

Connecting image, silence, and metaphor

A completed multimodal annotation that treats Vardaman's compressed sentence as a translation problem.



ACTIVITY PROMPT

Study one image without commentary. Record what it invites, what it withholds, and how the sentence changes the image after it appears.

COMPLETED MODEL

"A fish sits below the reflected house. The red window breaks into pieces across the waterline."

TAGS

Metaphor | Silence | Translation

OBSERVATION

The fish is below the reflected house, separated by the waterline. The domestic image fractures across the ripples.

INTERPRETATION

The image treats Vardaman's sentence as a translation problem: the domestic world above cannot remain whole when it is carried into his way of seeing.

QUESTION

What is gained - and what is distorted - when grief is translated into an image another person can see?

How the thinking moves

Use this model to study the sequence of decisions. Do not copy its answer; repeat its movement with your own evidence.

STEP 1	Look before reading the prompt.
STEP 2	Describe visible evidence without interpreting it.
STEP 3	Read the sentence and note what changes.
STEP 4	Make one claim about translation or metaphor.
STEP 5	Ask what the image cannot settle.

Why this model works

The response moves between visual evidence and language without treating either as a final answer. It preserves uncertainty while still making a specific claim.

Student self-check

EVIDENCE	I named a specific detail and accurately situated it.
INTERPRETATION	I explained why the detail matters instead of only summarizing it.
COMPLICATION	I left room for another reader or another piece of evidence.
MEDIUM	I explained what this interface, image, or map makes visible.

Citation and AI disclosure

Suggested citation: Watkins, Marc. *Reading Faulkner in the Age of Thinking Machines*. Interactive digital collection and teaching resource, 2026.

Project: My Mother Is a Fish. <https://6a52f2d6f2ffea74e464b9e5--my-mother-is-a-fish.netlify.app/>

Literary source: Faulkner, William. *As I Lay Dying*. Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, 1930.

AI disclosure: Marc Watkins conceived, directed, selected, revised, and takes responsibility for this resource and the linked projects. Generative AI systems assisted with interface prototyping, code generation and debugging, visual asset development, and editorial scaffolding. OpenAI Codex assisted with the gallery and PDF production. Watkins reviewed and shaped all outputs. Student-facing activities do not require generative AI, and students should cite any AI use required by their course or institution.