

Directions: Read the memoir from the book entitled *Colors of the Mountain* and the poem entitled *At the San Francisco Airport*, then answer the questions that follow.

Memoir excerpted from *Colors of the Mountain*

...In one simple sentence, the letter informed me that I had been admitted into Beijing Language Institute’s English department, and that I was expected to report on campus within a month.

I ran home as fast as I could.

5 Mom, Dad, and the whole family were at hand to congratulate me. We studied the letter and the information they had sent about the department and the college. The picture of the college was a treasure.

10 My dream had come true. I would be off to Beijing to study English. I would be the first one in the history of Yellow Stone High [Yellow Stone, China] to do so. Now I had a future, a bright one. In a few years, I would be fluent in English, could go to work for the Foreign Ministry and would converse in that fine language with fine people in an elegant international setting. Other things would follow, and I would be able to take care of my wonderful family and give them all that had been denied them.

15 Though I had never set foot outside my county and Putien was the largest city I had ever been to, my mind had wings, and it had traveled far away. ...

Finally, two days before I was about to leave, his¹ letter came.

20 It was a moment of great happiness for all of us. Mom and Dad, who were hardened by many years of suffering and deprivation, rarely revealed their emotions, but now I saw Dad collapse into a chair, bury his face in his shaking hands, and weep. Mom sat down also and let loose a torrent. Everyone was sniffing.

25 Thirty years of humiliation had suddenly come to an end. Two sons had been accepted into leading universities within the same year. Mom and Dad had never dreamed of such a day. They had thought we were finished. Kicked around in school, I had almost dropped out many times. Jin had been forced to quit school at the age of twelve to become a farmer with nothing to look forward to but blisters on his tender hands, being spit upon by the older farmers, and backbreaking work that had taken away ten prime years of his life. There had been years of no hope, no dreams, only tears, hunger, shame, and darkness. ...

¹his — Jin, the narrator’s brother

30 After breakfast, I checked my train ticket for the last time. Dad, my sisters, and Jin had borrowed bikes and were coming to Putien to see me off at the bus station. I hugged Mom at the door again and again. She cried, but a smile shone through her tears. She pulled me once more into her arms, then gently pushed me away and nodded. Only at that moment as I looked at her did I realize that she was the most beautiful woman in the whole world and that I was going to miss her when I was thousands of miles away in Beijing. ...

35 Together Jin and I threw my heavy wooden trunk onto the overloaded luggage rack on top of the shaky, dusty bus. Then we squeezed into a crowded seat that was marked for four people but actually had six occupying it. My sisters came up to the bus and hugged me

40 tearfully, then Dad climbed up the steps. He stumbled, and I sprang out of my seat to meet him. He was a big man and gave me a bear hug. I was surrounded once more by the same warmth I used to feel as a small kid hiding under his padded cotton overcoat. He took my face in his hands and bit his lower lip until it turned pale. ...

I love you, Dad. I am your son, forever.

—Da Chen

Reference:

Chen, D. (2011, August). *Colors of the Mountain*. Retrieved March 7, 2013, from NYSED.gov Office of State Assessment: Comprehensive English Regents Examinations website: <http://www.nysedregents.org/ComprehensiveEnglish/811/compeng-exam811.pdf>

At the San Francisco Airport

To J. W. [his daughter], 1954

This is the terminal: the light
Gives perfect vision, false and hard;
The metal glitters, deep and bright.
Great planes are waiting in the yard—
5 They are already in the night.

And you are here beside me, small,
Contained and fragile, and intent
On things that I but half recall—
Yet going whither you are bent.
10 I am the past, and that is all.

But you and I in part are one:
The frightened brain, the nervous will,
The knowledge of what must be done,
The passion to acquire the skill
15 To face that which you dare not shun.

The rain of matter upon sense
Destroys me momentarily. The score:
There comes what will come. The expense
Is what one thought, and something more—
20 One’s being and intelligence.

This is the terminal, the break.
Beyond this point, on lines of air,
You take the way that you must take;
And I remain in light and stare—
25 In light, and nothing else, awake.

Reference

Winter, V. (2011, August). *At the San Francisco Airport*. Retrieved March 7, 2013, from NYSE.gov Office of State Assessment: Comprehensive English Regents Examinations website:
<http://www.nysedregents.org/ComprehensiveEnglish/811/compeng-exam811.pdf>

Answer the following questions using the text entitled "Colors of the Mountain."

1. To what university did Da Chen get accepted?
 - A) Harvard
 - B) Northwestern
 - C) Beijing Language Institute
 - D) Virginia Tech
2. All of the following statements are true EXCEPT:
 - A) Da Chen could work for the Foreign Ministry after University.
 - B) Da Chen would become a farmer.
 - C) Two sons had been accepted into leading universities.
 - D) Da Chen had never been outside of the county.
3. What literary device is used in the following sentence:

"The picture of the college was a treasure."

- A) Metaphor
 - B) Hyperbole
 - C) Personification
 - D) Simile
4. What was the purpose of Da Chen's train ride?
 - A) to see the Eiffel Tower in Paris
 - B) to go to the Olympics in Shanghai
 - C) to go to Beijing to learn English
 - D) to go to the Foreign Ministry
 5. In lines 19-20, the word torrent is used to describe:
 - A) how angry Da Chen's mother was
 - B) Da Chen's excitement at being accepted to University
 - C) a sudden rush of tears
 - D) the humiliation felt by Da Chen's family for the past 30 years

6. From what point of view is "Colors of the Mountain" told?
- A. Third Person Limited, Da Chen
 - B. First Person, Da Chen
 - C. Third Person Omniscient
 - D. Third Person Limited, Jin

"At the San Francisco Airport"

Answer the following questions using the text entitled "At the San Francisco Airport."

1. Identify the rhyme scheme for the poem "At the San Francisco Airport."
- A. ABCBA
 - B. AABBA
 - C. ABABA
 - D. ABBAB
2. According to the third stanza, what feelings do both the parent and child have concerning this trip?
- A. Confidence with some hesitation
 - B. Uncertainty with a great deal of hesitation
 - C. Dread with cowardice
 - D. Fright with determination
3. How does the setting of the terminal contribute to the symbolism in the poem?
- A. The setting represents the beginning of a vacation.
 - B. The setting represents a turning point in the parent-child relationship.
 - C. The setting represents the child's unwillingness to leave his parent.
 - D. The setting represents the father's enthusiasm about his child leaving.

4. What striking contrast is made between the first and second stanzas?
 - A. The large size of the plane - the small size of the child
 - B. The light of the metal - the darkness of the child's past
 - C. The clarity of light - memory loss
 - D. The excitement of the plane ride - the sadness of the child

5. What can you infer about the child's attitude about the opportunity she has?
 - A. Apathetic
 - B. Angry
 - C. Depressed
 - D. Passionate

Comparison of "Colors of the Mountain" and "At the San Francisco Airport"

Answer the following questions comparing both texts.

1. What do Da Chen and the child in the poem hope to achieve through their journey?
 - A. Rest through a much needed vacation
 - B. Fun in traveling to a new town
 - C. Acquisition of skills for a future career
 - D. Independence from their overbearing parents

2. What is a common element between the memoir and the poem?
 - A. Two friends leaving each other for the first time
 - B. Anger between the parent and child
 - C. Arguments between a mother and father over their child's future
 - D. A child leaving his or her parent for a new life

3. What is the attitude of both parents towards their child leaving?
- A. Both parents think the child should not take the trip.
 - B. Both parents are angry with the child's decision.
 - C. Both parents are sad to see the child leave but realize it is a necessary decision.
 - D. Both parents are enthusiastic that they will not have to support their child any longer.
4. Read each excerpt and identify the common literary device:

from the poem "At the San Francisco Airport"

"This is the terminal: the light
Gives perfect vision, false and hard;
The metal glitters, deep and bright."

from the memoir "Colors of the Mountain"

"I was surrounded once more by the same warmth I used to feel as a small kid
hiding under his padded cotton overcoat."

- A. Imagery
- B. Allusion
- C. Hyperbole
- D. Personification