

**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: luminous<sup>1</sup>  
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.

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<sup>1</sup>**luminous:** filled with light

**GO ON**

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**Session 2**

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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.

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**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.

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**GO ON**

Session 2

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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.

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**GO ON**