

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

In each of the following poems, the speaker responds to the conditions of a particular place and time—England in 1802 in the first poem, the United States about 100 years later in the second. Read each poem carefully. Then write an essay in which you compare and contrast the two poems and analyze the relationship between them.

London, 1802

Milton!¹ thou shouldst be living at this hour:
 England hath need of thee: she is a fen²
 Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
 Line Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
 5 Have forfeited their ancient English dower³
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
 Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
 Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart;
 10 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
 So didst thou travel on life's common way,
 In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
 The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

—William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

¹ John Milton (1608-1674), English poet and political writer, author of *Paradise Lost*, whose famous essay against censorship, "Areopagitica," championed the cause of liberty and public virtue.

² Swamp

³ Natural endowment

Douglass*

Ah, Douglass, we have fall'n on evil days,
 Such days as thou, not even thou didst know,
 When thee, the eyes of that harsh long ago
 Line Saw, salient, at the cross of devious ways,
 5 And all the country heard thee with amaze.
 Not ended then, the passionate ebb and flow,
 The awful tide that battled to and fro;
 We ride amid a tempest of dispraise.
 Now, when the waves of swift dissension swarm,
 10 And Honor, the strong pilot, lieth stark,
 Oh for thy voice high-sounding o'er the storm,
 For thy strong arm to guide the shivering bark,
 The blast-defying power of thy form,
 To give us comfort through the lonely dark.

Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)

* Frederick Douglass (1817-1895), American writer, former slave, whose autobiography (1845) made him a leader in the abolitionist cause.

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