

English I Passages

Passage #1 – Writing (Questions 1-6)

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

Damian is excited about being eligible to vote in the next presidential election, but he's also disappointed that many Americans do not participate in the voting process. He has written this paper to persuade people to vote. Read Damian's paper and think about the revisions he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.



Vote!

(1) According to the United Nations, the right to vote is a fundamental human right. (2) It's the most direct way for people to influence the decisions of their government. (3) This right is not guaranteed in all nations of the world, but it is part of the U.S. Constitution. (4) Surprisingly, however, many Americans fail to exercise this right. (5) In fact, in 2008 only 64 percent of eligible Americans voted in the presidential election. (6) And in local elections the percentages were even smaller. (7) This isn't a wise move for you or the country.

(8) Before the American Revolution the British government taxed the colonists living in what is now the United States. (9) These colonists had no say in the decisions about taxes made by the government in Great Britain. (10) This idea of taxation without representation is part of the reason our forefathers were determined. (11) They wanted to separate from Great Britain and form their own nation. (12) Thousands of Americans fought and died in the revolution that followed, which eventually led to independence and voting rights for many.

(13) Even today this right is very limited in some countries around the world. (14) Therefore, in Saudi Arabia the government operates under an absolute monarchy, and people have no opportunity to vote in national elections. (15) And in communist North Korea, citizens are allowed to vote, but there is only one name on the ballot. (16) Voting rights activists say that absurdities like these have been alleged in other countries as well, including Egypt and Iran. (17) As Americans, we should appreciate the fact that we live in a democracy where we are free to voice our opinions. (18) The best way to demonstrate gratitude for this right is by showing up at the polls.

(19) Government decisions affect your life every day. (20) How can you complain about issues concerning school funding, the environment, and health care if you don't even take the time to vote on proposals involving those issues? (21) It's astounding to me that one of the lowest voter turnout rates in the United States is what Texas has. (22) In fact, in a recent presidential election, only about 55 percent of eligible Texans cast a vote. (23) And in local elections sometimes less than 10 percent of the voting population chooses who will make them.

(24) At one time only white male citizens could vote in the United States, but today most citizens who are 18 or older are eligible to vote. (25) And registering to vote is a simple process. (26) You just need to complete a voter registration application and mail it to the voter registrar in your county. (27) So when you turn 18, take the time to become a registered voter. (28) Then pay attention to election candidates and issues.

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Passage #2 – Writing (Questions 7-11)

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

Katy read about some newlyweds who created an unusual home for themselves. She wrote this paper to tell about the couple's experience. Read Katy's paper and think about the revisions she needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.



Home Sweet Rosie

(1) In today's world many people live in smaller apartments and houses than they would like, especially in cities where space is limited and prices are high. (2) But for some people, living in small quarters isn't a necessity; it's a choice. (3) Mike and Natalie Young, of Austin, are two people who have made that choice. (4) They have a bus and have named it Rosie.

(5) "For years I have been interested in the mobile lifestyle, tiny houses, repurposing useful materials, and auto mechanics," Mike Young wrote in his blog. (6) So in 2011, when he and his fiancée Natalie began discussing where they would live after they got married, the idea of a bus came up. (7) They investigated some low-budget apartment rentals but quickly concluded that living in a school bus would be even less expensive. (8) The pair first contacted school districts to try to find a used bus that they could afford. (9) They eventually found the perfect vehicle on a website specializing in classified ads.

(10) It all started then. (11) Although the former owner had already removed all the seats inside the bus, there was still a lot of work to do before the space would be livable. (12) As a resourceful twist on traditional wedding gifts, Mike and

Natalie decided to create a wedding registry for their project. (13) Friends and family could then purchase materials such as flooring, kitchen equipment, and an air conditioner that would help the couple turn their bus into a home. (14) In his blog Mike referred to their efforts as "an experiment in simplicity."



(15) A few months later the bus was ready, and the newlyweds were preparing to move in. (16) They were pleased that their new home had a living area, a bedroom, and a small kitchen, complete with running water and a propane stove. (17) But Mike and Natalie weren't finished yet. (18) They wanted Rosie to feel like a home rather than a recreational vehicle. (19) They carefully selected artwork to display in the foyer, or entrance, of the bus. (20) They added potted plants and rugs. (21) Wooden furniture was topped with photos, books, and lamps. (22) Mike explained, "We choose the few things that have the most impact, that mean the most to us."

(23) Living in a bus has presented a few questions, especially during the hot Texas summers. (24) "We're basically in a metal box," Natalie explained. (25) Even with an air conditioner, the midday heat is brutal. (26) But since Mike works during the day and Natalie is a full-time nursing student, they are usually able to avoid being home during the hottest hours of the day, at least for now.

(27) The Youngs say they are content living in their small space. (28) And just as they hoped, Rosie has become a gathering place for family and friends.

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Passage #3 – Writing (Questions 12-16)

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

Jasmine wrote this paper to tell about a personal experience that turned out different than she expected. Read Jasmine's paper and look for the corrections she needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

Bunkmate Surprise

(1) My bulletin board is covered with pictures of Carmen and me. (2) In almost all of them, we are at Camp Flaming Rock. (3) Every summer for the past five years, we've been camp bunkmates. (4) We're great friends, so I was ecstatic to be returning to camp for another fun summer together. (5) You can imagine my shock when I got to the registration table and discovered that I had been assigned to bunk with Kaitlyn. (6) How could anyone seriously expect Kaitlyn and me to bunk together?

(7) If Carmen and I were like two peas in a pod, Kaitlyn and I were like the repelling ends of magnets. (8) The idea of spending two weeks with her as my bunkmate was hard to imagine. (9) Although I was too old to cry about the situation, tears threatened to spill down my cheeks anyway. (10) I shuffled to the cabin, now dreading the weeks to come as much as I had anticipated them before.

(11) Kaitlyn's gear was already on the top bunk when I got there. (12) As I grudgingly unpacked, she sorted her belongings and completely ignored me. (13) For the rest of the day, neither of us spoke, it was obvious that she was no happier about the arrangement than I was.

(14) At Camp Flaming Rock your bunkmate is also your partner for daily activities. (15) That meant that Kaitlyn and I were thrust into each other's presence all day long. (16) At first, grouchiness prevailed, but as the days passed on, both of our attitudes started to change. (17) While we were canoeing one day, I was stung by a bee, and my hand began to swell. (18) Kaitlyn paddled the rest of the way back by herself. (19) By the time we got to the shore, she was hot and sweaty, but she didn't complain; she just walked with me to the nurse's station. (20) Another day our group played a game based on identifying sounds. (21) I was blindfolded and had to find my way to Kaitlyn by listening to a sound she typically made. (22) When she started making the snoring noises I had been hearing every night, I was able to find her in no time. (23) As soon as the blindfold came off, we both laughed hysterically.

(24) Over time, I noticed some things about Kaitlyn that I had never really seen before. (25) I had always thought she was a bit of a snob, but the more I got to know her, the more I realized that she was just shy. (26) She seemed snobbish because like me, she often worried about what other people would think of her.

(27) As we began to open up to each other, I started to see how Kaitlyn and I were really a lot alike. (28) We both loved singing, we both had pesky little brothers, and we both insisted on sleeping in fuzzy socks!

(29) The end of camp rolled around faster than either of us could have imagined. (30) As Kaitlyn and I packed our suitcases, we laughed about how awkward our first few days together had been. (31) We were both surprised at what close friends we had become. (32) Although I missed bunking with Carmen that summer, I'm glad I made another close friend. (33) Now there's a new picture on my bulletin board at home. (34) It's of me and my special friend Kaitlyn. (35) And both of us are wearing fuzzy socks!

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Passage #4 – Writing (Questions 17-22)

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

Raúl wrote the following paper in response to a class assignment. Proofread Raúl's paper and think about any corrections he needs to make. When you finish reading, answer the questions that follow.

Killer Venoms

(1) Imagine a poison so potent that it could kill you before you even realized you had been exposed to it. (2) Some of the most dangerous venoms on the planet are produced by creatures that seem innocuous at first. (3) These animals, however, carry a deadly bite.

(4) One example is the cone snail found in the Coral Reefs near Australia. (5) On the outside this snail looks unremarkable, but what cannot be seen is its deadly stinger. (6) A spear-like projection from the cone snail can inject a paralyzing venom into a victim. (7) Just a few microliters of this venom, less than the amount most eyedroppers hold is enough to kill 10 people!



Cone Snail

(8) Measuring in at just five inches across, the Brazilian wandering spider is another menacing creature. (9) Although far from the world's largest spider, it can be one of the most venomous. (10) This spider doesn't spin a web and wait for its prey; it stays on the move, wandering about on the forest floor and even venturing into neighborhoods and homes. (11) It is especially dangerous because it is more aggressive than most spiders and will attack if it senses that its territory is threatened. (12) An attack by this spider could be more than just excruciatingly painful, it could be fatal.



Brazilian Wandering Spider

(13) Perhaps the most frightening creature in the world is the box jellyfish, which is found in many of the world's oceans. (14) The tentacles of this jellyfish are covered with thousands of stinging cells that can flood a victim with poison. (15) Even worse, the tentacles become extra sticky when they're in contact with skin, so trying to remove it can make a sting even more severe. (16) A person exposed to the venom of this creature may not even have enough time to get to shore before going into shock.



Box Jellyfish

(17) As toxic as these and other venoms can be, scientists are discovering that they sometimes have beneficial uses. (18) For example, the venom of the Brazilian pit viper is the source of a drug used to treat high blood pressure. (19) While a component found in copperhead snake venom may soon be used to treat breast cancer. (20) In addition, the venom of the cone snail is currently being evaluated in research laboratories as a possible painkiller. (21) Studying the affects of these potent venoms is dangerous work, but scientists say that it's worth the risk, especially if one of these "killer venoms" can actually save lives someday.

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Passage #5A – Fiction (Questions 23-28)

Read the next two selections and answer the questions that follow.

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.

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Passage #5B Expository (Questions 29-33)

A Crystal-Clear Love Affair

from *Memories of Yankee Stadium*
by Scott Pitoniak



© AP/Bill Kozlowski

- 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.

© Bettmann/COBIS

- 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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Passages #5A – Fiction and #5B – Expository (Questions 34-37)

Refer to Passage #5A and Passage #5B above.

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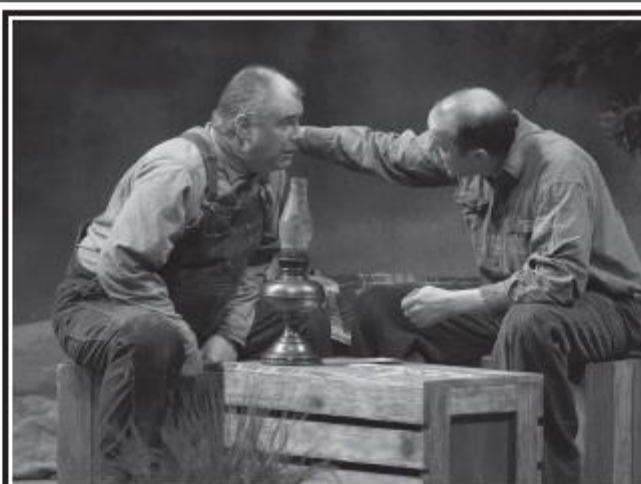
Passage #6 (Questions 38-44)

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 Bennon. Courtesy of Seattle Repertory Theatre.

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Passage #7 – Persuasive (Questions 45-50)

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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