

**Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition**  
**fall 2008 final exam**  
**take-home essay topic**

The following poems are both concerned with Eros, the god of love in Greek mythology. Read the poems carefully. Then, write an essay in which you compare and contrast the two portrayals of Eros and analyze the techniques used to create these depictions. Consider especially how literary elements such as diction, imagery, metaphor, point of view, structure, and tone help to reinforce each poem's characterization of the Greek god of love.

**ΕΡΩΣ<sup>1</sup>**

Why hast thou nothing in thy face?  
Thou idol of the human race,  
Thou tyrant of the human heart,  
The flower of lovely youth that art;  
Yea, and that standest in thy youth  
An image of eternal Truth,  
With thy exuberant flesh so fair,  
That only Pheidias<sup>2</sup> might compare,  
Ere from his chaste marmoreal<sup>3</sup> form  
Time had decayed the colours warm;  
Like to his gods in thy proud dress,  
Thy starry sheen of nakedness.

Surely thy body is thy mind,  
For in thy face is nought to find,  
Only thy soft unchristen'd smile,  
That shadows neither love nor guile,  
But shameless will and power immense,  
In secret sensuous innocence.

O king of joy, what is thy thought?  
I dream thou knowest it is nought,  
And wouldst in darkness come, but thou  
Makest the light where'er thou go.  
Ah yet no victim of thy grace,  
None who e'er long'd for thy embrace,  
Hath cared to look upon thy face.

—Robert Bridges (1899)

**Eros**

I call for love  
But help me, who arrives?  
This thug with broken nose  
And squinty eyes.  
"Eros, my bully boy,<sup>4</sup>  
Can this be you,  
With boxer lips  
And patchy wings askew?"

"Madam," cries Eros,  
"Know the brute you see  
Is what long overuse  
Has made of me.  
My face that so offends you  
Is the sum  
Of blows your lust delivered  
One by one.

We slaves who are immortal  
Gloss<sup>5</sup> your fate  
And are the archetypes  
That you create.  
Better my battered visage,  
Bruised but hot,  
Than love dissolved in loss  
Or left to rot."

—Anne Stevenson (1990)

<sup>1</sup> ΕΡΩΣ: Eros (in Greek)

<sup>2</sup> Pheidias: Greek sculptor of the fifth century B.C.E.

<sup>3</sup> marmoreal: marble

<sup>4</sup> bully boy: jovial companion

<sup>5</sup> gloss: explain or interpret