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Note for prescribed list of poems for English Romantic Verse: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is counted as the equivalent of five poems.

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Prescribed text: Metaphysical Poetry, editor Colin Burrow

Question 9

A Nocturnal Upon St Lucy's Day, Being the Shortest Day by John Donne

'Tis the year's midnight, and it is the day's, Lucy's, who scarce seven hours herself unmasks. The sun is spent, and now his flasks Send forth light squibs, no constant rays; The world's whole sap is sunk: The general balm th' hydroptic earth hath drunk, Whither, as to the bed's feet, life is shrunk, Dead and interred; yet all these seem to laugh, Compared with me, who am their epitaph.

Study me then, you who shall lovers be At the next world, that is, at the next spring: For I am every dead thing, In whom Love wrought new alchemy. For his art did express A quintessence even from nothingness, From dull privations, and lean emptiness He ruined me, and I am re-begot Of absence, darkness, death; things which are not.

All others, from all things, draw all that's good, Life, soul, form, spirit, whence they being have; I, by love's limbeck, am the grave Of all, that's nothing. Oft a flood Have we two wept, and so Drowned the whole world, us two; oft did we grow To be two chaoses, when we did show Care to aught else; and often absences Withdrew our souls, and made us carcasses.

But I am by her death (which word wrongs her) Of the first nothing, the elixir grown; Were I a man, that I were one I needs must know; I should prefer, If I were any beast, Some ends, some means; yea plants, yea stones detest And love; all, all some properties invest; If I an ordinary nothing were, As shadow', a light and body must be here.

But I am none; nor will my sun renew. You lovers, for whose sake the lesser sun At this time to the Goat is run To fetch new lust, and give it you, Enjoy your summer all, Since she enjoys her long night's festival, Let me prepare towards her, and let me call

Let me prepare towards her, and let me call This hour her vigil, and her eve, since this Both the year's, and the day's deep midnight is.

Prescribed text: Metaphysical Poetry, editor Colin Burrow

Question 10

The World by Henry Vaughan

I saw eternity the other night Like a great ring of pure and endless light, All calm, as it was bright, And round beneath it, time in hours, days, years Driv'n by the spheres Like a vast shadow moved, in which the world And all her train were hurled: The doting lover in his quaintest strain Did there complain; Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his flights, Wit's sour delights, With gloves and knots, the silly snares of pleasure; Yet his dear treasure All scattered lay, while he his eyes did pour Upon a flow'r. The darksome statesman hung with weights and woe Like a thick midnight fog moved there so slow He did nor stay, nor go; Condemning thoughts (like sad eclipses) scowl Upon his soul, And clouds of crying witnesses without Pursued him with one shout. Yet digged the mole, and lest his ways be found, Worked underground, Where he did clutch his prey; but one did see That policy, Churches and altars fed him, perjuries Were gnats and flies; It rained about him blood and tears, but he Drank them as free. The fearful miser on a heap of rust Sat pining all his life there, did scarce trust His own hands with the dust, Yet would not place one piece above, but lives In fear of thieves. Thousands there were as frantic as himself And hugged each one his pelf; The downright epicure placed heav'n in sense And scorned pretence, While others, slipped into a wide excess, Said little less; The weaker sort slight, trivial wares enslave Who think them brave, And poor, despised truth sat counting by Their victory.

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Yet some, who all this while did weep and sing, And sing, and weep, soared up into the ring, But most would use no wing.
'Oh fools', said I, 'thus to prefer dark night Before true light,
To live in grots and caves, and hate the day Because it shows the way,
The way which from this dead and dark abode Leads up to God,
A way where you might tread the sun, and be More bright than he.'
But as I did their madness so discuss One whispered thus:
'This ring the bride-groom did for none provide

But for his bride.

Prescribed text: English Romantic Verse, editor David Wright

Question 11

Lines Written in Early Spring by William Wordsworth

I heard a thousand blended notes, While in a grove I sate reclined, In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link The human soul that through me ran; And much it grieved my heart to think What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower, The periwinkle trailed its wreaths; And 'tis my faith that every flower Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played, Their thoughts I cannot measure:– But the least motion which they made, It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan, To catch the breezy air; And I must think, do all I can, That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent, If such be Nature's holy plan, Have I not reason to lament What man has made of man!

Prescribed text: English Romantic Verse, editor David Wright

Question 12

Ode on a Grecian Urn by John Keats

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness, Thou foster-child of silence and slow time, Sylvan historian, who canst thus express A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme: What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape Of deities or mortals, or of both, In Tempe or the dales of Arcady? What men or gods are these? What maidens loth? What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape? What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on; Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd, Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone: Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare; Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss, Though winning near the goal – yet, do not grieve; She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss, For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied, For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love! For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd, For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above, That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd, A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice? To what green altar, O mysterious priest, Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies, And all her silken flanks with garlands drest? What little town by river or sea shore, Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel, Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn? And, little town, thy streets for evermore Will silent be; and not a soul to tell Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede Of marble men and maidens overwrought, With forest branches and the trodden weed; Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought

As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral! When old age shall this generation waste, Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st, 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty',—that is all Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Prescribed text: The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse, editor Christopher Ricks

Question 13

Love in a Life by Robert Browning

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ROOM after room, I hunt the house through We inhabit together. Heart, fear nothing, for, heart, thou shalt find her— Next time, herself!—not the trouble behind her Left in the curtain, the couch's perfume! As she brushed it, the cornice-wreath blossomed anew: Yon looking-glass gleamed at the wave of her feather.

II

Yet the day wears, And door succeeds door; I try the fresh fortune— Range the wide house from the wing to the centre. Still the same chance! she goes out as I enter. Spend my whole day in the quest,—who cares? But 't is twilight, you see,—with such suites to explore, Such closets to search, such alcoves to importune!

Prescribed text: The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse, editor Christopher Ricks

Question 14

The Darkling Thrush by Thomas Hardy

I LEANT upon a coppice gate When Frost was spectre-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be The Century's corpse outleant, His crypt the cloudy canopy, The wind his death-lament. The ancient pulse of germ and birth Was shrunken hard and dry, And every spirit upon earth Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among The bleak twigs overhead In a full-hearted evensong Of joy illimited; An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small, In blast-beruffled plume, Had chosen thus to fling his soul Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings Of such ecstatic sound Was written on terrestrial things Afar or nigh around, That I could think there trembled through His happy good-night air Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew And I was unaware.