2015 APENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

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 the following poem by Caribbean writer Derek Walcott, the speaker recalls a childhood experience of visiting

an elderly woman storyteller. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-developed essay, discuss the speaker’s

recollection and analyze how Walcott uses poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience.

XIV

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|  | With the frenzy of an old snake shedding its skin,  |
|  | the speckled road, scored with ruts, smelling of mold,  |
|  | twisted on itself and reentered the forest  |
| Line | where the dasheen1leaves thicken and folk stories begin. |
| 5 | Sunset would threaten us as we climbed closer  |
|  | to her house up the asphalt hill road, whose yam vines  |
|  | wrangled over gutters with the dark reek of moss,  |
|  | the shutters closing like the eyelids of that mimosa2 |
|  | called Ti-Marie; then — lucent as paper lanterns,  |
| 10 | lamplight glowed through the ribs, house after house —  |
|  | there was her own lamp at the black twist of the path.  |
|  | There’s childhood, and there’s childhood’s aftermath.  |
|  | She began to remember at the minute of the fireflies,  |
|  | to the sound of pipe water banging in kerosene tins,  |
| 15 | stories she told to my brother and myself.  |
|  | Her leaves were the libraries of the Caribbean.  |
|  | The luck that was ours, those fragrant origins!  |
|  | Her head was magnificent, Sidone. In the gully of her voice  |
|  | shadows stood up and walked, her voice travels my shelves.  |
| 20 | She was the lamplight in the stare of two mesmerized boys  |
|  | still joined in one shadow, indivisible twins.  |

1 dasheen: tropical plant with large leaves

2 mimosa: tropical plant whose leaves close or droop when touched or shaken

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