Banha University
Faculty of Education
English Department

A Guiding Model Answer for

First Grade

Introduction to Poetry (Make-Up) 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 (Make-Up) Exam

Respond to the following questions

*** NB:** Time designations suggest the relative weight to give each question; they are not intended as restrictions on the time you spend. However, time length and grade for each question are assigned next to each one.

1. Read the following Shakespearean sonnet and respond to the subsequent questions? (Time is 30 minutes; Grade is 30)

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang

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 me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

A. What is the main idea expressed in the sonnet above?

B. Explain how the argument or statement brings out the idea in a logical way?

C. Look for the central image in the sonnet and explain how it is used to embody the idea of the sonnet?

II. Answer the following: (Time is 90 minutes; Grade is 90)

1. Why is the speaker's use of the word "temperate," in Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18," spoken in three syllables, significant?

2. Why does the use of metonymy in "eye of heaven" illustrate the power of that device in Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18"?

3. According to Renaissance theories, explain what John Donne means by the following line?

Whatever dies, was not mixed equally;

4. Ben Jonson's "Song: To Celia" moves between the abstract and the concrete. How and why?

5. Extract the figure of speech in the following lines and explain it?

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and Preserver; hear, O hear!

6. Explain William Wordsworth's Poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"?

Good Luck
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Answers

1. Shakespeare's Sonnet 73:

A. The main idea expressed in Sonnet 73 is that of mutability, deriving from Greek and Roman philosophers, but strained through the theological thinkers of the Middle Ages and modified during the Renaissance. Basically, it describes all "sublunary" phenomena (those beneath the moon, thus corrupted) as subject to change. Thus they lack the permanence both of biblical perfection and of Platonic ideals. In this sonnet, Shakespeare's consciousness of himself and of his beloved friend remains rooted in mortality and mutability. Unlike the idealized relationship portrayed in earlier sonnets, here there is a strong consciousness of the changes that old age brings to the poet and to his relationships with others. Here is resignation in the face of the inevitability of death and his permanent separation from his beloved. Time becomes omnipotent. It controls all natural processes, and no expedient of art can resist it. The most one can do is to express a heightened affection for one who is soon to pass away.

B. The argument or statement is the poet's progressive aging. This sonnet is addressed to the poet's lover and comments on the approach of old age in the speaker. As in all the Shakespearian sonnets, the voice is that of the poet. The lover has sometimes been interpreted as the unknown "Mr. W. H." to whom the first quarto edition was dedicated, but Samuel Taylor Coleridge surmised that the lover must be a woman.

The poet opens by stating that his lover must behold him at the time of life corresponding to late autumn, when almost no leaves remain on the trees and the birds have flown south. The poet's calling attention to his old age might seem incongruous, since many lovers might try to hide the fact from their companions. Yet, in this relationship, William Shakespeare not only is being forthright but also seems to be seeking the sympathy of his dear friend.

In the second quatrain, the image shifts from the time of year to the time of day. He 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.

The third quatrain moves from the world of seasons and time to the more restricted compass of natural phenomena—the way a fire burns itself to ashes and then is smothered by those ashes. As the magnitude of the image decreases, the force of its message concentrates, concluding with the very picture of a deathbed.

The concluding couplet sums up the purpose of Shakespeare's revelation of his decreasing powers: to request that his friend love more strongly because of the short time left to the poet. Critics have been concerned with the word "leave" in the last line, since it might be thought to indicate that the lover is the one to depart. Some have even commented that "lose" might better convey the idea. Certainly the death of the poet would cause a separation to occur, however, and the lover would have to "leave" him.

C. The central image in the sonnet the poet's progressive aging. Shakespeare uses imagery to develop this argument. Sonnet 73 contains three distinct metaphors for the poet's progressive aging. The first of these is the implied comparison between his state and the time of year when a few yellow leaves, or none at all, remain on boughs shaking

in the cold winds, deserted by the birds that usually inhabit them. One might be tempted to compare this directly with graying and loss of hair, but it is more probably to be taken generally as a reference to the aging process.

The second quatrain moves from the time of year to the time of day. Again there is a metaphor: The poet's likeness is that of a 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.

Structurally, this concept would close the octave of a Petrarchan sonnet, and although the English sonnet has ostensibly eliminated the eight-six division, the vestiges of a division remain, since the poet moves from his year-day metaphors to another kind of figure in his next quatrain. Here, the metaphor involves a complex process rather than a simple period of time. The afterglow of a fire gradually being choked by the ashes of its earlier burning becomes the description of Shakespeare's aging. The ashes of the fire's earlier combustion are the poet's own youthful dissipation, hinting an extravagance of which we know nothing biographically except the metaphorical statement made here. Although there is no specific color named, one senses the red of a glowing fire, enhancing the yellow and black of the previous descriptions. The concluding couplet moves from metaphor to direct statement, summarizing the purpose of the poet in revealing so frankly his approaching old age. After the richness of the preceding lines, it might appear almost anticlimactic, yet it is important to the structure of the form, lending finality to the whole.

Part II:

1. Why is the speaker's use of the word "temperate," in William Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18," spoken in three syllables, significant?

Answer

William Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18" addresses the theme of immortality through verse. Here, the speaker's use of the word "temperate," spoken in three syllables, is significant, because he wants to praise the qualities of endurance and constancy, over those of change.

2. Why does the use of metonymy in "eye of heaven" (the sun) illustrate the power of that device in William Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18"?

Answer

In William Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18," the use of metonymy in "eye of heaven" (the sun) illustrates the power of that device: The eye is usually thought of as the agency for perception and character; here the central focus of the sky seems central to the concept of nature itself. Personification of this eye enhances the subject of the poem as a whole, for dimming

his gold complexion implies hiding the beauty of the individual whom the poet addresses—something the poet intends to prevent.

3. According to Renaissance theories, explain what John Donne means by the following line?

Whatever dies, was not mixed equally;

Answer

According to Renaissance theories, John Donne's line "Whatever dies, was not mixed equally;" in "The Good-Morrow," means 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.

4. Ben Jonson's "Song: To Celia" moves between the abstract and the concrete. How and why?

Answer

Ben Jonson's lyric ballad "Song: To Celia" moves between the abstract and the concrete, smoothly integrating in the first stanza the dominant images of eyes, wine, kisses, and the act of drinking into an expression of the speaker's love for his lady. The harmonious interplay of the imagery is reinforced with the musicality of the lyric in its alliteration and structured rhyme scheme. Energy is generated through the rhythm of the lines as well as the exactness of the imagery, aided by Jonson's use of active verbs like "drink," "rise," "sup," and "breathe."

5. Extract the figure of speech in the following lines and explain it?

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and Preserver; hear, O hear!

Answer

There is an oxymoron in "Destroyer and preserver," where Shelley considers the role of the wind as "Destroyer and preserver. *Oxymoron* is the combination of contradictory or incongruous terms.

6. Explain William Wordsworth's Poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"?

Answer

William Wordsworth's Poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" was inspired by an outing the poet shared with his sister Dorothy in 1802. While walking through the woods, the two chanced upon a colony of daffodils growing next to a lake. In the poem the simple event leads to reflection on the restorative powers of nature. The unexpected beauty of the flowers draws the speaker out of a lonely trance and inspires him with uncontrollable happiness. The experience is so powerful that it remains in his memory long after the encounter. He needs only think of the daffodils to overcome a stupor or unpleasant mood.

At the beginning of the poem, one finds the poet hiking on a windy day. He has no set destination. Happening upon innumerable wild daffodils, he compares them to a crowd of people and to an army ("host" implies that the flowers are the heavenly army of the divinity). He compares the densely packed flowers to the stars in the Milky Way and to a multitude of dancers engaged in a spirited dance. This stanza balances the original event more evenly between isolated subject ("I") and communal object (daffodils) by concentrating on the external scene. The other three stanzas rely heavily on the first-person singular.

The poet had enjoyed the event even while he experienced it, but in later years, when he is more mature, he comments that at the earlier time he had not recognized its full value. In the final six lines, the poet moves into the present tense, using the key Wordsworthian word "oft" to generalize about the reiterated and enduring effects of recollection. The word "vacant" usually connotes for Wordsworth positive things such as vacations. "Pensive," by contrast, implies melancholy, the serious, gloomy, earthbound humor among the four humors; but it mainly serves as a dark foil to set off the bright and joyful conclusion.