

Lit Circle Assignment #2

1. "Till It Happens To You" by Lady Gaga

Lady Gaga's emotional melody, "Till It Happens to You" indirectly connects to the novel, "Up Ghost River" by Edmund Metatawabin. In the novel, at age 16 Edmund is sexually assaulted by a middle-aged man, Mike Pasko, someone he thought was a friend. After, Edmund feels ashamed and fears telling his family or the authorities. He believes that if he had, "been born in a different body with a different history, [he] might have gone to the police." (Metatawabin 127) "Till it Happens to you" relates to Edmund's emotions and experiences through its lyrics that tell a story of an assault survivor. The lyric, "Til it happens to you, you don't know how it feels" represents Edmund's belief that nobody would understand. Looking past the intended meaning of the song, it could also represent themes from the novel. Such as, the struggles to rise up after traumatic experiences like attending residential school. "Cause when you fall you gotta get up and move on, Tell me how the hell could you talk, how could you talk" is a lyric from, "Till it Happens to you" that shows this.

2. "Walk a Little Straighter" by Billy Currington

Edmund Metatawabin's childhood of residential school, physical and sexual abuse, and the foster system led him to seek refuge through alcohol in his adult life. "Walk a Little Straighter" by Billy Currington tells the story of a boy whose father is estranged and an alcoholic. This connects to, "Up Ghost River" and Edmund Metatawabin's life because his children too struggle with this for a period of time. Edmund is unable to discontinue drinking, "[He] was deep in it, and [he] felt unable to swim or walk, weighed down-by [his] past, by [his] mistakes and those [he] had hurt." (Metatawabin 204) If Edmund had continued he would risk leading his children down a similar path. Billy Currington's song references this, "walk a little straighter daddy, you're leading me." On a larger scale, this theme is seen in reality through intergenerational effects of residential schools.

3. "Amazing" by Aerosmith

"Amazing" by Aerosmith connects to Edmund Metatawabin's biography, "Up Ghost River." After rehab fails to break Edmund's addiction to alcohol, he looks to his native spirituality for guidance. "Amazing" represents Edmund's journey on The Red Road, "the Seven Sacred Teachings, the vision quests, the shaking tent, the sweat lodges, and the animal spirit guides." (Metatawabin 247) The lyrics, "Life is a journey, not a destination and I just can't tell just what tomorrow brings" and, "With the blink of an eye you, finally see the light. It's amazing" represent Edmund finally looking past his traumatic history and seeing that life can be amazing.