

Read the passages and answer Questions 1 through 3. Then write a response to the writing prompt.

Passage 1

Excerpt from *Martin Sloane: A Novel*

by Michael Redhill

In the following excerpt from the novel, the 35-year-old narrator is reflecting on her childhood.

1 Some people believe in a connected world in which every one thing is cognate¹ with every other thing, the bell tolling for you, for me. In this kind of world, orders are revealed within our own order, our beginnings woven with other beginnings, endings with endings. In this way, life is seen to rhyme with itself. . . .

2 But now, if I go all the way back to my own birth, I find only disconnected memories. A dusty shag carpet, a writing pad by a phone, an orange wall. I think I can recall an early dream: bedroom curtains opening on a carousel? Later, my mother in gardening gloves, smelling like soil, . . . A banana-seat bicycle, a bumpy road between two towns, jackdaws² creaking in the air over gravestones. Some time later, a piano brought down from Syracuse, the one my mother played as a girl.

3 But this childhood narration doesn't rhyme with anything, not even with itself, for what could a dusty carpet have to do with gardening gloves, or a piano with gravestones? So many times in thirty-five years, I've known the feeling of that little girl I once was being erased. The girl followed by the young woman who was then given the hook³ for another, later, woman. I feel only a rough kinship with them, like they are co-conspirators in what has become of me. A lifetime of versions. But the little girl? She's gone. I don't have her. It's only when you're old enough to understand that the past is gone that you begin to store your own life, and like most children, at least as I recall, I thought I would be eight forever. . . . Never anything but eight.

4 I probably didn't start keeping track of my own life until I left my childhood home. Then I'd lie awake in my dorm bed testing to see if I could remember how all the doors in the house I no longer lived in opened. Which ones swung easily on

¹**cognate:** connected

²**jackdaws:** a type of bird

³**given the hook:** to be taken away

their hinges, which had a sticking point you had to tug it through. Which doorknobs were loose, which stiff. The folding closet door in my bedroom that slid open on a track and then came off the track and swung free. I thought to myself, once I'd forgotten the doors of my childhood home, my childhood would truly be over.

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Passage 2

Ode to a Box of Tea

by Pablo Neruda

Box of tea
from
elephant country,
now a worn
5 sewing box,
small planetarium of buttons:
you brought
into the house
a sacred,
10 unplaceable scent,
as if you had come from another planet.
With you my weary young heart
arrived from far-off places,
returning
15 from the islands.
I had lain sweating
with fever
by the ocean shore, while a
palm frond
20 waved back and forth above me,
soothing
my emotions
with its green air and song.
Exquisite

25 tin box,
oh
how you remind me of
the swell of other seas,
the roar
30 of
monsoons over Asia
when
countries
rock
35 like ships
at the hands of the wind
and Ceylon¹ scatters
its scents
like a head of
40 storm-tossed
hair.
Box of tea,
like my
own heart
45 you arrived bearing
stories,
thrills,
eyes
that had held
50 fabulous petals in their gaze
and also, yes,
that
lost scent
of tea, of jasmine and of dreams,
55 that scent of wandering spring.

¹ **Ceylon:** an island in southeast Asia

“Ode to a Box of Tea” by Pablo Neruda, from Little, Brown & Company, 1993. Used by permission of the publisher via Copyright Clearance Center.

- 1** How do the doors described in paragraph 4 relate to a central idea of passage 1?
- A.** They represent a fading connection to a childhood long past.
 - B.** They reinforce the notion that insignificant objects can trigger powerful memories.
 - C.** They show how vivid images from childhood carry meaning into adult life.
 - D.** They suggest that focused concentration preserves connection to the past.

- 2** What is the speaker describing in lines 37–41 of passage 2?

Ceylon scatters / its scents / like a head of / storm-tossed / hair

- M.** how monsoon storms help to irrigate the tea fields on Ceylon
 - P.** how the stormy winds help to pollinate the tea plants on Ceylon
 - R.** how the monsoon storms sow the seeds of the tea plants on Ceylon
 - S.** how the stormy winds spread the fragrance of the tea fields on Ceylon
- 3** Which sentence states a central idea of passage 2?
- A.** A box of tea triggers the speaker’s recollection of a special trip.
 - B.** A rare box of tea leads to fantastic adventures for the speaker.
 - C.** A box of tea stirs the speaker’s senses and hopes for the future.
 - D.** A once fragrant box of tea is worn and neglected by the speaker.

Writing Prompt

You have just read two passages that discuss relationships between memory and objects. Write a multi-paragraph informational essay explaining the significance that each author attaches to specific objects in the passages.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

- plan your essay and do some prewriting in the space provided.
- write your essay on the lined pages of your answer document.

Be sure to

- use evidence from **both** passages.
- avoid over-relying on one passage.

Your written response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph informational essay.

Write your essay on the lined pages of your answer document. Anything you write that is not on the lined pages of your answer document will NOT be scored.