

## English 12 Original Composition

### Scale Point: 6

#### Comment

This paper was awarded a 6 because it illustrates a maturity of both content and style. Language is sophisticated. The topic is addressed in a nuanced and insightful manner.

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The girl's dress was too small, and it itched. She hated dark colours, anyway. She sat, wedged between her mother and a fat third cousin who smelled like wet wool, in the third row of the funeral parlor. She smacked her gum loudly, and looked with twelve-year-old scorn at the assembled mourners. Her mother pinched her arm, and several old ladies rustled about in the broken silence to seek out the source of the disruptive and inappropriate chewing.

The girl grimaced at her mother, then stared determinedly ahead at the box that held what has once been her Grandmother McPhee. The girl had not liked her Grandmother McPhee particularly well, she had taken pleasure in scoffing at the old woman's failing memory, failing body, and pathetic offers of friendship. She had looked with dread on the obligatory semi-monthly visits to the nursing home where her grandmother was slowly languishing away. She had shrugged indifferently when she learned of her grandmother's death. She had put on a show of uncaring for her mother, who had looked at her with sympathy and put away the box of tissues. But inside, the girl was filled with a kind of horror.

When the time had come to leave for the funeral, the girl had announced first that she did not want to go, and second that she wanted to wear her jeans. Her mother, grim and determined, had manoevered her into an old, dark green dress that the late Grandmother McPhee had sent for the girl's birthday. The girl resented the intimacy of being encased in the relic.

After the moment of silence in the funeral parlor, an old lady the girl didn't know slowly hobbled her way up to the podium to speak. At the podium, the old woman asked for the lights to be lowered, and explained that she had prepared a slide show of photographs she had kept of Agnes McPhee over their 75 year friendship.

The first slide was in black and white (and yellow with age), and depicted two girls, about twelve, standing in the snow grinning, with their arms around each other. The girl on the left was wearing a green dress, and was obviously proud of it.

The old woman at the podium met the eyes of the girl in the third row wearing the same dress. The girl's eyes filled with tears of regret, and of just understood loss. The old woman smiled kindly, with understanding, as if to say "she understood." For the first time, the girl understood, too. She squeezed against her mother, and was quiet.