

Question 1: Poetry Analysis

6 points

In Colleen McElroy's poem "Monologue for Saint Louis," published in 1980, the speaker returns to her childhood home in St. Louis, Missouri, after an extended absence and contemplates how she has changed. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how McElroy uses literary elements and techniques to convey the speaker's complex experience of returning home.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points For any of the following: • There is no defensible thesis. • The intended thesis only restates the prompt. • The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. • There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the poem.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
Responses that do not earn this point: • Only restate the prompt. • Make a generalized comment about the poem that doesn't respond to the prompt. • Describe the poem or features of the poem rather than making a claim that requires a defense. Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt • "The poem 'Monologue for Saint Louis' depicts a speaker contemplating her return home and how she has changed." Do not relate to the prompt • "St. Louis has a large national monument, commonly known as the Arch." Describe the poem or features of the poem • "The intentional lack of capitalization is significant in conveying the poem's meaning."		Responses that earn this point: • Provide a defensible interpretation of the speaker's complex experience of returning home. Examples that earn this point: Provide a defensible interpretation • "The speaker in McElroy's poem is filled with both nostalgia and regret upon returning home." • "In the poem, the speaker's return home is full of paradoxes—her experience is sweet and rotten, familiar and strange, a return and a visit to a new place. It is through her love of words that she is able to reconcile her bittersweet experience." • "Through repetition and the absence of punctuation, McElroy reveals that the speaker's visit home is marked by moments of recognition as well as disorientation."
Additional Notes: • The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. • The thesis may be anywhere within the response. • For a thesis to be defensible, the poem must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. • The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. • A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0–4 points)	0 points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.	1 point EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student's argument.	2 points EVIDENCE: Provides some specific, relevant evidence. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student's argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	3 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how at least one literary element or technique in the poem contributes to its meaning.	4 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how multiple literary elements or techniques in the poem contribute to its meaning.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
	Typical responses that earn 0 points: - Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. - May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant.	Typical responses that earn 1 point: - Tend to focus on summary or description of a poem rather than specific details or techniques. - Mention literary elements, devices, or techniques with little or no explanation.	Typical responses that earn 2 points: - Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. - May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don't strengthen the argument. - May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. - Do not explain the connections or progression between the student's claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established.	Typical responses that earn 3 points: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the poem to build an interpretation. - Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. - Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim.	Typical responses that earn 4 points: - Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. - Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the poem to build an interpretation. - Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. - Explain how the writer's use of multiple literary techniques contributes to the student's interpretation of the poem.
Additional Notes: - Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. - To earn the fourth point in this row, the response may observe multiple instances of the same literary element or technique if each instance further contributes to the meaning of the poem.					

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Sophistication (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (<i>"Human experiences always include ..."</i> OR <i>"In a world where ..."</i> OR <i>"Since the beginning of time ..."</i>). - Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (<i>"While another reader may see ..."</i> OR <i>"Though the poem could be said to ..."</i>). - Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the poem comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation. - Oversimplify complexities in the poem. - Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the student's argument.	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following: - Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the poem. - Illuminating the student's interpretation by situating it within a broader context. - Accounting for alternative interpretations of the poem. - Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
Additional Note: This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student's argument, not merely a phrase or reference.		

Question 1: Poetry Analysis

6 points

In Victor Hernández Cruz’s poem “Two Guitars,” published in 2001, the speaker imagines that two guitars are alive and engaging in conversation about their musical experiences. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Hernández Cruz uses literary elements and techniques to convey a complex portrayal of the guitars’ musical world.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

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Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
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Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt • <i>“The poet conveys the guitars’ complex musical world through the use of several literary techniques.”</i> Do not relate to the prompt • <i>“Music is a vital element of many cultures around the world.”</i> Describe the poem or features of the poem • <i>“Victor Hernández Cruz’s poem consists of 36 lines and depicts two guitars speaking to one another. He uses figurative language to convey the experiences of the guitars.”</i>		Examples that earn this point: Provide a defensible interpretation • <i>“The poet uses personification and vivid imagery to convey the powerful emotions that bring the guitars’ emotional, energetic musical world into being.”</i> • <i>“The poem depicts the experiences of playing an instrument and hearing music in a way that portrays the guitars inhabiting spaces that connect ordinary life to timeless truths.”</i> • <i>“In the 2001 poem ‘Two Guitars,’ Victor Hernández Cruz employs metaphor and simile to portray the guitars’ musical world. This musical world reflects life in New York City’s vibrant Latino community.”</i>
Additional Notes: • The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. • The thesis may be anywhere within the response. • For a thesis to be defensible, the poem must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. • The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn’t do so to earn the thesis point. • A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.		

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