

English IV AP – Literature and Composition | Poetry Objective #3:
“Musée Des Beaux Arts”

Name _____

Period _____

1. _____ The "Old Masters" mentioned in this poem are
 - a. poets.
 - b. painters.
 - c. martyrs.
 - d. Saints.
 - e. novelists.

2. _____ The antecedent of the pronoun "they" in line 9 is
 - a. children.
 - b. Old Masters.
 - c. the aged.
 - d. someone else.
 - e. There is no antecedent.

3. _____ The allusion in the poem to the dreadful martyrdom probably refers to the
 - a. fall of Icarus.
 - b. suffering of the ploughman.
 - c. pain of childbirth.
 - d. crucifixion of Christ.
 - e. massacre of the innocents.

4. _____ In the poem the drowning of Icarus is
 - a. an event that could have been avoided.
 - b. an act determined by fate.
 - c. a sign of God's displeasure.
 - d. an added illustration of martyrdom.
 - e. a subject appropriate to art.

5. _____ The poem begins with
 - a. a general statement.
 - b. a vivid image.
 - c. a bemused ironic statement.
 - d. a mythological allusion.
 - e. an apostrophe to artists.

6. _____ The speaker states that Icarus' death was
 - a. the result of failure to obey.
 - b. a sign of God's wrath.
 - c. a moment of historic importance.
 - d. an event that produced no reaction.
 - e. the result of a misjudgment of the sun's power.

7. _____ The speaker suggests that the miraculous birth was
 - a. an event that pleased only the aged.
 - b. a great moment in the history of religion.
 - c. the beginning of Christianity.
 - d. a popular subject of art.
 - e. an event that drew the ploughman to the manger.

8. _____ The poem expresses
- moral indignation.
 - religious fervor.
 - aesthetic appreciation.
 - direct and matter-of-fact comment.
 - misanthropy.
9. _____ The tone of the poem is
- sublime.
 - sentimental.
 - ironic.
 - indignant.
 - vitriolic.
10. _____ The movement of the poem is
- from general to specific.
 - from the abstract to the concrete.
 - from the vague to the specific, returning to the vague.
 - from the indignant to the obtrusive.
 - inductive.
11. _____ The fact that it is an "expensive delicate" ship (line 19) harkens back to
- the miraculous birth.
 - the work of the masters .
 - the imagery of the horse.
 - an allusion to Icarus.
 - classical Greek art.
12. _____ Which line's diction seems the most inappropriate with the formality established early in the work?
- Line 5.
 - Line 12.
 - Line 14.
 - Line 19.
 - Line 21.
13. _____ The use of which of the following words is most juxtaposed in the poem?
- "suffering" (line 1).
 - "miraculous" (line 6).
 - "innocent" (line 13).
 - "forsaken" (line 16).
 - "expensive" (line 19).
14. _____ The work as a whole takes as its theme the juxtaposition of
- the holy with the unholy.
 - the Christian and the Jewish.
 - the evil and the damned.
 - the artist and their subjects.
 - the dramatic with the everyday.

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Read the following poem and choose the best answer for each objective question.

“Musee Des Beaux Arts”
by W.H. Auden

About suffering they were never wrong,
 The Old Masters: how well they understood
 Its human position; how it takes place
 While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along,
 How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting (5)
 For the miraculous birth, there always must be
 Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
 On a pond at the edge of the wood.
 They never forgot
 That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course (10)
 Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
 Where the dogs go with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
 Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Breughel's Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
 Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may (15)
 Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
 But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
 As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
 Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
 Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky, (20)
 Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.