

## 1. ANS: D

Note: Amy Clampitt, a contemporary poet, was born and brought up in New Providence, Iowa, graduated from Grinnell College, and from that time on lived mainly in New York City working for a publishing company. She wrote poetry in high school, so this fact would interest many high school English students. The recipient in 1982 of a Guggenheim Fellowship, and in 1984 of an Academy of American Poets Fellowship, she was made a MacArthur Prize Fellow in 1992.

New Teachers: Since this passage has multiple sub-topics that distract students from the meaning of the poem, try this pre-reading activity. Have them recall and write a short narrative about an event in their lives that would have them recall this incident each time they saw or viewed or talked about something related to it. For example, when my brother was only 3 or 4, the family took a trip to the zoo. My brother was not frightened by the sounds or actions of any animal that day until we went to the Lion's House. It wasn't the roar of the lions that caused anything but curious observation from my brother, Pete. As we lingered and chattered in front of a hippopotamus that was housed in the same building, one very large hippo suddenly widened his jaws the full three feet span. As Dad turned to suggest what we would view next, he saw Pete hightail it out of the building as fast as his little legs would carry him. As Dad took off in pursuit, his final shout was that is my only child with common sense. Every time my family goes to the zoo or we watch anything with hippos, this comic story reminds us of the family's chasing after Pete.

1. In the first stanza the speaker presents the whippoorwill as, D, an annoyance. It repeats itself "like the stuck groove of an LP with a defect," which does not lack humor. The bird is not a metaphor for the poet, a symbol of death, or an emblem of freedom, choices A, B, and C. It could be choice E, but there is no message from the bird, just the speaker's reaction to it.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Easy                    MSC: 97% answered correctly

NOT: 1994 #41

## 2. ANS: B

2. The whippoorwill is called a "voice of obsession" because it keeps repeating the same song (line 3), choice B. The cry might be shrill, but the speaker does not say that, eliminating choice A. Choice C is a good distracter and a fair guess as to why a 27% missed it is that the speaker can't see the bird doesn't make it invisible; the song makes it perceptible. The bird is not coming closer, choice D. Nothing is implied in the poem that the bird is sick; it is still singing, choice E.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Easy                    MSC: 73% answered correctly

NOT: 1994 #42

## 3. ANS: B

3. The speaker gives two reasons, choice B. The first is that that it could be sick and the second is hungry, attacked to the moths. This number eliminates choices A, C, D, and E.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Easy                    MSC: 73% answered correctly

NOT: 1994 #43

4. ANS: E

4. The speaker implies that the moths are food for all birds, choice E. In lines 22-23, the speaker hypothesizes that the existence of moths has no purpose except to insure that “no bird goes hungry.” The moths are not the subject of the poem, so moths make good distracters since three stanzas wonder about moths. The speaker goes back to the topic with stanza in line 25, so if moths are bent on self-destruction or are dangerous to whippoorwills, choices A and B, are not good choices. No comparison is made between the whippoorwill and moths, choice C. The speaker does not think of the moths as heroic, choice D. Instead they are “innumerable nodes of spun-out tissue untidying the trees, the larval.”

PTS: 1                    DIF: Medium            MSC: 64% answered correctly  
NOT: 1994 #44

5. ANS: B

5. The diction used in lines 19-21, “innumerable nodes of spun-out tissue untidying the trees, the larval that spew of such hairy hordes,” the speaker finds some aspects of nature alien to her, choice B. The passage does not have any references to scientific explanations or that nature is governed by higher power choices A and D. The subject is still birds and why these insects exist except, perhaps, as food for them. These insects are not reminding her of the beauty of nature, choice E. The moths are not tragic and not comforting; (choices C) if anything, they boarder on grotesque.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Medium            MSC: 57% answered correctly  
NOT: 1994 #46

6. ANS: E

6. This is a difficult question for most students because the vocabulary is difficult to understand in context of the poem. In line 26, “what’s disjunct” shows that the behavior of the birds “with dartings and flashings” is not integrated or incorporated in a larger entity, choice E. Even their colors change on the body parts. It all appears very discordant to the speaker. The speaker does not talk about most observers seeing the birds, just her aunt and her child, choice A. Choice B is alluded to with the imagery, but the speaker knows they are part of the natural world as the speaker goes on to say that all living creatures are part of the “tragic wonder of being at all.” Disjunct does not mean broken; it means separated or not sequential, choice C. The birds are not in threat of extinction, choice E.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Hard                MSC: 26% answered correctly  
NOT: 1994 #46

7. ANS: A

7. Before the speaker noticed the bird’s color and behavior, her aunt had noticed and “drew” or brought the five-year old child “up” to look, too, among the maple trees, choice, A. “Things” is used to describe the aunt, choices B and C. “Name” is used for the birds, choice D. “Green deeps” creates metonymy for the trees, choice E.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Hard                MSC: 33% answered correctly  
NOT: 1994 #47

8. ANS: C

8. Both of these birds stand out as individuals amid their surroundings, choice C. The rose colored grosbeak for its markings and the whippoorwill for its “uncalled for” color are noticed. The grosbeak does not keep the speaker awake, choice A. All birds, according to the speaker, feed on insects, choice B. The birds do not function as a symbol or representation of the speaker, choice D. Nature, in the poem, is not violated, just not understood, choice E.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Easy                    MSC: 68% answered correctly  
NOT: 1994 #48

9. ANS: D

9. In line 34, her aunt “believed her cat had learned to leave birds along,” stating her lack of acceptance for the nature of cats, choice D. Natural disasters are not discussed for choice A to be valid. The speaker is more curious about scientific information that deals with nature than her aunt, choice C. Her aunt noticed things in nature before the speaker did (lines 30-31), but the aunt doesn’t understand nature better, choice C. The aunt doesn’t understand the “nodes,” the nature of her disease anymore than the speaker does “as it was a system, a webwork of error that throve until it killed her. The aunt is largely aware, not indifferent, of her natural surroundings passed down to her from her hikes with her father, choice E.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Easy                    MSC: 70% answered correctly  
NOT: 1994 #49

10. ANS: C

10. This question uses a line reference to “node after node” of a network of error that throve until it killed her just as the moths have “innumerable nodes of spun out tissue.” This language describes the aunt’s death which is most similar to the language used to describe the moths, choice C. The other choices, A, B, D, and E, of cats, birds, whippoorwill or grandfather do not have the same language.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Easy                    MSC: 69% answered correctly  
NOT: 1994 #50

11. ANS: C

11. The speaker views nature with constant questions asking how it works. She can’t understand the profound, complex life and death forms, choice C. She starts out annoyed, then moves to confusion, and finally has some acceptance of its reminders in the last stanza. The choices A and B are not in the poem as a whole, even though the speaker is, perhaps, comforted in the last stanza as to why the whippoorwill’s cause her such discomfort. They remind her of her aunt. Nature for the speaker are not inspiring or comforting, it’s somewhat alien to her, choices A and B. The speaker uses language that is more disgusting than vicious, Choice D. Nature is not benign; it is nasty and nasty, choice E.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Medium                    MSC: 48% answered correctly  
NOT: 1994 #51

12. ANS: A

12. A categorical or unconditional declaration is in lines 17-18, 23-24, 25-26, and 40-43. Lines 1-2 are qualified with “it was very “nearly” enough” instead of it was enough. In lines 17-18, the speaker says unconditionally that “insects are to be seen as an ailment, moths above all, choice B The speaker remains unconditional with choice C in “the gregariousness of the many are what we can’t abide.” She continues with her unqualified statement in “We single out for notice/above all what’s disjunct, the way birds are....” and “we survive as we can; the hooked-up, the humdrum, the brief, tragic....,” eliminating choices D and E

PTS: 1                      DIF: Hard                      MSC: 29% answered correctly  
NOT: 1994 #52

13. ANS: E

13. This is an applied definition or identification question many students answered correctly, choice E. Line 51 uses the human characteristic of breathing to personify night. Choices A, B, C, and D do not give human characteristics to inanimate objects.

PTS: 1                      DIF: Easy                      MSC: 74% answered correctly  
NOT: 1994 #53

14. ANS: D

14. “The whippoorwill out/ in the woods, for me, brought back/ as by a relay, from a place at such a distance/ no recollection now in place could reach so far, /the memory of a memory she told me of once;/ of how her father, my grandfather, by whatever/ now unfathomable happenstance, / carried her (she might have been five) into the breathing night. / Listen!” she said he’d said. “Did you hear it? / That was a whippoorwill.” And she (and I) never forgot.” This section returns the reader to the initial subject of the poem, illustrates the influence of childhood experience, links the present to the past, and evokes a family relationship. The reader now understands the significance of the title and her relationship with her beloved aunt. Choice D is the only one that is not present in the last lines of the poem.

PTS: 1                      DIF: Medium                      MSC: 56% answered correctly  
NOT: 1994 #54

15. ANS: B

15. The grandfather’s words convey a sense of awe, choice B. For the five year old child the wonder and amazement of the sound comes from her father’s reverent approach to introduce the child to the whippoorwill. He is not regretful, tragic, hopeful, or concerned about danger. He is introducing his small child to the beauty of the bird’s song. The narrator’s irritation of the bird at the first of the poem comes from the lost childhood memory that reflects the pain of the lost aunt.

PTS: 1                      DIF: Easy                      MSC: 79% answered correctly  
NOT: 1994 #55