

Name: _____ Class: _____

Poem Resisting Arrest

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Kyle Dargan is poet based in Washington, D.C. In this poem, included in his book of poetry Anagnorisis, a speaker describes a poem that questions its arrest. As you read, take notes on how the speaker describes the arrest.

[1] This poem will be guilty. It assumed it retained¹
the right to ask its question after the page

came up flush against its face. The purpose
this poem serves is obvious, even to this poem,

[5] and that cannot stop the pen or the fist
choking it. How the page tastes at
times—unsalted

powerlessness in this poem's mouth, a blend
of that and what it has swallowed of the news. It
spits

blood—inking. It is its own doing and undoing.

[10] This poem is trying to compose itself. It has
the right to remain either bruised or silent,
but it is a poem, so it hears *you'd be safer*

if you stopped acting like a poem, ceased resisting.
Where is the daylight (this poem asks and is

[15] thus crushed) between existence and resistance,
between the now-bloodied page and the poem?

Another poem will record the arrest of this poem,
decide what to excerpt.² That poem will fail—

[20] it won't find the right metaphor for the pain
of having to lift epigraphs³ from the closing

words of poems that were accused of resisting.
That poem is numb. This poem is becoming



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1. **Retain (verb):** to continue to have something
2. to take a short portion from a whole text
3. a short quotation or engraved inscription

numb, already losing feeling in its cuffed phrasing.
No one will remember the nothing of which

[25] this poem was accused—just that it was another
poem that bled. This poem never expected to be

this poem, yet it must be—for you who will not
acknowledge the question. This poem knew

it was dangerous to ask *why*?

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Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which statement describes the main theme of the poem?
 - A. Poetry can help expose the unfair treatment of others and speak for them.
 - B. Questioning authority can be dangerous and sometimes it's best to remain silent.
 - C. Poetry is a safe way one can express themselves without suffering repercussions.
 - D. Everyone has the right to question why they are being accused of something.

2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "the right to ask its question after the page / came up flush against its face." (Lines 2-3)
 - B. "thus crushed) between existence and resistance, / between the now-bloodied page and the poem?" (Lines 15-16)
 - C. "Another poem will record the arrest of this poem, / decide what to excerpt. That poem will fail—" (Lines 17-18)
 - D. "This poem never expected to be / this poem, yet it must be—for you who will not / acknowledge the question." (Lines 26-28)

3. PART A: Which of the following describes the relationship between the poem's arrest and the poem that records the arrest?
 - A. The poem recording the arrest will share the other poem's experience with the world.
 - B. The poem recording the arrest will do nothing to help the poem arrested.
 - C. The poem recording the arrest will not be able to accurately capture the poem's arrest.
 - D. The poem recording the arrest is uncaring towards the experiences of the arrested poem.

4. PART B: Which quote from the poem best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "thus crushed) between existence and resistance, / between the now-bloodied page and the poem?" (Lines 15-16)
 - B. "That poem will fail— / it won't find the right metaphor for the pain" (Lines 18-19)
 - C. "That poem is numb. This poem is becoming / numb" (Lines 22-23)
 - D. "No one will remember the nothing of which / this poem was accused" (Lines 24-25)

5. How do the words used to describe the poem's arrest help contribute to the idea that the arrest in the poem is unjust?
