

Directions: Read the excerpt from the biography entitled “**Fifth Chinese Daughter**” and read the poem entitled “**Gathering Leaves in Grade School**,” then answer the questions that follow.

Biography excerpt from “Fifth Chinese Daughter”

5 ...The course started with woodworking, and Jade Snow made a bookcase; proceeded to paints and pigments, and she painted the bookcase with linseed oil and pigment which she herself had ground together; metal work, and she slaved to snip off a round of copper, anneal¹ and pound it into an ashtray; weaving, and she made herself a primitive loom from an old berry crate; paper work, and she made her own paste and paper dolls and decorated paper beads. Finally there was work in clay, emphasizing ceramic sculpture and pottery.

10 One day, the class transferred to the pottery studio which was little more than a gray shack underneath some lovely cork elm trees. In this small room, about ten by twenty feet, were a sink, one electric, and three foot-treadled potter’s wheels, many shelves and one cabinet. Two auxiliary rooms held a firing kiln, an old pie oven for drying green ware, glazes and glazing equipment. Fine clay dust had settled over everything. But what marvels the shelves in the main room held! The instructor told them to wander around and get acquainted with the place, but to be careful of breakage.

15 On some shelves were drying, half-completed forms. Others held finished work, and when Jade Snow’s eyes lighted on them she felt shocked excitement. The articles were reaching out and speaking to her! She couldn’t herself understand the stimulation and response. Among these completed examples of student pottery were pitchers, vases, cups, bowls. Some were imperfect, thick, warped, or crude. But they were all glazed in beautiful, clear, and unfamiliar shades of blues, greens, and yellows. Some were delicate, and some virile,² but they all had that hand quality which was the stamp of a creator’s love of his craft. It was a provoking awakening, a discovery of another new thing in the world at which to wonder and marvel.

25 This wonder and marvel of pottery never ceased for Jade Snow. The instructor now gave them simple lectures on the nature of clay, what they should and should not do with it, on glazes and firings, and then left them alone with their hands and the materials. As the class hours were short, Jade Snow would return at odd times, on week ends and evenings, to make little bowls or to trim or glaze pots. She played with simple forms, decorations, and textures, and the hours, like the fishing trips during her childhood, would simply fly while all troubles were forgotten in the joy of creating. The clay forms became a satisfying reflection of personal will and skill. ...

¹anneal — to heat and cool

²virile — masculine

In crafts, she found, one learned more by seeing and feeling for oneself than by instruction. She did not ask her instructor for much personal help, but all about her in various stages of completion were his own pottery forms and colors to serve as silent standards of criticism. He himself seemed a tireless worker, maintaining the best possible
35 equipment and stock of materials for his students, and constantly re-establishing new and higher requirements for making pottery. Whenever he had perfected one technique or form he progressed to another unknown. Whatever formulas he discovered and all his voluminous notes on experiments, were at the disposal of his students. Through

innumerable informal talks with him as each worked separately, Jade Snow developed a
40 “feeling” for art, an inspiration for good pottery, and the knowledge that sober, hard work was the most important quality of all.

Her first products were certainly bad or mediocre. While inspired by the work of others, her pottery was nevertheless her own creation, a combination of the clay she chose, the form she achieved, and the glazes she used. They reflected the quality of her
45 workmanship and the impulses of her heart more than any other material she had used. The final satisfaction was that they were physical remembrances of certain personal moments in time which could never be considered lost so long as the pottery was not broken beyond repair. Jade Snow made as many pieces as time and energy would allow in the short month remaining before graduation, and while she regretted that she had
50 discovered the fascination of clay so late in her college days, she rejoiced that at least she had discovered it. ...

—Jade Snow Wong
excerpted from *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, 1950
Harper & Brothers

Reference

NYSED.gov Office of State Assessment. (2011). *Comprehensive English Regents Examination*.
<http://www.nysedregents.org/ComprehensiveEnglish/>

Gathering Leaves in Grade School

They were smooth ovals,
and some the shade of potatoes—
some had been moth-eaten
or spotted, the maples
5 were starched, and crackled
like campfire.

We put them under tracing paper
and rubbed our crayons
over them, X-raying
10 the spread of their bones
and black, veined catacombs.

We colored them green and brown
and orange, and
cut them out along the edges,
15 labeling them deciduous
or evergreen.

All day, in the stuffy air of the classroom,
with its cockeyed globe,
and nautical maps of ocean floors,
20 I watched those leaves

lost in their own worlds
flap on the pins of the bulletin boards:
without branches or roots,
or even a sky to hold on to.

—Judith Harris
www.poetryfoundation.org

Reference

NYSED.gov Office of State Assessment. (2011). *Comprehensive English Regents Examination*.
<http://www.nysedregents.org/ComprehensiveEnglish/>

Answer the following questions using the text entitled “Fifth Chinese Daughter.”

1. What literary device is used in the following excerpt from sentence one of “Fifth Chinese Daughter”?

“...and Jade Snow made a bookcase; proceeded to paints and pigments, and she painted the bookcase with linseed oil and pigment which she herself had ground together...”

- A. Hyperbole
 - B. Idiom
 - C. Onomatopoeia
 - D. Alliteration
2. In paragraph one, the best meaning of the word **primitive** is:
- A. Basic and unsophisticated
 - B. Early in history of humankind
 - C. Fundamental and old
 - D. Current and modern
3. Which lines indicate that the professor loved his work?
- A. “The instructor told them to wander around and get acquainted with the place...”
 - B. “The instructor now gave them simple lectures on the nature of clay...”
 - C. “He himself seemed a tireless worker, maintaining the best possible equipment and stock of material for his students.”
 - D. “Whenever he had perfected one technique or form he progressed to another...”

4. Re-read paragraph 3.

On some shelves were drying, half-completed forms. Others held finished work, and when Jade Snow's eyes lighted on them she felt shocked excitement. The articles were reaching out and speaking to her! She couldn't herself understand the stimulation and response. Among these completed examples of student pottery were pitchers, vases, cups, bowls. Some were imperfect, thick, warped, or crude. But they were all glazed in beautiful, clear, and unfamiliar shades of blues, greens, and yellows. Some were delicate, and some virile, but they all had that hand quality which was the stamp of a creator's love of his craft. It was a provoking awakening, a discovery of another new thing in the world at which to wonder and marvel.

Which five words from paragraph 3 best indicate a tone of optimism and excitement?

- A. shelves
 - B. understand
 - C. imperfect
 - D. crude
 - E. virile
 - F. awakening
 - G. discovery
 - H. new
 - I. wonder
 - J. marvel
5. Which line does NOT illustrate Jade's enthusiasm for her art?
- A. "She played with simple forms, decorations, and textures..."
 - B. "She did not ask her instructor for much personal help..."
 - C. "The wonder and marvel of pottery never ceased..."
 - D. "...Jade Snow's eyes lighted on them she felt shocked excitement."

Answer the following questions using the text entitled “Gathering Leaves in Grade School.”

1. Read the following line from the poem “Gathering Leaves in Grade School”.

“Were starched, and crackled like campfire”

What literary device is used?

- A. Assonance
 - B. Metaphor
 - C. Simile
 - D. Paradox
2. The reader may best infer that the poet:
- A. Enjoyed the leaf project
 - B. Was proud of her work
 - C. Felt sorry for the leaves
 - D. Would rather be at a campfire
3. Which lines from the poem best indicate a mood of sadness and disillusionment?
- A. “They were smooth ovals,
And some the shade of potatoes-“
 - B. “The spread of their bones
and black, veined catacombs”
 - C. “We put them under tracing paper
and rubbed our crayons over them”
 - D. “Labeling them deciduous
or evergreen”

4. Read the last stanza from “Gathering Leaves in Grade School.” Which feelings can we infer that the poet is experiencing?
- A. Empathy for the leaves and for herself
 - B. Anger at the leaves and at herself
 - C. Disappointment in her teacher and in herself
 - D. Joy for the leaves and for herself
5. How does the poet’s tone change from the first stanza to the second and third stanzas?
- A. It changes from sadness to joy.
 - B. It changes from joy to sadness.
 - C. It changes from sympathy to reverence.
 - D. It changes from reverence to matter of fact.

Comparison of “Fifth Chinese Daughter” and “The Gathering Leaves in Grade School.”

Answer the following questions comparing both passages.

1. Which best describes the respective attitudes of the author of “Fifth Chinese Daughter” versus the poet of “Gathering Leaves in Grade School” toward their works of art?
- A. Wonder versus resignation
 - B. Amused versus witty
 - C. Angry versus playful
 - D. Serious versus joyful

2. Wong’s use of the line “the articles were reaching out and speaking to her!” and Harris’ use of the line “I watched those leaves lost in their own worlds” are both examples of:
- A. Consonance
 - B. Alliteration
 - C. Personification
 - D. Hyperbole
 - E. Assonance
3. Which best expresses the general theme of both “Fifth Chinese Daughter” and “Gathering Leaves in Grade School?”
- A. Art allows one to express oneself.
 - B. Art can change one’s perspective of ordinary objects.
 - C. Creative expression is not worth the time.
 - D. Artistic choices are up to the teacher, not the student.
4. Based upon the texts “Fifth Chinese Daughter” and “Gathering Leaves in Grade School,” which sentence is probably true about both passages?
- A. Both authors appreciate creativity.
 - B. Both authors use the same materials for their art.
 - C. Both authors are full of the wonder of discovery of their art.
 - D. Both authors discover art under the guidance of a teacher.

5. In Wong’s “Fifth Chinese Daughter,” she states: “[art] was a provoking awakening, a discovery of another new thing in the world at which to wonder and marvel.”

Which stanzas in Harris’ poem “Gathering Leaves in Grade School” best show a contrast with these feelings?

- A. First and second
- B. Second and fifth
- C. Fourth and fifth
- D. Second and third