

AP LIT Essay Scoring Practice #1: *The Street* / PART A

2009 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

The following selection is the opening of Ann Petry's 1946 novel, *The Street*. Read the selection carefully and then write an essay analyzing how Petry establishes Lutie Johnson's relationship to the urban setting through the use of such literary devices as imagery, personification, selection of detail, and figurative language.

There was a cold November wind blowing through 116th Street. It rattled the tops of garbage cans, sucked window shades out through the top of opened windows and set them flapping back against the 5 windows; and it drove most of the people off the street in the block between Seventh and Eighth Avenues except for a few hurried pedestrians who bent double in an effort to offer the least possible exposed surface to its violent assault.

10 It found every scrap of paper along the street— theater throwaways, announcements of dances and lodge meetings, the heavy waxed paper that loaves of bread had been wrapped in, the thinner waxed paper that had enclosed sandwiches, old envelopes, 15 newspapers. Fingering its way along the curb, the wind set the bits of paper to dancing high in the air, so that a barrage of paper swirled into the faces of the people on the street. It even took time to rush into doorways and areaways and find chicken bones and 20 pork-chop bones and pushed them along the curb.

It did everything it could to discourage the people walking along the street. It found all the dirt and dust and grime on the sidewalk and lifted it up so that the dirt got into their noses, making it difficult to breathe; 25 the dust got into their eyes and blinded them; and the grit stung their skins. It wrapped newspaper around their feet entangling them until the people cursed deep in their throats, stamped their feet, kicked at the paper. The wind blew it back again and again until 30 they were forced to stoop and dislodge the paper with their hands. And then the wind grabbed their hats,

pried their scarves from around their necks, stuck its fingers inside their coat collars, blew their coats away from their bodies.

35 The wind lifted Lutie Johnson's hair away from the back of her neck so that she felt suddenly naked and bald, for her hair had been resting softly and warmly against her skin. She shivered as the cold fingers of the wind touched the back of her neck, explored the 40 sides of her head. It even blew her eyelashes away from her eyes so that her eyeballs were bathed in a rush of coldness and she had to blink in order to read the words on the sign swaying back and forth over her head.

45 Each time she thought she had the sign in focus, the wind pushed it away from her so that she wasn't certain whether it said three rooms or two rooms. If it was three, why, she would go in and ask to see it, but if it said two—why, there wasn't any point. Even 50 with the wind twisting the sign away from her, she could see that it had been there for a long time because its original coat of white paint was streaked with rust where years of rain and snow had finally eaten the paint off down to the metal and the metal 55 had slowly rusted, making a dark red stain like blood.

It was three rooms. The wind held it still for an instant in front of her and then swooped it away until it was standing at an impossible angle on the rod that suspended it from the building. She read it rapidly. 60 Three rooms, steam heat, parquet floors, respectable tenants. Reasonable.

2009 AP English Literature Scoring Guide

Question #2: Ann Petry, *The Street*

General Directions: This scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays that you read, but in problematic cases, please consult your table leader. The score that you assign should reflect judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, its style, its mechanics. **Reward the writers for what they do well.** The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a three (3).

9-8 These essays offer a persuasive analysis of Petry’s use of literary devices to establish Lutie Johnson’s relationship to the urban setting. The writers make a strong case for their interpretation of the passage. They explore the urban setting as it affects the character; consider devices such as imagery, personification, selection of detail, and figurative language; and engage the text through apt and specific references. Although these essays may not be error-free, their perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear, precise, and effectively organized. Generally, essays score a nine (9) reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an eight (8).

7-6 These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how the author uses literary devices to establish Lutie Johnson’s relationship to the urban setting. The writers provide a sustained, competent reading of the passage, with attention to devices such as imagery, personification, selection of detail, and figurative language. Although these essays may not be error-free and are less perceptive or less convincing than 9-8 essays, the writers present their ideas with clarity and control and refer to the text for support. Generally, essays scored a seven (7) present better developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a six (6).

5 These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the passage, but tend to be superficial or undeveloped in their treatment of how the author uses literary devices to characterize the relationship between Lutie Johnson and the urban setting. While containing some analysis of the passage, implicit or explicit, the discussion of how literary devices contribute to the relationship between character and setting may be slight, and support from the passage may be thin or tend toward summary or paraphrase. While these writers demonstrate adequate control of language, their essays may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7-6 essays.

4-3 These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the passage. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant; the writers may ignore Lutie Johnson or Petry’s use of literary devices to establish her relationship to the setting. These essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors. Generally, essays scored a three (3) exhibit less control over the elements of composition and may contain weaker or less developed readings than those scored a four (4).

2-1 These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range. They may persistently misread the passage or be unacceptably brief. They may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the prompt, the writer’s ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays that are especially inept or incoherent are scored a one (1).

0 These essays give a response with no more than a reference to the task.

-- These essays are either left blank or are completely off-topic

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Hurricanes ravage beautiful coastal cities. Tornadoes send trees tumbling into homes. Sandstorms send biting debris at the cleanliness of the world. The ever present element of wind has the power to destroy, the power to please, and the power to signify one's relationship with the environment he/she is in. ^{In the excerpt from} ~~the~~ Ann Petry's The Street, Lutte Johnson's separation and opposition to the urban setting is emphasized through the personified quality of the wind.

Even the beginning imagery of the "cold" wind that "rattled" and "sucked" and ~~set~~ set windows "flapping" contributes to the ^{attitude} ~~feeling~~ of separation Lutte Johnson feels toward the urban setting. The "barrage of paper swirled into the faces of the people on the street" emphasizes this attitude of cold opposition evoked by the urban setting. The details such as the sign "streaked with rust" and "the grit stung their skin" further emphasize the harsh relationship Lutte Johnson has with the stark ^{urban scene} ~~urban setting~~ ^{she} ~~she~~ experiences.

The personification of the wind "fingering its way along the curb" and trying to "discourage the people walking along the street" emphasizes the ^{negative vibe} ~~negative~~ ^{Lutte} ~~Lutte~~ Johnson ^{experiences} ~~feels~~ in the urban setting. ~~That~~ Even her effort to read the sign becomes a ^{struggle} ~~fight~~ with the wind as ~~she~~ the wind is "twisting the



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sign away from her and holding it at "an impossible angle." The wind symbolizes ~~her~~^{Lutie} Johnson's separation from the urban setting as emphasized by ^{the} personification "the wind lifted Lutie Johnson's hair away from the back of her neck so that she felt suddenly naked and bald." Longing for the "softly and warmly" resting environment she was used to, ~~she~~ Lutie Johnson had a difficult time reconciling herself to the harsh urban ~~setting~~^{environment}.

The ~~is~~ hyperbole "...its violent assault" emphasizes the violent assault of new, unfamiliar conditions Lutie Johnson must face in her urban environment. The rusting metal "making a dark stain like blood" is a simile that contributes to this forboding ill that Lutie Johnson feels in ~~her~~^{her} unease with the urban scene. Also, the personification ^{the} wind "stuck its fingers inside their coats" conveys a feeling of defilement and opposition ~~as~~ since the probing by the ^{cold} wind was undesirable.

~~she~~ In this undesirable, opposing struggle with the wind, Lutie Johnson's separation and opposition to the urban setting are revealed. From the wind's "cold fingers" to the "entangling" newspapers to the sign "streaked with rust", Lutie Johnson's opposition to the stark, unfriendly urban setting is portrayed through the personified power of the "all knowing" wind. Often, a new setting is hard to assimilate into, and the struggle comes in seeing ^{the power to} the beauty in a harsh new place.

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Question 2

B

In her novel, *The Street*, Ann Petry introduces a lady named Lutie Johnson. She also introduces a "cold November wind." As Lutie is trying to read a sign that the wind keeps ~~pushing away~~ pushing away. Ann Petry uses personification of the wind to create a battle between Lutie and the wind.

At the very ~~beginning~~ beginning of the ~~novel~~ novel, the wind is personified. It makes its way through the street, dictating the actions of other objects. When it finds Lutie Johnson, they begin a battle of sorts over a sign. The wind keeps ~~pushing~~ pushing the sign away from her as she tries to read it. This battle signifies the whole setting trying to push Lutie away from the street. The sign she keeps trying to read was advertising ~~rooms~~ rooms for rent. The wind doesn't want her to stay in one of those rooms. Even though the wind is pushing the old, rusted sign, Lutie wants to read the sign. Finally, her perseverance prevails and she conquers the wind.

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Petry immediately establishes the urban setting as a type of war zone, in which the forces of nature are at battle with all the tenants of the city.

Lutie Johnson is subjected to this brute force as is everyone else, yet she is not ~~at all~~ deterred from searching for a permanent place of residence.

She holds a complex relationship with the urban setting, fighting and withstanding its nature to get closer with it and establish her own place.

The wind, in addition to other forces of nature, is personified throughout the entire passage, creating a threatening adversary. It was able to "suck window shades", to "find every scrap of paper", to "lift Lutie Johnson's hair away" and use its "fingers" to "finger its way along the curb" and attack passerby with weapons that they themselves leave behind. ^{e.g. litter, grime, paper} The fingers are able to "grab their hats", "prize their scarves", and "touch the back of [Lutie's] neck" to make her feel "naked and bald". Without much argument, none of these are pleasant situations or sensations. Petry's description deters the reader away from the urban setting as much as possible. Even further, there is allusion to the rain and snow that once inhabited the city, that "had finally eaten the paint off down to the metal, and the metal had slowly

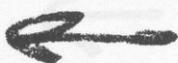


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rusted, making a dark red stain like blood." The natural, unavoidable forces are personified to give them a sense of forever-present and chaotic forces that inhabit the city.

Petry selects specific detail to convey the forces of ~~the~~ the urban setting as at battle with the people who venture out, including and specifically Lutie Johnson. The forces employ aspects of the urban setting to debilitate the citizens, using dirt and grime to "make it difficult to breathe", using dust to "blind them", and grit to "sting their skins". The blood-like stain on the sign indicates that the city has been in a losing battle for some time. However, ^{noting} ~~noting~~ this attack on the sign brings up an important relation to Lutie. Lutie is attracted to an aspect of the city that has too been attacked by the same forces, ~~but that~~ this aspect ^{of the building} and ~~its~~ ^{experience} lend potential protection to Lutie, who ~~is~~ ^{insists} ~~insists~~ seemingly ^{insists} on remaining in the war-zone. Petry also provides the detail of Lutie's thought process, deciding ^{her} immediately on the sign and its accompanying building based on whether or not there are two rooms or three rooms. Three rooms ^{which she prefers} offers more protection and support than two rooms. So although Lutie



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plans on remaining in the urban area, she ^{is preparing} ~~plans~~ well ~~by~~ building up personal security and support, indicating that, though questionably remaining in such dreary surroundings, she is wary of her position and the area around her.

Petry additionally uses imagery to describe the slightly warped surroundings. She ~~describes~~ details the sign as "standing at an impossible angle on the road that suspended it from the building" letting the reader just imagine its twisted and hard-to-read position. The scenario in which the sign is held in focus for mere seconds before being twisted and pushed away by the wind is also very usual. Both instances of imagery emphasize how patient and adapting Lutie is to the city, as she waits for the wind to agree with her, and then knowing not to trust the wind, reads the sign as quickly as possible. That patience and humility may be applied to her attitude towards the city in general as well.

Petry uses personification, imagery, detail and other literary tools to convey ~~how Lutie~~ Lutie's position in the urban setting. The personification indicates that, though an individual, Lutie is not alone in the city, and Lutie's actions portray her

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as somewhat ~~exaggerated~~ as everyone else, but also ^{as} patient, coping, and as having a plan of action.

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D,

In Ann Petey's novel, *The Street*, she establishes Lutie Johnson's relationship to the urban setting through her use of literary devices such as imagery, personification, selection of detail, and figurative language.

First, Petey describes the neighborhood, using figurative language and personification to give life to the wind. She uses words like "violent assault" to express the amount of force the wind is blowing with. The wind is picking up all kinds of trash from previous dances, ~~and~~ movie tickets, to "chicken bones" and "pork-chop bones". ~~Petey~~ uses these particular elements in selection of detail to show the reader what kind of neighborhood 116th street is. She also gives life to the story by using selection of detail when describing how thick or thin the wax paper on the street is. Personification comes into play when Petey describes how the wind "did everything it could to discourage the people walking along the street." ~~But~~ Lutie Johnson was one of those people. Petey tells the story of how the wind "grabbed their hats" and "pried their scarves from around their necks" and then how the wind "blew their coats away from their bodies". By using this type of figurative language and personification, the struggle Lutie Johnson



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has to go through living in this urban setting is evident. The imagery of Lutie Johnson continuing to try and read the sign despite the wind's efforts shows her determination.

Ann Petry uses selection to detail, imagery, ~~and~~ personification, and figurative language, ~~as~~ as well as the persistence of the wind, to show how Lutie Johnson perseveres over her circumstances, in relation to her living environment.

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Ann Petry makes use of excellent imagery, personification, selection of details and figurative language to establish ^{conditions} the environment that Lutie Johnson had to deal with ~~that~~ and the urban setting. Petry uses a variety of adjectives to describe the cold, biting November wind and used a great deal of detail to describe how it ~~was~~ affected the setting. The reader imagery gives the is almost HD-like, giving the reader ~~an~~ a very detail making the reader feel like he is in the setting.

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F.

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In Ann Petry's novel, *The Street*, Lutie Johnson is characterized, ironically, by the nature of her instantaneous adversary - the soul of the city. Her relationship to the urban environment is established mainly through imagery and personification, the former of which gives Lutie's perception of her situation ~~and~~ ^{while} the latter defines the attitude of the city towards the people who try to live in it, such as Lutie ~~and~~ herself.

The use of personification is immediate; the key medium, wind, manages to express the atmosphere of the city as if it is a living entity; very determined and excessively mischievous. Lutie is one of many who endure this trivial torture: "The cold November wind...drove most of the people off the street... it found every scrap of paper; it even took the time to rush into doorways [and] do everything it could to discourage the people walking along the street." In Lutie's experience, the wind is like the breath of the city, a devilish being that takes pleasure in inconveniencing its inhabitants. It is very thorough in its work, finding every insignificant characteristic about the setting, such as a tiny scrap of paper, and proceeding to find even some use for that in its impish plans, perhaps by blowing it around Lutie's feet or into her face. This emphasizes not only what Lutie will have to face if she intends to live there, but it also plays upon Lutie's own qualities. For example, she can deal with the environment of an urban center with patience and determination in order to get her work done.



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She is thus defined as one of many who have found within themselves the strength to undergo the daily test that the city's soul decides to fling upon them, proving their worth as urban inhabitants. It is almost as if they are playing a game, the city and the girl, seeing who can one-up the other in each round. For example, as Lutie attempts to investigate the area for signs of a proper shelter, the wind does all it can to thwart her. "Each time she had the sign in focus, the wind pushed it away from her so that she ~~could~~ wasn't ~~sure~~ certain whether it said three rooms or two rooms." Finally, their game comes to a draw as "the wind [holds] it still for an instant" so that Lutie is able to read it. The game is far from over, however, because it is as if the city has just upped the level and upgraded the home base. Now Lutie must deal with even tougher problems because the urban entity has already been merciful once, and probably ~~does not~~ not plan on repeating the action. The imagery ~~the~~ ^{that} the author uses shows Lutie's point of view on this relationship, with her as the victim. She is disturbed by the noise of the wind "rattling], sucking], and flapping]" things all around the city; it also "found all the dirt ... and lifted it up so that the dirt got into [the people's] noses". Lutie is no safer than her fellow city folk. Much like them, she can feel as "the wind lift[es] [her] hair away from the back of her neck so that she [feels] suddenly naked," and "she shivers as the cold fingers of the wind touched the back of her →

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neck." It is very strongly implied by this imagery that in this game that Lurie plays with the merciless city that she views herself as the underdog in the relationship, constantly teased and violated by the city's touch. The noise annoys her, the dirt invades her air, and the cold and force ensure that she has the most difficult experience possible while searching for shelter. Given the imagery of the place that would help her is significantly antagonistic, on the city's part. The sign that signals her salvation (temporarily, at least) is "streaked with rust where years of rain and snow had [exposed] the metal, [which] had rusted, making a dark red stain like blood." In every way, the city attempts to discourage Lurie, and she overcomes its cruelty each time. The ugliness of the sign does not phase her; she accepts the rooms that it advertises. The struggle on Lurie's part and the game of the city continues. Poetry truly ~~is~~ characterizes the city and Lurie as opponents in a match, using personification for one point of view and imagery for the other, giving a play-by-play of the relationship between the ~~city~~^{beauty} and the urban beast.

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In this excerpt of The Street, Ann Petry characterizes a ruthless November wind ~~rearing~~ causing slight chaos on 116th street. Petry uses personification, imagery, and figurative language to ~~describe~~ this natural occurrence.

The wind is characterized ~~as~~ a violent force. Petry uses personification in order to make the wind an ~~animate~~ animate force. With use of words such as "fingered, found, wrapped, and lifted," the wind becomes an dangerous force, aware of the damage it's causing. The wind becomes more damaging now that it can decide its next target. It is now responsible.

Petry uses figurative language and imagery so that her audience might better experience the wind. She describes the wind's image, by listing all of the various papers that the wind relentlessly blows around the street.

With the introduction of Lutie Johnson, the wind now has a victim. The wind is merciless and ~~preys upon~~ randomly preys upon any innocent pedestrians it can find. Petry includes details about the sign as the wind seems to taunt Lutie as it "pushed [the sign] away from her."

In the final paragraph, as the wind continues to harass Lutie, she is able to read the comforting sign. After her treacherous walk, she can now find comfort in the heated,

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reasonable, and calm building. She seems to feel liberated in returning to her arrival to place that could be home.

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Throughout The Street, Petry ~~is~~ portrays the wind as a destructive force, capable of controlling the lives of human beings. She personifies it, allowing the wind to ~~perform~~ perform actions - it rattles, sucks, drives, finds, fingers, ~~finds~~ and grabs. Not surprising, then, is the fact that the wind impacts Lutie Johnson too. It lifts her hair and rattles the sign, but for an instant it relents, just so she can see the sign. ~~It~~ Because of this, Johnson finds her way in the city. Thus, despite the fact that the wind ^{tries its hardest to} disrupt every other ~~individual~~ individual in the city, Lutie Johnson outlasts the wind because she finds her way in an urban setting despite its annoying persistence.

Throughout the first three paragraphs, the wind is ~~is~~ personified as a dominant, controlling person; It can do all of the things a dominant human being would do. The wind "rattled the tops of garbage cans," "drove most people off of the street," "found" dirt and dust and "lifted it up" so the dust bothered the people, and it "grabbed their hats." All of these actions, these personifications, of the wind show the power of the wind to control people's lives. ^{Because of} ~~The~~ this, wind serves as a metaphor for life since human

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beings think they have control over their lives but it only takes something as small as the wind to remind them that they do not.* All of these ideas and actions performed by the wind set up perfectly what happens to Lutie Johnson since she overcomes the wind's power and survives in the city.* The specific actions, depicted ^{of the wind} throughout the text further imply this idea since most of the actions/processes the wind disrupts are normal, every-day occurrences that humans do not ever think about]

While the wind deters everyone else, Lutie Johnson is able to find her way despite its annoyance. ~~too~~ At first, the wind tries to treat Lutie like the others: "[It] lifted Lutie Johnson's hair away from ~~the~~ ~~the~~ the back of her neck" (35-36) so she felt cold. Next, the wind blew her eyelashes so that her eyeballs were cold and watery, making it difficult for her to see the sign so she would know where to go. All of this specific detail chronicles the way in which the wind tries to deter Lutie so she will end up like all of the other people ~~she is not deterred~~. Johnson tries continually to see the sign, to know where she is supposed to



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go, but everytime she has it in focus, the wind blows again and blurs her vision. The sign represents Johnson's life while the wind represents unexpected ~~obstacles~~ obstacles one experiences throughout their lives. Every time an individual thinks they know where to go in life, something unexpectedly happens and interrupts their course.

In spite of the fact that the wind causes her problems, Lutie succeeds and finds her way. She is annoyed at the fact that the wind kept blurring her vision, but she did not give up. Because of this she finds her way to the building. Of course, the building is an apartment building which suggests that Lutie is moving into the city because she wants to find her way in life. The apartment building represents a place of security, safe from the wind, safe from life and reality. As hard as it tries, the wind cannot deter Lutie from her goal, so she moves forward in the city, ^{knowing she has found the} apartment building.

Throughout the passage, the wind is personified as a disruptive force. Because of this, it parallels the disruptive forces in life that cause problems. While these forces deter many people, they do not discourage Lutie Johnson since she stays strong and finds her

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way through the city to her apartment building

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Question 2

In the opening of Anne Petry's novel The Street, she carefully conveys a unique message to the reader about Lottie Johnson's relationship to the urban setting. Throughout the passage, Petry's artistic use of vivid imagery, personification, selection of detail, and figurative language aid the reader in understanding the message.

The diction used to describe the powerful wind in a cold November urban city, places the reader in an imaginative world of the setting itself. Petry utilizes detail to great extent to establish the ~~complex~~ relation of the main character to the urban setting. The wind is described in the city as a "violent assault" that "grabbed their hats, prised their scarves from around their necks, stuck its finger ⁱⁿ inside their collar coats, blew their coats away from their bodies." The drastic characteristics of the wind, personify it as a ~~major~~ life obstacle with a mind of its own as it "did every thing it could to discourage the people from walking in the streets." (lines 21-22) The immense detail surrounding the force and masculinity of the wind in an urban setting not only serves as a vivid literal experience, but also as powerful figurative comparison.

The second half of the passage (lines 35-60), pertains to figurative side of the importance of the well-detailed wind. Petry implies that the main character, Lottie Johnson, is on a mission to find a new apartment in the city, but faces difficulties in doing so. The first part ~~of the~~ passage explaining



Question 2

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people struggling against the wind, but are still determined to walk outside and face it. The wind is what represents ~~the~~ Lurie's struggle to find comfort and reason in ~~an~~ the complexity of an urban setting. The people who "bent double in effort to offer the least possible exposed surface to its [wind's] violent assault," are the representation of Lurie searching for a home despite the obstacles. These two ideas of literal and figurative language used by Petry, clash together as Lurie finds herself caught in the powerful wind of the city, searching for a home. Petry brings the wind to life through crucial detail and personification as paints the picture of Lurie walking in the wind by inputting, "She shivered as the cold fingers of the wind torched the back of her neck, explored the sides of her head." (lines 38-40) The passage comes to successful conquest as Lurie fights through the wind to catch ~~the~~ a glance of sign flapping in the wind that ~~was~~ served as a plausible home.

Although Petry uses figurative language, diction, personification, and imagery to the their full potential, she also implies a theme that is conveyed through the aid of these techniques. She allows the reader to analyze how the relationship between the main character ~~and~~ to the urban setting is established.

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