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Commentary on "Springsteen the Cavalier: The Boss and the Bards"

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Commentary by Allison Kranek
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First of all, what a fascinating topic! Megan Randall's essay offers an intriguing examination of the parallels between seventeenth century poetry and current American popular culture, and as such, demonstrates a sophisticated analytical insight. Her paper is extremely well organized and follows a logical structure that enables her not only to make comparisons between Springsteen and the writings of both Early and Late Cavaliers, but also to compare Early and Late Cavalier writers and to contrast multiple poems by individual authors within each of those periods. As a result, Randall effectively creates a strong argument that benefits from complex and multiple levels of comparison and analysis. Similarly, she draws comparisons between historical periods that both provide important background information in her paper and to supplement her argument as a whole. Sometimes comparison papers can be difficult to organize, but Randall's paper is an excellent example of how one can link parts of the paper together without confusing the reader. In order to accomplish this, she uses a parallel structure throughout many of her paragraphs. For instance, she begins each body paragraph with a discussion of sexuality, followed by an examination of sun images, "carpe diem," Petrarchan imagery, and finally, the poem's or the song's form. In addition, Randall makes her comparison apparent by using words such as "like," "similarly," "also," and "likewise." Throughout her paper, she balances quotes from her sources with her own interpretation, as well as demonstrates an understanding of grammar and mechanics. Finally, Randall's knowledgeable and unique voice makes this paper easy to follow and a pleasure to read.