

Multiple-Choice Sample Questions: Passage 2

ADVICE TO A PROPHET

- When you come, as you soon must, to the streets of our city,
Mad-eyed from stating the obvious,
Not proclaiming our fall but begging us
In God's name to have self-pity,
- 5 Spare us all word of the weapons, their force and range,
The long numbers that rocket the mind;
Our slow, unreckoning hearts will be left behind,
Unable to fear what is too strange.
- 10 Nor shall you scare us with talk of the death of the race.
How should we dream of this place without us?
The sun mere fire, the leaves untroubled about us,
A stone look on the stone's face?
- 15 Speak of the world's own change. Though we cannot conceive
Of an undreamt thing, we know to our cost
How the dreamt cloud crumbles, the vines are blackened by frost,
How the view alters. We could believe,
- 20 If you told us so, that the white-tailed deer will slip
Into perfect shade, grown perfectly shy,
The lark avoid the reaches of our eye,
The jack-pine lose its knuckled grip
- On the cold ledge, and every torrent burn
As Xanthus* once, its gliding trout
Stunned in a twinkling. What should we be without
The dolphin's arc, the dove's return,
- 25 These things in which we have seen ourselves and spoken
Ask us, prophet, how we shall call
Our natures forth when that live tongue is all
Dispelled, that glass obscured or broken
- 30 In which we have said the rose of our love and the clean
Horse of our courage, in which beheld
The singing locust of the soul unshelled,
And all we mean or wish to mean.
- 35 Ask us, ask us whether with the worldless rose
Our hearts shall fail us; come demanding
Whether there shall be lofty or long standing
When the bronze annals of the oak-tree close.

*Xanthus: in Greek myth, a river scalded by Hephæstus, god of fire.

13. The speaker assumes that the prophet referred to in lines 1-12 will come proclaiming
 - (A) a new religious dispensation
 - (B) joyous self-awareness
 - (C) a new political order
 - (D) the horror of self-destruction
 - (E) an appreciation of nature
14. According to the speaker, the prophet's "word of the weapons" (line 5) will probably not be heeded because
 - (A) human beings are really fascinated by weapons
 - (B) nature is more fascinating than warfare
 - (C) men and women are more concerned with love than with weapons
 - (D) people have heard such talk too often before
 - (E) people cannot comprehend abstract descriptions of power
15. In the phrase, "A stone look on the stone's face," (line 12) the speaker is suggesting that
 - (A) a stone is the most difficult natural object to comprehend
 - (B) such a stone is a metaphor for a human lack of understanding
 - (C) it is human beings who see a face on stones
 - (D) nature is a hostile environment for the human race
 - (E) the pain of life is bearable only to a stoic
16. In line 13 the speaker is doing which of the following?
 - (A) Anticipating the prophet's own advice
 - (B) Despairing of ever influencing the prophet
 - (C) Exchanging his own point of view with that of the prophet
 - (D) Heeding the prophet's advice
 - (E) Prescribing what the prophet should say
17. In lines 14-16, the speaker is asserting that we
 - (A) learn more or less about decay in nature according to our point of view
 - (B) can never understand change in nature
 - (C) are always instructed by an altering of our perspective
 - (D) have all experienced loss and disappointment
 - (E) realize that the end of the world may be near
18. The speaker implies that without "the dolphin's arc, the dove's return" (line 24) we would
 - (A) be less worried about war and destruction
 - (B) crave coarser pleasures than the enjoyment of nature
 - (C) have less understanding of ourselves and our lives
 - (D) be unable to love
 - (E) find ourselves unwilling to heed the advice of prophets
19. The phrase "knuckled grip" (line 20) implies that the jack-pine
 - (A) will never really fall from the ledge
 - (B) has roots that grasp like a hand
 - (C) is very precariously attached to the ledge
 - (D) is a rough and inhuman part of nature
 - (E) is very awkwardly placed
20. "The dolphin's arc" (line 24) refers to the
 - (A) biblical story of Noah
 - (B) leap of a dolphin
 - (C) hunting of dolphins with bows and arrows
 - (D) rainbow
 - (E) migration pattern of the dolphin
21. The phrase "that live tongue" (line 27) is best understood as
 - (A) a metaphor for nature
 - (B) an image of the poet's mind
 - (C) a symbol of the history of the world
 - (D) a reference to the poem itself
 - (E) a metaphor for the advice of the prophet
22. According to the speaker, we use the images of the rose (line 29), the horse (line 30), and the locust (line 31)
 - (A) literally to denote specific natural objects
 - (B) as metaphors to aid in comprehending abstractions
 - (C) as similes illustrating the speaker's attitude toward nature
 - (D) to reinforce images previously used by the prophet
 - (E) to explain the need for scientific study of nature
23. Which of the following best describes an effect of the repetition of the phrase "ask us" in line 33?
 - (A) It suggests that the prophet himself is the cause of much of the world's misery.
 - (B) It represents a sarcastic challenge to the prophet to ask the right questions.
 - (C) It suggests that the speaker is certain of the answer he will receive.
 - (D) It makes the line scan as a perfect example of iambic pentameter.
 - (E) It provides a tone of imploring earnestness.
24. Which of the following best paraphrases the meaning of line 36?
 - (A) When the end of the year has come
 - (B) When the chronicles no longer tell of trees
 - (C) When art no longer imitates nature
 - (D) When nature has ceased to exist
 - (E) When the forests are finally restored
25. Which of the following best describes the poem as a whole?
 - (A) An amusing satire on the excesses of modern prophets
 - (B) A poetic expression of the need for love to give meaning to life
 - (C) A lyrical celebration of the importance of nature for man
 - (D) A personal meditation on human courage in the face of destruction
 - (E) A philosophical and didactic poem about man and nature