**Final Essay: Poem analysis between** “**Sonnet V” and “Worth”**

**Essay Instructions:**

Answer the following exam question (below) and support your interpretation with evidence gained from a close reading analysis of the texts(s). Be sure to **mention the author's use of literary devices such as imagery, metaphor, irony, symbol, and personification.**  Consider why the poet might have used them and what impact they have on your understanding of this poem and the ideas in it as a reader

**DO NOT USE EXTERNAL SOURCES!! The essay should be based on personal interpretation**

Your final exam essay should be a multi-paragraph essay with an introduction and a thesis statement, body paragraphs, and a conclusion.

Your essay should include quotations and follow the conventions of standard English grammar and usage, as well as **MLA in-text citation rules for quotations**. The only accepted sources will be the Poems

Remember that the narrator of a poem is called a “**speaker**,” and you should use that term in your essay, or anytime you are writing about poetry.

See PDF for detailed instructions on how to read and interpret the poem

POEM 1

**Sonnet V**

By Robert Southey

Did then the bold Slave rear at last the Sword  
Of Vengeance? drench'd he deep its thirsty blade

In the cold bosom of his tyrant lord?  
Oh! who shall blame him? thro' the midnight shade

Still o'er his tortur'd memory rush'd the thought 5  
Of every past delight; his native grove,  
Friendship's best joys, and Liberty and Love,

All lost for ever! then Remembrance wrought

His soul to madness; round his restless bed  
Freedom's pale spectre stalk'd, with a stern smile 10  
Pointing the wounds of slavery, the while

She shook her chains and hung her sullen head:  
No more on Heaven he calls with fruitless breath,  
But sweetens with revenge, the draught of death.

**MLA Citation:**

Southey, Robert. “Sonnet V,” in Marcus Wood, ed. *The Poetry of Slavery: An Anglo-American Anthology, 1764-1865* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 218.

POEM 2

Consider, how form and content are related in this poem. Why write about a slave killing his master in the form of a sonnet? Why use the specific literary devices the poet does to elaborate on this? How do these things impact the way you read, think about, and interpret the poem?

**Worth**

By Marilyn Nelson

Today in America people were bought and sold:

five hundred for a "likely Negro wench."

If someone at auction is worth her weight in gold,

how much would she be worth by pound? By ounce?

If I owned an unimaginable quantity of wealth, 5

could I buy an iota of myself?

How would I know which part belonged to me?

If I owned part, could I set my part free?

It must be worth something—maybe a lot—

that my great-grandfather, they say, killed a lion. 10

They say he was black, with muscles as hard as iron,

that he wore a necklace of the claws of the lion he'd fought.

How much do I hear, for his majesty in my blood?

I auction myself. And I make the highest bid.

**MLA Citation**

Nelson, Marilyn. “Worth.” *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/57034/worth-56d23a1ec6579.

**ESSAY QUESTION:**

While both of above poems are about slavery, they provide different perspectives on the subject.

How does each poem use literary devices to address these horrors?

In your response, compare the pair of poems above to the ideas or elements of the following poem:

**“The Slave Auction”**

*By Frances Ellen Watkins Harper*

The sale began—young girls were there,

Defenseless in their wretchedness,

Whose stifled sobs of deep despair

Revealed their anguish and distress.

And mothers stood, with streaming eyes,

And saw their dearest children sold;

Unheeded rose their bitter cries,

While tyrants bartered them for gold.

And woman, with her love and truth—

For these in sable forms may dwell—

Gazed on the husband of her youth,

With anguish none may paint or tell.

And men, whose sole crime was their hue,

The impress of their Maker’s hand,

And frail and shrinking children too,

Were gathered in that mournful band.

Ye who have laid your loved to rest,

And wept above their lifeless clay,

Know not the anguish of that breast,

Whose loved are rudely torn away.

Ye may not know how desolate

Are bosoms rudely forced to part,

And how a dull and heavy weight

Will press the life-drops from the heart.