

1996 ENGLISH LITERATURE

Question 2 (Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

Read carefully the following poem by the colonial American poet, Anne Bradstreet. Then write a well-organized essay in which you discuss how the poem's controlling metaphor expresses the complex attitude of the speaker

The Author to Her Book

Thou ill-formed offspring of my feeble brain,
Who after birth did'st by my side remain,
Til snatched from thence by friends, less wise than true,
line Who thee abroad exposed to public view; . (5) Made
thee in rags, halting, to the press to trudge,
Where errors were not lessened, all may judge.
At thy return my blushing was not small,
My rambling brat (in print) should mother call,
I cast thee by as one unfit for light, (10)
Thy visage was so irksome in my sight;
Yet being mine own, at length affection would
Thy blemishes amend, if so I could.
I washed thy face, but more defects I saw,
And rubbing off a spot, still made a flaw. (15)
I stretched thy joints to make thee even feet,
Yet still thou run'st more hobbling than is meet;
In better dress to trim thee was my mind,
But nought save homespun cloth in the house I find.
In this array, 'mongst vulgars may'st thou roam;
(20) In critics' hands beware thou dost not come;
And take thy way where yet thou are not known.
If for thy Father asked, say thou had'st none;
And for thy Mother, she alas is poor,
Which caused her thus to send thee out of door.

(1678)