

"what i wouldn't do" by dorianne lux essay sample



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When reading the definitions of work the first few examples seem to focus on what is the most widely recognized form of the word. Referring to one's employment. When we hear people use the word ' work' it is usually spoken of going to or coming home from. Education and experience are the things we need to find and keep a job that keeps us happy, affords us a good living, and makes us want to get out there everyday and perform our skill. The poems we read seem to agree with this point by describing different types of people with everyday jobs and how they feel when they are there and the struggles they go through to stay employed at these jobs they don't necessarily like.

The poem I chose to look at is “ What I Wouldn't Do” by Dorianne Lux. The idea of this poem is a person, (female, I believe) who describes the many jobs she has had and how she remembers them in her own mind. The poem begins with a job she had selling magazine subscriptions. “ The only job I didn't like, quit/ after the first shift, was selling/ subscriptions to TV Guide over the phone./” These first few lines don't tell very much about the reasons for her quitting. As the poem goes on she speaks of other jobs, fast food waitress, laundromat attendant, housekeeper and donut maker. Each line describes the drudgery of the work and how she struggled to get through each minute. “ It was that moment/ of expectation, before I answered back,/ the sound of their held breath,/ their disappointment when they realized/ I wasn't who they thought I was,/” these last lines explain how hard it was for her, if only because of the feeling she got from the anonymous customers she called.

Some synonyms of the definition work, “ activity of body, of mind, of a machine, or of a natural force” are stated as labor, toil, drudgery and grind. The poem gives great examples of how mentally challenging this woman’s work is to her stability and well being. As she explains by the example of the magazine sales how she quit the first day and the reason was how emotionally damaging this kind of work was to her spirit. She just could not bear giving the people she called the hope of someone they loved being on the other end and then listening to the disappointment in their voices when they realized it was just a random sales pitch. This poem relates very well to the definition of drudgery which is, “ dull and irksome labor.” I think the writer does a good job of getting that point across.