

Wendell Berry, "An Entrance to the Woods"

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Wendell Berry, *An Entrance to the Woods*

I put some lunch into a little canvas bag, and start out, leaving my jacket so as not to have to carry it after the day gets warm. Without my jacket, even climbing, it is cold in the shadow of the hollow, and I have a long way to go to get to the sun. I climb the steep path up the valley wall, walking rapidly, thinking only of the sunlight above me. It is as though I have entered into a deep sympathy with those tulip poplars that grow so straight and tall out of the shady ravines, not growing a branch worth the name until their heads are in the sun. I am so concentrated on the sun that when some grouse flush from the undergrowth ahead of me, I am thunderstruck; they are already planing down into the underbrush again before I can get my wits together and realize what they are.

The path zigzags up the last steepness of the bluff and then slowly levels out. For some distance it follows the backbone of a ridge, and then where the ridge is narrowest there is a great slab of bare rock lying full in the sun. This is what I have been looking for. I walk out into the center of the rock and sit, the clear warm light falling unobstructed all around. As the sun warms me I begin to grow comfortable not only in my clothes, but in the place and the day. And like those light-seeking poplars of the ravines, my mind begins to branch out.

Southward, I can hear the traffic on the Mountain Parkway, a steady continuous roar — the corporate voice of twentieth-century humanity, sustained above the transient voices of its members. Last night, except for an occasional airplane passing over, I camped out of reach of the sounds of engines. For long stretches of time I heard no sounds but the sounds of the woods.

Near where I am sitting there is an inscription cut into the rock:

A · J · SARGENT
FEB · 24 · 1903

Those letters were carved there more than sixty-six years ago. As I look around me I realize that I can see no evidence of the lapse of so much time. In every direction I can see only narrow ridges and narrow deep hollows, all covered with trees. For all that can be told from this height by looking, it might still be 1903 — or, for that matter, 1803 or 1703, or 1003. Indians no doubt sat here and looked over the country as I am doing now; the visual impression is so pure and strong that I can almost imagine myself one of them. But the insistent, the overwhelming, evidence of the time of my own arrival is in what I can hear — that roar of the highway off there in the distance. In 1903 the continent was still covered by a great ocean of silence, in which the sounds of machinery were scattered at wide intervals of time and space. Here, in 1903, there were only the natural sounds of the place. On a day like this, at the end of September, there would have been only the sounds of a few faint crickets, a woodpecker now and then, now and then the wind. But today, two-thirds of a century later, the continent is covered by an ocean of engine noise, in which silences occur only sporadically and at wide intervals.

From where I am sitting in the midst of this island of wilderness, it is as though I am listening to the machine of human history — a huge flywheel building speed until finally the force of its whirling will break it in pieces, and the world with it. That is not an attractive thought, and yet I find it impossible to escape, for it has seemed to me for years now that the doings of men no longer occur within nature, but that the natural places which the human economy has so far spared now survive almost accidentally within the doings of men. This wilderness of the Red River now carries on its ancient processes *within* the human climate of war and waste and confusion. And I know that the distant roar of engines, though it may *seem* only to be passing through this wilderness, is really bearing down upon it. The machine is running now with a speed that produces blindness — as to the driver of a speeding automobile the only thing stable, the only thing not a mere blur on the edge of the retina, is the automobile

itself — and the blindness of a thing with power promises the destruction of what 53
cannot be seen. That roar of the highway is the voice of the American economy; it is 54
sounding also wherever strip mines are being cut in the steep slopes of Appalachia, 55
and wherever cropland is being destroyed to make roads and suburbs, and wherever 56
rivers and marshes and bays and forests are being destroyed for the sake of industry 57
or commerce. 58

No. Even here where the economy of life is really an economy — where the cre- 59
ation is yet fully alive and continuous and self-enriching, where whatever dies enters 60
directly into the life of the living — even here one cannot fully escape the sense of an 61
impending human catastrophe. One cannot come here without the awareness that 62
this is an island surrounded by the machinery and the workings of an insane greed, 63
hungering for the world’s end — that ours is a “civilization” of which the work of no 64
builder or artist is symbol, nor the life of any good man, but rather the bulldozer, the 65
poison spray, the hugging fire of napalm, the cloud of Hiroshima. 66

1. In paragraph 1 (lines 1-10), the author suggests that he and the tulip poplars are alike in all of the following ways EXCEPT
 - a. Both the trees and the author start in deep shade and cold temperatures.
 - b. Within the darkness both the trees and the author are incapable of any productivity beyond the search for sunlight.
 - c. Like the trees, the author will be able to be productive once he reaches sunlight.
 - d. Both the trees and the author share the environment with other life forms.
 - e. Both the trees and the author are so focused on the quest for sunlight that other movement is startling.

2. The primary purpose of the first two paragraphs (lines 1-17) is to
 - a. suggest the author’s argument through the metaphor of the tulip poplars
 - b. illustrate the author’s relationship with the environment
 - c. provide an example to be discredited later in the essay
 - d. establish the struggles that exist in nature
 - e. develop imagery that provokes reader sympathy for the narrator

3. Paragraph 5 (lines 26-40) illustrates all of the following writing techniques EXCEPT

a. hyperbole	d. repetition
b. juxtaposition	e. onomatopoeia
c. metaphor	

4. All of the following descriptions indicate the author’s attitude toward “the corporate voice of twentieth-century humanity” (line 19) EXCEPT
 - a. “The visual impression is so pure and strong that I can almost imagine myself one of them.” (lines 31–32)
 - b. “In 1903 the continent was still covered by a great ocean of silence, in which the sounds of machinery were scattered at wide intervals of time and space.” (lines 34–35)
 - c. “a huge flywheel building speed until finally the force of its whirling will break it in pieces, and the world with it” (lines 42–43)
 - d. “This wilderness of the Red River now carries on its ancient processes *within* the human climate of war and waste and confusion.” (lines 47–48)
 - e. “That roar of the highway is the voice of the American economy.” (line 54)

5. The writer of this passage would most likely agree with which of the following statements?
- a. The economy of life goes hand in hand with human economy, developing from darkness and cold to light and warmth.
 - b. Destruction of the natural world is an inevitable outgrowth of the development of civilization.
 - c. Through camping and hiking, individuals must struggle against the forces of nature to come to a deeper appreciation for the comforts of civilized life.
 - d. Because most individuals are unaware of the destructive forces of industry and commerce, they are powerless to make changes.
 - e. Islands of the natural world will continue to thrive due to efforts of individuals such as the author himself, who battle the machinery of human progress.
6. Lines 54–58 (“That roar of the highway . . . sake of industry and commerce”) provides an example of
- a. antithesis
 - b. apostrophe
 - c. allusion
 - d. paradox
 - e. parallelism
7. The author’s tone in the last sentence (“One cannot come here . . . the cloud of Hiroshima”) can best be described as
- a. humorous sarcasm
 - b. condescending indifference
 - c. sardonic irony
 - d. reasoned objectivity
 - e. nostalgic anger
8. The organization of the passage can best be described as
- a. description followed by detailed analysis
 - b. personal reflection followed by argumentation
 - c. empirical data followed by generalizations
 - d. definition of terms followed by comparison
 - e. explanation of events followed by satirical commentary