Information

University of Oslo
Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages
Autumn 2024
ENG2332 - Poetry in English

The exam has four topics to choose from, and you will write an essay on one of them.

All questions must be answered in English.

What you write will be stored automatically every 15 seconds.

After starting the exam, you will see your remaining time in the upper left corner.

You are allowed to use an English-English dictionary, which is provided here in Inspera.

Break a leg!

1 Exam question

Answer **ONE** of the following topics.

1) Write an essay on Seamus Heaney's poem 'Terminus' (1987), explaining how the poem can be said to illustrate characteristic preoccupations in Heaney's *oeuvre*. You should pay close attention to the poem's details, while also drawing on your own knowledge of relevant contexts. **(Text provided.)**

2) Write an essay on Elizabeth Bishop's 'Poem' (1976), explaining how the poem can be said to illustrate characteristic preoccupations in Bishop's work. You should pay close attention to the poem's details, while also drawing on your own knowledge of relevant contexts. **(Text provided.)**

3) Write an essay on Paul Muldoon's elegy 'Turkey Buzzards' (2006), discussing the ways in which the poem achieves its end. You may wish to compare and contrast Muldoon's poem with other elegies you know. **(Text provided.)**

4) Write an essay in which you compare and contrast Anne Stevenson's 'Arioso Dolente' (2000) and Muldoon's 'At Least They Weren't Speaking French' (2006). **(Texts provided.)**

Fill in your answer here

Format

Words: 0

Maximum marks: 0

Question 1
Attached



TEXTS PROVIDED
POETRY IN ENGLISH, AUTUMN 2024 1)

Terminus (1987) ESSAY 1

Heaney, Seamus

ProQuest document link

FULL TEXT

Terminus (1987)

I

When I hoked there, I would find
An acorn and a rusted bolt.

If I lifted my eyes, a factory chimney
And a dormant mountain.

If I listened, an engine shunting
And a trotting horse.

Is it any wonder when I thought
I would have second thoughts?

II

When they spoke of the prudent squirrel's hoard
It shone like gifts at a nativity.

When they spoke of the mammon of iniquity
The coins in my pockets reddened like stove-lids.

I was the march drain and the march drain's banks
Suffering the limit of each claim.

III

Two buckets were easier carried than one.
I grew up in between.

3 My left hand placed the standard iron weight.
4 My right tilted a last grain in the balance.

5 Baronies, parishes met where I was born.
6 When I stood on the central stepping stone

7 I was the last earl on horseback in midstream
8 Still parleying, in earshot of his peers.

DETAILS

Publication title:	Opened Ground: Poems 1966–1996
Pages:	295-296
Publication year:	1998
Physical description:	xiii, 479 p.
Publisher:	Faber &Faber
Place of publication:	London
Country of publication:	United Kingdom, London
Publication subject:	Literature
ISBN:	0571194931
Source type:	Book
Language of publication:	English
Document type:	Book chapter, Poem
Publication note:	Copyright © 2000 Bell &Howell Information and Learning Company. All Rights Reserv ed. Do not export or print from this database without checking the Copyright Conditions to see what is permitted.; Preliminaries, introductory and editorial matter omitted.
Accession number:	CC0001282
ProQuest document ID:	2147731144
Document URL:	https://www.proquest.com/lion1/books/terminus-1987/docview/2147731144/sem-2?accountid=14699

ESSAY 2

3)

Elizabeth Bishop, 'Poem'

About the size of an old-style dollar bill,
American or Canadian,
mostly the same whites, gray greens, and steel grays
-this little painting (a sketch for a larger one?)
has never earned any money in its life.
Useless and free, it has spent seventy years
as a minor family relic handed along collaterally to owners
who looked at it sometimes, or didn't bother to.

It must be Nova Scotia; only there
does one see abled wooden houses
painted that awful shade of brown.
The other houses, the bits that show, are white.
Elm trees, low hills, a thin church steeple
—that gray-blue wisp—or is it? In the foreground
a water meadow with some tiny cows,
two brushstrokes each, but confidently cows;
two minuscule white geese in the blue water,
back-to-back,, feeding, and a slanting stick.
Up closer, a wild iris, white and yellow,
fresh-squiggled from the tube.
The air is fresh and cold; cold early spring
clear as gray glass; a half inch of blue sky
below the steel-gray storm clouds.
(They were the artist's specialty.)
A specklike bird is flying to the left.
Or is it a flyspeck looking like a bird?

Heavens, I recognize the place, I know it!
It's behind—I can almost remember the farmer's name.
His barn backed on that meadow. There it is,

titanium white, one dab. The hint of steeple,
filaments of brush-hairs, barely there,
must be the Presbyterian church.
Would that be Miss Gillespie's house?
Those particular geese and cows
are naturally before my time.

A sketch done in an hour, "in one breath,"
once taken from a trunk and handed over.
Would you like this? I'll probably never
have room to hang these things again.
Your Uncle George, no, mine, my Uncle George,
he'd be your great-uncle, left them all with Mother
when he went back to England.
You know, he was quite famous, an R.A....

I never knew him. We both knew this place,
apparently, this literal small backwater,
looked at it long enough to memorize it,
our years apart. How strange. And it's still loved,
or its memory is (it must have changed a lot).
Our visions coincided—"visions" is
too serious a word—our looks, two looks:
art "copying from life" and life itself,
life and the memory of it so compressed
they've turned into each other. Which is which?
Life and the memory of it cramped,
dim, on a piece of Bristol board,
dim, but how live, how touching in detail
—the little that we get for free,
the little of our earthly trust. Not much.
About the size of our abidance
along with theirs: the munching cows,
the iris, crisp and shivering, the water
still standing from spring freshets,
the yet-to-be-dismantled elms, the geese.

ESSAY 3 5)

TURKEY BUZZARDS

Muldoon, Paul

ProQuest document link

FULL TEXT

TURKEY BUZZARDS

They've been so long above it all,
those two petals
so steeped in style they seem to stall
in the kettle

simmering over the town dump
or, better still,
the neon-flashed, X-rated rump
of fresh roadkill

courtesy of the interstate
that Eisenhower
would overtake in the home straight
by one horsepower,

the kettle where it all boils down
to the thick scent
of death, a scent of such renown
it's given vent

to the idea buzzards can spot
a deer carcass
a mile away, smelling the rot
as, once, Marcus

Aurelius wrinkled his nose
at a gas leak

6)

23 from the Great Sewer that ran through Rome
24 to the Tiber

25 then went searching out, through the gloam,
26 one subscriber

[Page 79]
27 to the other view that the rose,
28 full-blown, antique,

29 its no-frills ruff, the six-foot shrug
30 of its swing-wings,
31 the theologian's and the thug's
32 twin triumphings

33 in a buzzard's shaved head and snood,
34 buzz-buzz-buzzy,
35 its logic in all likelihood
36 somewhat fuzzy,

37 would ever come into focus,
38 it ever deign
39 to dispense its hocus-pocus
40 in that same vein

41 as runs along an inner thigh
42 to where, too right,
43 the buzzard vouchsafes not to shy
44 away from shite,

45 its mission not to give a miss
46 to a bête noire,
47 all roly-poly, full of piss
48 and vinegar,

49 trying rather to get to grips
50 with the grommet
51 of the gut, setting its tinsnips
52 to that grommet

7)

[Page 80]

53 in the spray-painted hind's hindgut
54 and making a
55 sweeping, too right, a sweeping cut
56 that's so blasé

57 it's hard to imagine, dear Sis,
58 why others shrink
59 from this sight of a soul in bliss,
60 so in the pink

61 from another month in the red
62 of the shambles,
63 like a rose in over its head
64 among brambles,

65 unflappable in its belief
66 it's Ararat
67 on which the Ark would come to grief,
68 abjuring that

69 Marcus Aurelius humbug
70 about what springs
71 from earth succumbing to the tug
72 at its heartstrings,

73 reported to live past fifty,
74 as you yet may,
75 dear Sis, perhaps growing your hair
76 in requital,

77 though briefly, of whatever tears
78 at your vitals,

[Page 81]
79 learning, perhaps, from the nifty,

nay *thrifty*, way

these buzzards are given to stoop
and take their ease
by letting their time-chastened poop
fall to their knees

till they're almost as bright with lime
as their night roost,
their poop containing an enzyme
that's known to boost

their immune systems, should they prong
themselves on small
bones in a cerebral cortex,
at no small cost

to their well-being, sinking fast
in a deer crypt,
buzzards getting the hang at last
of being stripped

of their command of the vortex
while having lost
their common touch, they've been so long
above it all.

DETAILS

Publication title:	Horse Latitudes
Pages:	78-81
Publication year:	2006
Physical description:	107 p.
Publisher:	Faber &Faber
Place of publication:	London

ESSAY 4 9)

Arioso Dolente (for my grandchildren when they become grandparents)

Stevenson, Anne

ProQuest document link

FULL TEXT

Arioso Dolente (for my grandchildren when they become grandparents)

Mother, who read and thought and poured herself into me;
she was the jug and I was the two-eared cup.
How she would scorn today's 'show-biz inanity,
democracy twisted, its high ideals sold up!'
Cancer filched her voice, then cut her throat.
Why is it
none of the faces in this family snapshot
looks upset?

Father, who ran downstairs as I practised the piano;
barefooted, buttoning his shirt, he shouted 'G,
D-natural, C-*flat*! *Dolente, arioso*.
Put all the griefs of the world in that change of key.'
Who then could lay a finger on his sleeve
to distress him with
'One day, Steve, two of your well-taught daughters
will be deaf.'

Mother must be sitting, left, on the porch-set,
you can just see her. My sister's on her lap.
And that's Steve confiding to his cigarette
something my mother's mother has to laugh at.
The screened door twangs, slamming
on its sprung hinge.
Paint blisters on the steps; iced tea, grasscuttings,
elm flowers, mock orange ...

A grand June evening, like this one, not too buggy,
unselfquestioning midwestern, maybe 1951.
And, of course, there in my grandmother's memory
lives just such another summer—1890 or 91.

10)

Though it's not on her mind now/then.
No, she's thinking of
the yeast-ring rising in the oven. Or how *any* shoes
irritate her bunion.

[Page 20]

Paper gestures, pictures, newsprint laughter.
And after the camera winks and makes its catch,
the decibels drain away *for ever and ever*.
No need to say 'Look!' to these smilers on the porch,
'Grandmother will have her stroke,
and you, mother, will nurse her.'
Or to myself, this woman died paralysed-dumb, and that one
dumb from cancer.

Sufficient unto the day ... Grandmother, poor and liturgical,
whose days were duties, stitches in the tea-brown blanket
she for years crocheted, its zigzag of yellow wool,
her grateful offering, her proof of goodness to present,
gift-wrapped, to Our Father in Heaven. 'Accept,
O Lord, this best-I-can-make-it soul.'
And He: 'Thou good and faithful sevant, lose thyself
and be whole.'

Consciousness walks on tiptoe through what happens.
So much is felt, so little of it said.
But ours is the breath on which the past depends.
'What happened' is what the living teach the dead,
who, smilingly lost to their lost concerns,
in grey on grey,
are all of them deaf, blind, unburdened
by today.

As if our recording selves, our mortal identities,
could be cupped in a concave universe or lens,
ageless at all ages, cleansed of memories,
not minding that meaningful genealogy extends
no further than mind's flash images reach back.
As for what happens next,
let all the griefs of the world
find keys for that.

ESSAY 4 11)

AT LEAST THEY WEREN'T SPEAKING FRENCH

Muldoon, Paul

ProQuest document link

FULL TEXT

[Page 35]

AT LEAST THEY WEREN'T SPEAKING FRENCH

I

At least they weren't speaking French
when my father sat with his brothers and sisters, two of each, on a ramshackle bench
at the end of a lane marked by two white stones
and made mouth music as they waited, chilled to the bone

fol-de-rol fol-de-rol fol-de-rol-di-do

for the bus meant to bring their parents back from town.
It came and went. Nothing. One sister was weighed down
by the youngest child. A grocery bag from a town more distant still, in troth.
What started as a cough

fol-de-rol fol-de-rol fol-de-rol-di-do

would briefly push him forward to some minor renown,
then shove him back, oddly summery, down
along the trench
to that far-flung realm where, at least, they weren't speaking French.

[Page 36]

II

At least they weren't speaking French
when another brother, twenty-something, stepped on a nail no one had bothered to clench

17 in a plank thrown
18 halfheartedly from the known to the unknown

19 *fol-de-rol fol-de-rol fol-de-rol-di-do*

20 across a drainage ditch on a building site. His nut-brown arm. His leg nut- brown.
21 That nail sheathed in a fine down
22 would take no more than a week or ten days to burgeon from the froth
23 of that piddling little runoff

24 *fol-de-rol fol-de-rol fol-de-rol-di-do*

25 and make of him a green and burning tree. His septicaemia-crown.
26 Sowans as much as he could manage. Trying to keep that flummery down
27 as much as any of them could manage. However they might describe the stench,
28 as exhalation, as odor, at least they weren't speaking French.

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III

29 At least they weren't speaking French
30 when those twenty-something council workers, one with a winch, the other a wrench,
31 would point my son and me to a long overgrown
32 lane marked by two faded stones

33 *fol-de-rol fol-de-rol fol-de-rol-di-do*

34 like two white-faced clowns
35 gaping at the generations who passed between them and set down
36 bag after grocery bag. Setting them on the table. The newspaper tablecloth.
37 1976. Not the East Tyrone Brigade, not Baader-Meinhof

38 *fol-de-rol fol-de-rol fol-de-rol-di-do*

39 bringing the suggestion of a frown
40 to those two mummer stones still trying to lie low, trying to keep their mummery down
41 to a bare minimum, two stones that, were they to speak, might blench

42 as much at their own giving out as our taking in that at least they weren't speaking French.

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