Passage One (pg3)
As summer wheat came ripe,
so did I,
born at home, on the kitchen floor.
Ma crouched,
barefoot, bare bottomed
over the swept boards,
because that’s where Daddy said it’d be best.

I came to fast for the doctor,
bawling as soon as Daddy wiped his hand around
inside my mouth.
To hear Ma tell it,
I hollered myself red the day I was born.
Red’s the color I’ve stayed ever since.

Daddy named me Billie Jo.
He wanted a boy.
Instead,
he got a long-legged girl
with a . . .

Passage Two (pg 104)
Sunday night,
I stretch my legs in my iron bed
under the roof.
I place a wet cloth over my nose to keep
from breathing dust
and wipe the grime tracings from around my mouth,
and shiver, thinking of Ma.
I am kept company by the sound of my heart drumming.

Restless,
I tangle in the dusty sheets,
sending the sand flying,
cursing the grit against my skin,
between my teeth,
under my lids, 
swearing I’ll leave this forsaken place.

I hear the first drops. 
Like the tapping of a stranger 
at the door of a dream, 
the rain changes . . .

Passage Three (pg 219)
The wheat is growing 
even though dust 
blows in sometimes.

I walk with Daddy around the farm 
and see that 
the pond is holding its own, 
it will keep Ma’s apple trees alive, 
nourish her garden, 
help the grass around it grow, 
enough to lie in and dream 
if I feel like it, 
and stand in, 
and wait for Mad Dog 
when he comes past once a week 
on his way from Amarillo, 
where he works for the radio.

And as long as the 
dust doesn’t crush 
the winter wheat, 
we’ll have something to show in the spring 
for all . . .

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<th></th>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Long Words</th>
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<td>Passage 1</td>
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**Raygor Readability Level: Grade 6**