Tone Tracker

Name ____________________________ Date ___________ Period ________

Directions: record your thinking. Use the focus questions to guide your discussion.

Focus Questions /Tasks
1. Who or what is the subject of the poem?

2. Determine the overall mood of the poem. Jot down the words or phrases that support your answer.

3. Study the word choice. Does the poet use positive or negative connotations or meanings of words?

4. Read the poem again. Who do you think the intended audience is? What makes you believe this?

The subject of the poem is: divorce/ growing up too soon/

Notes on Mood
The mood starts out sorrowful and yearning. The words from the text that support my answer are “I know that Daddy is still gone” and “She is inviting me to join her for a good cry”. These phrases make me think the boy and his mom are desperate for the dad to return.

Notes on Word Choice
The phrase “until we get things squared away” tells me the character, the boy, is trying to be strong. He wants to take on the role of the provider and protector of his family. This is opposite of the line or phrase “I swallow the lump in my throat over and over again.” This shows the boy wants to take on these new roles, but really he is not ready.

Notes on Audience
The intended audience is anyone who might feel sorry for the boy. Acting as the narrator, he is telling his audience, I am aware of the my situation- “As soon as I walk through the door” and “I am not a little kid anymore”, but don’t worry about me- “Time enough for you to be a man tomorrow but not today.” He wants his audience to know, he still has one parent who is in charge.

Compare notes with your partner. Jot down any new ideas you have after your conversation.

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Talking about Tone
Directions: Use your notes to help you answer the questions.

Word Choice is positive or negative
positive

The mood is sorrowful and angry

The audience is anyone who pities the narrator

Tone

How do you think the narrator feels about the subject? Be sure to include evidence from the text to support your answer.

The author feels the subject of divorce is painful, but it doesn't have to destroy you. The beginning of the poem shows the hurt and longing the boy and his mom feel because the dad is gone. For example, the lines "She looks me in the eye, and I see an invitation. She is inviting me to join her for a good cry," demonstrate the pain this family feels. On the other hand, the end of the poem shows the narrator is refusing to give in to pity. The lines, "slaps me hard across the face and the sting bring tears instantly. Momma looks relieved," shows the mom still has some fight or energy for life despite the dad being gone. This tells me the author feels divorce is tough, but people can recover from the loss.

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