

Directions

Read this poem. Then answer questions 36 through 38.

At Dusk

by Natasha Trethewey

- At first I think she is calling a child,
my neighbor, leaning through her doorway
at dusk, street lamps just starting to hum
the backdrop of evening. Then I hear
5 the high-pitched wheedling we send out
to animals who know only sound, not
the meanings of our words—*here here*—
nor how they sometimes fall short.
In another yard, beyond my neighbor's
10 sight, the cat lifts her ears, turns first
toward the voice, then back
to the constellation of fireflies flickering
near her head. It's as if she can't decide
whether to leap over the low hedge,
15 the neat row of flowers, and bound
onto the porch, into the steady circle
of light, or stay where she is: luminous¹
possibility—all that would keep her
away from home—flitting before her.
20 I listen as my neighbor's voice trails off.
She's given up calling for now, left me
to imagine her inside the house waiting,
perhaps in a chair in front of the TV,
or walking around, doing small tasks;

GO ON

- 25 left me to wonder that I too might lift
my voice, sure of someone out there,
send it over the lines stitching here
to there, certain the sounds I make
are enough to call someone home.

¹**luminous:** filled with light

GO ON

Session 2

Page 3

36

How do the poet's word choices in lines 1 through 8 of "At Dusk" establish the mood of the poem? Use **two** details from the poem to support your response.

GO ON

37

In “At Dusk,” how does the shift that begins in line 21 affect the meaning of the poem? Use **two** details from the poem to support your response.

GO ON

Session 2

Page 5

38

In “At Dusk,” what do the speaker’s thoughts reveal about her ideas concerning home? Use **two** details from the poem to support your response.

GO ON