**The Fall of Icarus**

*Be sure to use complete sentences as you answer every part of the following:*

1. When you first looked at the painting, what was the first thing you noticed? How long did it take for you to notice Icarus’ legs in the bottom right-hand corner?

2. How would you describe the tone of the painting? Give two examples from the scene that support your conclusion.

3. What viewpoint did Breughel give to the painting? By this, I mean, where does the artist have us “standing” as we look at the scene? What’s interesting about this choice? Who are we actually supposed to be in the scene?

4. How do the artist’s color and lighting choices impact the message the viewer takes away from the painting?

5. Although the death of Icarus is the critical piece of this narrative scene, this is not a painting about death. What is Breughel’s message to the viewer?

**Musee des Beaux Arts (Museum of Fine Arts)**

About suffering they were never wrong,

The old Masters: how well they understood

Its human position: how it takes place

While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;

How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting

For the miraculous birth, there always must be

Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating

On a pond at the edge of the wood:

They never forgot

That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course

Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot

Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer’s horse

Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Breughel’s Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away

Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may

Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,

But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone

As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green

Water, and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen

Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,

Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

– W. H. Auden, 1940

*Be sure to use complete sentences as you answer every part of the following:*

1. Auden opens the poem with an inversion. Instead of saying, “The old Masters were never wrong about suffering,” he says, “About suffering they were never wrong, the old Masters...” What is significant about this launch to the poem? How does the inversion change the line’s impact?

2. This poem is free verse, meaning it does not use consistent meter patterns, rhyme, or any other noticeable formula. Auden does, though, occasionally rhyme some of his lines. Identify at least three of Auden’s rhyming pairs of words and explain why you think he chose to join those specific lines.

3. In the last stanza, Auden specifically refers to the Breughel painting. He says that “everything turns away” from the disaster. List three people/things in the painting that have turned their backs on the drowning teenager.

4. What is the theme of the poem?

5. Do you think the people in the scene heard/noticed Icarus falling from the sky or do you think they were all so absorbed in their own busy lives that they didn’t notice at all? Does one way or the other change Auden’s theme?

6. Both Breughel and Auden seem to be suggesting that people notice, but are indifferent to the suffering of others. Do you agree with this idea or not? Give two concrete examples from your life or studies to support your stance.

**Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da**

The Beatles

Desmond has his barrow in the market place...

Molly is the singer in a band...

Desmond says to Molly, “Girl, I like your face”

And Molly says this as she takes him by the hand...

Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, brah!...

Lala how the life goes on...

Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, brah!...

Lala how the life goes on.

Desmond takes a trolley to the jewelry store...

Buys a twenty carat golden ring... (ring!)

Takes it back to Molly waiting at the door...

And as he gives it to her, she begins to sing...(sing!)

Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, brah!...

Lala how the life goes on...

Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, brah!...

Lala how the life goes on.

In a couple of years, they have built a home sweet home,

With a couple of kids running in the yard,

Of Desmond and Molly Jones... (Ha ha ha ha ha)

Happy ever after in the market place...

Desmond lets the children lend a hand...

Molly stays at home and does her pretty face...

And in the evening she still sings it with the band...

Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, brah!...

Lala how the life goes on...

Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, brah!...

Lala how the life goes on.

In a couple of years, they have built a home sweet home,

With a couple of kids running in the yard,

Of Desmond and Molly Jones...

Happy ever after in the market place...

Molly lets the children lend a hand...

Desmond stays at home and does his pretty face...

And in the evening, she’s a singer with the band...

Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, brah!...

Lala how the life goes on...

Ob-la-di, ob-la-da, life goes on, brah!...

Lala how the life goes on.

And if you want some fun,

Sing Ob-la-di-bla-da.