

Excerpt from Responses to *April Showers*
Responses by Genre Literature and American Literature
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“How sad. I’m sorry for your loss.” This line is often spoken to people after they lose a loved or dear one. Most people experience such a loss by losing grandparents or parents to old age, parents or friends to a tragic event – to some unexpected turn of fate. But what do we say to one who lost two or three or five or ten friends in one day? This question may have no answer, but one must always try to meet loss with empathy and love.

I connected with the movie *April Showers*. It touched me in a way that is difficult to put into words. Watching the movie and looking around in the dark auditorium theater, I thought to myself, “How would I feel knowing that this was the last day I was going to see some of these people? What if the young man I liked, a young man who had no clue as to my deep feelings for him, died without knowing how I felt? How would I feel? I realized that anything can happen, and at any second someone I love or care for deeply, may be taken from me. I realized that the power of such a loss would be in God’s hands.

There are those who don’t believe that people can change, but I noticed something that changed in each and every one of us in that auditorium, if for only a moment. The loudest, most obnoxious troublemakers of our school were speechless as, at the movie’s end, they saw the list of schools and students scrolling down the screen. Teachers looked into the eyes of their students, realizing how important those students were, and people began to be kinder to each other.

Something that movie did that no teacher or parent or child could do was to present us all with a situation and throw us into it. Roam all hallways today, and reflect on a few months ago, and you will see the changes I am speaking of.

April Showers was just a movie, but to us – to students and to faculty – it was an experience that led us to view our school as a gift of which we are all a part and for which we should all be grateful.

Briana Agnew

April Showers and I met when Jason got his books pushed out of hands by students who were bullying him. I can relate to that because I’ve had my books pushed out of my hands before, but nobody was there to help me – in the way that Shaun helped Jason. The students who pushed my books, and others around me,

just laughed – “You dropped your books.” And even when I drop my books on my own, there is nobody there to help me pick them up; but when others drop their books, I am there to help them. They say “thank you,” and we go our different ways. When Shaun helped Jason, I thought his help was very nice, even though the two of them spoke very little the rest of the movie.

Josh Sibbett

In the beginning of *April Showers*, Shaun jokes kindly and supportively with Jason about being bullied. Shaun says something along the lines that the senior bullies are almost done with high school or “almost to the end.” This comment is, in a sense, foreshadowing the coming events because for some it was the end of their high school careers, and the end of their lives. For all of the students of Columbine, April 20 was a graduation, the end of the lives and world they had known.

Kayla Porter

The image from *April Showers* that most burned itself into my consciousness is the look of the boy at the funeral standing silent with the microphone in his bandaged hand. This image moved me because he looked so lost, so dumbfounded, by the reality that the girl he loved was gone, and that he had not taken the opportunity, when he had it, to tell her how he felt. I know that if I lost a love in this way that I would be lost too.

April Showers met my life when from the conversation between Nick and Shaun came the observation that, “At school, we hear constant threats to kill someone, but we are sure they are just words. Did we miss something?” I am fairly good at making some enemies. I get threatened often. But one time, in particular, I made an enemy of a weird, freaky kid who was, although I did not know it, suicidal. I thought nothing of his threat toward me because I could beat him up easily, and I didn’t think he could ever shoot someone. But then I came to find out that, perhaps a month after he had left school, he had brought a gun to school on at least that one occasion. On the day he gathered the courage to bring the gun, made the sad error to bring it, I had skipped all but my first period of school. The movie caused me to reflect . . . in many areas.

Matt Cook

The image from *April Showers* that burned itself into my consciousness was the part when Jason; the young man who was bullied, who “saved a dead girl,” who was proclaimed a hero, and who, with basis in reality or not, felt survivor’s guilt; took his own life. It was so sad to me that he could not find peace in life anymore. Before his suicide, he looked in the mirror at himself. It seemed as if he could not escape the blood that had been, and in a way still was, on him.

Jillanna Scanlon

It has been almost a month since I’ve seen *April Showers*; yet, I still remember the movie vividly. The scene that stays in my mind the most forcefully is that in which the SWAT team member lifts the boy’s face away from the desk, and realizes that the boy is dead. It’s hard to imagine how that officer and the other SWAT team members in the room. Because this part of the movie was filmed in my high school, I know that the members of the SWAT team, actual officers from our county, were told that they should treat and respond to all events as if they were real. The emotions one sees on the screen reflect this suspension of disbelief. I can only wonder at what it would have been like to have seen the Columbine tragedy in its complete reality.

Candi Irons

There are two images from *April Showers* that clearly stand out in my mind. The first image was of the young man, so very young, who had been shot and killed as he sat in his desk. His head was down on his desk, and he was dead. It appeared at first, though, that he was simply sleeping. It affected me because everyday I am at school I see students that look exactly like that. The second image was that of Jason, the bullied student, the student who had been labeled a hero. Jason, lying in a bathtub where, cleansed with water, he could still not escape the blood of the killings – in this case, the blood of his suicide. His part in the tragedy caused him so much pain and confusion that he could not take it. He committed suicide.

I believe that the title of the film is important. The first thing that I think of when I hear the phrase *April showers* is the line, “April showers bring May flowers.” The movie suggests that some good can come from hard times and sad moments. As a result of the Columbine disaster, schools are more attentive to student problems and to school safety. Second, April showers are rain. The rain is sadness and tragedy, and the tears that result. The rain is depression, the weight of the world coming down on people.

Jeff Church

The strongest meeting point in *April Showers* for me was the moment when, a day or two after the killings, Shaun was walking through the field and toward the school. The beauty and serenity of the field captivated me. The green field, the blue sky, the soft clouds were so vivid that I felt that I was in that field. In contrast is the carnival of RV's and tents in the school lot that Shaun enters from the field. Three lone girls behind Shaun were moving in and out of camera, girls so focused that they drew my attention, they meant something. They were desperately looking for somebody.

As a whole, *April Showers* is a piece of art. Yet within are so many more works of art and of other art forms. The score of the film. The painting-like visuals . . . of the lightening, for example. The choreography of the three girls moving into and out of the scene. These are as much examples of art within art as are passages within Mozart.

Ryan Whitney

Who Killed Whom?

Who killed whom?

Most blame the one who pulled the trigger.

Some blame themselves.

Others place the blame on bullying.

Skeptics point their fingers at the media.

Who killed whom?

I will leave that decision to you.

Who was victimized?

Was it the dead or the survivors?

The dead are gone. The living have lost them.

Who killed whom?

I do not know. But when fingers wrapped around grip,

And when shots rang out,

Someone died.

And no one stopped it.

Ashley Waller
