Ode On A Grecian Urn
by John Keats

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensuous ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.
O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.
1. What is a question the speaker asks in the first stanza?
   A. Are heard or unheard melodies sweeter?
   B. What men or gods are these?
   C. Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
   D. To what green altar, O mysterious priest, / Lead'st thou that heifer?

2. Whom or what is the speaker addressing in the first stanza?
   A. a flower
   B. a god
   C. a man
   D. an urn

3. Read these lines from the poem.

"Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both.
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?"

What can you infer from "What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?" (line 10)?
   A. There are pipes depicted on the urn.
   B. The speaker knows how to play pipes and timbrels.
   C. Pipes have a sweeter sound than timbrels.
   D. Timbrels have a sweeter sound than pipes.
4. Read the second and third stanzas of the poem.

Why can the boughs of the trees never shed their leaves?

A. because they are an illustration and will never change
B. because they are in a climate that is warm all year
C. because the trees produce a sap that causes the leaves to stick to the boughs
D. because the "Bold Lover" (line 17) takes such good care of them

5. What is a theme of this poem?

A. Nature is more important than art.
B. Art lasts longer than life.
C. Telling the truth is more important than being beautiful.
D. If you are attractive, people will believe what you say.

6. Read these lines from the poem.

"Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue."

Why might the poet have repeated the word "happy" so often in this stanza?

A. to make readers question whether people in love are really happy
B. to call attention to a similarity between a "burning forehead" and a "parching tongue" (line 30)
C. to suggest that the happiness being described will soon come to an end
D. to emphasize that the happiness being described is never-ending
7. Read these lines from the poem.

"Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'rst thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return."

Whom or what does the word "these" in line 31 refer to?

A. the "garlands" in line 34
B. the "folk" in line 37
C. the "town" in line 38
D. the "streets" in line 38

8. Read these lines from the poem.

"Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!"

The "Bold Lover" is close to kissing a female who is "fair," or beautiful. How long will she be fair?

9. What does the urn "say" in lines 49 and 50?
10. In line 49 the claim is made that ""[b]eauty is truth.""

Explain whether the rest of the poem supports or contradicts this claim.

Support your answer with evidence from the text.
As virtuous men pass mildly away,  
   And whisper to their souls to go,  
Whilst some of their sad friends do say  
   The breath goes now, and some say, No:

So let us melt, and make no noise,  
   No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;  
'Twere profanation of our joys  
   To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,  
   Men reckon what it did, and meant;  
But trepidation of the spheres,  
   Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love  
   (Whose soul is sense) cannot admit  
Absence, because it doth remove  
   Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined,  
   That our selves know not what it is,  
Inter-assured of the mind,  
   Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,  
   Though I must go, endure not yet  
A breach, but an expansion,  
   Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so  
   As stiff twin compasses are two;  
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show  
   To move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the center sit,  
   Yet when the other far doth roam,  
It leans and hearkens after it  
   And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,  
   Like th' other foot, obliquely run;  
Thy firmness makes my circle just,  
   And makes me end where I begun.
1. In line 5, the speaker urges "us" to melt. What else does the speaker urge "us" to do?
   A. The speaker urges "us" to create a tear-flood.
   B. The speaker urges "us" to create a sigh-tempest.
   C. The speaker urges "us" to make no noise.
   D. The speaker urges "us" to speak with the laity.

2. The poet uses stanzas to organize the ideas of this poem. What is the structure of each stanza?
   A. Each stanza is three lines long with a rhyming pattern of ABA.
   B. Each stanza is four lines long with a rhyming pattern of ABAB.
   C. Each stanza is five lines long with a rhyming pattern of AABBA.
   D. Each stanza is six lines long with a rhyming pattern of AABBCC.

3. Read these lines from the poem:
   
   Dull sublunary lovers' love
   (Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
   Absence, because it doth remove
   Those things which elemented it.

   But we by a love so much refined,
   That our selves know not what it is,
   Inter-assured of the mind,
   Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

   How does the love the speaker feels differ from "[d]ull sublunary lovers' love"?
   A. The love the speaker feels has more to do with the mind.
   B. The love the speaker feels has more to do with the eyes.
   C. The love the speaker feels has more to do with the lips.
   D. The love the speaker feels has more to do with the hands.
4. The speaker has to leave the person he or she is addressing.

What is a phrase or line that supports this conclusion?

A. "The breath goes now" (line 4)
B. "Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears" (line 9)
C. "Though I must go" (line 22)
D. "If they be two" (line 25)

5. What is the speaker's message to his or her addressee?

A. The more time you spend with me, the more I love you.
B. We should spend some time apart because I do not love you as much as I used to.
C. Pay attention to the movement of the earth because that movement can cause harm.
D. Do not be sad about me leaving, because our love will bring me back to you.
6. Read these lines from the poem:

   Our two souls therefore, which are one,
   Though I must go, endure not yet
   A breach, but an expansion,
   Like gold to airy thinness beat.

   If they be two, they are two so
   As stiff twin compasses are two;
   Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
   To move, but doth, if the other do.

   And though it in the center sit,
   Yet when the other far doth roam,
   It leans and hearkens after it,
   And grows erect, as that comes home.

What are compasses compared to in these lines?

A. "souls" (line 25)
B. "gold" (line 28)
C. "airy thinness" (line 28)
D. "home" (line 32)
7. Read these lines from the poem:

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the center sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.

What does the word "it" in line 29 refer to?

A. "the fixed foot" (line 27)
B. "the center" (line 29)
C. "the other" (line 30)
D. "home" (line 32)
8. Read these lines from the poem:

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the other do.

Normally the "soul" of the addressee "makes no show to move." Under what circumstance does it move?
9. Read these lines from the poem:

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.

What makes the speaker "end" where he or she began?

10. What can you infer about the personality of the addressee?

Support your answer with evidence from the text.
Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility

We passed the school where children played,
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 't is centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.
1. Who "kindly stopped" (line 2) for the speaker of the poem?
   A. a child at school
   B. a farmer in a field
   C. Death
   D. Immortality

2. How has the poet structured each stanza of the poem?
   A. The first and third lines of each stanza rhyme.
   B. In each stanza, all four lines have the same number of beats.
   C. Each stanza begins with the word "We" and ends with a common noun.
   D. Each stanza is constructed as a single sentence.

3. Death is polite.

   Which stanza besides the first supports this conclusion?
   A. the third stanza
   B. the fifth stanza
   C. the fourth stanza
   D. the second stanza

4. The speaker of the poem is someone who has died. How can the speaker's tone best be described?
   A. angry and bitter
   B. energetic and curious
   C. frantic and frightened
   D. calm and measured

5. What is a main theme of the poem?
   A. While immortality may seem like a great gift, it is actually a heavy burden.
   B. Death is something to be feared and avoided at all costs.
   C. It is often difficult and painful for someone who has lived a long life to accept death.
   D. Death may signify the end of life, but it is also linked to immortality.
6. Why might the poet have personified death in this poem?
   A. to compare obedient horses with a person who has died
   B. to emphasize the similarity between the idea of immortality and the idea of eternity
   C. to argue that life after death does not exist
   D. to make death seem like a human being instead of an event

7. Read these lines from the poem:

   Because I could not stop for Death,
   He kindly stopped for me;
   The carriage held but just ourselves
   And Immortality.

   We slowly drove, he knew no haste, 5

   Whom does the word "We" in line 5 refer to?
   A. the speaker
   B. the speaker, Death, and Immortality
   C. Death and Immortality
   D. the speaker and Death

8. What does the speaker pass while in the carriage? Name three things.
9. Describe the house in front of which the speaker pauses. Provide at least three details from the poem.

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10. What might the "house" described in the fourth stanza be? Support your inference with evidence from the poem.

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Song VII
by Rabindranath Tagore

My song has put off her adornments.
She has no pride of dress and decoration.
Ornaments would mar our union;
they would come between thee and me;
their jingling would drown thy whispers.

My poet's vanity dies in shame before thy sight.
O master poet, I have sat down at thy feet.
Only let me make my life simple and straight,
like a flute of reed for thee to fill with music.
Song VII - Comprehension Questions

Name: _______________________________ Date: ________________

1. What has the song of the speaker put off?
   A. adornments
   B. simplicity
   C. poetry
   D. words

2. What tone does the phrase "O master poet" help create?
   A. a casual, personal tone
   B. a dark, threatening tone
   C. a sad, regretful tone
   D. a formal, respectful tone

3. The speaker of the poem believes that the addressee is superior to him or her.

   What lines from the poem support this conclusion?
   A. lines 4 and 5
   B. lines 6 and 7
   C. lines 1 and 2
   D. lines 3 and 4

4. What might be an example of the "jingling" ornaments that the speaker refers to in lines 3-5?
   A. a keychain
   B. rhyme
   C. a diamond necklace
   D. a bell

5. What is a theme of the poem?
   A. Music is a more worthwhile art than poetry.
   B. Expensive jewelry is often a sign of vanity.
   C. One should try to achieve simplicity in art and in life.
   D. Uncertainty is a necessary evil in art and life.
6. What is the meaning of "put off" in line 1?
   A. turned away
   B. postponed
   C. turned off
   D. taken off

7. Read lines 1 and 2 from the poem:
   
   My song has put off her adornments.
   
   She has no pride of dress and decoration.
   
   Who or what does the word "She" refer to?
   A. "pride" (line 2)
   B. the speaker
   C. "adornments" (line 1)
   D. "my song" (line 1)

8. What "dies in shame" before the sight of the addressee?

9. What does the speaker want to do with his or her life?
10. What steps has the speaker taken to make his or her life simple and straight? Name at least two. Support your answer with evidence from the poem.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"Why do they make good neighbors?
Isn't it Where there are cows?
But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."
1. What does the speaker meet the neighbor to do?
   A. to spill boulders in the sun
   B. to give offense
   C. to make gaps in a wall between them
   D. to set a wall between them

2. The poem describes a wall. How does the structure of the poem contribute to that description?
   A. The lack of rhyme in the poem hints that elves may be responsible for knocking down the wall between the speaker and the speaker's neighbor.
   B. The repetition of the phrase "Good fences make good neighbors" suggests that the speaker believes the saying to be true.
   C. As one long block of text without any breaks between lines, the poem suggests the image of a wall.
   D. The iambic pentameter establishes a quick, bouncing rhythm that emphasizes the poem's cheerful mood.

3. Read this line from the poem: "Something there is that doesn't love a wall."
   What lines in the poem support this statement?
   A. lines 5-9
   B. lines 25-27
   C. lines 2-4
   D. lines 17-19

4. What does the speaker's neighbor probably believe about good neighbors?
   A. Good neighbors tell the truth, even when doing so is difficult.
   B. Good neighbors are always willing to help and share with each other.
   C. Good neighbors hunt rabbits and plant apple trees together.
   D. Good neighbors keep a certain amount of distance from each other.
5. What is a theme of the poem?

A. the pleasure that an unexpected discovery can bring  
B. the unrealistic thinking of people who live in the country  
C. the nature of social relationships  
D. the hardships of old age

6. Read these lines from the poem:

There where it is we do not need the wall:

He is all pine and I am apple orchard.

My apple trees will never get across  

And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.

What is the meaning of line 24?

A. The neighbor likes to eat pine nuts in the spring, while the speaker prefers to eat apples in the fall.  
B. The neighbor is a pine tree in the woods, while the speaker is an apple tree in an orchard.  
C. The neighbor is worried that the speaker's apple trees may trespass on his property.  
D. The neighbor's property is full of pine trees, while the speaker's property is full of apple trees.

7. Read lines 1 and 2 from the poem:

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,

That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,

What does the word "it" refer to?

A. "there" (line 1)  
B. "Something" (line 1)  
C. "the frozen-ground-swell" (line 2)  
D. "a wall" (line 1)
8. Who in this poem says, "Good fences make good neighbors"?

9. Summarize the "notion" (line 29) that the speaker thinks about putting into the neighbor's head.

10. Does the speaker of the poem believe that "good fences make good neighbors"? Support your answer with evidence from the text.