

1998

The College Board Advanced
Placement Examination

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II Total

time—2 hours

Question 1 (Suggested time—40 minutes. This

question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

1. The following poem was written by a contemporary Irish woman, Eavan Boland. Read the poem carefully and then write an essay in which you analyze how the poem reveals the speaker's complex conception of a "woman's world."

It's a Woman's World

	Our way of life has hardly changed since a wheel first whetted a knife.		So when the king's head (30) gored its basket— grim harvest— we were gristing bread
Line			
(5)	Well, maybe flame bums more greedily and wheels are steadier but we're the same		or getting the recipe for a good soup to appetite our gossip.
		(35)	
	who milestone (10) our lives with oversights— living by the lights		And it's still the same: By night our windows moth our children (40) to the flame
	of the loaf left by the cash register, (15) the washing powder paid for and wrapped,		of hearth not history. And still no page scores the low music of our outrage.
	the wash left wet Like most historic peoples we are defined (20) by what we forget,		(45) But appearances still reassure: That woman there, craned to the starry mystery
	by what we never will be: star-gazers, fire-eaters. It's our alibi		is merely getting a breath (50) of evening air, while this one here— her mouth
(25)	for all time that as far as history goes we were never on the scene of the crime.		a burning plume— she's no fire- eater, (55) just my frosty neighbour coming home.

(1982)

"It's a Woman's World," by Eavan Boland, from her collection *Night Feed*. Published by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the author and W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.