

16/17 May 2017



On December 5th of 1921, future-Nobel laureate and Pulitzer Prize-winning author William Faulkner landed a job as a University of Mississippi postmaster. Despite numerous reports of his writing novels on the job, losing and occasionally throwing away mail, ignoring colleagues and customers, playing bridge during opening hours, and regularly turning up late only to leave early, Faulkner somehow held the position for almost three years — until, in September of 1924, a predictably unflattering inspection resulted in him being forced to resign.

He wrote the following letter to his superiors.

[October, 1924]

As long as I live under the capitalistic system, I expect to have my life influenced by the demands of moneyed people. But I will be damned if I propose to be at the beck and call of every itinerant scoundrel who has two cents to invest in a postage stamp.

This, sir, is my resignation.

(Signed)

image and text from <http://www.lettersofnote.com/2012/09/this-sir-is-my-resignation.html>

Greetings, AmLit Scholars—

I hope you enjoyed that epistolary treat!

Here's how we'll roll today:

1. WEDGE—For roughly ten minutes, respond to the reading due today by attempting a bit of empathy with the protagonist: write about a time in your life when you questioned the actions of an adult, especially if you decided to pursue a course of action that demonstrated your independence. Try to provide the specific multisensory details that would allow an audience of ignorant animals to understand the events vicariously.

2. Ripping Through Faulkner—We will discuss “Barn Burning” and Modernism while honing our decentered discourse skills.

3. More Faulkner—There's a speech we should consider. A copy is posted to our Moodle page.

Tappa! Tappa! Tappa!—

Mr Leo

Homework:

1. Consider these two quotations from famous American writers:

The novelist Ford Madox Ford: “Hemingway’s words strike you, each one, as if they were pebbles from a brook.”

In *Death in the Afternoon*, Hemingway outlined his “theory of omission” or “iceberg principle.” He states: “If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of the iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. The writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing.”

2. Actively read the Hemingway bio and short stories, with an eye out for elements of Modernism.