Each of the following passages come from either *Woman Hollering Creek* or *Brown Girl, Brownstones*. **Choose two to explicate and close read in detail.** You’ll need to tell me the context in which the passage appears (i.e., what’s happening in the plot), and explain the passage’s importance to the work as a whole (how it contributes to character development, themes, or plot). Then, you’ll need to construct a close reading of the passage, in which you use textual details to make an argument about the passage’s meaning or its relationship to ongoing themes in the novel. Point break down: 5 points for context, 5 points for explication, and 10 points for close reading.

1. “The neighbor ladies, Soledad, Dolores, they might’ve known once the name of the *arroyo* before it turned English but they did not know now. They were too busy remembering the men who had left through either choice or circumstance and would never come back.

Pain or rage, Cleófilas wondered when she drove over the bridge the first time as a newlywed and Juan Pedro had pointed it out. *La Gritona*, he had said, and she had laughed. Such a funny name for a creek so pretty and full of happily ever after.” (*Woman Hollering Creek* 47)

1. “*¡Ay!* To make love in Spanish, in a manner as intricate and devout as la Alhambra. To have a lover sigh *mi vida, mi preciosa, mi chiquitita*, and whisper things in that language crooned to babies, that language murmured by grandmothers, those words that smelled like your house, like flour tortillas, and the inside of your daddy’s hat, like everyone talking in the kitchen at the same time, or sleeping with the windows open, like sneaking cashews from the crumpled quarter-pound bag Mama always hid in her lingerie drawer after she went shopping with Daddy at the Sears.

*That* language. That sweep of palm leaves and fringed shawls. That startled fluttering, like the heart of a goldfinch or a fan. Nothing sounded dirty or hurtful or corny. How could I think of making love in English again? English with its starched *r*’s and *g*’s. English with its crisp linen syllable. English crunchy as apples, resilient and stiff as sailcloth.” (*Woman Hollering Creek* 153)

1. “Suddenly he halted. His head dropped and he might have been inspecting his polished shoes, the crease in his trousers or the linoleum’s gay pattern. But really he was watching the slow dissolution of his dream: the white house with Grecian columns and stained-glass bathroom windows crumbling before it could take root. He moaned, breaking inside as the dream broke. Yet, as the moan tapered into a sigh, something else emerged. That sigh expressed a profound relief. It was as though Silla, by selling the land, had unwittingly spared him the terrible onus of wresting a place in life. The pretense was over. He was broken, stripped, delivered . . .

And something else underlined that sigh: the same unnatural acceptance that had scored his bitter outburst when he was refused the job in accounting. Perhaps he sensed that, like his defeat then, his loss of the land now was simply his due. Moreover, it brought a kind of perverse gratification, a terrifying exultation. There were sins, perhaps, lodged in him and charging the air around him that demanded his perpetual sacrifice.” (*Brown Girl, Brownstones* Book 3 ch. 4, second to last page)

1. “The project receded and she was again the sole survivor amid the wreckage. And suddenly she turned away, unable to look any longer. For it was like seeing the bodies of all the people she had ever known broken, all the familiar voices that had ever sounded in those high-ceilinged rooms shattered—and the pieces piled into this giant cairn of stone and silence. She wanted, suddenly, to leave something with them. But she had nothing. She had left the mother and the meeting hall wearing only the gown and her spring coat. Then she remembered the two silver bangles she had always worn. She pushed up her coat sleeve and stretched one until it passed over her wrist, and, without turning, hurled it high over her shoulder. The bangle rose behind her, a bit of silver against the moon, then curved swiftly downward and struck a stone. A frail sound in that utter silence.” (*Brown Girl, Brownstones* Book 4 ch. 11, final page).