A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body
Andrew Marvell

Soul
O who shall, from this Dungeon, raise
A Soul inslavel’d so many ways?
With bolts of Bones, that fetter’d stands
In Feet; and manacled in Hands.
Here blinded with an Eye; and there,
Deaf with the drumming of an Ear.
A Soul hung up, as ‘twere, in Chains
Of Nerves, and Arteries, and Veins.
Tortur’d, besides each other part,
In a vain Head, and double Heart.

Body
O who shall me deliver whole,
From bonds of this Tyrannic Soul?
Which, stretcht upright, impales me so,
That mine own Precipice I go;
And warms and moves this needless Frame:
(A Fever could but do the same.)
And, wanting where its spite to try,
Has made me live to let me die.
A Body that could never rest,
Since this ill Spirit it possest.

Soul
What Magic could me thus confine
Within another’s Grief to pine?
Where whatsoever it complain,
I feel, that cannot feel, the pain.
And all my care its self employs,
That to preserve, which me destroys:
Constrain’d not only to endure
Diseases, but what’s worse, the Cure:
Am Shipwrackt into Health again.

Body
But Physic* yet could never reach
The Maladies thou me dost teach;
Whom the first Cramp of Hope dost tear:
And then the Palsy shakes of Fear.
The Pestilence of Love does heat:
Or Hatred’s hidden Ulcer eat.
Joy’s cheerful Madness does perplex:
Or Sorrow’s other Madness vex.
Which Knowledge forces me to know,

And Memory will not forgo.
What but a Soul could have the wit
To build me up for Sin so fit?

So Architects do square and hew,
Green Trees that in the Forest grew.

*Physic: medicine

1. The headings of the stanzas, Soul and Body, indicate which one of the two is
(A) being addressed
(B) acting as the deliverer of the other
(C) being described
(D) winning the struggle at the moment
(E) speaking

2. In the poem, which of the following best describes the relationship between the body and the soul?
(A) The body controls the soul.
(B) The soul owns and manages the body.
(C) They are separate and independent.
(D) Each is subject to the demands of the other.
(E) In time, they become completely unified.

3. Which of the following devices is dominant in the first stanza?
(A) An extended metaphor of cruel imprisonment
(B) An extended definition of the soul
(C) Names of parts of the body to represent the whole
(D) Internal rhyme to emphasize the internal nature of the struggle
(E) End-stopped lines to temper the urgency of the message

4. The notion of an eye that can blind and an ear that can deafen (lines 5-6) suggests that the
(A) body is in fact in worse condition than the soul
(B) soul claims to have senses, but those senses fail
(C) eye and ear impede the soul’s perception instead of aiding it
(D) eye and ear try continually to perceive the soul but never do
(E) fragile eye and ear are stronger than the soul

5. In the context of the first stanza, lines 1-2 express a longing to be
(A) freed from an actual prison
(B) separated from physical life
(C) saved from eternal damnation
(D) cured of a crippling ailment
(E) released from enslavement to vice
6. Which of the following best sums up what is said in lines 13-14?
   (A) The body would prefer death to the dictates of the soul.
   (B) The soul puts the body in the position of always being a danger to itself.
   (C) The body becomes a danger to others when it ignores what the soul teaches.
   (D) The body is the stepping-off place for any attempt to understand the nature of the soul.
   (E) The soul offers the body the chance to achieve new heights.

7. What does line 15 suggest about the nature of the soul?
   (A) It is the divine element in a person.
   (B) It is the source of evil as well as good.
   (C) It confuses by introducing conflicting emotions.
   (D) It is the animating force in a person.
   (E) It makes one conscious of physical sensations.

8. Which of the following best restates the question posed in lines 21-22?
   (A) What constrains me to suffer from experiences that are not naturally my own?
   (B) What can make me sorrow for the body in its ill state when I have no natural sympathy?
   (C) What struggle of good and evil makes me both cause the misfortunes of the body and then regret them?
   (D) Why must the body ultimately come to grief and I be saved?
   (E) Why must I dwell in another body after my original dwelling place has died?

9. Lines 25-26 are best understood to mean that the
   (A) soul can neither care nor feel, and so the body has no reason to try to preserve it
   (B) body ignores the soul’s efforts to influence it
   (C) soul’s best attempts to exist in unity with the body end by killing the body
   (D) body refuses to recognize that it could not live without the soul
   (E) soul’s efforts are used by the body for its own maintenance and, consequently, for the ruination of the soul

10. “Port” (line 29) refers metaphorically to
    (A) death
    (B) the body
    (C) the unity of body and soul
    (D) illness
    (E) hell

11. Which of the following best describes the effect of the metaphors in lines 31-36?
    (A) The likening of emotion to illness suggests that the soul and body are really one.
    (B) The very number of ailments exaggerates the weakness of the body and the strength of the soul.
    (C) The mention of teaching implies that knowing oneself well is the key to healing the breach between body and soul.
    (D) The metaphors stress that the body perceives the emotions physically and, further, that it perceives only their negative effects.
    (E) The metaphors indicate that the obsession of the body with its own ailments keeps it from giving expression to the soul.

12. The last four lines, which extend the length of the last stanza, have the effect of
    (A) offering a solution to the dilemma of the body and soul
    (B) providing an epigrammatic summary of the body’s view of the soul
    (C) providing comic relief from the serious conflict in the poem
    (D) breaking through the irony of the poem to reveal the whole person, body and soul combined
    (E) finally allowing the soul to argue back within a stanza devoted to the view of the body

13. Which of the following most fully expresses the cleverness of the body in its impingement on the soul?
    (A) “O who shall, from this Dungeon, raise/A Soul inslav’d so many ways?” (lines 1-2)
    (B) “And, wanting where its spite to try,/Has made me live to let me die.” (lines 17-18)
    (C) “And all my care its self employs,/That to preserve, which me destroys:” (lines 25-26)
    (D) “But Physic yet could never reach/The Maladies thou me dost teach;” (lines 31-32)
    (E) “Which Knowledge forces me to know,/And Memory will not forgo.” (lines 39-40)