

During our unit of study on South African literature, we have encountered a number of beliefs. Your “This I Believe” essay **might** be related to topics and beliefs that have come up during this unit. Use your Belief Statements Activity sheet, your Beliefs Chart, and your memory of the following stories/experiences to inspire you:

- Simulation.
- “Kaffir Boy” excerpt by Mark Mathabane
- “Only A”
- “Once Upon a Time” by Nadine Gordimer
- Amandla!

Below, make a list of 5 – 10 topics that could develop into a main belief for your essay. Go beyond “racism.” Two examples are given for you.

\* Injustice

\* Bystanders

1 -

2 -

3 -

4 -

5 -

6 -

7 -

more? :

Circle at least three (3) that you feel most strongly about. Write the beliefs related to those topics below:

1. I believe ...

2. I believe ...

3. I believe ...

Where might these beliefs have come from? Write the origins below. Be as specific as you can:

1.

2.

3.

Actions speak louder than words. Do your actions match your beliefs? Give an example of how people can see each belief play out in your daily actions and choices.

1.

2.

3.

*Handwritten:* Go to [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org) and find a "This I Believe" essay. Print it out and attach it. Use the essay to fill in the information below:

1. What is the main belief stated in the essay?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  2. How did the author develop this belief (where did the belief come from)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  3. How does this belief affect the author's life? What specific decisions and/or actions does this person take in his/her daily life based on this belief?
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## Global Literature

### "This I Believe" homework

Extra Credit

After reading each of these two essays, think about the belief expressed by the author. Do you agree with the belief the author expresses? Why or why not?

Write a brief (1-paragraph) response to each essay.

## The Making of Poems

by Gregory Orr



Photo: Alvin

Gregory Orr has taught English at the University of Virginia since 1975. He is the author of nine poetry collections and the recipient of NEA and Guggenheim fellowships. Orr lives in Charlottesville, Va. with his wife, the painter Tasha Orr.

*All Things Considered*, February 20, 2006 - I believe in poetry as a way of surviving the emotional chaos, spiritual confusions and traumatic events that come with being alive.

When I was 12 years old, I was responsible for the death of my younger brother in a hunting accident. I held the rifle that killed him. In a single moment, my world changed forever. I felt grief, terror, shame and despair more deeply than I could ever have imagined. In the aftermath, no one in my shattered family could speak to me about my brother's death, and their silence left me alone with all my agonizing emotions. And under those emotions, something even more terrible: a knowledge that all the easy meanings I had lived by until then had been suddenly and utterly abolished.

One consequence of traumatic violence is that it isolates its victims. It can cut us off from other people, cutting us off from their own emotional lives until we go numb and move through the world as if only half alive. As a young person, I found something to set against my growing sense of isolation and numbness: the making of poems.

When I write a poem, I process experience. I take what's inside me -- the raw, chaotic material of feeling or memory -- and translate it into words and then shape those words into the rhythmical language we call a poem. This process brings me a kind of wild joy. Before I was powerless and passive in the face of my confusion, but now I am active: the powerful shaper of my experience. I am transforming it into a lucid meaning.

Because poems are meanings, even the saddest poem I write is proof that I want to survive. And therefore it represents an affirmation of life in all its complexities and contradictions.

An additional miracle comes to me as the maker of poems: Because poems can be shared between poet and audience, they also become a further triumph over

human isolation.

Whenever I read a poem that moves me, I know I'm not alone in the world. I feel a connection to the person who wrote it, knowing that he or she has gone through something similar to what I've experienced, or felt something like what I have felt. And their poem gives me hope and courage, because I know that they survived, that their life force was strong enough to turn experience into words and shape it into meaning and then bring it toward me to share. The gift of their poem enters deeply into me and helps me live and believe in living.

# Be Cool to the Pizza Dude

by Sarah Adams



Sarah Adams

Sarah Adams has held many jobs in her life, including telemarketer, factory worker, hotel clerk and flower shop cashier, but has never delivered pizzas. Raised in Wisconsin, Adams is now an English professor at Olympic Community College in Washington.

*"In the big pizza wheel of life, sometimes you're the hot bubbly cheese and sometimes you're the burnt crust. It's good to remember the fickle spinning of that wheel."*

*All Things Considered*, May 16, 2005 · If I have one operating philosophy about life it is this: "Be cool to the pizza delivery dude; it's good luck." Four principles guide the pizza dude philosophy.

Principle 1: Coolness to the pizza delivery dude is a practice in humility and forgiveness. I let him cut me off in traffic, let him safely hit the exit ramp from the left lane, let him forget to use his blinker without extending any of my digits out the window or towards my horn because there should be one moment in my harried life when a car may encroach or cut off or pass and I let it go. Sometimes when I have become so certain of my ownership of my lane, daring anyone to challenge me, the pizza dude speeds by me in his rusted Chevette. His pizza light atop his car glowing like a beacon reminds me to check myself as I flow through the world. After all, the dude is delivering pizza to young and old, families and singletons, gays and straights, blacks, whites and browns, rich and poor, vegetarians and meat lovers alike. As he journeys, I give safe passage, practice restraint, show courtesy, and contain my anger.

Principle 2: Coolness to the pizza delivery dude is a practice in empathy. Let's face it: We've all taken jobs just to have a job because some money is better than none. I've held an assortment of these jobs and was grateful for the paycheck that meant I didn't have to share my Cheerios with my cats. In the big pizza wheel of life, sometimes you're the hot bubbly cheese and sometimes you're the burnt crust. It's good to remember the fickle spinning of that wheel.

Principle 3: Coolness to the pizza delivery dude is a practice in honor and it reminds me to honor honest work. Let me tell you something about these dudes: They never took over a company and, as CEO, artificially inflated the value of the stock and cashed out their own shares, bringing the company to the brink of bankruptcy, resulting in 20,000 people losing their jobs while the CEO builds a home the size of a luxury hotel. Rather, the dudes sleep the sleep of the just.

Principle 4: Coolness to the pizza delivery dude is a practice in equality. My measurement as a human being, my worth, is the pride I take in performing my job -- any job -- and the respect with which I treat others. I am the equal of the world not because of the car I drive, the size of the TV I own, the weight I can bench press, or the calculus equations I can solve. I am the equal to all I meet because of the kindness in my heart. And it all starts here -- with the pizza delivery dude.

Tip him well, friends and brethren, for that which you bestow freely and willingly will bring you all the happy luck that a grateful universe knows how to return.