Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Coming Into Language***: **Close Reading Activity**

Complete the following questions with your assigned group using separate paper, one per group.

1. (paragraph 1) What images and descriptive details create a grotesque atmosphere?

2. Why would the author choose to begin his story in this way?

3. (paragraph 3): How does stealing the book make Baca feel?

4. (paragraph 4): Define *humiliating* and *jeopardy*:

5. (paragraph 4):With what figurative language does Baca convey his fears? Be specific.

6. (paragraph 5): Explain *how* language can “liberate,” “transform,” and “transport.”

7. (paragraph 9) How do you react to the incident concerning the detectives and the drunk? How does this reaction contribute to Baca’s story?

8. (paragraphs 14, 15): Explain how the contrast between the “raging ocean” and the “island/continent” helps the reader to understand the change Baca experiences.

9. (paragraph 20): Why does Baca get confined to a maximum security “dungeon”?

10. (paragraph 22): Explain Baca‘s comment that "language made bridges of fire between me and everything I saw.”

11. (paragraph 23): Explain what Baca means when he says, “at night I flew.”

12. (paragraph 25): How did the prison administrators attempt to make Baca work?

13. (paragraph 29): What events and conditions led to Baca’s comment that “there was a place in my heart where I had died”?

14. List the specific examples of the process of the “metamorphosis” of the poet into the images he creates that Baca gives in paragraph 32.

15. In the final paragraph, Baca lists all the reasons he writes. Choose which of these reasons would be the most important for you to become a writer, and explain your choice.