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Dazzling

After reading *Blood Dazzler*, a reader can be left with varying thoughts. Some readers may question what they knew/know while others may be left angry or disappointed. Patricia Smith uses varying perspectives throughout her poetry to not only engage the reader but to provoke emotion from different angles. Three of the most thought provoking poems were *Back Home*, *Katrina* and *Rebuilding*.

In *Katrina*, Smith personifies the hurricane. She gives the hurricane life and feeling. The poem reads, "All I ever wanted to be was a wet, gorgeous mistake, a reason to crave shelter." This is not only the closing line of the poem but it is also the most powerful line of the entire poem. Smith however does imply that Katrina is sorry for what she's done and the reckless behavior she acted upon. The poem is powerful because it portrays the idea that nature is not necessarily responsible for the actions it takes. Katrina however destroyed a city and those ruins had to go through rebuilding.

The imagery in the poem *Rebuilding* is astounding. "...the obscene shimmer of new nails hammered into treated wood." Just this sentence puts a picture into a reader's head. Obscene is defined as repugnant, distasteful, and unacceptable. In that sense, the word has almost a foul taste in the reader's mouth and mind. This poem has a very powerful yet negative affect on the reader. The poem shows how much pain went through rebuilding not only a destroyed city but a destroyed culture and destroyed families as well. The last line of the poem reads, "It seems we

have been programmed to set chaos upright, scrub at the stain, build our homes on rivers, waltz in the rain.” This line really sums up how much the morale and spirits of the people were destroyed. Smith is almost trying to say that even though they can rebuild the city that the people will never be same. On the plus side at least those people came back home.

Back Home showed a lot of emotion and imagery. The poem talks about how the last living things rummage around. Almost to say that when people returned to New Orleans, they found almost nothing to come back to and that what they did find scurried away quickly. Unfortunately, people who survived the hurricane didn't come back to much. This poem acknowledges that even though people could eventually come home, the home they once knew and built was no longer there. It's an unfortunate reality for anyone in any natural disaster.

Overall the entire book of poetry was centered around the disasters effects on people. The poems were written from varying perspectives which gave different points of view for the reader to rely on. The book could teach some people lessons but no book will ever give you the understanding of what the people actually went through. To truly learn and understand, you must travel to the sight of the misfortune. Only then can one truly learn and understand the horror of what was Hurricane Katrina.