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The World is an Endless Hope

Sitting at the railroad, the train finally passed, and, as she was crossing over the tracks, she heard the gunfire. She already knew what had happened. When she got to the house, the police were there with an ambulance. She leapt out of her truck to see her son’s girlfriend sobbing in her mother’s arms and paramedics carrying her dead nineteen-year-old boy into the ambulance. High on pills, he had been arguing with his girlfriend, and her mom came out of the house screaming at him that he was an awful boyfriend and needed to leave. In response to her, he killed himself with her husband’s pistol. Sadly, I knew this young man and had gone to school with him. My sophomore year in high school, three students at my school committed suicide. In the poem “Suicide Note,” the author was inspired to write about a young girl who took her own life by jumping out of a window because she felt her parents were upset with her grade point average at school. It seems silly, but these situations occur all of the time with teens and young adults. If someone continues to feel “not good enough,” then what’s their motivation to stay alive? Due to the lack of medical attention and society’s ignorance, teenagers and young adults are suffering from suicidal thoughts and actions every day, but are being dismissed as young, immature ‘children’ whose opinions and thoughts don’t matter because they’re not an ‘adult’ yet. The rate of suicide is increasing because adolescents are struggling
with medical depression, lack of support and validation from adults, and are faced with struggles that weren’t even imagined for previous generations.

   Every year in America, nearly 5,000 teenagers commit suicide. “Suicide is the second-leading cause of death for young people between ages 15 and 19.” (Peacock para. 1). According to Judith Peacock, the number one reason for suicide in teens is untreated depression. Three types of depression listed that were found common among adolescents were bipolar disorder, dysthymia, and seasonal affective disorder (Peacock). In “Suicide Note,” the story is based during wintertime. “It is snowing steadily/surely not good weather/for flying- this sparrow/sillies and dizzied by the wind/on the edge.” (Mirikitani ll.36-40). The narrator mentions snow, cold, ice, glacier, and other lines in the story that relate to the winter weather (Mirikitani). This season clearly plays a huge role in the suicide note written. This is a point that relates back to seasonal affective disorder. This is a type of clinical depression that seems to be ignored, along with the others previously listed. If a teenager or young adult continues to struggle with feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or whatever the case may be, the likeliness they’ll continue to see meaning in life is slim if they can’t seem to find any relief from their depression.

   Another reason why teenagers and young adults continue to have suicidal thoughts and follow through with them is from not having enough support and validation from their parents, teachers, and other peers. “not good enough/not pretty enough/not smart enough” (3). In this poem, the girl felt she had disappointed her parents because she didn’t do well enough in school. “I worked very hard,…harder, perhaps to please you.” (7, 9). Unfortunately, her hard work was not good enough to please her parents, so she took her own life. Parents, teachers, and other adults aren’t supportive enough of
adolescents, and this causes these adolescents to feel no reason to continue trying to do better because the task seems impossible. It’s depressing that adults can’t find it in them to just love these younger people where they are. Yes, encouragement to do better is always great. Not harsh criticism, though. This is the hardest time of these younger folks lives up to that moment. They need as much support, care, love, and encouragement as possible. Parents, teachers, and other adults having unrealistic expectations and getting upset when they aren’t met only harm the young adult or teenager. Therefore, they feel there is no hope and they find a “permanent solution to a temporary problem.” (Peacock para.2).

The last cause is the one of new pressures of the present day. “Teens today are confronting suicide much more often than their parents did when they were young” (Huddle para. 4). “Suicide Note” was written in the year 1987. Suicide wasn’t as common then as it is today. However, it was right around the time that is began to progressively get more popular due to increased drug uses and cultural influences, like music. Since then, suicide has become an epidemic among adolescents. One of the core reasons it has become as widespread as it has is because of the increase in violence and crime rate (Huddle). Other reasons it’s becoming more ‘popular’ among younger generations is because of the increase use of drugs, the romantic view of suicide being brought up through the media, teen bullying, unrealistic views of death, etc. “Today’s teens face pressures unheard of 40 years ago.” (Peacock para. 5). In “Suicide Note,” the pressure the young woman was dealing with was trying to be the perfect daughter to her parents when they really wanted a son, “If only I were a son, shoulders broad” (10). In today’s society, there are so many issues creating a negative environment for young
people to develop in. This is causing them to have that sense of hopelessness and willingness to take their own life.

“Suicide Note” is a prime example of leading factors that increase suicidal rates among teenagers and young adults. Her depression caused by the wintertime season, her lack of support from her parents, and the rising pressures of the current time period all more than likely played a factor in the narrator’s decision to kill herself. The problems that occurred in this poem have grown over the years in the lives of many other young adults in today’s society. Unfortunately, student and young adult suicidal rates will more than likely continue to increase in the world as it continues to become an endless hope to those trying to find meaning in their lives.
Works Cited

