

**Anat, 8<sup>th</sup> grader**

***Follow the North Star, Reflection Assignment***

I have blamed my inability to watch scary movies on my lack of watching murder and mystery movies as a kid. I hate books of those genres, and I despise roller-coasters. All in all, I was scared out of my wits about the North Star field trip. But once it began, I feared not the program, but for myself as a fugitive.

My mother says she does well in emergencies, and I thought this program would be a great test to see how I react. Luck was on my side, and I watched practically everyone else in my group get interrogated before me, and was prepared when approached by a buyer. But unlike my normal self, when I was yelled at and told I would need to "...shoot out darkies..." I did not talk back or get upset. When I think back to that night, I am surprised that I did not laugh at the mistakes of my classmates and my teacher. When you are yelled at and degraded at every turn, you become someone else. I am debating whether or not I like my second self. I listened to orders and reprimanded my classmates. I am scared to wonder what I would do if I really was a slave, and difficult situations came up. I find myself wondering, would I have had the strength to run away? Would I have the courage to hide runaway slaves? As many books as I read about this time period, this program was ideal for seeing how I would truly act were I a slave or worker on the Underground Railroad.

I just finished a book called *North by Night*, and it describes a girl who works on the Underground Railroad. Some of the main plot points discuss a fugitive who has a baby. One of the most affronting facts that I learned through this program was about the female slaves. I always knew, but have trouble accepting and understanding, how young the women who bore children were! During the program females were referred to as breeders; in "free" states that was their main job. As a fourteen year old, I would probably have around two children by now! Our society considers a mother of the age of 19 young, but a fugitive in *North by Night* who was 19 was pregnant with her third child. Furthermore, all of her children had been born with her married owner, who had raped her as a young woman. Sources that say slaves were seen as cattle are true, and show the true atrocity of the human race. Black women are referred to as breeders, and have even less power than the male slave.

I hope to learn from the strength of women who were believed to have no strength, and the bravery of the people who had the courage to be selfless. I will never again take my freedom, of choice, voice, or life, for granted again. *North by Night* and the Conner Prairie's *Follow the North Star* program have flown me through time and shown me the true meaning of bravery.