Short paper #1

Due: Monday, Sept 26, in class. Please consult the syllabus for details about lateness penalties.

Requirements:
- 2 pages (i.e. 1 ½ - 2 ½ pages)
- must have a title, double-spaced, spell-checked, proof-read, stapled
- citations should be MLA-style, internal citations

Need help with the paper?
1. there is a sample close-reading paper (on a text we have not read together) at: http://www.geneseo.edu/~rutkowsk/F2005/170/assignments.html
2. I’m willing to look at drafts (or just help you brainstorm) in my office hours. With advance notice, I sometimes can meet at times other than my office hours, so just email me and ask.

Assignment description: This will be our first try at a “close reading” – where small, detailed observations about a small excerpt lead to a larger hypothesis about the text. I’ve given you several passages below which I think are appropriate for close readings. Before you begin to write, it may help to think about the following questions: Are there particular words that stand out, as being particularly poetic (or, conversely, vulgar) for their context? Are there words or phrases which contradict one another, or seem to imply the opposite of what they’re saying? What rules of grammar are being used (or broken) in your chosen passage? Once you’ve jotted down some responses to these questions, ask yourself – how are these things that you’ve noticed significant?

Format:
- Please re-type your chosen passage on the top of your first page.
- For this paper only, do not bother with an introduction; begin your analysis right away.
- First 1-2 paragraphs: look only at the language of your chosen paragraph, the diction (word choice) and syntax (arrangement of words) as described above.
- Next paragraph: put your chosen bit into its immediate context in the poem. What is the purpose of that section? How is it the same (or different) from what surrounds it?
- Final paragraph: here is where you begin to formulate an overall hypothesis of how your chosen poet is using language. Relate your chosen bit to larger themes or issues which are important to the overall work.

Expectations/Evaluation:
- Even though your passage will be typed at the top of your first page, you must cite examples from the text early and often.
- Be sure to not only offer observations about the language being employed, but also draw conclusions about what those observations might mean and how they contribute to overall meaning.
- Back up every single claim you make with evidence and give an accurate citation for each in parenthesis after the quote or paraphrase (87).
You may choose from the following three passages (you may trim the passage down if you find you can’t analyze the whole thing in two pages):

#1

From the stump of the arm, the amputated hand,
I undo the clotted lint, remove the slough, wash off the matter and blood,
Back on his pillow the soldier bends with curv’d neck and side-falling head,
His eyes are closed, his face is pale, he dares not look on the bloody stump,
And has not yet look’d on it.


#2

I gaze at you,
longing longing,
as from a gilt and scarlet cage;
silent, speak your name, cry –
Love me.
To touch you, once to hold you close –
My jungle arms, their prized chimeras, appall.


#3

A celebration, this is.
Out of a gap
A million soldiers run,
Redcoats, every one.

Whose side are they on?
O my
Homunculus, I am ill.