Passages and Changes

Throughout life, people undergo many changes -- changes as inconsequential as their fashion to more meaningful changes in their friends or their activities. As a person gets older, they tend to lose interest in many things they were once into because growing out of things is a must in life.

Shakespeare illustrated this truth when he wrote his famous poem “The Seven Ages of Man.” He begins with the famous quote “All the world’s a stage” and summarizes the stages that everyone will go through as they get older. He explains the stages as first being an infant just coming into the world who grows into toddler and eventually into a schoolboy. Then one is a lover, the teen who is going this way and that with hormones. Next, he says the young soldier who is vain about his accomplishments and rebellious toward authority. Then he explains that middle age is like the justice who thinks he is wise to the ways of the world. Next is the pantaloon, explained in the poem as a thin foolish old man. Shakespeare sums it up in the last stage as “the second childishness.” I feel that the lover, the soldier and the justice are the most important steps of man because that is where a person makes the most important decisions in life and enjoys the most fun. However, it is clear that Shakepeare feels that we never truly learn everything we are supposed to learn while here on earth.

In life, people go through many difficulties. Many people change and grow and develop because of problems and difficulties they endure. In the short story “The Scarlet Ibis” one of the main characters deals with many circumstance that change him. His brother, Doodle, is crippled and can not walk, and at first the narrator does not like him. However, throughout the story, he connects with his brother and even teaches him how to walk and get around. By the end of the story, the boys have gotten close, and the older brother learns to love the younger regardless of his disability. But the story ends sadly with Doodle's death. The narrator’s loss of his brother is an example to us, the readers, that we are molded by those in our lives. Doodle taught the narrator that love should have no qualifications and pride has a high cost in life.

The final stage in any person’s life is always death. We cannot run from it, even though in this day and age many try but to no avail. Some take pills and other man-made medicines to try a put off that date, but it won’t work. They have to learn to deal with it and just prepare for the time. Many stories have captured this final struggle but none as
well as “Before the End of Summer.” It is a short story about a boy and his grandmother who is expected to die before the end of summer and illustrates how difficult it is for anyone, especially young people, to accept death. Bennie, the protagonist, is frightened by the impending loss of his grandmother but eventually learns how to cope with this fear and accept death as a part of life. Another work of literature with a similar theme is “The Ballad of William Sycamore”. This poem tells of a man who loses his two sons to war and loses his way of life to changes in civilization. The lesson to be learned is we all have to learn to be flexible and adjust to life.

Change happens everyday and is an essential part of life. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 shows that everything has a time and has a place. It states that it’s “a time to be born, and a time to die.” Therefore, in life there is a time for death and a time for living. Those are all changes people have to go through in life and changes are what make up our lives; after all, without change there is no life.