Weekly Reading and Writing #3

Read:
- “A & P,” by John Updike, p.1282 (notecard due Tuesday)
- “The Lesson,” by Toni Cade Bambara, p.71 (notecard due Tuesday, April 20)
- “A White Heron,” by Sarah Orne Jewett, p.623 (notecard due Tuesday, April 20)

Daily writes (5x8 notecard) are due the same day the reading is assigned.

Weekly Writing #3
Directions: Choose two questions from the following. Please write about two different stories and choose no more than one creative option. For each question, develop your response in a focused paragraph. Use details, specifics, examples and quotes from the story to help develop your response. Please word-process with 12 point font, single-space, and write about ½ page for each response.

“A & P”
1. Consider the plot structure of Updike’s story. What part of the story seems like the exposition? Where in the story does the conflict become clear? What is the conflict? Where does the climax occur? (Refer to the essay, “The Elements of the Short Story” to refresh your understanding of exposition, conflict, conflict, climax.)
2. What do you think about the setting of this story, a very common grocery store? Which of the story’s many details stand out for you as particularly “true to life”? What does this close attention to details contribute to the story?
3. Another to consider the importance of conflict and setting in this story is to update it. Imagine the same story taking place in your hometown in 2007. What could the immediate/surface conflict be? Write an opening scene from this updated version.
4. (Creative option) Why does Sammy quit his job? Imagine that you are Sammy and write a brief explanation to a friend about why you quit.

“The Lesson”
1. What is the “lesson” of the story’s title? Is it a lesson successfully delivered? (In other words, do Sylvia and other characters in the story “get” what Miss Moore is trying to teach them? How do you know that?)
2. Explore the point-of-view of “The Lesson.” Is Sylvia a reliable or an unreliable narrator? In what specific ways would the story be entirely different if told from a 3rd person point-of-view?
3. Compare and/or contrast Sylvia’s “lesson” with Sammy’s lesson in “A & P.”

“A White Heron”
1. This story is often included in collections for children. What elements of a folk or fairy tale do you recognize? Did you enjoy these elements? Explain.
2. In what ways (setting, character, dialect, worldview) do you consider “A White Heron” a “local color” short story?
   Local Color writing has been describe as a movement in American literature during the last decades of the 19th century which depicted the nature of small town life in setting, characterization, dialect, and worldview of a region. About 1880, this interest became dominant in American literature; the various sectional divisions of America were “discovered” (Hugh Holman’s Handbook to Literature, 3rd edition, Odyssey Press, 1960).
3. (Creative option) Rewrite the ending of the story from Sylvia’s point-of-view.