

Literary Analysis

Epiphany

In a nonfiction account, the writer often focuses on an **epiphany**—a moment when a character has a flash of insight about himself or herself, another character, or life in general. In this excerpt from his autobiography, Christy Brown describes the moment when he proved to his family that his physical disability had not affected his mental ability. In a single moment, Brown demonstrated his intelligence and changed the course of his life forever. As you read, notice the way the narrative builds to this critical point.

Connecting Literary Elements

Christy Brown's writing is an example of **autobiography**, a form of nonfiction in which a person tells his or her own life story. As you will see, these are characteristics of an autobiography:

- It may record personal thoughts as well as narrate events.
- It focuses mostly on the individual, not the times or public incidents.
- In contrast to a collection of letters or a diary, it is written and organized for a public audience.

Look for these characteristics as you read this excerpt.

Reading Strategy

Identifying Author's Purpose

When an author writes, he or she has a **purpose**, a reason for writing. This purpose might be to influence you to take a position, to inspire you to do something, or to make you laugh. The purpose shapes the writer's choice of language and use of details.

To help you determine Brown's purpose for writing, use a chart like the one shown here. In the first box, write all of the important details. In the next box, write your response to the details. Finally, review what you have written, and determine the author's purpose.

Vocabulary Development

impertinence (im purt' ən əns) *n.*
inappropriate, rude action (p. 170)

conviction (kən vik' shən) *n.* strong
belief (p. 170)

inert (in ert') *adj.* lacking the power
to move; inactive (p. 170)

contention (kən ten' shən) *n.* state-
ment that one argues for (p. 171)

volition (vō lish' ən) *n.* the act of
using the will (p. 173)

taut (tôt) *adj.* high-strung; tense
(p. 173)

Details From Text	
↓	
My Response	
↓	
Author's Purpose	