

The Neustadt Scholar program at Colorado Academy is generously endowed by Kathy Neustadt, mother of Tess Hankin, class of 2016. Two to four upper school students are chosen by the English department to accompany faculty from the English department to the Neustadt award ceremony at the University of Oklahoma. The prize ceremony, events celebrating international literature, and time spent working one-on-one with Mia Couto will be held at the University of Oklahoma on **October 23 - 25, 2014**. (Due to the travel component that accompanies this award, parent permission is required.) The bigger of the two prizes, given biennially, is the Neustadt Prize for International Literature; the other award is the NSK Neustadt Prize for Children's Literature. Last year (2013), two students traveled to the NSK award ceremony, and this year (2014) two - four students will travel (all expenses paid by the Neustadt family) to the Neustadt Prize ceremony. This year's laureate is Mozambican author António Emily Leite Couto (Mia Couto), known for his poetry, short stories, and novels written in the genre of magical realism. He was chosen by a jury of nine international authors to receive the 2014 Neustadt International Prize for Literature.

If you choose to participate, you will need to read short stories by Mia Couto and perhaps the most well-known magical realism writer, Gabriel Garcia-Marquez and compose a portfolio of writing. While you are reading these stories and exploring the genre of magical realism, there will be a series of writing exercises that will lead you ultimately to write your own magical realistic story. Your portfolio and those submitted by your peers will be anonymously reviewed and judged by members of the CA English Department, from which the Neustadt Scholars will be chosen.

Some background info - what is Magical Realism?

- A term introduced in the 1940s referring to narrative art that presents extraordinary occurrences as an ordinary part of everyday life, but has since become associated with the writing of Alejo Carpentier, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Mia Couto, and Salman Rushdie. In the work of these writers, ordinary events are sometimes given extraordinary explanations.
- "Magical realism expands the categorizes of the real so as to encompass myth, magic and other extraordinary phenomena in Nature or experience which European realism excluded" (*Gabriel García Márquez*, eds. Bernard McGuirk and Richard Cardwell, 45).
- Example: Gabriel García Márquez uses magical realism to blend reality and fantasy so that the distinction between the two erases. An example of this technique comes from the story "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" [you will read below] where an angel falls to the Earth because of a violent rainstorm. When the angel is found by Pelayo and Elisenda, they are shocked to see an angel, and yet they never question its existence. The reality of the situation is never mistrusted, which is key to the genre; however, the angel itself is an astounding manifestation.
- "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" demonstrates Marquez's ability to tell a fairy tale or folk tale in a realistic manner while incorporating the magic of the angel. The angel is the catalyst for the family's recovery from destitution. Before the arrival of the angel, they are a simple, poor family with a dying son. Once the angel is captured, the son recovers and the family uses the angel for financial gain. Marquez shows us true

human nature. An incredible being falls to the Earth and the humans use it to make a fast buck. Eventually, the family grows to resent the angel and they wish it would vanish. Instead of the simplistic, happy ending of the ordinary fairy tale, the characters are allowed to exploit Nature until it flies off without a word. Consequently, the angel is never allowed to fulfill his destiny which was to take the soul of the dying child.

- "She kept watching him even when she was through cutting the onions and she kept on watching until it was no longer possible for her to see him, because then he was no longer an annoyance in her life but an imaginary dot of the horizon of the sea" (210).

(All page references to *Collected Short Stories* by Gabriel García Márquez)

Now, read "A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings" by Gabriel Garcia-Marquez. Before you read, write for about five minutes about the title - what do you think is the significance? or make predictions, ask questions, make up a story, etc. As you read highlight, underline, or otherwise mark instances of magic or magical elements referred to in the story. Also, consider the following questions (maybe take notes) while you read:

- 1) What religious message do you think this story tries to convey? Is religion dead or discredited, or does faith persist in unexpected or unconventional forms?
- 2) How would you characterize the community where García Márquez's story is set? Are the townspeople shallow and greedy? Practical and simple? Thoughtful and individualistic? Is there anything about their attitudes—or about García Márquez's setting itself—that remains ambiguous or unclear (a la magical realism)?
- 3) Why do you think García Márquez uses such vivid, gritty descriptions in "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"? Do these descriptions make the angel and the townspeople seem human and complicated? Or do García Márquez's descriptions actually make his characters exotic, mythic, and dignified?

### "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"

by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, translated by Gregory Rabassa

On the third day of rain they had killed so many crabs inside the house that Pelayo had to cross his drenched courtyard and throw them into the sea, because the newborn child had a temperature all night and they thought it was due to the stench. The world had been sad since Tuesday. Sea and sky were a single ash-gray thing and the sands of the beach, which on March nights glimmered like powdered light, had become a stew of mud and rotten shellfish. The light was so weak at noon that when Pelayo was coming back to the house after throwing away the crabs, it was hard for him to see what it was that was moving and groaning in the rear of the courtyard. He had to go very close to see that it was an old man, a very old man, lying face down in the mud, who, in spite of his tremendous efforts, couldn't get up, impeded by his enormous wings.

Frightened by that nightmare, Pelayo ran to get Elisenda, his wife, who was putting compresses on the sick child, and he took her to the rear of the courtyard. They both looked at the fallen body with a mute stupor. He was dressed like a ragpicker. There were only a few faded hairs left on his bald skull and very few teeth in his mouth, and

his pitiful condition of a drenched great-grandfather took away any sense of grandeur he might have had. His huge buzzard wings, dirty and half-plucked, were forever entangled in the mud. They looked at him so long and so closely that Pelayo and Elisenda very soon overcame their surprise and in the end found him familiar. Then they dared speak to him, and he answered in an incomprehensible dialect with a strong sailor's voice. That was how they skipped over the inconvenience of the wings and quite intelligently concluded that he was a lonely castaway from some foreign ship wrecked by the storm. And yet, they called in a neighbor woman who knew everything about life and death to see him, and all she needed was one look to show them their mistake.

"He's an angel," she told them. "He must have been coming for the child, but the poor fellow is so old that the rain knocked him down."

On the following day everyone knew that a flesh-and-blood angel was held captive in Pelayo's house. Against the judgment of the wise neighbor woman, for whom angels in those times were the fugitive survivors of a celestial conspiracy, they did not have the heart to club him to death. Pelayo watched over him all afternoon from the kitchen, armed with his bailiff's club, and before going to bed he dragged him out of the mud and locked him up with the hens in the wire chicken coop. In the middle of the night, when the rain stopped, Pelayo and Elisenda were still killing crabs. A short time afterward the child woke up without a fever and with a desire to eat. Then they felt magnanimous and decided to put the angel on a raft with fresh water and provisions for three days and leave him to his fate on the high seas. But when they went out into the courtyard with the first light of dawn, they found the whole neighborhood in front of the chicken coop having fun with the angel, without the slightest reverence, tossing him things to eat through the openings in the wire as if he weren't a supernatural creature but a circus animal.

Father Gonzaga arrived before seven o'clock, alarmed at the strange news. By that time onlookers less frivolous than those at dawn had already arrived and they were making all kinds of conjectures concerning the captive's future. The simplest among them thought that he should be named mayor of the world. Others of sterner mind felt that he should be promoted to the rank of five-star general in order to win all wars. Some visionaries hoped that he could be put to stud in order to implant the earth a race of winged wise men who could take charge of the universe. But Father Gonzaga, before becoming a priest, had been a robust woodcutter. Standing by the wire, he reviewed his catechism in an instant and asked them to open the door so that he could take a close look at that pitiful man who looked more like a huge decrepit hen among the fascinated chickens. He was lying in the corner drying his open wings in the sunlight among the fruit peels and breakfast leftovers that the early risers had thrown him. Alien to the impertinences of the world, he only lifted his antiquarian eyes and murmured something in his dialect when Father Gonzaga went into the chicken coop and said good morning to him in Latin. The parish priest had his first suspicion of an imposter when he saw that he did not understand the language of God or know how to greet His ministers. Then he noticed that seen close up he was much too human: he had an unbearable smell of the outdoors, the back side of his wings was strewn with parasites and his main feathers

had been mistreated by terrestrial winds, and nothing about him measured up to the proud dignity of angels. Then he came out of the chicken coop and in a brief sermon warned the curious against the risks of being ingenuous. He reminded them that the devil had the bad habit of making use of carnival tricks in order to confuse the unwary. He argued that if wings were not the essential element in determining the difference between a hawk and an airplane, they were even less so in the recognition of angels. Nevertheless, he promised to write a letter to his bishop so that the latter would write his primate so that the latter would write to the Supreme Pontiff in order to get the final verdict from the highest courts.

His prudence fell on sterile hearts. The news of the captive angel spread with such rapidity that after a few hours the courtyard had the bustle of a marketplace and they had to call in troops with fixed bayonets to disperse the mob that was about to knock the house down. Elisenda, her spine all twisted from sweeping up so much marketplace trash, then got the idea of fencing in the yard and charging five cents admission to see the angel.

The curious came from far away. A traveling carnival arrived with a flying acrobat who buzzed over the crowd several times, but no one paid any attention to him because his wings were not those of an angel but, rather, those of a sidereal bat. The most unfortunate invalids on earth came in search of health: a poor woman who since childhood has been counting her heartbeats and had run out of numbers; a Portuguese man who couldn't sleep because the noise of the stars disturbed him; a sleepwalker who got up at night to undo the things he had done while awake; and many others with less serious ailments. In the midst of that shipwreck disorder that made the earth tremble, Pelayo and Elisenda were happy with fatigue, for in less than a week they had crammed their rooms with money and the line of pilgrims waiting their turn to enter still reached beyond the horizon.

The angel was the only one who took no part in his own act. He spent his time trying to get comfortable in his borrowed nest, befuddled by the hellish heat of the oil lamps and sacramental candles that had been placed along the wire. At first they tried to make him eat some mothballs, which, according to the wisdom of the wise neighbor woman, were the food prescribed for angels. But he turned them down, just as he turned down the papal lunches that the penitents brought him, and they never found out whether it was because he was an angel or because he was an old man that in the end ate nothing but eggplant mush. His only supernatural virtue seemed to be patience. Especially during the first days, when the hens pecked at him, searching for the stellar parasites that proliferated in his wings, and the cripples pulled out feathers to touch their defective parts with, and even the most merciful threw stones at him, trying to get him to rise so they could see him standing. The only time they succeeded in arousing him was when they burned his side with an iron for branding steers, for he had been motionless for so many hours that they thought he was dead. He awoke with a start, ranting in his hermetic language and with tears in his eyes, and he flapped his wings a couple of times, which brought on a whirlwind of chicken dung and lunar dust and a gale of panic that did not seem to be of this world. Although many thought that his reaction had not

been one of rage but of pain, from then on they were careful not to annoy him, because the majority understood that his passivity was not that of a hero taking his ease but that of a cataclysm in repose.

Father Gonzaga held back the crowd's frivolity with formulas of maidservant inspiration while awaiting the arrival of a final judgment on the nature of the captive. But the mail from Rome showed no sense of urgency. They spent their time finding out if the prisoner had a navel, if his dialect had any connection with Aramaic, how many times he could fit on the head of a pin, or whether he wasn't just a Norwegian with wings. Those meager letters might have come and gone until the end of time if a providential event had not put an end to the priest's tribulations.

It so happened that during those days, among so many other carnival attractions, there arrived in the town the traveling show of the woman who had been changed into a spider for having disobeyed her parents. The admission to see her was not only less than the admission to see the angel, but people were permitted to ask her all manner of questions about her absurd state and to examine her up and down so that no one would ever doubt the truth of her horror. She was a frightful tarantula the size of a ram and with the head of a sad maiden. What was most heartrending, however, was not her outlandish shape but the sincere affliction with which she recounted the details of her misfortune. While still practically a child she had sneaked out of her parents' house to go to a dance, and while she was coming back through the woods after having danced all night without permission, a fearful thunderclap rent the sky in two and through the crack came the lightning bolt of brimstone that changed her into a spider. Her only nourishment came from the meatballs that charitable souls chose to toss into her mouth. A spectacle like that, full of so much human truth and with such a fearful lesson, was bound to defeat without even trying that of a haughty angel who scarcely deigned to look at mortals. Besides, the few miracles attributed to the angel showed a certain mental disorder, like the blind man who didn't recover his sight but grew three new teeth, or the paralytic who didn't get to walk but almost won the lottery, and the leper whose sores sprouted sunflowers. Those consolation miracles, which were more like mocking fun, had already ruined the angel's reputation when the woman who had been changed into a spider finally crushed him completely. That was how Father Gonzaga was cured forever of his insomnia and Pelayo's courtyard went back to being as empty as during the time it had rained for three days and crabs walked through the bedrooms.

The owners of the house had no reason to lament. With the money they saved they built a two-story mansion with balconies and gardens and high netting so that crabs wouldn't get in during the winter, and with iron bars on the windows so that angels wouldn't get in. Pelayo also set up a rabbit warren close to town and gave up his job as a bailiff for good, and Elisenda bought some satin pumps with high heels and many dresses of iridescent silk, the kind worn on Sunday by the most desirable women in those times. The chicken coop was the only thing that didn't receive any attention. If they washed it down with creolin and burned tears of myrrh inside it every so often, it was not in homage to the angel but to drive away the dungheap stench that still hung everywhere like a ghost and was turning the new house into an old one. At first, when the child

learned to walk, they were careful that he not get too close to the chicken coop. But then they began to lose their fears and got used to the smell, and before they child got his second teeth he'd gone inside the chicken coop to play, where the wires were falling apart. The angel was no less standoffish with him than with the other mortals, but he tolerated the most ingenious infamies with the patience of a dog who had no illusions. They both came down with the chicken pox at the same time. The doctor who took care of the child couldn't resist the temptation to listen to the angel's heart, and he found so much whistling in the heart and so many sounds in his kidneys that it seemed impossible for him to be alive. What surprised him most, however, was the logic of his wings. They seemed so natural on that completely human organism that he couldn't understand why other men didn't have them too.

When the child began school it had been some time since the sun and rain had caused the collapse of the chicken coop. The angel went dragging himself about here and there like a stray dying man. They would drive him out of the bedroom with a broom and a moment later find him in the kitchen. He seemed to be in so many places at the same time that they grew to think that he'd be duplicated, that he was reproducing himself all through the house, and the exasperated and unhinged Elisenda shouted that it was awful living in that hell full of angels. He could scarcely eat and his antiquarian eyes had also become so foggy that he went about bumping into posts. All he had left were the bare cannulae of his last feathers. Pelayo threw a blanket over him and extended him the charity of letting him sleep in the shed, and only then did they notice that he had a temperature at night, and was delirious with the tongue twisters of an old Norwegian. That was one of the few times they became alarmed, for they thought he was going to die and not even the wise neighbor woman had been able to tell them what to do with dead angels.

And yet he not only survived his worst winter, but seemed improved with the first sunny days. He remained motionless for several days in the farthest corner of the courtyard, where no one would see him, and at the beginning of December some large, stiff feathers began to grow on his wings, the feathers of a scarecrow, which looked more like another misfortune of decrepitude. But he must have known the reason for those changes, for he was quite careful that no one should notice them, that no one should hear the sea chanteys that he sometimes sang under the stars. One morning Elisenda was cutting some bunches of onions for lunch when a wind that seemed to come from the high seas blew into the kitchen. Then she went to the window and caught the angel in his first attempts at flight. They were so clumsy that his fingernails opened a furrow in the vegetable patch and he was on the point of knocking the shed down with the ungainly flapping that slipped on the light and couldn't get a grip on the air. But he did manage to gain altitude. Elisenda let out a sigh of relief, for herself and for him, when she watched him pass over the last houses, holding himself up in some way with the risky flapping of a senile vulture. She kept watching him even when she was through cutting the onions and she kept on watching until it was no longer possible for her to see him, because then he was no longer an annoyance in her life but an imaginary dot on the horizon of the sea.

Post-reading "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" writing activities:

1. Create a venn diagram comparing magical realism to another genre with which you are familiar (e.g. science fiction). Also, consider the other piece(s) of literature in the genre of magical realism that you know already - *The River King*, required summer reading for Freshmen year at CA is magical realism.
2. Create a chart identifying specific elements of magical elements or write a paragraph on each of the following:
  1. transformation of the common and the everyday into the awesome and unreal
  2. elements of dreams, fairy tales/stories, or mythology combined with the everyday
  3. elements that frame or the surface of the work that may be conventionally realistic
  4. strong narrative drive
3. Respond to the following questions:
  1. List those things that are realistic or believable in this story.
  2. List those parts of the story that are unbelievable.
  3. Describe the narrator's tone in the story.
  4. Explain the lesson the angel's visit teaches about human nature.
4. Choose two characters from the story and assume the persona of each character. Write a dialog between the two characters; you may want to write this as an interview where you interview each character. The goal is to practice writing dialog with magical realistic elements.
5. Write a description of this man based on the priest's observation.
6. Identify magical realist elements in each of the following details from the story; draw a picture/illustrate the scene if you would like:
  1. Pelayo discovers the man with wings lying in the mud.
  2. The next morning the child wakes and feels much better.
  3. Father Gonzaga arrives and warns them about mistaking this creature for an angel.
  4. Elisandra fences in the yard and charges admission to see the angel.
  5. The angel is burned with a branding iron.
  6. The traveling show arrives with a woman who is changed into a spider.
  7. Elisenda and Pelayo build a two-story mansion.
  8. The angel begins to lose its wings and drag around the house annoying Elisendra.
  9. The angel flies away, and Elisendra is relieved.
7. In a response of 100 to 150 words, students should explain what elements of the story make it "A Tale for Children." The response should have a clear topic sentence that answers the question and at least three examples of support from the story.

8. In a response of 100-150 words, have students explain the “fearful lesson” of the angel’s story. The response should convey the theme with support from the story.

You should now have a fairly good grasp of the genre. Read the following short stories by Mia Couto and continue to dig deep into what makes a story fit into the genre of magical realism:

- “The barber’s most famous customer”
- “The Russian princess”
- “The blind fisherman”

After reading these, compose your own magical realism story. Incorporate as many aspects of the genre that you know well now. But also, keep it simple. You will be writing a tightly written FICTIONAL story based on something that you learned about magical realism while reading the short stories from Marque and Couto. Here are some revision guidelines that will ALSO help you write your first drafts.

1. Do you have an opening sentence/opening that will capture the reader’s attention?
2. Do you have a closing sentence/closing that will capture the reader’s attention?
3. What is your dominant tone? How would you describe the strong emotion attached to this event?
4. Have you varied your paragraph structure?
5. What is your turning point in the story?
6. What are the person and place, and possibly event that motivated this story?
7. Circle at least 10 strong details. Are you using lots of descriptive detail about things you saw, tasted, smelled, touched and heard?
8. Have you written in the third (he, Johnny) or first (I) person consistently?
9. Have you written in the past or present consistently?
10. Have you varied the length of your sentences?
11. Have you thought of using repetition? (Reviser: where could the writer use repetition?)
12. What is the reviser’s favorite part? Why? Circle it?
13. Which part does the reviser think you can improve? Circle it and indicate why.
14. Do you have an interesting title?
15. Do you have any comma splices? Have you used commas after introductory elements? Have you used semi-colons correctly?
16. In the text: the reviser should correct and spelling, grammar/mechanics problems he/she can find. In other words, mark up the texts)

Sophisticated Info about how to write a short story



1. **What does your protagonist want?** - What **unexpected consequences** — directly related to the protagonist's goal-oriented actions — **ramp up the emotional energy** of the story?  
(Will the unexpected consequences force your protagonist to make yet another choice, leading to still more consequences?) What **details** from the setting, dialog, and tone **help you tell the story**?
2. **Write a catchy first paragraph** - In today's fast-moving world, the first sentence of your narrative should catch your reader's attention with the **unusual**, the **unexpected**, an **action**, or a conflict. Begin with tension and immediacy. **Remember that short stories need to start close to their end.**
3. **Developing Characters** - In order to develop a living, breathing, multi-faceted character, it is important to **know way more about the character than you will ever use in the story**. Here is a partial list of character details to help you get started (**most important things in four areas**):
  - **Appearance.** Gives your reader a visual understanding of the character.
  - **Action.** Show the reader what kind of person your character is, by describing actions rather than simply listing adjectives.
  - **Speech.** Develop the character as a person — don't merely have your character announce important plot details.
  - **Thought.** Bring the reader into your character's mind, to show them your character's unexpressed memories, fears, and hopes.
4. **Choose a point of view** - Point of view is the narration of the story from the perspective of **first, second, or third person**. As a writer, you need to determine who is going to tell the story and how much information is available for the narrator to reveal in the short story. The narrator can be directly involved in the action **subjectively**, or the narrator might only report the action **objectively**.
  - **First Person.** The story is told from the view of "I." The narrator is either the **protagonist** (main character) and directly affected by unfolding events, or the narrator is a **secondary character** telling the story revolving around the protagonist. This is a good choice for beginning writers because it is the easiest to write.
  - **Third Person.** The story tells what "he", "she," or "it" does. The third-person narrator's perspective can be **limited** (telling the story from one character's viewpoint) or **omniscient** (where the narrator knows everything about all of the characters).
5. **Write meaningful dialogue (YOU DO NOT HAVE TO USE DIALOGUE!)** - Dialogue is what your characters say to each other (or to themselves). **Each speaker gets his/her own paragraph**, and the paragraph includes whatever you wish to say about what the character is doing when speaking.
6. **Use Setting and Context** - Setting includes the **time, location, context, and atmosphere** where the plot takes place.
  - Remember to combine setting with characterization and plot.

- **Include enough detail** to let your readers picture the scene but only details that actually add something to the story. (For example, do not describe Mary locking the front door, walking across the yard, opening the garage door, putting air in her bicycle tires, getting on her bicycle—none of these details matter except that she rode out of the driveway without looking down the street.)
- Use **two or more senses** in your descriptions of setting.

Rather than feed your readers information about the weather, population statistics, or how far it is to the grocery store, **substitute descriptive details** so your reader can experience the location the way your characters do.

7. **Set up the plot** - Plot is what happens, the storyline, the action. Jerome Stern says it is how you set up the situation, where the turning points of the story are, and what the characters do at the end of the story.

“A plot is a series of events deliberately arranged so as to reveal their dramatic, thematic, and emotional significance.” -*Jane Burroway*

Understanding these story elements for developing actions and their end results will help you plot your next short story.

- **Explosion or “Hook.”** A thrilling, gripping, stirring event or problem that grabs the reader’s attention right away.
  - **Conflict.** A character versus the *internal* self or an *external* something or someone.
  - **Exposition.** Background information required for seeing the characters in context.
  - **Complication.** One or more problems that keep a character from their intended goal.
  - **Transition.** Image, symbol, dialogue, that joins paragraphs and scenes together.
  - **Flashback.** Remembering something that happened before the short story takes place.
  - **Climax.** When the rising action of the story reaches the peak.
  - **Falling Action.** Releasing the action of the story after the climax.
  - **Resolution.** When the internal or external conflict is resolved.
8. Create Conflict and Tension - conflict produces **tension** that makes the story begin. Tension is created by **opposition** between the character or characters and **internal** or **external** forces or conditions. By **balancing the opposing forces** of the conflict, you keep readers glued to the pages wondering how the story will end. **Possible Conflicts Include:**

9.

- The protagonist against another individual
- The protagonist against nature (or technology)
- The protagonist against society
- The protagonist against God
- The protagonist against himself or herself.

9. **Build to Crisis or Climax** - This is the **turning point of the story**—the most exciting or dramatic moment.
- The crisis may be a recognition, a decision, or a resolution. The character understands what hasn't been seen before, or realizes what must be done, or finally decides to do it. It's when the worm turns. Timing is crucial. If the crisis occurs too early, readers will expect still another turning point. If it occurs too late, readers will get impatient—the character will seem rather thick.—*Jerome Stern*
  - *Jane Burroway* says that the crisis “must always be presented as a scene. It is “the moment” the reader has been waiting for. In Cinderella’s case, “the payoff is when the slipper fits.”
  - While a good story needs a crisis, a random event such as a car crash or a sudden illness is simply an emergency —unless it somehow involves a **conflict** that makes the reader care about the characters (see: “[Crisis vs. Conflict](#)”).

#### 10. Find a Resolution

- The **solution to the conflict**. In short fiction, it is difficult to provide a complete resolution and you often need to just show that characters are beginning to change in some way or starting to see things differently.
- **Open**. Readers determine the meaning - “Brendan’s eyes looked away from the priest and up to the mountains.”
- **Resolved**. Clear-cut outcome - “While John watched in despair, Helen loaded up the car with her belongings and drove away.”
- **Parallel to Beginning**. Similar to beginning situation or image - “They were driving their 1964 Chevrolet Impala down the highway while the wind blew through their hair.” “Her father drove up in a new 1964 Chevrolet Impala, a replacement for the one that burned up.”
- **Monologue**. Character comments - “I wish Tom could have known Sister Dalbec’s prickly guidance before the dust devils of Sin City battered his soul.”
- **Dialogue**. Characters converse.

## Post reading activities **due Sept. 3**

### **Writing about the reading:** pick one

1. Create a venn diagram comparing magical realism to another genre with which you are familiar (e.g. science fiction). Also, consider the other piece(s) of literature in the genre of magical realism that you know already - *The River King*, required summer reading for Freshmen year at CA is magical realism.
2. Create a chart identifying specific elements of magical elements or write a paragraph on each of the following:
  1. transformation of the common and the everyday into the awesome and unreal
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  4. Explain the lesson the angel's visit teaches about human nature.
4. Identify magical realist elements in each of the following details from the story.
  1. Pelayo discovers the man with wings lying in the mud.
  2. The next morning the child wakes and feels much better.
  3. Father Gonzaga arrives and warns them about mistaking this creature for an angel.
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  5. The angel is burned with a branding iron.
  6. The traveling show arrives with a woman who is changed into a spider.
  7. Elisenda and Pelayo build a two-story mansion.
  8. The angel begins to lose its wings and drag around the house annoying Elisendra.
  9. The angel flies away, and Elisendra is relieved.
5. Explain what elements of the story make it "A Tale for Children."
6. Explain the "fearful lesson" of the angel's story (<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/2917?style=print>).

**Now you write:** pick one. Keep it short. The goal is to play around with the merging of the magic and the real, where the lines cross, where they don't.

1. Choose two characters from the story and assume the persona of each character. Write a dialog between the two characters, as they would tell each other the story.
2. A skeptical journalist comes from the capital to write a story about what happened in the village. Whom does he interview? What story do the villagers tell-do they try to convince him there was an angel? Is he convinced? Do they try to keep it a secret? What does he think really happened?
3. Write a description of the old man based on the priest's observation.
4. Write a dramatic monologue from the point of view of the angel. He makes his way back to heaven. How would he explain what happened? Did he succeed in his mission: yes or no?
5. Write the story but change one key element: the nature of the other-worldly character: not an angel, but a ..... The setting: this is a country village. Make it urban. They get annoyed by the angel. What if Elisendra falls in love? What if they hide him? What if he dies? What would happen then?