



## AP English Literature Summer Reading and Essay Assignment 2015-16

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1. Reading: Get your hands on and read these two books: ***Salvage the Bones* by Jesmyn Ward** and ***Medea* by Euripides** (choose a translation of the ancient Greek play that is readable). If you borrow books from the library, renew them to bring to class; if you read them on a device, bring the device. We will discuss the books in class on day one. Expect a test with an essay to follow. Be attentive as you read; take notes and observe the authors' use of various literary devices such as imagery, figurative language, point of view, selection of detail, and character development. Don't worry about the rhetorical devices studied in AP English Language.

2. Essay: The prompt appears below. The suggested time to complete this essay is 40 minutes. Follow the directions carefully and type a thoughtful, well-organized response that answers the prompt and cites evidence in the body paragraphs. Do not summarize the poem. ***The essay is due to turnitin.com by 11:59 PM on Sunday August 9, 2015.***

Join class #10030667 using a REAL e-mail so that your instructor can contact you, if necessary. The password is caSe sEnSiTive: differentiate between capital and small letters – there are no spaces between words: **APLitSummer**

**Failure to satisfactorily complete the summer reading, failure to submit the essay to turnitin.com on time, or submitting an essay with plagiarized content, will be grounds for being removed from the class.**

### Essay

The following poem is by the contemporary poet Christian Wiman. Carefully read and annotate the poem. Then write a well-developed essay in which you identify the speaker's attitude toward the people and places he describes. As you do this, analyze the techniques he uses to convey his attitude. Techniques you may want to consider include point of view, figurative language, imagery, and rhyme scheme. Do not merely summarize the poem.

#### *Sitting Down to Breakfast Alone*

*Brachest*, she called it, gentling grease  
over blanching yolks with an expertise  
honed from three decades of dawns  
at the Longhorn Diner in Loraine,  
Line 5 where even the oldest in the old men's booth  
swore as if it were scripture truth  
they'd never had a breakfast better,  
rapping a glass sharply to get her  
attention when it went sorrowing  
10 so far into some simple thing—  
the jangly door or a crusted pan,  
the wall clock's black, hitchy hands—

that she would startle, blink, then grin  
as if discovering them all again.  
15 Who remembers now when one died  
the space that he had occupied  
went unfilled for a day, then two, three,  
until she unceremoniously  
plunked plates down in the wrong places  
20 and stared their wronged faces  
back to banter she could hardly follow.  
Unmarried, childless, homely, "slow,"  
she knew coffee cut with chamomile  
kept the grocer Paul's ulcer cool,  
25 yarrow in gravy eased the islands  
of lesions in Larry Borwick's hands,  
and when some nightlong nameless urgency  
sent him seeking human company  
Brother Tom needed hash browns with cheese.  
30 She knew to nod at the litany of cities  
the big-rig long-haulers bragged her past,  
to laugh when the hunters asked  
if she'd pray for them or for the quail  
they went laughing off to kill,  
35 and then—envisioning one  
rising so fast it seemed the sun  
tugged at it—to do exactly that.  
Who remembers where they all sat:  
crook-backed builders, drought-faced farmers,  
40 VF'ers muttering through their wars,  
night-shift roughnecks so caked in black  
it seemed they made their way back  
every morning from the dead.  
Who remembers one word they said?  
45 The Longhorn Diner's long torn down,  
the gin and feedlots gone, the town  
itself now nothing but a name  
at which some bored boy has taken aim,  
every letter light-pierced and partial.  
50 Sister, Aunt Sissy, Bera Thrailkill,  
I picture you one dime-bright dawn  
grown even brighter now for being gone  
bustling amid the formica and chrome  
of that small house we both called home  
55 during the spring that was your last.  
All stories stop: once more you're lost  
in something I can merely see:  
steam spiriting out of black coffee,  
the scorched pores of toast, a bowl  
60 of apple butter like edible soil,  
bald cloth, knifelight, the lip of a glass,  
my plate's gleaming, teeming emptiness.