with who she was her mother started to stray more and more away from her. It was as if her mom was scared to open to it. And the girl just wants her mom to be proud, cause what’s more important is loving yourself and what your made of.

The main points of the essay "Mixed Blood Stew" by Jewell Parker Rhodes are how Jewell Rhodes learns about her bloodline. She learns that her blood grandfather was actually white meaning that she has white blood in her. After learning this she feels relieved thinking that now she would be accepted by white people amidst the civil right movement. However she would soon realize that this was not the case. Even though she was an Anglo/Irish/Choctaw/Cherokee/african girl the only color white people saw was black. When she was born in 1954 Emmett Till was recently killed for speaking "slang" towards a white women and that this sparked the civil rights movement. Jewell grew up with her grandmother and grandfather. Even though she and her grandfather were not blood related they were still family. She lived with her grandparents because her mother had abandoned her. Later in life though, her mother came to claim her after her father and mother decided to give marriage another try. They were the only african american family in a suburban white community. Jewell's mother, though was very insecure about african american culture in their household. When Jewell turned 16 she became very rebellious. She started to embrace her african american culture. She painted her room red and black, hung fishnets from the ceiling and decorated her wall with african masks and spears. She also would play Jimi hendrix and Jefferson Airplane in her room as well as sporting a full grown afro. Because of these rebellious actions Jewell's mother kicked her out the house forcing her to go from California back to Pittsburg to live with her Grandparents or as Jewell says her "birthplace" While she lived with her mother Jewell did come across some documents showing that her mother's great great parents were slaves and that were sold to slave masters. Her mother wasn't happy claiming that these documents were hers and that Jewell couldn't look at them. Once Jewell became an adult she ended up having a successful job. She became an assistant professor at the University of Maryland. When she would walk home she

would have to deal with white people shouting racial slurs at her. But in life Jewell never let the color of her skin stop her from making certain decisions like marrying a white man. Her mother would pop up at certain times in Jewell's life. One of the most memorable her mother surfaced was when she was not pleased with Jewell marrying a white. The reason why she was not pleased was that she was concerned about the children being half black and half white. So when Jewell gave birth to her daughter her mother made no effort to reach out and congratulate her. This happened once again when Jewell gave birth to her son.

The main point of this essay is that Jewell Parker Rhodes explains how she is not just african american and that her blood is a stew of many different cultures. Her grandmother taught her that all the different genes in her blood will be passed on to her children and to their children. This main point is prevalent though this essay as it applies to everyone and anyone who reads it. Making the connection between a person's blood and a pot of stew makes the point of everyone's blood being a mix so much more powerful as that a person's blood can be african american, irish, or cherokee and even still everyone's blood is still red at the end of the day.

Luminda Tavares

18 September 2018

*Mixed-Blood Stew Summary*

The theme of the story is about this young girl who doesn't know "who she is."

The novel is about her (a hurt child) childhood and family. Her mother had abandoned her when she was very young such as an infant and later came into her life when she was nine years old. In 1954 she was born going through her mother's things trying to attach that missing piece from her life and discover what was really going on and find out clues from the separation. She was a mulatto child. She had discovered that her mother had auctioned a sheet framed of what she considered her mom kept a secret away from her. During the nine years of no mother being a person of appearance she was raised by her grandmother. Her grandmother explained to her where they come from which was Africa and explained how people ("white folks") had an image of black people, everytime they would see one it would seem as if they were ignorant. Her grandmother would refer to them as a "stew" because it represented mixed bloods as in races. Her granddad was Irish he had fallen in-love with her grandmother who did have white descent in her generation before. Time has passed and she refers to ethnic groups changing, shifting, melding into a more beautiful and varied gumbo which is known as her reference of a mix stew. Each time a new marriage is introduced comes new blood. She would have dreams often about the "faces" inside her blood she would discover how whites only had a better preference but she knew her own happiness being a brown girl being raised in her grandparents house. In her mom's shocking presence of returning back brought horrific moments

such as her not going, she looked as if they were the only African-American family in a suburban white community which they were. She had come to realize her mom had given up and couldn't accept herself, her grandmother was known to be a mixed child of rape which was known to the mom to be something not aimless. The mother would think outside the box such as adopting the "tastes" of white culture she would have been accepted, being a mixed-blood New World African American was something not proud to be in her logical preference. She found that her mom had found a special mix in humanity which later had shaped her mother and in her eyes everyone else. She explains on how being a black decent was fine but being descended from a white master was not she would look at the image of herself which is in the mirror and refer to her family being "ghosts" in her blood. Mother being steady in her life left a thought in her head when she questioned her about marrying a white man, when giving birth to her child she didn't acknowledge her her two kids being one light and one dark. Her observation is known to her as African-American and it has always has been and all blood is red.

Ivanildo Araujo

ENG 101

9/19/18

## Miscegenation

The story of a girl who seeks to know about her past, where she came from, and why some of her family have lighter skin and others is black.

Everything starts when she was digging in her mother's closet and trying to find clues about why her mother abandoned her when she was infant. She found some evidences like, photos, birth certificates that later she starts to interest to know more about her mother and her past.

In my opinion her mother was hiding something of their past and doesn't want a girl to know, when she told her never to touch to her stuffs. She said that shelve remain closed until her mother's death. For her mother they came to America on the Mayflower not in the slave's ship. Because of her mother left her she was raised by her grandmother in a small community and in the Methodist Church. She spent her life with people with same skin color as her, and she always knew that her color was beautiful. Her Grandmother used to tell the kids in the house the stories about African -American like her, and how they were rich.

Her grandmother told them that they came from Africa before Georgia and the black people were slaves in her time. She told them how white people in that time thought about black people. She starts to compare her mother and her grandmother how they talk about race, and she thought her grandmother's tales were better than her mothers' silence. She traveled to Georgia invited by her grandmother and there she discovered some facts about her past.



Besides her grandmother her grandfather also has some stories to tell her like that they were descendant of Choctaw and Irish. Her Grandfather used to sit in the dining room table and told the grandkids some facts and stories about their family tree, and how Irish people came to Pittsburg and how their grandfather's parents met in the past. She starts to make herself a question about her blood type since their family have so much type mixed blood that made than a family of miscegenation. Her grandfather describes how their ethnic group changed, shifting and melding into more beautiful and mixed-blood stews.

In some part in the text that I found interesting her grandfather point that he doesn't understand why white people in that time insisted that their bloodline was uncomplicated since that blood of black people had a hug and historical resonance.

The Author pointed that the fact that she is a mixing of so many races the white people still call her a nigger, and even when she was a professor in a university educating young minds she continued to called nigger by the frat-house boys and she question about differences between whites and others race.

She told a story that lead to a civil right movement, when in 1954 a baby boy named Emmett Till was murdered because he was speaking slang to an adult white woman and the boy's mother ask to open the coffin so everybody could see the battering of her son, since at that time those kind of things was considered an offence. For her there is no pure color even for a child, everything came from a mix. When she was a child she also found out how big was the differences between black and white at that time and at the same time she found out that her grandfather was white, and this was a big surprise for her since she always taught her grandfather was another person, black not white. She continues to ask her grandmother questions about her marriage, and at the and her grandmother ended up to telling her the whole story about his live.

Finally, she describes how things ended up between her and her parents, that when she moved to her parents' house that lived in a white community thing wasn't easy back there, and she became rebellious because of the different of opinion about race between them, and because of that her mother kicked her out of the house. For her mother the idea of mixed blood was too complicated, and her mother was ashamed of their story of being descendent of slaves. In the end she married a white man and she had to mixed kids, one white and one black. She said will tell them to celebrate rivers, the roar of people, faces, histories stirring in their blood.