Jennifer Loman. Interpretation of Literature

Invitation for Brian Doyle’s “Pop Art”

*Read the following*:

**Pop Art**

***by Brian Doyle***

In nine years I have been graced with three children and here is what I have learned about them. They are engines of incalculable joy and agonizing despair. They are comedy machines. Their language is their own and the order of their new halting words has never been heard before in the whole history of the world. They are headlong and hilarious. Their hearts are enormous and sensitive beyond calculation by man or machine. Their pride is vast. They are cruel, and move in herds and gaggles and mobs, and woe unto the silent one, the one who looks funny, the one who speaks awkwardly, the fat one, for she will be shouldered aside, he will never get the ball, she will never be asked to jump rope, he will not be invited to the pool party, she will weep with confusion and rage, he will lash out with sharp small fists. Yet they are endlessly kind, kind by nature, and among them there is often an artless democracy, a linking of arms against the vast puzzle of the long people. They search for rules and rank, for what is allowed and what is forbidden, and poke the rules to see which bends and which is steel, for they wish to know their place in the world, where they might walk, what they may wear, which shows are allowed, how far they can go, who they are. They rise early in excitement and return reluctantly to barracks at night for fear of missing a shred of the daily circus. They eat nothing to speak of but grow at stunning rates that produce mostly leg. They are absorbed by dogs and toast. Mud and jelly accrue to them. They are at war with wasps. They eat no green things. Once they learn sarcasm they use it with abandon, slashing here and there without control and wreaking havoc. When they weep they weep utterly from the marrows of their lonely bones. They will not speak of death but when it comes, a dark hooded hawk on the fence, they face it without fear. They are new creatures hourly, and what you think you know of them is already lost in the river. Their hearts are dense books no one can read. They speak many languages of the body. To them you are a stone who has always been and will always be. When they are ill they shrivel. To father them is not a brief noun but an endless verb that exhausts, enrages, edifies, elevates, educates; I am a thinner and grayer man than I was; and closer to joy. They frighten me, for they will make a new world on the bowed back of the one I love; but they delight me, for to have loved them is to have tasted the furious love the Maker has for what He made, and fathers still, and always will.

Brian Doyle is the editor of Portland Magazine at the University of Portland. He is the author of Credo, a collection of essays, as well as further essays (with his father Jim Doyle) in Two Voices. Doyle's work has appeared in The Best American Essays 1998, and The Best American Essays 1999.

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**Your Task**: Write your own one-page typed piece, one modeled on Doyle’s “Pop Art” (2001). Note that your list of descriptions (of something or someone) should add up to more than just a roster of characteristics. Instead, you should aim to reveal the nature of the subject.

Aim for your writing to demonstrate your grasp of the following:

* Reflective writing (in which your goal is to illuminate a subject via careful rumination on that subject as opposed to persuasive argumentation in which your goal is to argue a literary claim). Recall that reflective writing may be musing, uncertain, or anecdotal, whereas argumentation authoritatively proves a thesis.
* Figurative language (metaphors, similes, hyperbole, personification, and more)
* Sentence variety and control
* Momentum (building your mini-essay toward a powerful close). Note that this essay ends with a universal insight, once inclusive of the topic of children and parenthood, but one that moves into the realm of the religious.