

RILKE (Recondite Individuals' Literary Knowledge Extravaganza)

Edited by John Lawrence

Questions by John Lawrence, Nick Jensen, Caleb Kendrick, Sameen Belal, and Alston Boyd

Playoffs Round 8

1. In one poem, this author claimed that he does not love Juliet, Ophelia, Beatrice, or Laura. He described the title garment of one poem as “Delicate as the wing of a bee / Cool as the heart of a tea-rose”. One poem by him mentions “pale globes of snow” that are the breasts of the swan-women of the Rhine. This author of “Chinoiserie” and “To a Pink Dress” described “acid Venus” rising naked and provocatively out of a “bitter gulf” in a poem about a gypsy woman named Carmen. Though not Ruben Dario, this poet of “Symphony in (*) White Major” listed “verse, marble, [and] onyx” as the materials that make works more beautiful through their resistance to being plied in his poem “Art”. This French author is usually credited with popularizing the phrase “art for art’s sake”. For 10 points, name this 19th-century poet of the collection *Enamels and Cameos*, the father of the Parnassian movement.

ANSWER: Théophile Gautier

2. One character in this novel claims that the happiest moment in her life occurred on the bus ride home from the car crash that killed her fiancé. The last section before this novel’s epilogue ends with the protagonist looking at an African-American man’s forehead as the man emerges from a church on Ash Wednesday, to see if he received ashes. One scene in this novel juxtaposes the conversation around a dinner table with one character explaining why she deliberately took a non-lethal dose of pentobarbital. The protagonist of this novel engages in an existential quest that he calls “the (*) search”, and has an affair with his secretary Sharon Kincaid. This novel’s protagonist is lectured about responsibility by his Aunt Emily after he proposes marriage to his mentally unstable step-cousin Kate during Mardi Gras. For 10 points, name this novel about the cinema-loving New Orleans stockbroker Binx Bolling, by Walker Percy.

ANSWER: *The Moviegoer*

3. In a long speech in this play, one character suggests that a man’s “respectability” is determined by how many things he is ashamed of. That character in this play mistakenly attributes a quote by Beaumarchais to Voltaire, only to be corrected by a man who dreams of breaking the world record for travel between Paris and Biskra. In this play’s third act, the author of “The Revolutionist’s Handbook and Pocket Companion” is captured in the Sierra Nevadas with his chauffeur by the brigand (*) Mendoza. One character discusses Life Force with a woman, a statue, and The Devil in a scene of this play that parodies moments from a Mozart opera. In the first act of this play, Roebuck Ramsden is named a joint guardian of Anne Whitefield together with Jack Tanner. For 10 points, the scene “Don Juan in Hell” appears in what play by George Bernard Shaw, which takes its name from a concept by Nietzsche?

ANSWER: *Man and Superman*

4. The narrator of a novel by an author with this surname sings in her nonsense language over a meal of sardines to win a wind-up car and sells oranges to a Fool to earn money for strawberries as a Christmas gift to her fasting mother. A blind character whom radicals order to drive an explosive Mercedes to trigger a “sympathy bomb” in an opera house shares this surname with the author of a novel in which Bea and the narrator’s hippie mother becomes a Sufi mystic after she takes them to Morocco. The performing (*) bear State o’ Maine’s owner in *The Hotel New Hampshire* shares this surname with an author who claimed that uncertainty arises less from the mechanical doll Olympia than Nathaniel’s anxiety over being blinded by the Sand-Man in his essay on the uncanny. For 10 points, give this surname shared by the author of *Hideous Kinky* and her great-grandfather, who drew on Sophocles to formulate the Oedipus complex.

ANSWER: Freud

5. In one work by this author, two characters debate whether it would have been better if Racine had become a respectable silk merchant, instead of a morally terrible person who wrote great plays. In one novel by him, when a marquis grows bored of the noblewoman he has seduced, the woman revenges herself by tricking him into marrying a prostitute, who poses with her mother as highly religious women. He wrote a picaresque novel in which an innkeeper's wife tells the story of Madame (*) Pommeraye to a character who repeatedly tells his master that everything is foreordained by being written in a great scroll in the sky. This author also wrote an imaginary dialogue between himself and the title relative of a famous composer. For 10 points, name this French Enlightenment-era author, whose philosophical fiction includes *Rameau's Nephew* and *Jacques the Fatalist*.

ANSWER: Denis Diderot

6. This place is the “cultured hell that tests my youth” “feeds... bread of bitterness” to the speaker of one poem and houses “libraries of tears” for another, who recalls a childhood meeting where “Everybody must have / been a spy.” The speaker of another poem named for this place identifies with a man “finding the same old stupid plan / Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.” One poem asks this title place, “When will you send your eggs to India?” while another asks, “Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark?” After he has “given all” to this title location of a “million (*) Trotskyites,” one poem's speaker decides he's “putting [his] queer shoulder to the wheel” after telling it, “Go fuck yourself with your atom bomb.” To show he is a part of this country, a “darker brother” vows to “be at the table / When company comes.” For 10 points, name this title country of an Allen Ginsberg poem, which too is sung by the speaker of a poem by Langston Hughes.

ANSWER: America [accept the United States of America or the USA or any other equivalents]

7. In this play, a crazed former abbot recites a travesty of the Lord's prayer that begins “Oh Satan which art in hell”. When one character in this play attempts to kill another character, she is stopped with the instructions: “Not yet [...] You have to come to his door three times”. The second act of this play ends with a dream sequence in which one character's mother, father, and schoolmaster, and the leading intellectual figures of his era appear to mock his scientific theories. In this play, a chorus repeatedly chants: “We want our rights and we don't care how / We want our (*) revolution now”. Coulmier keeps interrupting to complain about censored lines in this play, in which Simmone constantly changes the head bandages of a man in a bathtub, and another character delivers a speech while being whipped by the actress playing Charlotte Corday. One title French revolutionary figure puts on a play-within-a-play about the other in, for 10 points, what play by Peter Weiss?

ANSWER: Marat/Sade [or The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat As Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade; or Die Verfolgung und Ermordung Jean Paul Marats dargestellt durch die Schauspielgruppe des Hospizes zu Charenton unter Anleitung des Herrn de Sade]

8. One story by this author describes a man cutting the head and paws off of a trapped creature in a pit, which turns into a human corpse. The protagonist of that story by this author is a girl who encounters a hunter in a green coat, who bets her a kiss that he can use a compass to beat her to her destination. She created a character who loses her virginity to her husband in a bed surrounded by a dozen mirrors while she wears a ruby choker. This author of “The Company of Wolves” gave a fictionalized account of (*) Jeanne Duval, the black mistress of Baudelaire, in the title story of her collection *Black Venus*. She wrote a novel in which Jack Walser becomes enamored of Sophie Fevvers, an aerialist who grew wings after hatching from an egg. For 10 points, name this author who wrote the novel *Nights at the Circus* and who gave feminist reinterpretations of fairy tales in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*.

ANSWER: Angela Carter

9. In a novel named for this item, sneezing in German class inspires an anticlerical student to enter an academic arms race with a Jewish rival who repeats the mantra “We must be Europeans.” The Saudi-raised protagonist of another novel named for this item infiltrates a club that puts on Harold Pinter plays under a crime-promoting tennis star. A sociologist-hating grammarian’s “baby boy” Alexis works as an “Exterminating Angel” for this item in *Our Lady of the Assassins*. A “split” between spirituality and sensuality leads Sonya to dump a man who steals his mother’s brooch to buy this item from (*) Hirche after first getting it from Zander and Nelly. Frank’s brother Charles investigates his suspicious confession of arson at Estrella del Mar in a novel named for this item, which consumes Vadim Maslennikov. For 10 points, name this title item of M. Ageyev’s *Novel* and J. G. Ballard’s chronicle of a resort’s *Nights* of addiction.

ANSWER: cocaine [accept coke; accept benzoylmethylecgonine; accept methyl (1R,2R,3S,5S)-3- (benzoyloxy)-8-methyl-8-azabicyclo[3.2.1] octane-2-carboxylate; accept basuco; accept slang terms for cocaine such as blow; prompt on generic answers about “drugs” or “coca”]

10. In a novel by an author with this last name, one character tries to look up “pinking shears” in a dictionary and finds that dried flowers have been pressed into a dictionary, at the entries for the letter of their name. An author with this last name created a character who drops off her children with their grandmother and then drives a Ford car off a cliff and into the lake in which her father died in a train derailment. In that novel by an author with this last name, the narrator’s sister Lucille and the narrator (*) Ruthie are abandoned by their mother in the town of Fingerbone and raised by their aunt, an eccentric drifter named Sylvie. The author of the novel *Housekeeping* shares this last name with the author of poem that includes the refrain “Out of a grave I come to tell you this” and which opens by telling its addressee to “Go to the western gate”. For 10 points, give this last name of the poet of “Luke Havergal”.

ANSWER: Robinson

11. After listing out these things, a baseball lover hears that large ones are like desert oases from his mother’s amnesiac employer. A chess fanatic who represents these things as *single* rows of beans makes a freshman renounce his major for failing his summer quest to answer a question he prefaces with a fact about them from ancient Greece. A pasta lover who resents her sister for finding her an apartment describes a woman who corresponded about these things under a French male name while talking to a drunk notebook thief. These things title a novel in which abandoning the disabled (*) Michela haunts her twin Mattia, who orbits around the anorexic Alice Della Rocca. In an Apostolos Doxiadis novel, Uncle Petros is obsessed by a problem about combining these things, whose *Solitude* names a Paolo Giordano novel. Catherine reveals to the PhD student Hal that she, not her dementia-stricken father Robert, wrote a key result about them. For 10 points, name this subject of the title theorem in David Auburn’s *Proof*.

ANSWER: twin prime numbers [prompt on natural numbers or integers or more general math-related answers] (The leadin is from Yoko Ogawa’s strongly recommended *The Housekeeper and the Professor*)

12. The speaker of a Thom Gunn poem titled for this adjective is “condemned to be / An individual” and “Walk through hypothesis.” This adjective does not describe those who “had no politicians and sang at their ease” according to “Refugee Blues.” “Little Gidding” evokes “The intolerable shirt of flame” that cannot be removed by power described by this adjective. In a poem titled for this adjective, the “Catterpillar and Fly / feed on the Mystery” that “bears the fruit of Deceit.” This adjective describes the “sleeping head” of the speaker’s love on his (*) “faithless arm” in W. H. Auden’s “Lullaby.” “Ode on a Grecian Urn” recalls “All breathing... passion far above” of this adjective, which all things that “are subject to decay” are described by according to *Mac Flecknoe*. For 10 points, name this title adjective of an “Abstract” from Blake’s *Songs of Experience*, which describes error contrasted with divine forgiveness in “An Essay on Criticism.”

ANSWER: human

(The leadin is from Thom Gunn’s “The Human Condition.”)

13. This author described sitting next to a man on a plane who asks him to mouth the words “I want to die” so he can practice lip-reading. This author examined Thomas Harriot’s account of his contact with American Indians in an essay that states that subversiveness is “contained by the power it would appear to threaten”. The line “I begin with a desire to speak with the dead” opens an essay in which he argues that plays try to produce a kind of collective experience called “social energy”. He defined identity as “a characteristic mode of (*) address to the world” and discussed how its formation changed in the Renaissance through a process of “self-fashioning”. He claimed that we should use imagination to fill in the gaps in our knowledge of Shakespeare’s biography in a speculative work on “How Shakespeare became Shakespeare”. For 10 points, name this American literary critic who wrote *Will in the World* and founded New Historicism.

ANSWER: Stephen (Jay) Greenblatt

14. When they are children, a Brazilian expat from this country finds bones in a red cave with her engineer brother, whose corpse she brings home to drought-stricken Wuoth Ogik. While promoting cotton, a native of this country goes clubbing with a chief he meets at Gruyere’s Swiss pub and throws money on the road to escape a roving Women’s League while on leave from a South African college. On Sundays, couples leave the station to dance to guitar music in this country’s Kinenie Forest, where a woman who knits pullovers after her home is (*) burned down has sex with a man who refuses payment for the handle he carves her. The 2002 Caine Prize was awarded to a gay author from this country, who founded the journal *Kwani?* and wrote the memoir *One Day I Will Write About This Place*. Mugo confesses to betraying Kihika in a speech on this country’s Uhuru Day. For 10 points, name this homeland of Binyavanga Wainaina and *Grain of Wheat* author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o.

ANSWER: Republic of Kenya [or Jamhuri ya Kenya]

(The leadin is from Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor’s strongly recommended *Dust*.)

15. When several characters in this play are worried that one character might slit his wrists when left alone in a bathroom, another character assures them: “That’s the kid’s bathroom. The worst he could do is brush his teeth to death.” A newswriter in this play is asked where he gets his ideas from and he responds: “The news”. When one character in this play tells another character to stop waving a spoon while they argue, the other explodes and yells: “Spoon? You dumb ignoramus. It’s a ladle”. The first act of this play ends with one character unknowingly calling another by his (*) wife’s name as he lays on a pillow and wishes him goodnight. This play opens with a poker game including Vinnie, Murray and Speed, and includes a disastrous double-date with two English upstairs neighbors, the Pigeon Sisters. For 10 points, slob Oscar Madison and neat-freak Felix Ungar clash after becoming roommates in what play, the most famous by Neil Simon?

ANSWER: *The* Odd Couple

16. One character evokes this activity’s joys after quoting “a poem, devoted to the flames.” While soldiers engage in this activity at Läähkimä Gorge, a Swedish attaché’s wife fearfully clutches an AWOL journalist’s pet. A day after joining the son of the Officer of the Guards for this activity, a poor relative of Chopin flees to the tropics. Failure at this activity baffles a fishless fisherman whose vast resume of failed jobs includes “coffee-bearer” as he does it in a capsizing boat. Vatanen skis across the Finland-USSR border to engage in this activity illegally at the end of *The* (*) *Year of the Hare*. Using an object that “kicks” during this activity gives Valenka’s master a swollen right cheek. General Henrik accuses Konrad of trying to kill him during this activity 41 years earlier in Sándor Márai’s *Embers*. A sympathizer of serfdom’s toll on the Miller’s wife Arina frequently pursues this pastime with Yermolay. For 10 points, name this central activity of Ivan Turgenev’s *A Sportsman’s Sketches*.

ANSWER: snipe/bear/stag/duck/etc. hunting [accept stand-shooting game or any other clear-knowledge equivalents such as trapping or stalking game; accept sportsmanship or similar answers]

17. [NOTE to moderator: please read the second sentence fairly slowly, making sure to read out loud the words that appear inside the brackets.]

One of this author's characters invents an apparatus for diluting water, and believes that night is caused by "black air" from volcanic eruptions. The narration of one novel by him is filled with the following typical construction: "Brinsley was at the window giving chuckles out. ["paragraph break"] *Nature of Chuckles* ["colon"]: Quiet, private, averted." An imprint of Norton that published the works of William Gass and William Gaddis is named after a novel by him. After trying to retrieve the cash box that he stole with John (*) Divney, one of his characters finds himself trapped in the company of the bicycle-obsessed policeman, MacCruisken and Pluck. In another work by this author of *The Dalkey Archive*, Anthony Lamont and John Furriskey are characters in a novel-within-a-novel who drug their creator and put him on trial. For 10 points, name this Irish author of *The Third Policeman* and *At Swim-Two-Birds*.

ANSWER: Flann O'Brien [or Brian O'Nolan]

18. This author described a wanderer clouded by the "antimony of neglect" after "the crab had pierced its claws into his brain" by turning his piety to greed for a gold brick. "No water remained but the tears of orphans" during a famine that makes lovers forget love in a work by this author that contrasts the tiger and paralytic fox to counsel enterprise. He told of an old man identifying the pursuit of esteem over materialism as the only true sign of puberty. "Stones became silver in the hands of saints" contented with their lot according to this author's collection of (*) "sugar-candy" claiming that tyrants are lawful to slander in its section "concerning education." All humans are limbs created of one essence according to one of his aphorisms, which include the original story of a shoeless man humbled by a footless one. Bihzad illustrated a royal copy of a "Palace of Wealth" of *mat ḥ nawī* by this author, whose parables include the *Bani Adam*. For 10 points, name this 13th-century Persian author of the *Bustan* and *Gulistan*.

ANSWER: Sa'di [or Abū-Muhammad Muslih al-Dīn bin Abdallāh Shīrāzī, Saadi Shirazi; prompt on "Shirazi"]

19. In a novel with this title, an obsessive bather slaps the narrator with a leather belt for going to a flower shop during their Easter bike trip, even though he leaves a note. In that novel with this title, a streetcar conductor avoids a handwriting test by claiming she wrote a report about a group of women locked in a burning church. Two characters called by this title start using the informal "you" after leaving a seminar on "Sex, Class and Culture" and vowing to resolve the mix-up between *Without* (*) *fear of wind or vertigo* and *Leaning from the steep slope*. The teen "kid" Michael Berg has an affair with the former SS guard Hanna in a novel with this title, which is the shared appellation of two characters who consult the Cimmerian professor Uzzi-Tuzii, one of whom is the female "Other" Ludmilla. For 10 points, give this title of a Vergangenheitsbewältigung novel by Bernhard Schlink and the second-person narrator of *If on a winter's night a traveler*.

ANSWER: The (Other) Reader [accept *Il Lettore* or *La Lettrice*; or *Der Vorleser*; prompt on "you" or "tu" or "voi;" prompt on "Ludmilla" or "Vipiteno"]

20. In a novel by this author, a two-part interview transcript omits the initial "e" from all words starting with "ex." In another novel by this author, a glib Cambridge student who reads Conrad to a brigadier to sleep with his Brazilian housekeeper says yes to a Faustian bargain at a ski resort by getting in a car instead of bringing breakfast to a woman whose vanished brother has her memorize a labyrinth. "Atemporal" Horologists battle soul-decanting Anchorites in this author's universe, in which an explorer with a fictive brain parasite is told that his medicine is really arsenic by a (*) Moriori stowaway whose flogging he witnesses in the Chatham Islands. Luisa Rey investigates the Swanekke reactor in a story by this author linked to an "orison" recorded by the Fabricant Sonmi-451. For 10 points, name this cannibalism-obsessed author of an "über-book" including *The Bone Clocks* and *Cloud Atlas*.

ANSWER: David Stephen Mitchell