

Elizabeth R. Wilson

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

Date

Meme's Hands

Meme, as I call my great aunt, has lived with rheumatoid arthritis for over fifty years. As a result of this disease, her hands have become gnarled, like twisted tree roots after they break ground. Her long fingers are in a crooked position, and her knuckles and joints are inflamed with the arthritis. Her palms are light red, and the tops of her hands are freckled light brown from exposure to sunlight. The veins in her hands can be seen clearly, for they bulge out, creating blue tributaries that run beneath her slightly wrinkled skin. One of her index fingers displays a small scar from the cut of a sharp knife. Most people would take one look at her hands and call them distorted or ugly, but not me. In my eyes, there is no other pair of hands as beautiful as hers.

These hands have been those of a loving aunt, nurse, disciplinarian, cook, and a field hand for as long as I can remember. These rough yet gentle-spirited hands have cared for me when I was sick, comforted me as I cried, and held me when I just needed to be held. They have worked from dawn to dusk in the blazing summer heat in a garden or field. They have been cut and burnt while preparing meals for our family and have taken on the permanent aroma of lemon-scented Dawn from washing the dishes after every meal or snack. They have been buried in dough for cookies, pies, or some other special treat. They have been the epitome of discipline, firmly holding a fly swatter or switch, ready to swat at me at the mere appearance of disobedience.

Everyone has his or her own ideas of beauty. Mine comes in the form of a pair of old, jagged hands. When I look at Meme's hands, I see what the rest of the world does not even look for. I see the essence of radiant beauty they reflect. I see hands that have worked themselves to the bone, making the world a better place and me a better person.