

### William Shakespeare - Sonnet #138

When my love swears that she is made of truth  
I do believe her, though I know she lies,  
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,  
Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.  
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,  
Although she knows my days are past the best,  
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:  
On both sides thus is simple truth suppress'd.  
But wherefore says she not she is unjust?  
And wherefore say not I that I am old?  
O, love's best habit is in seeming trust,  
And age in love loves not to have years told:

Therefore I lie with her and she with me,  
And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.

### The Dance

In Breughel's great picture, The Kermess,  
the dancers go round, they go round and  
around, the squeal and the blare  
and the tweedle of bagpipes, a bugle and fiddles  
tipping their bellies (round as the thick-  
sided glasses whose wash they impound) 5  
their hips and their bellies off balance  
to turn them. Kicking and rolling about  
the Fair Grounds, swinging their butts, those  
shanks must be sound to bear up under such 10  
rollicking measures, prance as they dance  
in Breughel's great picture, The Kermess.

--William Carlos Williams (1883-1963)

**Sonnet #5 from *Clearances***  
*In Memoriam M.K.H., 1911-1984*

The cool that came off the sheets just off the line  
Made me think the damp must still be in them  
But when I took my corners of the linen  
And pulled against her, first straight down the hem  
And then diagonally, then flapped and shook  
The fabric like a sail in a cross-wind, 5  
They made a dried-out undulating thwack.  
So we'd stretch and fold and end up hand to hand  
For a split second as if nothing had happened  
For nothing had that had not always happened  
Beforehand, day by day, just touch and go, 10  
Coming close again by holding back  
In moves where I was x and she was o  
Inscribed in sheets she'd sewn from ripped-out flour sacks.

--Seamus Heaney

**I Will Put Chaos into Fourteen Lines**

I will put Chaos into fourteen lines  
And keep him there; and let him thence escape  
If he be lucky; let him twist, and ape  
Flood, fire, and demon --- his adroit designs  
Will strain to nothing in the strict confines 5  
Of this sweet order, where, in pious rape,  
I hold his essence and amorphous shape,  
Till he with Order mingles and combines.  
Past are the hours, the years of our duress,  
His arrogance, our awful servitude: 10  
I have him. He is nothing more nor less  
Than something simple not yet understood;  
I shall not even force him to confess;  
Or answer. I will only make him good.

-- Edna St. Vincent Millay

**2006 AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION  
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

**ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION**

**SECTION II**

**Total time—2 hours**

**Question 1**

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

Read the following poem carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the poet uses language to describe the scene and to convey mood and meaning.

**Evening Hawk**

From plane of light to plane, wings dipping through  
Geometries and orchids that the sunset builds,  
Out of the peak's black angularity of shadow, riding  
*Line* The last tumultuous avalanche of  
5 Light above pines and the guttural gorge,  
The hawk comes.

**His wing**

Scythes down another day, his motion  
Is that of the honed steel-edge, we hear  
The crashless fall of stalks of Time.  
10 The head of each stalk is heavy with the gold of our error.  
  
Look! look! he is climbing the last light  
Who knows neither Time nor error, and under  
Whose eye, unforgiving, the world, unforgiven, swings  
Into shadow.

**Long now,**

15 The last thrush is still, the last bat  
Now cruises in his sharp hieroglyphics. His wisdom  
Is ancient, too, and immense. The star  
Is steady, like Plato,\* over the mountain.

If there were no wind we might, we think, hear  
20 The earth grind on its axis, or history  
Drip in darkness like a leaking pipe in the cellar.

—Robert Penn Warren

\*Greek philosopher (427?–347? B.C.)

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## 1989

Read the following poem carefully. Take careful notes on how the poem's organization, diction, and figurative language prepare the reader for the speaker's concluding response.

### *The Great Scarf of Birds*

John Updike

Playing golf on Cape Ann in October  
I saw something to remember.

Ripe apples were caught like red fish in the nets  
of their branches. The maples  
were colored like apples, (5)  
part orange and red, part green.  
The elms, already transparent trees,  
seemed swaying vases full of sky. The sky  
was dramatic with great straggling V's  
of geese streaming south, mare's-tails above them. (10)  
Their trumpeting made us look up and around.  
The course sloped into salt marshes,  
and this seemed to cause the abundance of birds.

As if out of the Bible  
or science fiction, (15)  
a cloud appeared, a cloud of dots  
like iron filings which a magnet  
underneath the paper undulates.  
It dartingly darkened in spots,  
paled, pulsed compressed, distended, yet (20)  
held an identity firm: a flock  
of starlings, as much one thing as a rock.  
One will moved above the trees  
the liquid and hesitant drift.

Come nearer, it became less marvellous, (25)  
more legible, and merely huge.

"I never saw so many birds!" my friend exclaimed.  
We returned our eyes to the game.  
Later, as Lot's wife must have done,  
in a pause of walking, not thinking (30)  
of calling down a consequence,  
I lazily looked around.

The rise of the fairway above us was tinted,  
so evenly tinted I might not have noticed  
but that at the rim of the delicate shadow (35)  
the starlings were thicker and outlined the flock  
as an inkstain in drying pronounces its edges.  
The gradual rise of green was vastly covered;  
I had thought nothing in nature could be so broad  
but grass. (40)

And as  
I watched, one bird,  
  
prompted by accident or will to lead,  
ceased resting; and, lifting in a casual billow,  
the flock ascended as a lady's scarf, (45)  
transparent, of gray, might be twitched  
  
by one corner, drawn upward and then,  
decided against, negligently tossed toward a chair:  
the southward cloud withdrew into the air.  
  
Long had it been since my heart (50)  
had been lifted as it was by the lifting of that great  
scarf.

## Janet Waking

Beautifully Janet slept  
Till it was deeply morning. She woke then  
And thought about her dainty-feathered hen,  
To see how it had kept.

One kiss she gave her mother,  
Only a small one gave she to her daddy  
Who would have kissed each curl of his shining baby;  
No kiss at all for her brother,

“Old Chucky, old Chucky!” she cried,  
Running across the world upon the grass  
To Chucky’s house and listening. But alas,  
Her Chucky had died.

It was a transmogrifying bee  
Came droning down on Chucky’s old bald head  
And sat and put the poison. It scarcely bled,  
But how exceedingly

And purple did the knot  
Swell with the venom and communicate  
Its rigor! Now the poor comb stood up straight  
But Chucky did not.

*And there  
was Janet* kneeling on the wet grass, crying her brown hen  
(Translated far beyond the daughters of men),  
To rise and walk upon it.

And weeping fast as she had breath  
Janet implored us, “Wake her from her sleep!”  
And would not be instructed in how deep  
Was the forgetful kingdom of death.

John Crowe Ransom

ANNE SEXTON

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**Young**

A thousand doors ago  
when I was a lonely kid  
in a big house with four  
garages and it was summer  
as long as I could remember,  
I lay on the lawn at night  
clover wrinkling under me,  
the wise stars bedding over me,  
my mother's window a funnel  
of yellow heat running out,  
my father's window, half shut,  
an eye where sleepers pass,  
and the boards of the house  
were smooth and white as wax  
and probably a million leaves  
sailed on their strange stalks  
as the crickets ticked together  
and I, in my brand new body,  
which was not a woman's yet,  
told the stars my questions  
and thought God could really see  
the heat and the painted light,  
elbows, knees, dreams, goodnight.

### **Mid-Term Break**

I sat all morning in the college sick bay  
Counting bells knelling classes to a close.  
At two o'clock our neighbors drove me home.

In the porch I met my father crying—  
He had always taken funerals in his stride—  
And Big Jim Evans saying it was a hard blow.

The baby cooed and laughed and rocked the pram  
When I came in, and I was embarrassed  
By old men standing up to shake my hand

And tell me they were “sorry for my trouble.”  
Whispers informed strangers I was the eldest,  
Away at school, as my mother held my hand

In hers and coughed our angry tearless sighs.  
At ten o'clock the ambulance arrived  
With the corpse, stanced and bandaged by the nurses.

Next morning I went up into the room. Snowdrops  
And candles soothed the bedside; I saw him  
For the first time in six weeks. Paler now,  
Wearing a poppy bruise on his left temple,  
He lay in the four foot box as in his cot.  
No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked him clear.

A four foot box, a foot for every year.

--Seamus Heaney

AUDRE LORDE

(1934- )

Coal

I  
is the total black, being spoken  
from the earth's inside.  
There are many kinds of open  
5 how a diamond comes into a knot of flame  
how sound comes into a word, colored  
by who pays what for speaking.

Some words are open like a diamond  
on glass windows  
10 singing out within the passing crash of sun  
Then there are words like stapled wagers  
in a perforated book—buy and sign and tear apart—  
and come whatever wills all chances  
the stub remains  
15 an ill-pulled tooth with a ragged edge.  
Some words live in my throat  
breeding like adders. Others know sun  
seeking like gypsies over my tongue  
to explode through my lips  
20 like young sparrows bursting from shell.  
Some words  
bedevil me.

Love is a word, another kind of open.  
As the diamond comes into a knot of flame  
25 I am Black because I come from the earth's inside  
now take my word for jewel in the open light.



## Getting Through

Like a car stuck in gear,  
a chicken too stupid to tell  
its head is gone,  
or sound ratcheting on  
long after the film  
has jumped the reel,  
or a phone  
ringing and ringing  
in the house they have all  
moved away from,  
through rooms where dust  
is a deepening skin,  
and the locks unneeded,  
so I go on loving you,  
my heart blundering on,  
a muscle spilling out  
what is no longer wanted,  
and my words hurtling past,  
like a train off its track,  
toward a boarded-up station,  
closed for years,  
like some last speaker  
of a beautiful language  
no one else can hear.

*Deborah Pope*

## **Weighing the Dog**

It is awkward for me and bewildering for him  
as I hold him in my arms in the small bathroom,  
balancing our weight on the shaky blue scale,

but this is the way to weigh a dog and easier  
than training him to sit obediently on one spot  
with his tongue out, waiting for a cookie.

With pencil and paper I subtract my weight  
from our total to find out the remainder that is his,  
and I start to wonder if there is an analogy here.

It could not have to do with my leaving you  
though I never figured out what you amounted to  
until I subtracted myself from our combination.

You held me in your arms more than I held you  
through all those awkward and bewildering months  
and now we are both lost in strange and distant neighborhoods.

Billy Collins

## **Lying in a Hammock at William Duffy's Farm in Pine Island, Minnesota**

Over my head, I see the bronze butterfly  
Asleep on the black trunk,  
Blowing like a leaf in green shadow.  
Down the ravine behind the empty house,  
The cowbells follow one another  
Into the distances of the afternoon.  
To my right,  
In a field of sunlight between two pines,  
The droppings of last year's horses  
Blaze up into golden stones.  
I lean back, as the evening darkens and comes on.  
A chicken hawk floats over, looking for home.  
I have wasted my life.

-- James Wright

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

The following poem is by the contemporary poet Li-Young Lee. Read the poem carefully. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how the poet conveys the complex relationship of the father and the son through the use of literary devices such as point of view and structure.

*A Story*

Sad is the man who is asked for a story  
and can't come up with one.

His five-year-old son waits in his lap.  
*Line* *Not the same story, Baba. A new one.*  
5 The man rubs his chin, scratches his ear.

In a room full of books in a world  
of stories, he can recall  
not one, and soon, he thinks, the boy  
will give up on his father.

10 Already the man lives far ahead, he sees  
the day this boy will go. *Don't go!*  
*Hear the alligator story! The angel story once more!*  
*You love the spider story. You laugh at the spider.*  
*Let me tell it!*

15 But the boy is packing his shirts,  
he is looking for his keys. *Are you a god,*  
*the man screams, that I sit mute before you?*  
*Am I a god that I should never disappoint?*

But the boy is here. *Please, Baba, a story?*  
20 It is an emotional rather than logical equation,  
an earthly rather than heavenly one,  
which posits that a boy's supplications  
and a father's love add up to silence.

Li-Young Lee, "A Story" from *The City in Which I Love You*.  
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ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION  
SECTION II  
Total time—2 hours

Question 1

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

Carefully read the following poem by Mary Oliver. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how Oliver conveys the relationship between the tree and family through the use of figurative language and other poetic techniques.

**The Black Walnut Tree**

My mother and I debate:  
we could sell  
the black walnut tree  
to the lumberman,  
and pay off the mortgage.  
Likely some storm anyway  
will churn down its dark boughs,  
smashing the house. We talk  
slowly, two women trying  
in a difficult time to be wise.  
Roots in the cellar drains,  
I say, and she replies  
that the leaves are getting heavier  
every year, and the fruit  
harder to gather away.  
But something brighter than money  
moves in our blood—an edge  
sharp and quick as a trowel  
that wants us to dig and sow.  
So we talk, but we don't do  
anything. That night I dream  
of my fathers out of Bohemia  
filling the blue fields  
of fresh and generous Ohio  
with leaves and vines and orchards.  
What my mother and I both know  
is that we'd crawl with shame  
in the emptiness we'd made  
in our own and our fathers' backyard.  
So the black walnut tree  
swings through another year  
of sun and leaping winds,  
of leaves and bounding fruit,  
and, month after month, the whip-  
crack of the mortgage.

— Mary Oliver