

EAE 0422 A	
Code Sujet	EHP
Sujet Jury	
Sujet Candidat	
Page	1 / 5

DOCUMENT A

Richard Ford, *Wildlife* [1990]; this edition New York, Vintage Books, 1991, pp. 48-50.

[...] Ahead of us at the end of the canyon, the creek bottom road opened into a wide grass meadow beyond which a hill went up sharply, full of small fires in sparse trees.

5 “Let’s give you the full treatment,” my mother said, and she stopped the car right there, still in the narrow canyon where there were patches of fire burning ten yards from the road. She turned off the motor. “Open your door,” she said. “See what it feels like.”

10 I opened my side and stepped out on the road just as she’d told me to. And the fire was all around me, up the hill on both sides and in front of me and behind. The small yellow fires and lines of fire were flickering in the underbrush close enough that I could’ve touched them just by reaching out. There was a sound like wind blowing, and a crack of limbs on fire. I could feel the heat of it all over the front of me, on my legs and my fingers. I smelled the deep, hot piny odor of trees and ground in flames. And what I wanted to do was get away from it before it overcame me.

15 I got back in the car with my mother and closed the door. It was instantly cooler and quieter.

“How was that?” she said, and looked at me.

“It’s loud,” I said. My hands and legs still felt hot.

“Did it appeal to you?” my mother said.

20 “No,” I said, “It scared me.” And that is the feeling I’d had when it was all around me.

“It’s just a lot of small fires that once in a while blow together. Don’t be afraid, now,” my mother said. “You just needed to see what your father finds so entrancing. Do you understand it?”

25 “No,” I said, and I thought my father might’ve been surprised by such a fire and want to come home.

“I don’t understand either,” my mother said. “It’s not mysterious at all.”

“Maybe he was surprised,” I said.

30 “I’m sure he was,” my mother said. “I’m sorry we both can’t sympathize with him.” She started the car and drove us on.

35 In the meadow was a tent camp where there were trucks and temporary lights strung on lines between wooden poles. Fires were beside the road. Small ones. People were moving inside the camp—mostly men, I thought, brought there to fight the fire. Some I could see lying on cots inside tents that had their flaps left open. Some were standing and talking. Others were sitting in trucks. A small dark airplane with a white star on its tail section was sitting farther out on the meadow. Straight across the road that we were on and still ahead of us was a small service station where more trucks were, and a well-lighted CAFE sign hung out in the early-evening darkness. We passed a sign that said that this was Truly, Montana, though it was hard to tell what made it a town. It only seemed to be a separate place because all around it a fire was burning.

Code Sujet	EHP
Page	2 / 5

40 “This is quite a place,” my mother said, watching out the windshield as we drove into the little town of Truly. She motioned toward the tent camp. “That’s the stage-up over there,” she said, “where everyone leaves and comes back. It’s just smoke all the time up here. You’re never out of it.”

 “Do you think we can drive in and find Dad?”

45 “No we can’t,” my mother said abruptly. “He’s fresh out. They’ll keep him up there till he drops. Then he’ll come down, if he’s alive enough. I’m not going to look for him. Are you hungry?”

50 “Yes,” I said. But I was watching the hillside and only half listening. I watched a tall spruce tree catch fire high in the dark. A spark had found it, and it exploded in a bright, steeping yellow flame that leaped and shot out bits of fire into the night toward other trees, and swirled its own white smoke, flaming and then dying quickly as the wind on the hillside—a wind that did not blow where we were—changed and died. It all happened in an instant, and I knew it was dangerous though in a beautiful way. And I understood, just as I sat there in the car with my mother, what I thought dangerous was: it was a thing that did not seem able to hurt you, but quickly and deceivingly would. Though I
55 didn’t understand why my father would risk danger, unless it was that he didn’t care about life much, or unless there was something in losing it that was satisfying, which didn’t seem like anything I remembered anybody ever having said to me. [...]

Code Sujet	EHP
Page	3 / 5

DOCUMENT B

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*, 1836.
<http://www.emersoncentral.com/nature1.htm>

[...] Chapter I NATURE

To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds, will separate between him and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.

The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood.

When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects. It is this which distinguishes the stick of timber of the wood-cutter, from the tree of the poet. The charming landscape which I saw this morning, is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title.

To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth, becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says, — he is my creature, and maugre all his impertinent griefs, he shall be glad with me. Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight. Nature is a setting that fits equally well a comic or a mourning piece. In good health, the air is a cordial of incredible virtue. Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. In the woods too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life, is always a child. In the woods, is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, — no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving

Code Sujet	EHP
Page	4 / 5

me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, – my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, – all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances, – master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty. In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate than in streets or villages. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.

55 The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister, is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them. The waving of the boughs in the storm, is new to me and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or
60 doing right.

Yet it is certain that the power to produce this delight, does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both. It is necessary to use these pleasures with great temperance. For, nature is not always tricked in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs, is overspread
65 with melancholy today. Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then, there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.

Code Sujet	EHP
Page	5 / 5

DOCUMENT C

Stephen Willard, *Convict Lake and Hangman's Tree in the High Sierras, 1940s.*

