



**AP[®] English Lit
2004 Sample Student Responses
Form B**

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2.

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111

Overseas 2a

A dynamic relationship becomes evident between the "belching bog" and the journeying speaker as the poem moves from a tone of negativity, pessimism, even morbidity to that of acceptance and even awe. Tone maintains its strongest influence on the reader throughout, and is established creatively by numerous sound devices, imagery, and fitting diction.

Perhaps the structure of the poem should be credited for establishing a setting or rhythm in itself complimentary to the progression of tone. Though there is no grammatically-coherent stanza structure, certain patterns of rhyme and diction do exist. The initial line of pessimism, ~~disgust~~, disgust, and struggle is emphasized by a very cumbersome flow of rhythm. Enjambment plays a major role in creating chaos and a laboring rhythm which struggles in its continuity from brief line to brief line - almost steps in themselves. As lines grow longer in meter, but then fall back to single words, a sense of acceleration and then suddenly falling, stumbling, is established. Towards the poems end, however, single-word lines disappear, giving way to more coherent grammatical entities (such as the clause or phrase: "a poor dry stick given one more done" versus short spatters of line: "bogs. here". The longer lines yet experience enjambment, but this doesn't affect their continuity nearly as much as it does the broken imagery at the beginning.

Diction of this poem is its finest jewel. The

poet has obviously been quite anxious to find words which emphasize meaning and expression through imagery as well as sound device. The alliteration resulting from diction is a major vehicle for establishing tone. The repetition of the b's and d's is particularly cumbersome, if not treacherous at the beginning, evidence of the speaker's frustration: "dense sap, branching vines, the dark blurred faintly belching bogs." Imagery resulting from the meaning conveyed by diction is exceptionally grotesque: "belching bogs" and can only mean a tone of disgust. The relationship at this point between speaker and swamp is not favorable. It is of struggle, hostility, and fight for control. The speaker addresses the physical experience of his struggle after establishing the image of his surroundings: "My bones knock together at the pale joints" suggests that he is weary down to the very bones, and that he has been struggling for some length of time; in addition "bones" creates quite a morbid image and tone. A fight for control can be perceived. He is "trying for a foothold, fingerhold, navelhold over such slick crossings..." The speaker obviously wants physical or mental control of the decay around him, so that he won't be absorbed into it, "sink silently into the black, slick earth soup." Yet the struggle, the frustration and even fear present in the relationship subsides, or is forgotten as the journey continues. Now venturing his own, first-person

mental situation instead of a physical one, the speaker mentions "I feel not wet", a negative image of dampness, "so much as panted and glistened" positive images of suggesting beauty. Irony is present of course, as this feeling is nullified with descriptions of "fat grassy mires." The speaker begins to realize the beauty, or at least the beauty in function, of his surroundings: life-giving aspects such as "the rich and succulent mounds of earth." Speculation now occurs rapidly as the speaker experiences a certain enlightenment: "dry sticks given one more chance by the whims of swamp water." The ~~elgy~~ caesura provided by hyphens in the punctuation "-" add to the rapidity, and excitement, that this "pathless, seamless, peerless", initially regarded as being void of life, is ~~not~~ actually a source of rejuvenation, mercy, and therefore virtue.

The transition from disgust to respect on behalf of the speaker is ~~not~~ seen most clearly in the comparison between "Here is swamp, here is struggle, closure" and the final realization that this earth may be the very creator of "life", and "a breathing palace of leaves." The poet has recorded a valuable moral, that of the misleading qualities of aesthetics and the importance of perceiving what values lie behind image.

Question 2

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AA,

Overseas 2B

~~the author~~

In "Crossing the Swamp" by Mary Oliver, the poet uses personification, alliteration, imagery, ^{and} diction to create a large metaphor, ^{showing} ~~comparing~~ the swamp to ~~be~~ ^{like} a picture of his life.

Firstly, Mary Oliver uses personification and imagery to make the swamp real to the reader. She uses personification, saying that the bogs are "belching", the swamp is showing struggle, and that ~~a stick~~ the swamp has "whims". She also shows the image of a stick, and gives it too human characteristics to make its actions seem more powerful. The stick, a "poor, dry" object, is given "one more chance" to flourish in the swamp. It then, having human characteristics, has ^{unlimited} ~~the~~ potential; it could "root", "sprout", "branch out", "bud", all with the intent to make itself a holy temple and a place of inner greatness. ~~thus in using personifi~~ The image of the swamp is also powerful as it serves as a metaphor for the speaker's life. The "dense sap" in which the speaker's "bones knock together at the pale joints" shows the mire ~~and~~ that he goes through, as well as the fortitude needed to survive in such a situation.

The author then uses repeated alliteration to emphasize her diction in comparing the swamp and

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Question 2

the speaker's life. ~~At~~ As the poet begins writing, her diction is broad, powerful, and does not need alliteration to emphasize it, because the diction in itself is powerful ~~enough~~ enough. Words like "vastness" the "endless, wet, thick cosmos" and the "hugget of dense sap" shows ~~that~~ the infinite importance of the swamp to the speaker as a picture of his life. ~~The issue:~~ The author then uses alliteration to emphasize themes of the speaker's life and in the swamp. ^{the words} "pathless, seamless, peerless mud" ^{emphasize} emphasizing the "less" to show the emptiness ~~and~~ and lack of hope in the swamp lands of the speaker's life. ~~contrast with~~ The alliteration continues and builds on the last theme with the words "fing foothold, fingerhold, mindhold" . . . over "hipholds" and "hummocks", then showing the ~~the~~ speaker's difficulty in grasping onto objects which ~~and~~ the technique onomatopoeia proves as slippery: that "sink silently into slack earthcup". She continues to describe the speaker's life journey through swampy land, using the diction "painted and glittered" with the "rich, succulent marrows of earth" to depict an upward turn in the speaker's life. She then ends with the image of the dry stick, using the phrase "a breathing palace of leaves" to show, through diction, ~~the~~ ^{the} ending phase of ~~her~~ her metaphor ~~of~~ of the speaker's life journey and the journey

Question 2

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AA₃

~~through the swamp.~~

~~Thus, Mary Oliver, author of "Crossing the Swamp" develops an elaborate metaphor of the speaker's life and a journey through a swamp through the use of diction, personification, alliteration and imagery. The overall tone of the poem also works to create such a metaphor, going from slow, dark and depressing to hopeful and renewing at the end. The work is a beautiful example of the tale of a man who has lived life fully, and ended it richly, though through great toil and hardship.~~

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Question 2

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BB,

Overseas 2c

In the poem *Crossing the Swamp*, the main theme seems to be struggle. Everything mentioned seems to be struggling for life and struggling to overcome.

The swamp is struggling to take over and branch into many uncovered areas. The consonance of branching, barred, belching, and ~~bag~~ bog seem to personify the swamp. It gives it a humanlike quality that wants to take over the area and yet it acquiesces its control to smaller things such as the narrator of the poem. It realizes that the narrator is just trying to survive as well.

When the speaker/narrator enters into the poem, he seems to be struggling to overcome the ~~swamp~~ swamp. The author's use of alliteration, "sink silently" and rhyme "black slack" set the tone for how ~~much~~ strongly the narrator feels about the swamp. He sees it as a part of nature and yet, like man, wants to be more powerful by climbing through and over. It wasn't until the ~~and~~ narrator says, "I feel not wet so much as painted ~~and~~ and glittered." that the reader sees a change

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Question 2

BB:

Overseas 20

of view in the narrator. He seems to start to appreciate the swamp and realize that they both want the same thing; to succeed.

The narrator compares himself to a dry stick because the swamp has let him go to try and make his fortune. The swamp realizes that it must let go to be free. The narrator, in turn, compared to a stick, may be able to go on his way and someday help out the swamp. A mutual struggle turns into a mutual respect.

