

Read and annotate the following story, making sure to focus on:

1. Purposeful Annotation
2. Words in bold should be ones you can define from the context. Use textual evidence.

<p style="text-align: center;">"The Flowers" by Alice Walker <u>Reading and Writing about Short Fiction</u>. Ed. Edward Proffitt. NY: Harcourt, 1988. 404-05.</p>	<p>Purposeful Annotation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. References to light and color</li><li>2. Myop's series of actions</li><li>3. References to flowers</li></ol>
<p>5 It seemed to Myop as she skipped lightly from hen house to pigpen to smokehouse that the days had never been as beautiful as these. The air held a <b>keenness</b> that made her nose twitch. The harvesting of the corn and cotton, peanuts and squash, made each day a golden surprise that caused excited little tremors to run up her jaws.</p>	<p><b>Keeness might mean</b> _____ <b>because</b> _____.</p>
<p>10 Myop carried a short, knobby stick. She struck out at random at chickens she liked, and worked out the beat of a song on the fence around the pigpen. She felt light and good in the warm sun. She was ten, and nothing existed for her but her song, the stick clutched in her dark brown hand, and the tat-de-ta-ta-ta of accompaniment,</p>	
<p>15 Turning her back on the rusty boards of her family's sharecropper cabin, Myop walked along the fence till it ran into the stream made by the spring. Around the spring, where the family got drinking water, silver ferns and wildflowers grew. Along the shallow banks pigs <b>rooted</b>. Myop watched the tiny white bubbles disrupt the thin black scale of soil and the water that silently rose and slid away down the stream.</p>	<p><b>Rooted:</b></p>
<p>20 She had explored the woods behind the house many times. Often, in late autumn, her mother took her to gather nuts among the fallen leaves. Today she made her own path, bouncing this way and that way, vaguely keeping an eye out for snakes. She found, in addition to various common but pretty ferns and leaves, an armful of strange blue flowers with velvety ridges and a sweet suds bush full of the brown, fragrant buds.</p>	

25 By twelve o'clock, her arms laden with sprigs of her findings, she was a mile or more from home. She had often been as far before, but the strangeness of the land made it not as pleasant as her usual haunts. It seemed gloomy in the little cove in which she found herself. The air was damp, the silence close and deep.

30 Myop began to circle back to the house, back to the peacefulness of the morning. It was then she stepped smack into his eyes. Her heel became **lodged** in the broken ridge between brow and nose, and she reached down quickly, unafraid, to free herself. It was only when she saw his naked grin that she gave a little yelp of surprise.

**lodged**

35 He had been a tall man. From feet to neck covered a long space. His head lay beside him. When she pushed back the leaves and layers of earth and debris Myop saw that he'd had large white teeth, all of them cracked or broken, long fingers, and very big bones. All his clothes had rotted away except some threads of blue denim  
40 from his overalls. The buckles of the overall had turned green.

Myop gazed around the spot with interest. Very near where she'd stepped into the head was a wild pink rose. As she picked it to add to her bundle she noticed a raised mound, a ring, around the rose's root. It was the rotted remains of a noose, a bit of shredding  
45 **plowline**, now blending **benignly** into the soil. Around an overhanging limb of a great spreading oak clung another piece. Frayed, rotted, bleached, and frazzled--barely there--but spinning restlessly in the breeze. Myop laid down her flowers.

**plowline:**

**benignly:**

And the summer was over.

**Look up the word “myopic” and copy the definition here:**

**Why is the protagonist’s name Myop, do you think? Use textual evidence to support your answer.**

## Practice with Symbolism

<b>Reference to flowers (with line #)</b>	<b>What's happening in the story</b>	<b>What the flowers might represent</b>
"silver ferns and wildflowers grew" (14)	Myop is near her home and picking flowers	