I. Read the following story and answer the questions.

1. Why do Oren and others play the egg-hiding game? What do eggs symbolize? What is the significance of the game? And why does Oren want to keep the blue egg with a slip of paper saying “Air” inside? (25%)

2. Why does the author incorporate Basho’s poem into the story? What is the poem about? What is the significance of the poem in relation to the theme of the story? (25%)

Divestiture

By Bruce Holland Rogers

We do it like this. I go across the street to Oren's house. Oren has loaded the plastic eggs the night before. He puts five or six of them in a brown paper bag. We don't do more than five or six at a time. Then he gets his walker with the oxygen tank, and the brown paper bag goes into the basket in front, and we go out Oren's door, down the ramp, all the way down the street, past the park, and along the river path. That's where we do it, on the river path.

But I'm making this sound too easy. Everything's hard and takes a long time. That's how it is for us, at our age. It takes a long time to get down the ramp. It takes a long time for us to walk to the end of the street. We have to stop for Oren to catch his breath. He doesn't look too good. His face is kind of gray. But eventually we get all the way to the park, and in time we get through the park to the river path. And then we begin. We walk a little, and then we stop. Oren says, “Anybody?” He can't turn around, so he has to ask me if anyone's in sight behind us. We can't do it when anybody's watching.

When we have a stretch of path to ourselves, he reaches into the bag. His hands shake. The beds of his fingernails are purple. He takes out one of the eggs, and I crack it open so we can have one last look at part of his collection. Maybe it's a Canadian silver dollar from 1967 with the goose in flight, or it's a British crown with Saint George killing the dragon. A lot of times it's just an ordinary silver dollar, a Morgan or a Peace. We admire it. Some of those coins are so pretty. Sometimes it's a coin with a story, like that Luxembourg hundred francs with John the Blind charging into battle, and Oren fills me in on the details, and I say, “My, my. Isn't that something?”

Then we do it like this. We put the coin back inside the egg, check again to see we're alone, and I hide the egg where Oren tells me. In the crook of a tree. In among the blackberry brambles. Under some leaves with just a tiny bit of pink or purple showing.

Oren has lived here his whole life, and the river path is where he used to hunt for pop bottles. I grew up somewhere else, but I remember the hunt, the triumph of a good haul. One bottle was good for two pieces of penny candy. Five bottles were worth a dime, and that was a comic book.

Oren says, “Wouldn't that be a good feeling?” He has to catch his breath between sentences. “You find an egg, and inside it a silver crown?” Silver is up so high that just one of these coins is real money. Of course, I kind of think it would be sad if whoever found one of these eggs went right to the coin shop and sold it.
My favorites, of the ones we have hidden so far, are the Polish coin with the girl haloed in wheat, the Nicaraguan cordoba with the smiling sun, and the Ceylonese five rupees with the sixteen ducks walking around the coin in a circle.

We aren't too regular. Oren doesn't want anyone to come looking on a schedule.

Anyway, that's how we do it. I don't know about the others. Their eggs started showing up on the river path in places where we knew we hadn't hidden anything. Sometimes they were reusing our eggs, we think. Sometimes their eggs were different sizes, or a different color, or they made an egg that was half blue and half green, which we don't do.

Inside the first one, we found this little poem on a scrap of paper:

The oak tree stands
noble on the hill even in
cherry blossom time

-Basho

One big yellow egg held a smaller egg that held a still smaller egg that held a slip of paper with the word “Sunshine.” Another of these nesting eggs, a green one, held the word “Grass.”

We have found eggs bearing a wristwatch without a strap, a pair of cufflinks, a roll of postcard stamps, a boondoggle keychain, a phone number, a tiny pen knife, and a dollar bill. Oren usually spots them first, and I bring them to him. Then we put them back.

We make our way along the river, and every so often Oren has to lean over the walker in a way that lets him get his breath. The oxygen can only help so much. While we're resting like that, Oren spots a hollow tree that is such a perfect hiding place, it's a wonder we never saw it before. We're alone. We crack open the last egg of the day and look at the coin. Oren says it's from Iran. One side shows a lion holding a sword. It's a beauty.

When I get to the tree, I find the big blue egg that is already there. I swap eggs. I bring the blue one to Oren. I can tell by the size and feel of it that it's going to be another one of the nesting eggs. And, sure enough, when I start to open it for him, we find a blue egg inside a blue egg inside a blue egg. Inside the smallest egg is a slip of paper. It says, “Air.”

Oren smiles. I think he'd laugh if he could. “This one,” he says. He pauses to get his breath. “This one, I think I'll keep.”

II. Read the following poems and answer the questions.

1. How does Arnold's speaker see his love? And how does Hecht's speaker see the girl? In what ways do the speakers treat the girl similarly or differently? (25%)
2. How do the poems differ in language, tone, and theme? (25%)
**Dover Beach**

By Matthew Arnold

The sea is calm to-night.  
The tide is full, the moon lies fair  
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light  
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand;  
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.  
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!  
Only, from the long line of spray  
Where the sea meets the moon-blanchéd land,  
Listen! you hear the grating roar  
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,  
At their return, up the high strand,  
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,  
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring  
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago  
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought  
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow  
Of human misery; we  
Find also in the sound a thought,  
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.  
But now I only hear  
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating, to the breath  
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true  
To one another! for the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
And we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

(ca. 1851)
The Dover Bitch
A Criticism of Life: for Andrews Wanning
By Anthony Hecht

So there stood Matthew Arnold and this girl
With the cliffs of England crumbling away behind them,
And he said to her, 'Try to be true to me,'
And I'll do the same for you, for things are bad
All over, etc., etc.!
Well now, I knew this girl. It's true she had read
Sophocles in a fairly good translation
And caught that bitter allusion to the sea,
But all the time he was talking she had in mind
The notion of what his whiskers would feel like
On the back of her neck. She told me later on
That after a while she got to looking out
At the lights across the channel, and really felt sad,
Thinking of all the wine and enormous beds
And blandishments in French and the perfumes.
And then she got really angry. To have been brought
All the way down from London, and then be addressed
As a sort of mournful cosmic last resort
Is really tough on a girl, and she was pretty.
Anyway, she watched him pace the room
And finger his watch-chain and seem to sweat a bit,
And then she said one or two unprintable things.
But you mustn't judge her by that. What I mean to say is,
She's really all right. I still see her once in a while
And she always treats me right. We have a drink
And I give her a good time, and perhaps it's a year
Before I see her again, but there she is,
Running to fat, but dependable as they come.
And sometimes I bring her a bottle of Nuit d'Amour.

(1968)