Banha University
Faculty of Education
English Department

A Guiding Model Answer for

First Grade

Introduction to Poetry Exam

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Faculty of Education

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First Grade **Second Term (June 2014)**
Department of English **Time Allowed: 2 hours**

Introduction to Poetry

Introduction to Poetry Exam

Respond to the following Questions:

1. Complete the following? (Time limit is 30 minutes; Grade is 30)

A. The concept behind John Donne's lines, "Whatever dies, was not mixed equally; / If our two loves be one, or, thou and I / Love so alike, that none do slacken, none can die," in "The Good-Morrow," is …….

B. W. H. Auden's poem "Musée des Beaux Arts" is an example of ekphrasis, which means …..….. In it, "the miraculous birth" is ..…. The use of "specially" rather than "especially" suggests …..... The adjective "doggy" suggests …..., and the deliberately sloppy use of "life" rather than the more grammatically appropriate "lives" embodies …...…..

C. In speaking of the tree as "uttering" its leaves, Whitman, in "I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing," uses a word that is perfectly appropriate on a literal level. In this context, "utter" can simply mean …….

D. Sprung rhythm is ……

E. Wordsworth's line, "Milton! Thou should'st be living at this hour," is an example of .…….

2. Consider the lines from the Ben Jonson's song to Celia: *But might I of Jove's nectar sup / I would not change for thine*. Doesn't it mean the opposite of what the poet should be saying at this moment? Is there an ambiguity in the line with the wrong meaning uppermost? How does being mindful of it alter the meaning of the poem? *Drink to me only with thine eyes*—is there an ambiguity in "only"? How would you elucidate the metaphor at work in the first eight lines of the poem? (Time limit is 30 minutes; Grade is 30)

3. Coleridge claimed that *Khubla Khan* was a fragment, a work written in haste after a vivid dream. His work was interrupted and after the interruption, he had lost all sense of the dream and it is inspiration. Does the work seem like a fragment or a complete poem to you? What relationships obtain among the features of the imaginary landscape in which the "pleasure-dome" is situated? Can a "pleasure-dome" be "stately"? What effect does the Damsel with the dulcimer have upon the poet, and why should anyone be terrified by his appearance after hearing the song? (Time limit is 30 minutes; Grade is 30)

4. What is your interpretation of the following lines of verse? (Time limit is 30 minutes; Grade is 5)

A. And every fair from fair sometimes declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed

B. Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

C. The turnkey now his flock returning sees,
Duly let out a-nights to steal for fees:
The watchful bailiffs take their silent stands,
And schoolboys lag with satchels in their hands.

D. In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self that seals up all in rest.

Good Luck
Mohammad Al-Hussini Arab

Answers

1. Completion:

A. The concept behind John Donne's lines, "Whatever dies, was not mixed equally; / If our two loves be one, or, thou and I / Love so alike, that none do slacken, none can die," in "The Good-Morrow," is that the earthly sphere is composed of heterogeneous substances, which are unstable, ever-changing, and therefore mortal. The heavenly sphere is formed of homogeneous spiritual substance, which is pure and eternal. Sensual love is earthly and subject to change and decay, whereas the love enjoyed by the poet and his beloved is "equal," a state of oneness, a pure and changeless union.

B. W. H. Auden's poem "Musée des Beaux Arts" is an example of ekphrasis, which means the embedding of one kind of art form inside another—in this case, a famous painting summarized in a poem. In it, "the miraculous birth" is an allusion to the momentous arrival of Jesus. The use of "specially" rather than "especially" suggests a child's vocabulary; it projects an air of innocence ominously at odds with the horror the poet feels. The adjective "doggy" suggests a childlike vocabulary, and the deliberately sloppy use of "life" rather than the more grammatically appropriate "lives" embodies the offhanded attitude that repulses the poet.

C. In speaking of the tree as "uttering" its leaves, Whitman, in "I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing," uses a word that is perfectly appropriate on a literal level. In this context, "utter" can simply mean to "put forth" or "sprout." However, since the word is more commonly used to describe human speech and since Whitman habitually refers to his poems as "leaves" (as in the title *Leaves of Grass*), the word implies more. The tree that "utters … leaves" is an image not only of the man but also of the poet. The poet tells the reader that he broke a twig from the tree and that he now keeps the twig, with a little moss tied around it, in his room, where it remains a curious token. Its purpose is not to remind him of his friends because, he tells us, he thinks of little else. Rather, it stands for manly love or the love of man for man. Yet the phrase is ambiguous. A reader might take "manly love" to mean the love a man may feel for a woman. Whitman probably accepted, even intended, the ambiguity.

D. Sprung rhythm is a type of accented verse in which strongly accented syllables are pushed up against unaccented ones to produce a new way of scanning verse.

E. Wordsworth's line, "Milton! Thou should'st be living at this hour," is an example of Apostrophe.

2. Consider the lines from the Jonson's song to Celia: *But might I of Jove's nectar sup / I would not change for thine*. Doesn't it mean the opposite of what the poet should be saying at this moment? Is there an ambiguity in the line with the wrong meaning uppermost? How does being mindful of it alter the meaning of the poem? *Drink to me only with thine eyes*—is there an ambiguity in "only"? How would you elucidate the metaphor at work in the first eight lines of the poem?

Answer:

Ben Jonson's "Song to Celia" is an example of poetic device applied to erotic praise. The poem is romantically worshipful of the lady in question. On close inspection of the poem, the placement of the adverbs with the metaphors make it somewhat ambiguous; for example the placement of "only" in the first sentence is unclear whether it is referring to "Drink to me," or "with thine eyes." The result of this ambiguity is that the poet is providing the lady with a set of alternatives and leaving it up to her discretion to choose her own actions, any of which will be acceptable to him. The poet's ambiguity, then, makes him gallant. He promises the positive act of pledging his eyes in return for her gaze.

In lines three and four, the poet is showing respect by saying that if she "leave a kiss but in the cup," he will not look for wine. He states the actions he will take in response to her actions even if they are not aimed at him. In the next lines, the

poem moves away from the physical toward the metaphorical as the lover refers to his spiritual thirst: "The thirst, that from the soul doth rise". The thirst that arises from the soul is unclear as to its exact meaning, but whatever it is, it is quenched with a drink. The intention is undoubtedly complimentary and even more refined than the previous two ideas. It is typical of Jonson that the success of his poems is due to the offering of options and gallantry rather than the traditional concept of love poems that take the attitude of desire, reproach, or familiarity. In this poem, the pitch of adoration is raised as the poem proceeds, and, simultaneously, the poet raises the level of his consequential actions. Jonson uses the myth of Jove's nectar, the immortalizing fluid, as an analogue of the "drink divine", which is superior to mere wine, kisses, or glances.

The speaker opens with a plea for his lady to express her love by gazing upon him. His plea is assertive, in the form of a command to drink to him with her eyes. He wants more than an expression of her love, however; he wants a pledge. He notes this in the second line when he declares that he will return the pledge with his own eyes. The reference to the cup that is commonly filled with wine becomes an apt metaphor for what he is asking from his lady. One usually makes a toast, a pledge of some sort, when first sipping a cup of wine. The speaker wants his lady to make a pledge to him with her eyes rather than while drinking from a cup of wine. This pledge would be more personal and so more meaningful to him.

By suggesting that his lady could convey such a pledge through her gaze, he pays tribute to her expressive eyes. He suggests that their connection is so intimate that they do not need the words of a speech to communicate their feelings for each other. This act reflects medieval love conventions, which propose that love is received through the eyes.

When the speaker gives his lady an alternative way to express her love, he suggests that she may be reluctant to do so. Leaving a kiss in the cup would allow her to respond to him in a more modest manner. This alternative, he states, would be just as pleasing to him. When he insists that he will "not look for wine," he implies that her kiss will intoxicate him more than any alcohol could. Wine would be an inadequate replacement for her love.

The next four lines extend the metaphor set up in the first four lines. The speaker insists that if his lady would leave a kiss for him in the cup, he would prize it more than nectar from the gods. He claims that his soul "thirsts" for love and that only "a drink divine" that transcends even Jove's nectar can quench it. "Jove" refers to the god Jupiter, lord of the classical gods and a recurrent symbol of divinity in secular poetry. The gods drank a heavenly nectar far finer than any wine mortals drank. Here the speaker is saying that he would not take Jove's nectar in exchange for that of his lady. By insisting that he values his lady's kiss more than the nectar of the gods, he elevates her to, or higher than, the status of a goddess. This type of extreme compliment is defined as "hyperbole."

3. Coleridge claimed that *Khubla Khan* was a fragment, a work written in haste after a vivid dream. His work was interrupted and after the interruption, he had lost all sense of the dream and it is inspiration. Does the work seem like a fragment or a complete poem to you? What relationships obtain among the features of the imaginary landscape in which the "pleasure-dome" is situated? Can a "pleasure-dome" be "stately"? What effect does the Damsel with the dulcimer have upon the poet, and why should anyone be terrified by his appearance after hearing the song?

Answer:

Coleridge's account of the unusual origin of his poem "Kubla Khan" is probably only one of numerous instances in which one of the Romantic poets proclaimed the spontaneity or naturalness of their art. Most critics of "Kubla Khan" believe that its language and meter are too intricate for it to have been created by the fevered mind of a sleeping poet. Others say that its ending is too fitting for the poem to be a fragment.

For other commentators, "Kubla Khan" is clearly an allegory about the creation of art. As the artist decided to create his work of art, so does Kubla Khan decide to have his pleasure-dome constructed. The poem's structure refutes Coleridge's claim about its origins, since the first thirty-six lines describe what Kubla has ordered built, and the last eighteen lines deal with the narrator's desire to approximate the creation of the pleasure-dome.

However, whether whole or fragment, dream or not, the poem examines issues of vital importance to Coleridge: creativity and the function of the imagination. The poem, including his prefatory comment, focuses on the process by which art is developed and how it may be lost or destroyed. When the poem begins, Kubla Khan orders the construction of an architectural marvel, his pleasure-dome; he locates his grand palace by a sacred river, one of nature's wonders. The poem continues by contrasting human creativity with the power of the natural world. The final stanza provides still another illustration of the process of creation, as the poet struggles to revive his poetic vision.

Coleridge sums up the idea of the whole poem in the in the opening paragraph (ll. 2, 4, 5). The title character decrees that a "stately pleasure-dome" be built in Xanadu. Coleridge's Kubla has his palace constructed where Alph, "the sacred river," begins its journey to the sea. The construction of the palace on "twice five miles of fertile ground" is described. It is surrounded by walls and towers within which are ancient forests and ornate gardens "bright with sinuous rills." The "sacred river" which stands for life runs "Through caverns measureless to man"—i.e.—man cannot fathom its deeps—to "a sunless sea"—which is the sea of the dead who never see the sun. The remaining part of the first stanza in addition to the second develop the images of life and death. The image of life is reflected in the phrase "mighty fountain" (l. 19) where the poet refers to birth, and in a simile compares it to the personified earth, which pants thickly due to the pangs of delivery (l. 18). Then this "fountain" is transmitted into sacred river—the river of life. In the beginning the scene is picturesque. It runs through "fertile ground" (l. 6), is enriched with walls and towers, the symbol of pomp and power, and abounds with winding rivulets (l. 8), and all these are under the realm of the sun and greenery, which are symbols of life.

It is life in its beauty and the opening lines of the first stanza echo it through its musicalness. Various observations can be made about the patterning of sounds in these lines. In the first place, the rhyming word of every line is linked by alliteration—of syllables or measures—to one of the words closely proceeding it: "*K*ubla *K*han" (l. 1), "*d*ome *d*ecree" (l. 2), "*r*iver *r*an" (l. 3), *m*easureless to *m*an" (l. 4), "sunless *s*ea" (l. 5). Secondly, there is an internal rhyme as opposed to the end rhymes prescribed by the verse pattern between "pl*eas*ure" and "m*eas*ure" (ll. 2, 4) despite the two-line gap between them. Thirdly, the first line of the poem contains a symmetrical pattern—of assonances on stressed syllables: /ae/ /u/ /ae/. Fourthly, there is an intermittent consonance of /n/ in lines 2, 4, 5: "ra*n*", (l. 3), "caver*n*s" (l. 4), "ma*n*," "dow*n*," "su*n*less" (l. 5). This musicalness makes the reader ready to be involved unconsciously in the images of life and death and leads him to accept death as a state accompanied with rapture and delight.

The final paragraph presents a first-person narrator who recounts a vision he once had of an Abyssinian maid playing a dulcimer and singing of Mount Abora. The narrator says that if he could revive her music within himself, he would build a pleasure-dome, and all who would see it would be frightened of "his flashing eyes, his floating hair!" His observers would close their eyes "with holy dread, / For he on honey-dew hath fed, / And drunk the milk of Paradise."

In this part, the image of the dome in which the poet's imagination has harmonized the discordant qualities of life and death is reiterated in the image of the "Abyssinian maid" (ll. 37-41) who is seen playing music, since in music, the musician can bring the discordant tunes into harmony. And so, if the poet has the ability to animate this music "within himself," he will be able to rebuild the "pleasure-dome" "in air" or in his poetry.

4. A. The interpretation of:

> And every fair from fair sometimes declines,
> By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed

In these lines, the poet summarizes his objections to the summer day by asserting that everything that is fair will be "untrimmed," either by chance or by a natural process. The most obvious meaning here is that everything that summer produces will become less beautiful over time. The word "fair," however, seems to mean more than merely beautiful to the eye and, like the words "lovely" and "darling," comprehends all desirable qualities. Here, too, the poet invokes the concept of sublunary corruption. Although he is apparently still discussing the disadvantages of a summer's day when compared to the person he is addressing, he is at the same time creating a transition to the next section of the poem by introducing the second element of his comparison, that comprehended in the word "lovely." Besides, there are two levels of meaning here, thanks to the play on the word "untrimmed": age or accident can destroy the balance of sails on a sailboat, just as it can take away the attractiveness of a beautiful youth. In either case, "the wind is taken out of one's sails", as the old saying goes. Shakespeare's artistry can be seen in his continuation of his sun-based metaphor with "declines", even as a new figure of speech is developed.

4. B. The interpretation of:

> Sophocles long ago
> Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
> Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
> Of human misery; we
> Find also in the sound a thought,
> Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" employs one of Arnold's favored metaphors between life and the sea. The rasping sound from the shingle beach as the waves, flowing in and out, drag the loose pebbles back and forth suggests to the speaker some unspecified, unrelenting sadness. In these lines, the speaker (presumably grounded in the classics as Matthew Arnold was) is reminded that the Greek tragic dramatist Sophocles had heard the same sound in the Aegean and it had suggested to him the turbid ebb and flow of human suffering, which had been the dominant subject of his plays. The poet and his companion—or perhaps the "we" is more generalized—are also reminded by the sound of a related but somewhat different thought.

4. C. The interpretation of:

> The turnkey now his flock returning sees,
> Duly let out a-nights to steal for fees:
> The watchful bailiffs take their silent stands,
> And schoolboys lag with satchels in their hands.

Jonathan Swift's "A Description of the Morning" pointing up the weakness in human nature and the resultant failings in human behavior. In these lines, he shows the jailer who watches as his prisoners return. He lets them out at night so they can rob people and then give some of the money to the jailer in exchange for favors. In the final couplet, bailiffs stand at the ready. Bailiffs are court officials who have power to make arrests or to reclaim property in payment of a debt. The final line describes boys who reluctantly set off for school carrying their satchels. It appears that they walk as slowly as they can, not wanting to arrive.

4. D. The interpretation of:

In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self that seals up all in rest.

In this quatrain, the image shifts or moves from the time of year to the time of day. William Shakespeare chooses twilight, the period between sunset and darkness, to reflect his state. "Twi" originally meant "half," so "half-light" signifies a period of diminished abilities and activities, again calling for the sympathy and understanding of the poet's friend. The second half of the quatrain brings forth more forcibly the associations of darkness with death and emphasizes the immanence of that mortal state in the poet's life.

Shakespeare aptly emphasizes the speaker's progressive aging through the use of the metaphor. This time, it is in the implied comparison between his state and the time of day fading in the west after sunset. Instead of the yellow of the first quatrain, there is the black of night's approach, a more sinister prospect. There follows a personification within the metaphor, naming night as death's second self, in essence creating a new metaphor within the first as it envisions night, which "seals up all in rest." The word "seals" suggests the permanent closing of a coffin lid, providing a finality that is only slightly relieved by the knowledge that the reader is actually seeing not death, but night. Some critics have suggested that the word "seals" suggests the "seeling" of the eyes of a falcon or hawk, a process of sewing the eyes of the bird so that it would obey the falconer's instructions more exactly. This suggests an even more forcible entry of death into the metaphor.