Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Read through the following journal entries from *The Journal of C.J. Jackson* by William Durbin. When you have finished reading, fill out the Venn Diagram on the back comparing (finding similarities) and contrasting (finding differences) the lives of Billy Jo Kelby and C.J. Jackson.

April 9

I’m sitting on the back porch writing in my journal this morning. Mother said I could rest out here as long as I kept my leg up on a milk stool. I told her I was feeling fine, but she said, “You get your leg up or get back to bed.”

Since another duster is kicking up, I expect she’ll let me help her take the wash in. The younguns, Dalton and Belle, who have just turned five and four, are way too short to reach the clothesline, and Olive and Lester are at school. In our county we say “the land is on fire” when the soil starts lifting into the air, and by the looks of the sky, we’re in for a good blow. If we don’t hurry, Mother will have to wash everything all over again.

I’ll finish this later.

April 10

I never had a chance to write any more yesterday. The duster got so bad that we had to go through our regular dust storm routine. We locked the cows in the barn, turned the washtubs over and weighted them down, and tied the windmill off. There was no need to shoo the chickens into the henhouse because the dark sky had tricked them into thinking it was time to roost.

By noon the storm was so bad that Daddy drove over to the school and picked up Olive and Lester. Daddy guessed the wind hit forty miles per hour and held right there. As the steady, straight-line blow ripped across the prairie, the dust rose into the sky and everything turned yellow-gray. Soon the air got so think that I couldn’t even see from the house to the barn. All we could do was check our sealing tape, hang wet sheets over the doors and windows, and wait out the storm.

April 12

Daddy heard that last Wednesday’s duster was so bad down at the Amarillo airport that a pilot was blinded by a dust cloud at 15,000 feet. I worry that the dust might damage Lester or Belle’s lungs. Though most of us Jacksons are rugged stock, Lester and Belle have always been pale and skinny. They take sick real easy, and lately they’ve both had ratty coughs.

Thousands of birds and jackrabbits suffocated during the storm, and their bodies are lying all over. Dalton and Belle felt sorry for the half-dozen critters that died near our place, and they scooped out shallow graves behind the barn for them.

I can’t get used to how gray and wasted everything looks. Before the drought, crops used to grow like all get-out here on the prairie. When I was a little boy, folks raised sorghum and maize and broomcorn. The cattle got fat, and the standing wheat stretched as far as you could see. The untilled ground waved with buffalo grass and wildflowers. Then came the dust and the wind.

Billy Jo Kelby’s Life Similarities of Billy Jo Kelby C.J. Jackson’s Life and C.J. Jackson’s LIfe

