

QUIZ 1 **Your name:** _____

Memorization

Write from memory a passage of four lines or (a little) more. (15 points).

Essay proposal

Suggest a short essay topic on Walcott which is 1) of interest to you and 2) *tightly focused* enough that one can make a decent stab at it in two double-spaced pages. (15 points).

When you are done, turn over.

Short passages

Below are a selection of passages from "The Schooner Flight" and *Omeros* I-III with the source identified. For 6 of these passages, please give basic context (e.g., where are we in the narrative or in the geography of the poem, who is speaking, who or what is being spoken about); for 3 of those 6, please add brief commentary (what should we notice about this passage).

1. but we live like our names and you would have
to be colonial to know the difference,
to know the pain of history words contain,
to love those trees with an inferior love ... "SF"

2. but this Caribbean so choke with the dead
that when I would melt in emerald water,
whose ceiling rippled like a silk tent,
I saw them corals: brain, fire, sea fans,
dead-men's-fingers, and then, the dead men.
I saw that the powdery sand was their bones
ground white from Senegal to San Salvador. "SF"

3. I have only one theme:
The bowsprit, the arrow, the longing, the lunging heart -
the flight to a target whose aim we'll never know,
vain search for an island that heals with its harbor
and a guiltless horizon, where the almond's shadow
doesn't injure the sand. "SF"

4. Next we pass slave ships. Flags of all nations,
our fathers below deck too deep, I suppose,
to hear us shouting. So we stop shouting. Who knows
who his grandfather is, much less his name? "SF"

5. He stretched out the foot. He edged the razor-sharp steel
Through pleading finger and thumb. The yam leaves recoiled
In a coiled sweat. He hacked every root at the heel.
He hacked them at the heel, noticing how they curled,
Head-down without their roots. He cursed the yams:

"Salope!

You all see what it's like without roots in this world?" *Omeros* book I, chapter IV

6. ... a different life
had to be made whenever the war was over,
even if it lasted ten years, if she would wait,
not on this grass cliff but somewhere on the other
side of the world, somewhere, with its sunlit islands,
where what they called history couldn't happen. Where?

Where could this world renew the Mediterranean's
innocence? She deserved Eden after this war.

Omeros book I, chapter V

7. "... They walk, you write;
Keep to that narrow causeway without looking down,
Climbing in their footsteps, that slow, ancestral beat
Of those used to climbing roads; your own work owes them
Because the couplet of those multiplying feet
Made your first rhymes. Look, they climb, and no one knows them;
They take their copper pittances, and your duty
From the time you watched them from your grandmother's house
As a child wounded by their power and beauty
Is the chance you now have, to give those feet a voice."

Omeros I, Chapter XIII

8. It was then that the small admiral with a cloud
on his head renamed Afolabe "Achilles,"
which, to keep things simple, he let himself be called.

Omeros II, Chapter XIV

9. He murmured to the mirror: No. My thoughts are pure.
They are meant to help her people, ignorant and poor
but these, smiled the bracelet, are the vows of empire.
Black maid or blackmail, her presence in the stone house
was oblique but magnetic.

Omeros II, Chapter XVIII

10. "... What does the name mean? I have forgotten the one
That I gave you. But it was, it seems, many years ago.
What does it mean?"

"Well, I too have forgotten.
Everything was forgotten. You also. I do not know.
The deaf sea has changed around every name that you gave
Us; trees, men, we yearn for a sound that is missing."

Omeros III, Chapter XXV

11. "...So, when you see burnt branches riding the swell,
Trying to reclaim the surf through crooked fingers,
After a night of rough wind by some stone-white hotel,
Past the bright triangular passage of the wind-surfers,
Remember us to the black waiter bringing the bill."
But they crossed, they survived. There is the epical splendour.

Omeros III, Chapter XXVIII

12. ... Near the hedge, the tines
Of the rake in the dead leaves grated on some stone,
So he crouched to uproot the obstruction. He saw
Deep marks in the rock that froze his fingers to bone.
The features incised there glared back at his horror
From its disturbed grave....
A thousand archaeologists started screaming

As [he] wrenched out the totem, then hurled it far
Over the oleander hedge.

Omeros III, Chapter XXXI