

**2002 AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE
QUESTIONS (Form B)**

Question 2

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

The following poem is a villanelle, a form having strict rules of rhyme, meter, and repetition. Read the poem carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the formal elements of the poem contribute to its meaning.

If I Could Tell You

Time will say nothing but I told you so,
Time only knows the price we have to pay;
If I could tell you I would let you know.

Line If we should weep when clowns put on their show,
(5) If we should stumble when musicians play,
Time will say nothing but I told you so.

There are no fortunes to be told, although,
Because I love you more than I can say,
If I could tell you I would let you know.

(10) The winds must come from somewhere when they blow,
There must be reasons why the leaves decay;
Time will say nothing but I told you so.

Perhaps the roses really want to grow,
The vision seriously intends to stay;
(15) If I could tell you I would let you know.

Suppose the lions all get up and go,
And all the brooks and soldiers run away;
Will Time say nothing but I told you so?
If I could tell you I would let you know.

From W. H. Auden: *Collected Poems by W. H. Auden*.
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