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### **Welcome to the written examination in ENG1304 - American Literature**

20 December 2018, 4 hours (14.30 to 18.30 hrs).

- You must choose **ONE** of the essay questions on the next page and write an essay on that topic.
- You must answer in English.
- You have access to an online English-English dictionary: <https://www.macmillandictionary.com>
- Your answer will be automatically saved every 20 seconds.
- You must write and submit your entire assignment in Inspira.

*Good luck with your exam!*

# 1 Essay questions

Answer ONE question.

1. How does Elizabeth Bishop represent the child's experience in her poem "In the Waiting Room"? Your discussion should pay attention to the poem's formal features as well as its thematic concerns. (Text provided.)

2.

**EITHER**










a) Art Spiegelman once said of his novel *Maus*: "This is a story that's motored by the word." Discuss how *The Complete Maus* is "motored by the word," even though it is a graphic novel.

**OR**

b) Discuss how *The Complete Maus* contributes to our historical understanding of the Holocaust.

3. Toni Morrison once said in an interview: "Sometimes good looks like evil; sometimes evil looks like good-- you never really know what it is. It depends on what uses you put it to." Discuss the central characters and events in *Sula* in light of this statement.

Fill in your answer here

Format - | **B** | *I* | U |  $x_2$  |  $x^2$  |  $I_x$  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  $\Omega$  |  |  |  $\Sigma$  | 

Words: 0

Maximum marks: 0

**Question 1**  
Attached



Elizabeth Bishop, "In the Waiting Room"

In Worcester, Massachusetts,  
I went with Aunt Consuelo  
to keep her dentist's appointment  
and sat and waited for her  
in the dentist's waiting room.  
It was winter. It got dark  
early. The waiting room  
was full of grown-up people,  
arctics and overcoats,  
lamps and magazines. 10  
My aunt was inside  
what seemed like a long time  
and while I waited I read  
the *National Geographic*  
(I could read) and carefully  
studied the photographs:  
the inside of a volcano,  
black, and full of ashes;  
then it was spilling over  
in rivulets of fire. 20  
Osa and Martin Johnson  
dressed in riding breeches,  
laced boots, and pith helmets.  
A dead man slung on a pole  
—"Long Pig," the caption said.  
Babies with pointed heads  
wound round and round with string;  
black, naked women with necks  
wound round and round with wire  
like the necks of light bulbs. 30  
Their breasts were horrifying.  
I read it right straight through.  
I was too shy to stop.  
And then I looked at the cover:  
the yellow margins, the date.

Suddenly, from inside,  
came an *oh!* of pain  
—Aunt Consuelo's voice—  
not very loud or long.  
I wasn't at all surprised; 40  
even then I knew she was  
a foolish, timid woman.  
I might have been embarrassed,

but wasn't. What took me  
completely by surprise  
was that it was *me*:  
my voice, in my mouth.  
Without thinking at all  
I was my foolish aunt,  
I—we—were falling, falling, 50  
our eyes glued to the cover  
of the *National Geographic*,  
February, 1918.

I said to myself: three days  
and you'll be seven years old.  
I was saying it to stop  
the sensation of falling off  
the round, turning world.  
into cold, blue-black space.  
But I felt: you are an *I*, 60  
you are an *Elizabeth*,  
you are one of *them*.

*Why* should you be one, too?  
I scarcely dared to look  
to see what it was I was.  
I gave a sidelong glance  
—I couldn't look any higher—  
at shadowy gray knees,  
trousers and skirts and boots  
and different pairs of hands 70  
lying under the lamps.

I knew that nothing stranger  
had ever happened, that nothing  
stranger could ever happen.  
Why should I be my aunt,  
or me, or anyone?  
What similarities—  
boots, hands, the family voice  
I felt in my throat, or even 80  
the *National Geographic*  
and those awful hanging breasts—

held us all together  
or made us all just one?  
How—I didn't know any  
word for it—how “unlikely” . . .  
How had I come to be here,  
like them, and overhear  
a cry of pain that could have

got loud and worse but hadn't?

The waiting room was bright  
and too hot. It was sliding  
beneath a big black wave,  
another, and another.

Then I was back in it.  
The War was on. Outside,  
in Worcester, Massachusetts,  
were night and slush and cold,  
and it was still the fifth  
of February, 1918.