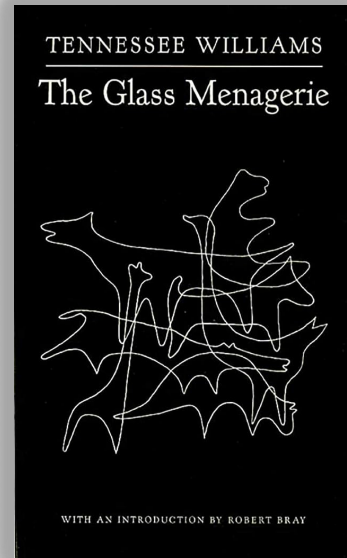
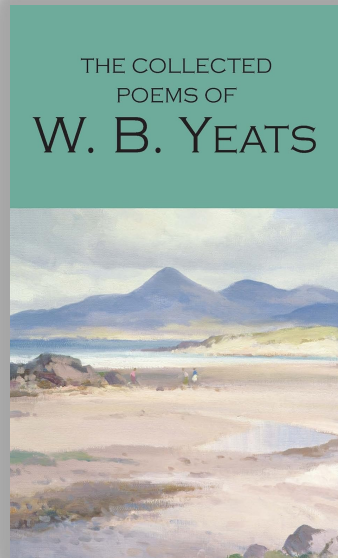
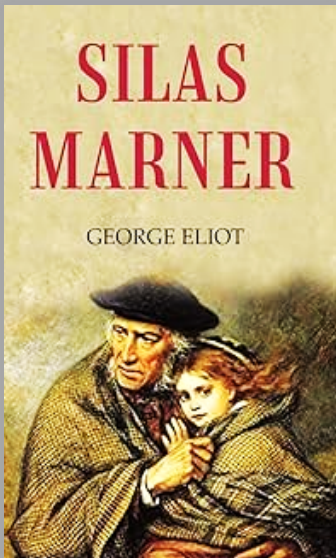




UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

Literary Criticism

State • 2024



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University Interscholastic League
Literary Criticism Contest • State • 2024

Part 1: Knowledge of Literary Terms and of Literary History

30 items (1 point each)

1. The term used to designate the types or categories into which literary works are grouped according to form, technique, or sometimes, subject matter is
 - A) abridgment.
 - B) genre.
 - C) philology.
 - D) synopsis.
 - E) typology.
2. The two-time United States Poet Laureate whose poetry collection *Native Guard* earned her the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry is
 - A) Rita Dove.
 - B) Claudia Emerson.
 - C) Jorie Graham.
 - D) Lisel Mueller.
 - E) Natasha Trethewey.
3. The trope in which occurs a substitution of the name of an object closely associated with a word for the word itself is
 - A) ambiguity.
 - B) hypallage.
 - C) metonymy.
 - D) onomatopoeia.
 - E) synecdoche.
4. A type of literary criticism dating back to Ancient Greece that focuses on cause and effect, means and ends, as well as form and matter, in relation to plot, character, thought and feeling, sound, and spectacle in drama is known as
 - A) Aristotelean criticism.
 - B) cultural primitivism.
 - C) feminist criticism.
 - D) formalist criticism.
 - E) psychoanalytical criticism.
5. A literary work that foretells destruction because of the evil of a group or one that is used for expressions of grief and complaint is known as a
 - A) flyting.
 - B) gasconade.
 - C) harangue.
 - D) Jeremiad.
 - E) Philippic.
6. The author of the banned-in-the-USSR novel *Doctor Zhivago* and recipient of the 1958 Nobel Prize for Literature, which he was forced to decline, is
 - A) Svetlana Alexievich.
 - B) Joseph Brodsky.
 - C) Ivan A. Bunin.
 - D) Czesław Miłosz.
 - E) Boris Pasternak.
7. The term used to characterize a work that is consciously and deliberately mannered, affected, elaborate, conventional, studied, or self-conscious is
 - A) absurd.
 - B) artificiality.
 - C) bathos.
 - D) carnivalesque.
 - E) didactic.
8. **Not** one of the four senses (the four levels) traditionally used in interpreting scriptural and allegorical materials is
 - A) allegorical.
 - B) analogical.
 - C) literal.
 - D) moral.
 - E) textual.
9. The name used by the nineteenth-century poet laureate Robert Southey to designate the members of a literary group made up of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron, and others, whose very irregular lives and radical ideas suggested the name, is
 - A) Cockney School.
 - B) Frankfurt School.
 - C) Geneva School.
 - D) Satanic School.
 - E) Spasmodic School.
10. The author of many works featuring Amerindian characters and the recipient of the 2021 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for *The Night Watchman* is
 - A) Geraldine Brooks.
 - B) Pearl S. Buck.
 - C) Louise Erdrich.
 - D) Marilynne Robinson.
 - E) Elizabeth Strout.

11. The Greek goddess of retributive justice or vengeance and whose name, associated with divine retribution, has become eponymically synonymous with fate is
- A) Calliope.
 - B) Mnemosyne.
 - C) Nemesis.
 - D) Parnassus.
 - E) Urania.
12. The recipient of two Pulitzer Prizes for Drama, one in 2009 for *Ruined* and one in 2017 for *Sweat*, is
- A) Beth Henley.
 - B) Tracy Letts.
 - C) Martyna Majok.
 - D) Lynn Nottage.
 - E) Suzan-Lori Parks.
13. The term invented during the nineteenth century to describe a phenomenon peculiar to the revival of alliterative verse in the later Middle English Period in which a strophe of unrhymed alliterative lines is followed by a set of rhymed lines is
- A) blood and thunder.
 - B) bob and wheel.
 - C) cock and bull.
 - D) storm and stress.
 - E) sweetness and light.
14. The gathering of writers and thinkers, many of whom lived in a residential district near central London after which the group takes its name, counting among its membership Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey, E. M. Forster, and John Maynard Keynes, among others, is the
- A) Bloomsbury Group.
 - B) Bluestockings.
 - C) Fugitives.
 - D) Knickerbocker Group.
 - E) Scriblerus Club.
15. The linguistic principle that describes a complex of relations among consonants in Indo-European languages is (the)
- A) Baconian Theory.
 - B) Freytag's Pyramid.
 - C) Grimm's Law.
 - D) Ockham's Razor.
 - E) scribal error.
16. In Greek mythology, the three sister goddesses, Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia, who confer elegance, beauty, charm, and joy on human beings and nature are the
- A) Furies.
 - B) Graces.
 - C) Humors.
 - D) Muses.
 - E) Worthies.
17. **Not** among famous Anglophone authors' *nom de plumes* is
- A) Joseph Conrad.
 - B) George Eliot.
 - C) Mark Twain.
 - D) Tennessee Williams.
 - E) William Wordsworth.
18. The early nineteenth-century New England literary group that includes William Cullen Bryant and John Greenleaf Whittier, named for an image that suggests warmth and domesticity as well as their northern environment, is the
- A) Fireside Poets.
 - B) Hartford Wits.
 - C) Knickerbocker Group.
 - D) Muckrakers.
 - E) New York School.
19. The early-nineteenth-century American short-story writer, essayist, biographer, and historian, who authored both a five-volume biography of George Washington and *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, Gentleman*, a collection that includes "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle" is
- A) Charles Brockden Brown.
 - B) William Cullen Bryant.
 - C) James Fenimore Cooper.
 - D) Washington Irving.
 - E) Henry David Thoreau.
20. The error, frailty, mistaken judgment, or misstep through which the fortunes of the hero of tragedy are reversed is known as
- A) aporia.
 - B) catharsis.
 - C) hamartia.
 - D) hubris.
 - E) peripeteia.

21. A term applied to any book printed during the last part of the fifteenth century (before 1501) that resembles in size, form, and appearance (often large and ornate) the conventional highly artistic late medieval manuscript is
- chrestomathy.
 - duodecimo.
 - folio.
 - incunabulum.
 - quarto.
22. A progenitor of cyberpunk and twentieth-century author of *V*, *The Crying of Lot 49*, the unanimously recommended for the Pulitzer *Gravity's Rainbow*, *Slow Learner*, *Mason and Dixon*, *Against the Day*, *Inherent Vice*, and *Bleeding Edge* is
- Martin Amis.
 - Philip K. Dick.
 - Graham Greene.
 - Thomas Pynchon.
 - Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
23. **Not** one of the traditional characters found in Greek drama; rather, one added by the twentieth-century literary critic Northrup Frye to the traditional, is the
- agroikos.
 - alazon.
 - deuteragonist.
 - eiron.
 - protagonist.
24. The literary and cultural period characterized by a gradual tempering of romantic impulse and the steady growth of realism in English letters, noted for the authors Tennyson, both Brownings, Arnold, and Swinburne, among others, is known as the
- Early Victorian Age.
 - Modernist Period.
 - Neoclassic Period.
 - Post-Modernist Period.
 - Romantic Period.
25. A term applied to those, including writers and artists, who leave, usually voluntarily, their native lands and reside elsewhere is
- exoticism.
 - expatriate.
 - flyting.
 - gnomic.
 - homodyne.
26. The period in American literary history covering 1900 to 1930 that is known for, in part, the virtual birth of modern American poetry and for the self-consciously dislocated, culturally and otherwise, Lost Generation is the
- Naturalistic and Symbolistic Period.
 - Period of the Confessional Self.
 - Postmodernist Period.
 - Realistic Period.
 - Romantic Period.
27. An ingenious variety of analogy widely used by many seventeenth-century poets who explore all areas of knowledge to find—in the startlingly esoteric or shockingly commonplace—telling and unusual analogies for their ideas is called a(n)
- attemperation.
 - diminishing metaphor.
 - heaping figure.
 - locus classicus.
 - metaphysical conceit.
28. Novels and plays characterized by a romantic aura that deal with espionage or intrigue fall into the genre known as
- action-adventure.
 - cloak and dagger.
 - cloak and sword.
 - cock and bull.
 - showing versus telling.
29. The twentieth-century Scottish novelist and short-story writer who wrote *Memento Mori*, *A Far Cry from Kensington*, *Aiding and Abetting*, *The Finishing School*, and *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, which features flashforward as a plot device, is
- Nadine Gordimer.
 - Doris Lessing.
 - Iris Murdoch.
 - Jean Rhys.
 - Muriel Spark.
30. A grammatically correct statement in which one word is placed in the same grammatical relationship with two words but in different senses is called
- analepsis.
 - metonymy.
 - syllipsis.
 - synecdoche.
 - tautology.

Part 2: The UIL Reading List

20 items (2 points each)

Items 31-36 are associated with Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*.

Items 37-42 are associated with George Eliot's *Silas Marner*.

Items 43-50 are associated with William Butler Yeats's selected poetry.

31. In Tennessee Williams's memory play *The Glass Menagerie*, the poignant observation that unmarried women are "little birdlike women without any nest—eating the crust of humility all their life!" is made by
- Amanda.
 - Laura.
 - Jim.
 - the narrator.
 - Tom.
32. Amanda's describing Bessie Mae Hopper's serialized story as "the *Gone with the Wind* of the post-World-War generation" constitutes a
- classical allusion.
 - historical allusion.
 - musical allusion.
 - political allusion.
 - topical allusion.
33. Jim argues that the only difference Tom and himself and their coworkers is
- ambition.
 - relationship status.
 - social poise.
 - vocal talent.
 - wages.
34. The intimate sharing found in "You say there's so much in your heart that you can't describe to me. That's true of me, too. There's so much in my heart that I can't describe to you! So let's respect each other's—" is spoken by
- Amanda to Laura.
 - Amanda to Tom.
 - Laura to Tom.
 - Tom to Amanda.
 - Tom to Laura.
35. Tom Wingfield's recollection of events ends with
- Amanda's shouting at Tom.
 - Jim's going down the fire escape.
 - Laura's blowing out the candles.
 - Tom's going to another movie.
 - Tom's staring at his father's portrait.
36. The Wingfield family member who is described as the only young person "who ignores the fact that the future becomes the present, the present the past, and the past turns into everlasting regret if you don't plan for it!" is
- Amanda.
 - Jim.
 - Laura.
 - Tom.
 - Mr. Wingfield.
-
37. In Eliot's *Silas Marner*, the wife of the local wheelwright whose malady had not been successfully addressed until Silas administers herbs is
- Molly Farren.
 - Nancy Lammeter.
 - Priscilla Lammeter.
 - Sally Oates.
 - Dolly Winthrop.
38. "I was the first to say you'd get your money back" are among the story's final spoken words, offered by
- Mr. Crackenthorpe.
 - Mr. Dowlas.
 - Mr. Kimble.
 - Mr. Macey.
 - Mr. Snell.
39. The narrator's commentary: "A weaver who finds hard words in his hymn-book knows nothing of abstractions; as the little child knows nothing of parental love, but only knows one face and one lap towards which it stretches its arms for refuge and nurture" turns on a(n)
- antithesis.
 - double entendre.
 - metaphor.
 - paradox.
 - simile.
40. "[I]t won't do any good to make the thing known" is
- Dane's deposition at Lantern Yard.
 - Dunstan's comment about selling the horse.
 - Marner's thought about finding his gold.
 - Molly's last statement to her daughter.
 - Nancy's advice about Godfrey's being the father.

41. Mr. Macey, twice offering Silas Marner his opinion on cause-unseen and effect-experienced, references Old Harry, a colloquial name for the
- devil.
 - farrier.
 - parish clerk.
 - squire.
 - wheelwright.
42. The imagery in the narrator's noting that there "was a buzz of voices through the house, as Miss Nancy entered, mingled with the scrape of a fiddle preluding in the kitchen" is enriched by
- heteroglossia.
 - onomatopoeia.
 - resonance.
 - syzygy.
 - xenoglossia.
-
- Items 43-50 refer to William Butler Yeats's
The Second Coming**
- Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, 4
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity. 8
- Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi* 12
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it 16
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle, 20
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?
43. The tone of W. B. Yeats's "The Second Coming" is
- ambivalent.
 - inspirational.
 - ominous.
 - pessimistic.
 - skeptical.
44. The spatiotemporal urgency characterizing the conviction "Surely some revelation is at hand; / Surely the Second Coming is at hand" points to
- aesthetic distance.
 - liminality.
 - luminism.
 - meliorism.
 - perspectivism.
45. The grammatical construction characterizing the clause found in lines 7 and 8, wherein two important coordinate ideas have coordinate presentation, is an example of
- ambiguity.
 - chiasmus.
 - parallelism.
 - reduplication.
 - rhopalic progression.
46. Line 2's repetition in close proximity of two words that have the same root exemplifies
- allelograph.
 - hypallage.
 - parataxis.
 - pleonasm.
 - polyptoton.
47. Yeats's combining of elements from two different belief systems (lines 9-14) constitutes (a)
- concrete universal.
 - melopoeia.
 - metafiction.
 - mythopoeia.
 - peripetia.
48. The major thematic concern of Yeats's poem is
- anticipation of catastrophic change.
 - avian symbolism's pervasiveness.
 - historical hypersomnia.
 - messianic millennialism.
 - Nigerian cultural and societal instability.
49. The combined repetitions occurring at *both* the beginning and ending of lines 9 and 10 is called
- anaphora.
 - epanalepsis.
 - epistrophe.
 - symploce.
 - tautology.

50. The speaker's referencing "the Second Coming" constitutes, in part, a
- A) biblical allusion.
 - B) classical allusion.
 - C) historical allusion.
 - D) literary allusion.
 - E) topical allusion.
54. Arguably, the number of letters that the speaker looses from the string-tied bundle (line 3) is
- A) one.
 - B) two.
 - C) four.
 - D) eight.
 - E) fourteen.

Part 3: Ability in Literary Criticism

15 items (2 points each)

Items 51-55 refer to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's

[My letters! all dead paper, mute and white!]

My letters! all dead paper, . . . mute and white!—
 And yet they seem alive and quivering
 Against my tremulous hands which loose the string
 And let them drop down on my knee to-night. 4
 This said, . . . he wished to have me in his sight
 Once, as a friend: this fixed a day in spring
 To come and touch my hand ... a simple thing,
 Yet I wept for it!—this, . . . the paper's light . . . 8
 Said, *Dear, I love thee*; and I sank and quailed
 As if God's future thundered on my past.
 This said, *I am thine*—and so its ink has paled
 With lying at my heart that beat too fast. 12
 And this . . . O Love, thy words have ill availed,
 If, what this said, I dared repeat at last!

51. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "[My letters! all dead paper, . . . mute and white]" best fits the form
- A) Anglo-Italian sonnet.
 - B) Miltonic sonnet. 300
 - C) Shakespearean sonnet.
 - D) Spenserian sonnet.
 - E) *terza rima* sonnet.
52. When repeatedly employing the relative pronoun **this**, the speaker is referring pointedly to the
- A) allusions made to ill-availed words.
 - B) letters.
 - C) lover's use of italics.
 - D) times her love intimated "I love you."
 - E) sonnet-writing.
53. The metrical pattern that predominates is
- A) anapestic trimeter.
 - B) iambic pentameter.
 - C) iambic tetrameter.
 - D) iambic trimeter.
 - E) trochaic pentameter.
55. Within the final two lines of Browning's sonnet, "O Love, thy words have ill availed, / If, what this said, I dared repeat at last!" is featured a(n)
- A) apostrophe.
 - B) encomium.
 - C) harangue.
 - D) incantation.
 - E) kenosis.
- Items 56-61 refer to Ronald Wallace's**
- Building an Outhouse**
- It is not unlike building a poem: the pure mathematics of shape; the music of hammer and tenpenny nail, of floor joist, stud wall, and sill; the cut wood's sweet smell. 4
- If the Skil saw rear up in your unpracticed hand, cussing, hawking its chaw of dust, and you're lost in the pounding particulars of fly rafters, siding, hypotenuse, and load 8 until nothing seems level or true but the scorn of the tape's clucked tongue,
- let the nub of your plainspoken pencil prevail and it's up! Functional. Tight as a sonnet. 12 It will last forever (or least for awhile) though the critics come and sit on it, and sit on it.
56. The contrast between the imagery of line 4 and the imagery of line 14 in Wallace's sonnet is linked to
- A) auditory imagery.
 - B) gustatory imagery.
 - C) olfactory imagery.
 - D) tactile imagery.
 - E) visual imagery.
57. The effect of Wallace's first four lines depends on
- A) auditory and olfactory imagery.
 - B) auditory and tactile imagery.
 - C) gustatory and visual imagery.
 - D) tactile imagery.
 - E) visual and tactile imagery.

58. The figure of speech with which Ronald Wallace's speaker begins his comparison "Building an Out-house" is
- A) hyperbole.
 - B) litotes.
 - C) oxymoron.
 - D) syncope.
 - E) zeugma.

might be a resource. Wit,
 your grateful slave.
 Form. Sometimes you force it, 15
 sometimes divorce it
 to make it behave.
 So don't try to force it.
 Respect a good corset. 19

*a woman's undergarment
 worn to shape the figure

59. The saw's response to the load it is being asked to handle (line 5-6) is an example of
- A) affective fallacy.
 - B) apostrophe.
 - C) mimesis.
 - D) pathetic fallacy.
 - E) personification.

62. The unusual species of rhyme that characterizes the third stanza is
- A) broken rhyme.
 - B) chain rhyme.
 - C) falling leonine rhyme.
 - D) heteromerous rhyme.
 - E) leonine rhyme.

60. The line in which the controlling image's tenor and vehicle are both confirmed and unquestionably linked is
- A) line 3.
 - B) line 7.
 - C) line 11.
 - D) line 12.
 - E) line 14.

63. The continuation of both the syntax and the meaning from one stanza to the next that occurs twice in Mitchell's poem is called
- A) boustrophedon.
 - B) end-stopped line.
 - C) enjambment.
 - D) run-on line.
 - E) truncation.

61. The full impact of the speaker's opinion of critics is carried by the last line's repetition of what is effectively (a/n)
- A) alliteration.
 - B) assonance.
 - C) barbarism.
 - D) double entendre.
 - E) euphemism.

64. The rhyming of the middle lines of stanzas 1-5, as well as the second line of stanza 6, is an example of
- A) assonant rhyme.
 - B) consonant rhyme.
 - C) dissonant rhyme.
 - D) resonance.
 - E) syzygy.

Items 62-65 refer to Elaine Mitchell's

Form

Is it a corset*
 or primal wave? 3
 Don't try to force it.
 Even endorse it
 to shape and deceive. 6
 Ouch, too tight a corset.
 Take it off. No remorse. It
 's an ace up your sleeve. 9
 No need to force it.
 Can you make a horse knit?
 Who would believe?
 Consider. Of course, it 12

65. The closed poetic form of Elaine Mitchell's poem "Form" is the
- A) pantoum.
 - B) rondeau.
 - C) roundelay.
 - D) *terza rima*.
 - E) villanelle.

**Required Tie-Breaking Prompt
 on next page**



Required Tie-Breaking Essay

Note well: Contestants who do not write an essay will be disqualified even if they are not involved in any tie. Any essay that does not demonstrate a sincere effort to discuss the assigned topic will be disqualified. The judge(s) should note carefully this criterion when breaking ties: ranking of essays for tie-breaking purposes should be based primarily on how well the topic has been addressed.

Three sheets of paper have been provided; your written response should reflect the *Handbook's* notion that an essay is a "moderately brief discussion of a restricted topic": something more than just a few sentences.

Read Linda Pastan's "Ethics," and offer a discussion of the speaker's valuation of life-experience while she views the Rembrandt in the museum compared to her youthful view of the two options offered by her professor in "ethics class so many years ago."

Ethics

In ethics class so many years ago our teacher asked this question every fall: If there were a fire in a museum, which would you save, a Rembrandt painting or an old woman who hadn't many	5	
years left anyhow? Restless on hard chairs caring little for pictures or old age we'd opt one year for life, the next for art and always half-heartedly. Sometimes the woman borrowed my grandmother's face	10	
leaving her usual kitchen to wander some drafty, half-imagined museum. One year, feeling clever, I replied why not let the woman decide herself? Linda, the teacher would report, eschews*	15	avoids
the burdens of responsibility. This fall in a real museum I stand before a real Rembrandt, old woman, or nearly so, myself. The colors within this frame are darker than autumn,	20	
darker even than winter—the browns of earth, though earth's most radiant elements burn through the canvas. I know now that woman and painting and season are almost one and all beyond the saving of children.	25	

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line arrows up →

1. B	215	31. A	16	FOLD
2. E		32. E	20	along the three
3. C	298	33. C	59	longitudinal
4. A	40	34. D	33	lines for ease
5. D	261	35. C	96-97	in grading. →
6. E	600	36. D	45	Please note that the objective
7. B	42	37. D	5	scores should not be altered to
8. E	208	38. D	182	reflect the breaking of any ties.
9. D	427	39. E	13	Simply adjust ranking.
10. C		40. E	176	The thirty items in Part 1
11. C	319	41. A	50;78	are worth one point each.
12. D	609	42. B	90	The twenty items in Part 2
13. B	63	43. C		are worth two points each.
14. A	61	44. B	273	The fifteen items in Part 3
15. C	223	45. C	351	are worth two points each.
16. B	221	46. E	372	DO NOT
17. E		47. D	312	mark (cross out)
18. A	200	48. A		actual LETTER answer;
19. D	556	49. D	468	mark the answer NUMERAL .
20. C	226	50. A		
21. D	251	51. B	300	
22. D	585; 127	52. B		
23. A	11	53. B		
24. A	161	54. C		
25. B	189	55. A	37	Page numbers refer
26. A	316	56. C		to the <i>Handbook 12e</i> ,
27. E	296	57. A		New Directions
28. B	93	58. B	275	<i>The Glass Menagerie</i> ,
29. E	20; 593	59. E	361	Signet Classics
30. C	466	60. D		<i>Silas Marner</i> ,
		61. E	186	and
		62. A	68	Scribner Paperback Poetry
		63. C	174	<i>The Collected Poems of</i>
		64. B	107	<i>William Butler Yeats</i>
		65. E	497	

Part 4: Tie-Breaking Essay

These notes are not intended to be understood as a key for the Tie-Breaking Essay prompt; rather, they should serve the judge(s) as a presentation of critical ideas that might appear in an essay responding to the prompt.

Criteria for judging the Tie-Breaking Essay **SHOULD** include

- the degree to which the instructions have been followed,
- the quality of the critical insight offered in response to the selection,
- the overall effectiveness of the written discussion, and
- the grammatical correctness of the essay.

Note well that the quality of the contestant's critical insight is more important than the contestant's prose style. In short, the Literary Criticism contest is one that promotes the critical analysis of literature. The quality of the writing, which should never go unappreciated, does not trump evidence of critical analysis.

Critical Notes on Linda Pastan's "Ethics"

Literary concepts that MIGHT be used by the contestant in a discussion comparing Pastan's speaker's valuation of life-experience while viewing the Rembrandt in the museum compared to her youthful view of the two options offered by her ethics professor include

- anecdote,
- blank verse,
- comparison,
- diction,
- epiphany,
- metaphor,
- sigmatism,
- theme, and
- tone.

The contestant's response should address both the speaker's (the poet's) youthful tone—reinforced through her teacher's "Linda eschews / the burden of responsibility" (lines 1-16, esp. 15-16) and the conscious awareness of the speaker's present-time "old woman, / or nearly so, myself" (lines 17-25, esp. 18-19).

The contestant's comparison might turn on the concept of burden: a relatively young student's failure to understand the burden associated with choice and, on the other hand, the older museum-visitor's realization—perhaps epiphany—that having to choose is not always a matter in the abstract.

The young writer might recognize that the classroom is locus of preparation—in this case ethical preparation—where a burden in the abstract can be safely discussed in preparation for the myriad moments of choosing that identify adulthood.

The poem's last line—the speaker's subtle lament—might be recognized as an eloquent reminder that the school of hard knocks does provide an education . . . that life is, indeed, *the* classroom.