

English I

Administered April 2014

RELEASED

READING

Jim at Bat

from Jim the Boy
by Tony Earley

- 1 A summer pasture at twilight:
- 2 The boy cannot hit the baseball to his satisfaction. Though he makes contact almost every time he swings the bat, he does not strike the mighty blow he sees in his mind. The ball does not leap scalded into the sky, but hops into the tall grass as if startled by a noise; it buzzes mildly, a dying beetle tied to a piece of thread, and rolls to a disappointing stop.
- 3 Uncle Zeno pitches. He tracks the ball into the grass every time the boy hits it, and retrieves it without complaint from each new hiding place. He blames himself for the boy's lack of success. The bat is simply too heavy. He knew this for fact when he bought it; he had not wanted to buy a new bat every time the boy grew an inch. He silently chides himself for being cheap.
- 4 Uncle Coran and Uncle Al man the field at improbably optimistic distances behind their brother. Their faces are indistinct in the coming darkness, their forms identical except that Uncle Coran wears a baseball glove on his left hand, while Uncle Al, who is left-handed, wears one on the right. They shout encouragement each time the boy swings the bat. They pound their fists into their gloves, though only for their nephew's benefit; their bodies no longer believe the ball will ever make it out to their place in the field. They do not creep closer because it would make the boy feel bad.
- 5 All three of the uncles wear the small, pocketless, old-fashioned baseball gloves they have had since they were boys. Uncle Al's mitt was made for a right-handed fielder, but he has worn it on the wrong hand for so long that he no longer notices that it doesn't fit. Each uncle would still gladly play a game of baseball, should anyone ask, although no one has asked for years. They keep their tiny, relic gloves properly oiled, however, as if such invitations were not only commonplace, but imminent.
- 6 The boy studies Uncle Zeno until Uncle Zeno's face seems to light up from the inside, weakly, like a moon seen through clouds. It changes into a hundred unfamiliar faces, twists into a hundred strange smiles, until the boy blinks hard and wills his eyes to see only what is there.
- 7 "Okay, Doc," Uncle Zeno says. "Keep your eye on the ball. Here it comes."
- 8 The baseball in Uncle Zeno's hand is almost invisible, a piece of smoke, a shadow. The woods on the far side of the pasture are already dark as sleep;

the river twists through them by memory. Uncle Zeno tosses the ball gently toward the boy, who does not see it until its arc carries it above the black line of trees, where it hangs for a moment like an eclipse in the faintly glowing sky. The boy is arm-weary; he swings as hard as he is able. The bat and ball collide weakly. The ball drops to the ground at the boy's feet. It lies there stunned, quivering, containing flight beneath its smooth skin. The boy switches the bat into his left hand, picks up the ball with his right, and throws it back to Uncle Zeno.

9 "I hit it just about every time," the boy says.

10 "Batter, batter, batter, batter," Uncle Al chirps in the field.

11 "Say, whatta-say, whatta-say, whatta-say," chants Uncle Coran in the ancient singsong of ballplayers. The uncles are singing to the boy. He has never heard anything so beautiful. He does not want it to stop.

12 "Okay, Doc," says Uncle Zeno. "One more. Now watch."

From JIM THE BOY by Tony Earley. Copyright © 2000 by Tony Earley. By permission of Little, Brown and Company.

A Crystal-Clear Love Affair

from Memories of Yankee Stadium
by Scott Pitoniak



- 1 May 30, 1956, remains indelibly etched in Billy Crystal’s mind.
- 2 That was the day the future actor, comedian, and director attended his first game at Yankee Stadium, and Mickey Mantle wound up making quite an impression on the eight-year-old boy and the copper facade hanging from the right-field roof.
- 3 During that afternoon contest between the Yankees and Washington Senators, Crystal and thousands of others watched in awe as the blond Bronx Bomber launched a moon shot that barely missed becoming the first fair ball hit completely out of the stadium. Mantle’s blast on a 2–2 fastball from Senators pitcher Pedro Ramos ricocheted off the decorative facade, just 18 inches from the top of the roof.
- 4 After the game, Ramos joked to reporters: “If it had not hit the roof, it would have landed in Brooklyn.”
- 5 The Mick’s loooooong home run capped an extraordinary day for young Billy—a day that would change his life forever.
- 6 His father was a concert promoter who managed the old Commodore Music Shop on 42nd Street in Manhattan. Legendary jazz artist Louis Armstrong had given the elder Crystal his box seats for a Yankees game that late May day, and the father had planned on taking Billy’s older brother. But when his big brother hurt his back, the ticket went to Billy. His dad arranged for Yankees trainer Gus Mauch to take Billy down to the home-team clubhouse before the game.



This photo diagram shows the path of the two home runs hit by Mickey Mantle on May 30, 1956, the day on which Billy Crystal attended his first New York Yankees baseball game at Yankee Stadium. The flight path of one home run (right) nearly carried the ball over the facade in right field and out of the stadium. Mantle played all of his 18 professional seasons with the Yankees, helping them win seven World Series from 1951 to 1968. He was also named the American League's Most Valuable Player three times.

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- 7 "You can imagine how exciting that was for a little kid," Crystal told the *New York Times* in a 1998 interview. "Gus came out and talked to us and then took my program inside and brought it out with all the signatures on it. [Yankees manager] Casey Stengel came out in the hall, and I remember saying, 'Who's pitching today, Casey?' and he looked at me and said, 'You are, kid, suit up.' How could you not be a Yankees fan after that?"
- 8 Mantle became his idol and the stadium the center of his young universe.
- 9 Crystal would make the 90-minute trek on the Long Island Railroad to the famed ballpark about 25 times a season after that memorable day. And he and the neighborhood kids in the New York suburb of Long Beach would play baseball in the summers from sunrise to sunset.
- 10 Crystal blossomed into an outstanding second baseman and earned a baseball scholarship to Marshall University in West Virginia. But his baseball-playing days ended when the school dropped the program his freshman year.
- 11 He wound up returning to the metropolitan area and eventually studied film and television at New York University, where one of his professors was Academy Award-winning director Martin Scorsese.

- 12 After working for several years as a stand-up comic, Crystal left Long Island for Hollywood in 1976 and, a year later, got his big break when he landed the role of the gay character Jodie Dallas on the ABC sitcom *Soap*. He later became a regular on *Saturday Night Live*, where his “you look mahvellous” impression of Fernando Lamas became a huge hit with viewers. His career peaked in the late 1980s and early ’90s when his roles in blockbuster movies such as *When Harry Met Sally . . .* and *City Slickers* established him as a major star. His celebrity status only grew when he became a frequent host of the Academy Awards show.
- 13 Along the way, Crystal developed a friendship with Mantle, his childhood idol. The Mick said on several occasions if anyone ever did produce a movie about him, he’d want it to be Crystal. And in 2001, six years after the Hall of Fame baseball player died, Crystal debuted the film *61**, which took a behind-the-scenes look at Mantle and Roger Maris’s pursuit of Babe Ruth’s home-run record during the historic 1961 season.
- 14 Nearly a half-century after his first trip there, Yankee Stadium remains one of the most special places in Crystal’s world. Though he lives on the West Coast, he has returned often to the ballpark to watch games and take part in special ceremonies.
- 15 The stadium he first saw in 1956 underwent massive changes during the renovations of the mid-1970s, but it still remains a magical place.
- 16 “I still feel the same way I did when I was a little boy,” he said. “The joy it gave me when I was playing with my friends, pretending to be a Yankee, or pretending with my brother that we were broadcasting the games.
- 17 “I just think of my father. Every time I’m [there], I think of my father. I think of the way he got us to love it without saying, ‘Love this.’”



New Yankee Stadium on Opening Day, April 16, 2009

© AP/Julie Jacobson

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Use “Jim at Bat” (pp. 26–27) to answer questions 23–28. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

23 Which words best help the reader understand the meaning of the word *indistinct* in paragraph 4?

- A** *man the field*
- B** *behind their brother*
- C** *in the coming darkness*
- D** *wears a baseball glove*

24 One of baseball’s long-established traditions is best exemplified in the description of —

- F** how Jim swings in paragraph 8
- G** Uncle Zeno on the pitcher’s mound in paragraph 6
- H** how the uncles chant in paragraphs 10 and 11
- J** the woods on the far side of the pasture in paragraph 8

- 25** Which sentence provides the strongest evidence that Jim appreciates what his uncles are doing for him?
- A** *The boy cannot hit the baseball to his satisfaction.*
 - B** *The boy is arm-weary; he swings as hard as he is able.*
 - C** *"I hit it just about every time," the boy says.*
 - D** *He has never heard anything so beautiful.*

-
- 26** Read the following from paragraph 8.

The ball drops to the ground at the boy's feet. It lies there stunned, quivering, containing flight beneath its smooth skin.

Why does the author use personification in this quotation?

- F** The baseball game symbolizes the love of the family.
- G** The description mimics the boy's disappointment.
- H** The author is comparing the ball to a bird.
- J** The author is showing the distance the ball has traveled.

27 Which line provides the best evidence that Jim has high expectations for himself?

- A** *He does not strike the mighty blow he sees in his mind.*
- B** *He blames himself for the boy's lack of success.*
- C** *He does not want it to stop.*
- D** *He silently chides himself for being cheap.*

28 From paragraph 5, the reader can infer that the three uncles —

- F** think that winning is important
- G** prefer baseball to all other games
- H** miss the days of their youth
- J** used to play baseball professionally

Use "A Crystal-Clear Love Affair" (pp. 28–30) to answer questions 29–33. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

29 The author's purpose for writing this selection is to —

- A** explain the effect Yankee Stadium had on Billy Crystal
- B** recognize Billy Crystal's achievements as an actor
- C** illustrate Mickey Mantle's importance to baseball
- D** promote the public's increased interest in baseball

30 The author includes the quotation in paragraph 16 primarily to substantiate the opinion that —

- F** renovations made to Yankee Stadium in the 1970s were necessary
- G** baseball can no longer legitimately be considered the national pastime
- H** Crystal has matured since his first visit to Yankee Stadium
- J** Yankee Stadium remains a magical place even after major changes

31 From paragraph 9, the reader can infer that Crystal was —

- A** not interested in a career as an actor when he was a teenager
- B** determined to be a professional baseball player
- C** an incredibly dedicated baseball fan
- D** interested in baseball primarily as a way to please his father

32 Which line provides the strongest evidence that Crystal gained the trust of his childhood hero?

- F** *"I remember saying, 'Who's pitching today, Casey?' and he looked at me and said, 'You are, kid, suit up.'"*
- G** *The Mick's loooooong home run capped an extraordinary day for young Billy—a day that would change his life forever.*
- H** *Nearly a half-century after his first trip there, Yankee Stadium remains one of the most special places in Crystal's world.*
- J** *The Mick said on several occasions if anyone ever did produce a movie about him, he'd want it to be Crystal.*

33 What is the purpose of the photo diagram of Mickey Mantle's two home runs?

- A** To highlight how differently the game of baseball was played in the past
- B** To show where Crystal was sitting when Mantle hit the home runs
- C** To represent a typical home run
- D** To compare the paths the home runs took

Use “Jim at Bat” and “A Crystal-Clear Love Affair” to answer questions 34–37. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

34 While “A Crystal-Clear Love Affair” focuses on a man who is a celebrity, “Jim at Bat” focuses on a boy who is —

- F** lazy
- G** ordinary
- H** selfish
- J** proud

35 Read these quotations.

Jim at Bat

The boy cannot hit the baseball to his satisfaction. Though he makes contact almost every time he swings the bat, he does not strike the mighty blow he sees in his mind.

A Crystal-Clear Love Affair

That was the day the future actor, comedian, and director attended his first game at Yankee Stadium, and Mickey Mantle wound up making quite an impression on the eight-year-old boy and the copper facade hanging from the right-field roof.

Which of these best describes the difference in tone between the two quotations?

- A** The tone of the first quotation is impassioned, while the tone of the second quotation is indifferent.
- B** The tone of the first quotation is discouraged, while the tone of the second quotation is celebratory.
- C** The tone of the first quotation is admiring, while the tone of the second quotation is playful.
- D** The tone of the first quotation is informative, while the tone of the second quotation is impartial.

36 Both selections explore the theme of baseball —

- F** being an important means of family bonding in American culture
- G** no longer being the innocent American pastime it once was
- H** providing children with famous role models to idolize
- J** helping many children escape a bleak home life

37 Which element is the same for both selections?

- A** The genre
- B** The subject matter
- C** The tone
- D** The writing style

SHORT ANSWER #1

DIRECTIONS

Answer the following question in the box labeled “Short Answer #1” on page 5 of your answer document.

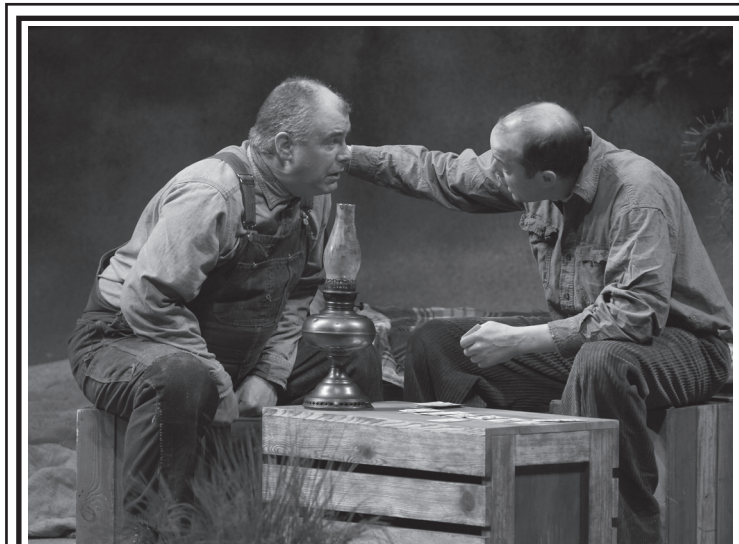
What is one similarity between the boy in “Jim at Bat” and Billy Crystal in “A Crystal-Clear Love Affair”? Explain your answer and support it with evidence from **both** selections.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Copyright restrictions prevent the excerpt from *Of Mice and Men—The Play* from being displayed in this format. Please refer to *Of Mice and Men—The Play* by John Steinbeck, accessible at your local library.

A photograph was included with this selection in the printed version of the English I test and is shown below.

Page 1 of Selection



Lennie (Charles Leggett) and George (Troy Fischnaller) plot their future in a production of *Of Mice and Men*. John Steinbeck's novel about two men wandering through California's bleak agricultural landscape in hopes of finding work is set against the backdrop of the Great Depression and is hailed as an American classic.

Charles Leggett and Troy Fischnaller in *Of Mice and Men*, 2011.
Photo by Chris Bennion. Courtesy of Seattle Repertory Theatre.

Copyright restrictions prevent the excerpt from *Of Mice and Men—The Play* from being displayed in this format. Please refer to *Of Mice and Men—The Play* by John Steinbeck, accessible at your local library.

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- 38** A major theme explored in this play is —
- F** the struggle for racial equality
 - G** the dream of economic self-sufficiency
 - H** the desire for a return to a better time
 - J** the need for social etiquette
-

- 39** In paragraph 17, the word *contorts* means —
- A** twists
 - B** shakes
 - C** pauses
 - D** drops
-

- 40** The dialogue in paragraphs 1 and 2 establishes that the relationship between George and Lennie is most similar to —
- F** a partnership between equals
 - G** the relationship between a teacher and a student
 - H** a partnership of strategic convenience
 - J** the relationship between a parent and a child

41 Which line of dialogue provides the best evidence that Lennie has low self-esteem?

- A** Go on, George! Tell about what we're gonna have in the garden.
- B** Furry ones, George. Like I seen at the fair in Sacramento.
- C** That's it, that's it! Now tell how it is with us.
- D** 'Cause I can jus' as well go away, George, and live in a cave.

42 The stage directions in paragraphs 3 and 6 provide evidence that for George, his speech about the future has become —

- F** unbelievable
- G** a ritual
- H** a joke
- J** pointless

43 The reader can infer that George is using the promise of letting Lennie “tend the rabbits” —

- A** as an incentive in order to manage Lennie’s behavior
- B** to cheat Lennie out of his pay
- C** to trick Lennie into doing all the work
- D** as a way to convince Lennie of his sincerity

44 The stage directions in paragraphs 5 and 7 emphasize Lennie’s —

- F** aggressive nature
- G** consistent thoughtfulness
- H** child-like enthusiasm
- J** irrational fear

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Hearing the Sweetest Songs

by Nicolette Toussaint

Newsweek

May 23, 1994

- 1 Every year when I was a child, a man brought a big, black, squeaking machine to school. When he discovered I couldn't hear all his peeps and squeaks, he would get very excited. The nurse would draw a chart with a deep canyon in it. Then I would listen to the squeaks two or three times, while the adults—who were all acting very, very nice—would watch me raise my hand. Sometimes I couldn't tell whether I heard the squeaks or just imagined them, but I liked being the center of attention.
- 2 My parents said I lost my hearing to pneumonia as a baby, but I knew I hadn't *lost* anything. None of my parts had dropped off. Nothing had changed: if I wanted to listen to Beethoven, I could put my head between the speakers and turn the dial up to 7. I could hear jets at the airport a block away. I could hear my mom when she was in the same room—if I wanted to. I could even hear my cat purr if I put my good ear right on top of him.
- 3 I wasn't aware of *not* hearing until I began to wear a hearing aid at the age of 30. It shattered my peace: shoes creaking, papers crackling, pencils tapping, phones ringing, refrigerators humming, people cracking knuckles, clearing throats and blowing noses! Cars, bikes, dogs, cats, kids all seemed to appear from nowhere and fly right at me.
- 4 I was constantly startled, unnerved, agitated—exhausted. I felt as though inquisitorial Nazis in an old World War II film were burning the side of my head with a merciless white spotlight. Under that onslaught, I had to break down and confess: I couldn't hear. Suddenly, I began to discover many things I couldn't do.
- 5 I couldn't identify sounds. One afternoon, while lying on my side watching a football game on TV, I kept hearing a noise that sounded like my cat playing with a flexible-spring doorstop. I checked, but the cat was asleep. Finally, I happened to lift my head as the noise occurred. Heard through my good ear, the metallic buzz turned out to be the referee's whistle.
- 6 I couldn't tell where sounds came from. I couldn't find my phone under the blizzard of papers on my desk. The more it rang, the deeper I dug. I shoveled mounds of paper onto the floor and finally had to track it down by following the cord from the wall.

- 7 When I lived alone, I felt helpless because I couldn't hear alarm clocks, vulnerable because I couldn't hear the front door open and frightened because I wouldn't hear a burglar until it was too late.
- 8 Then one day I missed a job interview because of the phone. I had gotten off the subway 20 minutes early, eager and dressed to the nines. But the address I had written down didn't exist! I must have misheard it. I searched the street, becoming overheated, late and frantic, knowing that if I confessed that I couldn't hear on the phone, I would make my odds of getting hired even worse.
- 9 For the first time, I felt unequal, disadvantaged and disabled. Now that I had something to compare, I knew that I *had* lost something: not just my hearing, but my independence and my sense of wholeness. I had always hated to be seen as inferior, so I never mentioned my lack of hearing. Unlike a wheelchair or a white cane, my disability doesn't announce itself. For most of my life, I chose to pass as abled, and I thought I did it quite well.
- 10 But after I got the hearing aid, a business friend said, "You know, Nicolette, you think you get away with not hearing, but you don't. Sometimes in meetings you answer the wrong question. People don't know you can't hear, so they think you're daydreaming, eccentric, stupid—or just plain rude. It would be better to just tell them."
- 11 I wondered about that then, and I still do. If I tell, I risk being seen as *unable* rather than *disabled*. Sometimes, when I say I can't hear, the waiter will turn to my companion and say, "What does she want?" as though I have lost my power of speech.
- 12 If I tell, people may see *only* my disability. Once someone is labeled "deaf," "crippled," "mute" or "aged," that's too often all they are. I'm a writer, a painter, a slapdash housekeeper, a gardener who grows wondrous roses; my hearing is just part of the whole. It's a tender part, and you should handle it with care. But like most people with a disability, I don't mind if you ask about it.
- 13 In fact, you should ask, because it's an important part of me, something my friends see as part of my character. My friend Anne always rests a hand on my elbow in parking lots, since several times, drivers who assume that I hear them have nearly run me over. When I hold my head at a certain angle, my husband, Mason, will say, "It's a plane" or "It's a siren." And my mother loves to laugh about the times I *thought* I heard: last week I was told that "the Minotaurs in the garden are getting out of hand." I imagined capering bullmen and I was disappointed to learn that all we had in the garden were overgrown "baby tears."
- 14 Not hearing can be funny, or frustrating. And once in a while, it can be the cause of something truly transcendent. One morning at the shore I was listening to the ocean when Mason said, "Hear the bird?" What bird? I listened hard until I heard a faint, unbirdlike, croaking sound. If he hadn't

mentioned it I would never have noticed it. As I listened, slowly I began to hear—or perhaps imagine—a distant song. Did I *really* hear it? Or just hear in my heart what he shared with me? I don't care. Songs imagined are as sweet as songs heard, and songs shared are sweeter still.

- 15 That sharing is what I want for all of us. We're all just temporarily abled, and every one of us, if we live long enough, will become disabled in some way. Those of us who have gotten there first can tell you how to cope with phones and alarm clocks. About ways of holding a book, opening a door and leaning on a crutch all at the same time. And what it's like to give up in despair on Thursday, then begin all over again on Friday, because there's no other choice—and because the roses are beginning to bud in the garden.
- 16 These are conversations we all should have, and it's not that hard to begin. Just let me see your lips when you speak. Stay in the same room. Don't shout. And ask what you want to know.

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45 Why does the author use sensory images in paragraph 3?

- A** To illustrate that hearing so well was disturbing
- B** To describe her irrational fear of sound
- C** To prove that she really didn't need a hearing aid
- D** To communicate that she was frequently interrupted

46 In which line does the author use alliteration to support the primary message of the selection?

- F** *For the first time, I felt unequal, disadvantaged and disabled.*
- G** *I listened hard until I heard a faint, unbirdlike, croaking sound.*
- H** *Songs imagined are as sweet as songs heard, and songs shared are sweeter still.*
- J** *I imagined capering bullmen and I was disappointed to learn that all we had in the garden were overgrown "baby tears."*

47 Read this sentence from paragraph 15.

We're all just temporarily abled, and every one of us, if we live long enough, will become disabled in some way.

The author makes this statement to suggest that —

- A** she really isn't very different from other people
- B** disabilities are affecting people with increasing frequency
- C** she was fortunate to have developed her disability at a young age
- D** people should prepare themselves for becoming deaf

48 In which line from the article does the author reveal how she would like others to respond to her lack of hearing?

- F** *I had always hated to be seen as inferior, so I never mentioned my lack of hearing.*
- G** *If I tell, people may see only my disability.*
- H** *Unlike a wheelchair or a white cane, my disability doesn't announce itself.*
- J** *It's a tender part, and you should handle it with care.*

49 In paragraph 9, the author suggests that when she started using a hearing aid, she —

- A** felt better prepared for job interviews
- B** was able to enjoy watching television
- C** experienced a sense of loss
- D** was embarrassed about wearing it

50 Why does the author conclude the article by addressing the reader directly?

- F** To include the reader in a personal joke
- G** To highlight the most important aspects of a conversation
- H** To suggest that most non-hearing people do not need hearing aids
- J** To instruct the reader how to treat people with hearing difficulties

SHORT ANSWER #2

DIRECTIONS

Answer the following question in the box labeled “Short Answer #2” on page 5 of your answer document.

After reading “Hearing the Sweetest Songs,” do you think the author considers herself disabled? Explain your answer and support it with evidence from the selection.



**STAAR
English I
April 2014**