

# **D**irections

Read this story. Then answer questions 1 through 7.

*In Ireland in 1937, Kathleen Murphy represents her dance school at a recital. She scans the audience for her Aunt Polly as she nervously awaits her turn to perform.*

## Excerpt from *Kathleen: The Celtic Knot*

*by Siobhan Parkinson*

I put my weight on my left foot and stood with my right foot poised, wondering what on earth I was going to do when the music started, because I couldn't remember even the very first step of the dance. But as soon as I heard the squeezebox<sup>1</sup> leading into my tune, everything that had happened over the past few weeks flew out of my head, and the knowledge of the steps came flooding back.

The split second the bar note sounded, I leaped into action. This was it. Either my legs were going to give way under me and I was going to end up in a heap on the floor with Polly's green curtains all around me, or I was going to dance my heart out. I gave one big, joyful bound and gave myself up to the dance, and the dance did me proud.

I kicked and soared and pranced and whirled, stepped and twirled and spun and flew, tripped and skipped and skimmed and sailed, all over that stage. I hardly knew where I was, and I was completely oblivious to the audience, the strange hall, even the adjudicator,<sup>2</sup> though I knew she must be out there somewhere in the blur of humanity beyond the stage, watching carefully and taking notes. I didn't care about that. I was filled with the joy of the dance, and I didn't give a rattling toss about Tess O'Hara and her sky blue frock and her snooty ways. All I wanted was for the music never to stop, so that I could dance and twinkle and leap in its magic nets forever.

The music did stop, of course, and I did, too; and as soon as I stopped, I knew it was just as well that the music had, because suddenly I was worn out, weak-kneed and panting, fit to collapse.

A terrific noise started up out of nowhere. I thought maybe the roof was coming down or a tremendous thunderstorm had started up, and I stood there, as if nailed to the stage, waiting to be overwhelmed by whatever force it was that had set this thunderous sound in motion. I breathed deeply, blinking and looking around me, still standing center stage, with my toes pointed in front of me and my knee crooked, as I had been taught. Then I realized what the noise was, and I started to smile. It wasn't a natural disaster or a storm.

<sup>1</sup> **squeezebox:** slang for an accordion

<sup>2</sup> **adjudicator:** a judge

**GO ON**

It was applause, a thunderous clapping and stamping of feet and rocking of chairs. And it was for me, for me and my dance. I beamed. I beamed and beamed until my face ached. I felt like the sun, up there on the stage, the center of a little universe, all eyes toward me, and me beaming and radiating triumph and pleasure and gratitude and exhaustion all at once.

I made a little curtsy, and then I tripped quickly and lightly offstage.

“She’s so light on her feet,” I could hear people say, as I flew down the steps at the side of the stage. “It’s like watching feathers floating on the breeze,” some poetic type said. “She’s a champion, that’s for sure.”

They were talking about me, but I’d lost interest now. I wanted to see if Polly was there. I needed to know that she’d seen me dancing. I wanted her to be able to tell my mam about it. Madge and the others wouldn’t have the words to describe it, I knew that, and I couldn’t describe it myself, but Polly would be able to tell it all with great panache.

I stood near the top of the hall, by the stage, and I scanned the rows and rows of people. A figure was coming toward me, but I couldn’t make it out properly in the semi-dusk of the seething room.

“Polly?” I called uncertainly. It couldn’t be Polly, though; it was too big and blustering. I was right. It was Mrs. Maguire.

“*Maith thú, a Chaitlín!*” she was saying delightedly, pumping my hand. “Well done, Kathleen! That was a champion performance if ever I saw one. You’re my star pupil, do you know that? I’m proud to be your teacher.”

I smiled nervously at her. I wasn’t used to having my hand shaken, and I certainly wasn’t used to people being proud to be my teacher. I kept on smiling, and at the same time I was trying to look around Mrs. Maguire’s bulk to see if I could catch a glimpse of Polly’s flying figure and wide smile.

Mrs. Maguire moved away then, after giving my hand one last good yank, to talk to another pupil’s mother, and as she did so, I spotted Polly, hanging back, waiting for me to finish my conversation with my teacher.

I was so glad to see her. I waved, and she came running forward and scooped me into a tight, tight hug, whirling me around and around the floor at the side of the rows of seats, till I could hardly breathe.

“Did you see me?” I asked when she finally let me go.

“I only caught the end of it, love,” she said, “but you were brilliant, absolutely brilliant. You weren’t dancing. You were flying!”

“That’s what it feels like,” I said. “Flying.”

1 Read this sentence from lines 10 and 11 of the story.

I kicked and soared and pranced and whirled, stepped and twirled and spun and flew, tripped and skipped and skimmed and sailed, all over that stage.

The author **most likely** includes this description of Kathleen’s dancing to

- A emphasize that the dance ends quickly
- B demonstrate Kathleen’s desire for recognition
- C provide an image of a spirited performance
- D demonstrate Kathleen’s skills as a dancer

2 Read this sentence from lines 11 through 14 of the story.

I hardly knew where I was, and I was completely oblivious to the audience, the strange hall, even the adjudicator, though I knew she must be out there somewhere in the blur of humanity beyond the stage, watching carefully and taking notes.

What is the meaning of the phrase “oblivious to” as it is used in this sentence?

- A unaware of
- B confused by
- C scornful of
- D afraid of

3 What do lines 10 through 17 **mostly** show about Kathleen?

- A Her confidence in her abilities helps her to remember her routine.
- B Her delight in dancing allows her to briefly forget her concerns.
- C She tries to ignore the unfamiliar setting and the audience.
- D She avoids people who are critical about her appearance.

- 4 Lines 36 through 42 **mainly** develop a central idea of the story by revealing
- A the importance of being able to communicate effectively
  - B that Kathleen has lost interest in the conversation because of her success
  - C that Kathleen’s success is meaningful only if she can share it with her family
  - D the significance of the support of family members even when they are absent

- 5 Which detail from the story **best** shows why Polly is important to Kathleen?
- A Polly can best describe Kathleen’s dance to her mam.
  - B Polly allows Kathleen to receive praise from her teacher.
  - C Polly made Kathleen’s dress using her own curtain fabric.
  - D Polly inspired Kathleen to participate in the dance recital.

- 6 Read this sentence from lines 49 through 51 of the story.

I kept on smiling, and at the same time I was trying to look around Mrs. Maguire’s bulk to see if I could catch a glimpse of Polly’s flying figure and wide smile.

This sentence suggests that Kathleen

- A is surprised by her teacher’s presence
- B hopes to avoid chatting after her performance
- C is trying to be polite even though she is distracted
- D feels uncomfortable due to her teacher’s compliments

7 How does the author establish the point of view differently in lines 1 through 32 as compared to lines 33 through 61?

- A by portraying the narrator's actions rather than sharing only the narrator's feelings
- B by describing the narrator's inner thoughts rather than sharing the inner thoughts of all the characters
- C by revealing the narrator's intentions through description instead of using description to share the opinions of all the characters
- D by revealing the narrator's thoughts only through description instead of through both description and dialogue

**GO ON**

## **D**irections

Read this poem. Then answer questions 22 through 28.

# Twilight Calm

*by Christina Rossetti*

- Oh, pleasant eventide!  
Clouds on the western side  
Grow grey and greyer hiding the warm sun:  
The bees and birds, their happy labours done,  
5 Seek their close nests and bide.
- Screened in the leafy wood  
The stock-doves sit and brood:  
The very squirrel leaps from bough to bough  
But lazily; pauses; and settles now  
10 Where once he stored his food.
- One by one the flowers close,  
Lily and dewy rose  
Shutting their tender petals from the moon:  
The grasshoppers are still; but not so soon  
15 Are still the noisy crows.
- The dormouse squats and eats  
Choice little dainty bits  
Beneath the spreading roots of a broad lime;  
Nibbling his fill he stops from time to time  
20 And listens where he sits.
- From far the lowings come  
Of cattle driven home:  
From farther still the wind brings fitfully  
The vast continual murmur of the sea,  
25 Now loud, now almost dumb.
- The gnats whirl in the air,  
The evening gnats; and there  
The owl opes broad his eyes and wings to sail  
For prey; the bat wakes; and the shell-less snail  
30 Comes forth, clammy and bare.

**GO ON**

Hark! that's the nightingale,  
Telling the selfsame tale  
Her song told when this ancient earth was young:  
So echoes answered when her song was sung  
35 In the first wooded vale.  
We call it love and pain  
The passion of her strain;  
And yet we little understand or know:  
Why should it not be rather joy that so  
40 Throbs in each throbbing vein?  
In separate herds the deer  
Lie; here the bucks, and here  
The does, and by its mother sleeps the fawn:  
Through all the hours of night until the dawn  
45 They sleep, forgetting fear.  
The hare sleeps where it lies,  
With wary half-closed eyes;  
The cock has ceased to crow, the hen to cluck:  
Only the fox is out, some heedless duck  
50 Or chicken to surprise.  
Remote, each single star  
Comes out, till there they are  
All shining brightly: how the dews fall damp!  
While close at hand the glow-worm lights her lamp  
55 Or twinkles from afar.  
But evening now is done  
As much as if the sun  
Day-giving had arisen in the East:  
For night has come; and the great calm has ceased,  
60 The quiet sands have run.

- 22 What does **most** of the poem describe?
- A the sounds of evening
  - B animals preparing for nightfall
  - C creatures hunting for food at night
  - D the way the weather changes at sunset

- 23 Read lines 1 through 3 of the poem.

**Oh, pleasant eventide!  
Clouds on the western side  
Grow grey and greyer hiding the warm sun:**

Which words **best** describe the tone that the poet creates at the beginning of the poem?

- A concern for warmth
- B surprised alarm at day's end
- C enthusiasm for the time of day
- D disapproval of the weather pattern

- 24 Read lines 6 and 7 of the poem. Then read this dictionary entry for “screen.”

**screen** *v.* 1. to provide with a means to exclude insects 2. to shelter or conceal from view 3. to separate or sort 4. to use a method to determine suitability for a task

Which definition **best** matches the meaning of “screened” as it is used in lines 6 and 7?

- A definition 1
- B definition 2
- C definition 3
- D definition 4

**GO ON**



25 Which lines provide the **best** evidence that events in nature are repeated over many years?

- A “The very squirrel leaps from bough to bough  
But lazily; pauses; and settles now  
Where once he stored his food.” (lines 8 through 10)
- B “Nibbling his fill he stops from time to time  
And listens where he sits.” (lines 19 and 20)
- C “Hark! that’s the nightingale,  
Telling the selfsame tale  
Her song told when this ancient earth was young:” (lines 31 through 33)
- D “Through all the hours of night until the dawn  
They sleep, forgetting fear.” (lines 44 and 45)

26 Which lines of the poem **best** demonstrate a gradual change that occurs during the evening?

- A lines 11 through 13
- B lines 16 through 20
- C lines 44 and 45
- D lines 54 and 55

27 Which word **best** describes most of the evening activity mentioned in the poem?

- A busy
- B lonely
- C strained
- D cooperative

**28** Which lines **best** show that the night is different from the evening?

- A lines 1 through 5
- B lines 11 through 15
- C lines 26 through 30
- D lines 56 through 60

**GO ON**

**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234**  
**2016 English Language Arts Tests Map to the Standards**  
**Released Questions Available on EngageNY**

**Grade 6**

Question	Type	Key	Points	Standard	Subscore	Secondary Standard(s)	Multiple Choice Questions:	Constructed Response Questions:	
							Percentage of Students Who Answered Correctly (P-Value)	Average Points Earned	P-Value (Average Points Earned ÷ Total Possible Points)
<b>Book 1</b>									
1	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5	Reading		0.65		
2	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4	Reading		0.70		
3	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.3	Reading		0.67		
4	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2	Reading		0.60		
5	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1	Reading		0.67		
6	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.3	Reading		0.73		
7	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.6	Reading		0.34		
22	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2	Reading		0.60		
23	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4	Reading		0.46		
24	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.4c	Reading		0.67		
25	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1	Reading		0.43		
26	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.3	Reading		0.41		
27	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2	Reading		0.48		
28	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1	Reading		0.50		
29	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.5	Reading		0.66		
30	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.1	Reading		0.55		
31	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.4	Reading		0.33		
32	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.3	Reading		0.59		
33	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.8	Reading		0.46		
34	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.2	Reading		0.51		
35	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.6	Reading		0.59		
<b>Book 2</b>									
36	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.3	Reading		0.38		
37	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.4	Reading		0.76		
38	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.1	Reading		0.34		
39	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.2	Reading		0.53		