## READING TEST

*35 Minutes—40 Questions*

**DIRECTIONS:** There are four passages in this test. Each passage is followed by several questions. After reading each passage, choose the best answer to each question and blacken the corresponding oval on your answer document. You may refer to the passages as often as necessary.

### Passage I

**PROSE FICTION:** The following passage is adapted from the short story "Between Two Homes" by Herbert Malloy (© 1993 by Herbert Malloy).

The fact that air travel allows me to fall asleep on the west coast and wake up on the east coast is bittersweet magic. On a red-eye flight, the continent passes stealthily underneath like an ugly secret we prefer not to acknowledge. Passengers drift in and out of an unsteady slumber, reluctantly awakening to the realization that they are still stuck on an airplane. Sometimes I open my eyes wide enough to gaze out the window at the twinkling lights of the towns and cities below.

I try to decipher which city glimmers below from the size of its grid of light, as well as my perception of how long I have been flying. Could that be Denver? Have I already napped a third of the flight? I look around the cabin to see how many other people are having trouble sleeping and become instantly jealous of the families and couples who have the luxury of leaning on each other.

The aura of cool sunlight begins to infiltrate the cabin as we near Dulles, Virginia. We see flocks of birds sharing the sky with us. By the time we arrive, we will have flown through three time zones, compressing a normal night by removing three of its sacred hours. We are not only cheating space by crossing a continent in the course of a long nap, but also cheating time by turning back our watches and rushing prematurely toward the sunrise.

My hometown is still a car ride away, but the vicinity of the airport is close enough to be a tonic to my nostalgic yearnings. As soon as I see the dense stands of oak and hickory blanketing the hills, I know I am back home. There's no trace of palm trees, no unrelenting flat stretches of compacted and perpendicular city streets. Left behind in our plane's exhaust, Southern California is still fast asleep.

* * * * * *

My dad has driven to the airport to pick me up, but I very nearly miss him—I'd forgotten he now drives a different car. I'm sure I've heard him speak of his new blue Toyota, but I always expect him to be driving the brown Lexus he owned when I moved away. Happily, the smell inside the car remains the same: stretched leather, cologne, and the faint hint of a cigarette that was meant to go undetected. I covertly scan the side of his face while he drives, hoping to see the same face I remember. Instead I see new wrinkles, new spots on his face, new folds of skin on his neck.

We pass by familiar landmarks as we near our house, as well as some not-so-familiar ones. The performance stage in the town center that was merely a proposal when I left is now up-and-running, according to the marquee listing its upcoming shows. The Olde Towne Tavern is apparently now called Summit Station. The old dance studio above the apartment buildings on West Deer Park seems to have finally closed — I always wondered how it stayed in business. The cluster of shops that famously burned to the ground near the high school has open doors and cars gliding in and out of the parking lot.

We've arrived at the house, and as soon as I walk through the door, I am flooded with further reminders of my absence — trinkets on the wall I don't recognize, rearranged furniture in the kitchen and living room, sugary cereals and snacks strangely absent from the top of the fridge. What was once my home has become someone else's house — my parents' house.

I suddenly see the mundane routines of my parents cast in a tragic light: my mother's agitation at the grackles that scare the goldfinches away from the bird-feeders, my father's habit of pretending to read the newspaper on the porch (just an opportunity to keep an eye on the neighborhood), the uninspired television they watch at night, often in separate rooms, and, most depressingly, the way they often fall asleep in front of the television, mouths gaping.

* * * * * *

The in-flight movie on the way back to California portrays the story of a physicist who awakens after spending ten years in a coma. His initial joy gradually subsides and ultimately leads to confusion and sadness as he attempts to reintegrate into a world that has moved on without him. Even science, that rock of immutable truths, has changed in his absence. He finds the entire body of research he had been working on prior to his coma now obsolete—years of advances in his field had furnished the answers he was pursuing.

As a physicist, he knew that time is a relative phenomenon, a concept that only has meaning in relation to an individual's succession of experiences and ordering of memories. Clearly, though, his world, like mine, had continued to age, changing despite his lack of participation in it. Years are passing whether you're there to observe them or not.

1. It can reasonably be inferred from the passage that the narrator thinks air travel is:

A. the most enjoyable way to travel.
B. an ordinary part of the world.
C. more uncomfortable than convenient.
D. somewhat unnatural in what it makes possible.

2. The first three paragraphs (lines 1–23) establish all of the following about the narrator EXCEPT that he is:

F. onboard an airplane
G. traveling east.
H. departing from Denver.
J. noticing sights below.

3. The point of view from which the passage is told is best described as that of:

A. a young adult returning from a vacation to Southern California.
B. an adult relating his reactions to visiting to his hometown.
C. a young adult awakening from a long coma.
D. an adult who prefers Southern California to his new home.

4. According to the narrator, which of the following things is relatively new to his parents' house?

F. Certain trinkets on the wall.
G. The fridge.
H. His father's brown Lexus.
J. The bird-feeders.

5. The passage contains recurring references to all of the following EXCEPT:

A. difficulty sleeping.
B. birds.
C. grids of light.
D. dancing.

6. The narrator indicates that the most upsetting habit of his parents is:

F. buying new cars.
G. how and where they fall asleep.
H. what they watch on television.
J. how many trinkets they buy.

7. According to the passage, the coma victim has a sense of time as a relative phenomenon because:

A. ten years had gone by quickly.
B. he was a physicist.
C. it was a side effect of his medical treatments.
D. it was the focus of his research before his coma.

8. Based on the narrator's account, all of the following are part of the present, rather than the past, in his hometown EXCEPT:

F. the closed dance studio.
G. the upcoming show marquee.
H. Summit Station.
J. the burnt remains of a shopping center.

9. Details in the passage most strongly suggest that one characteristic of the narrator's hometown is:

A. flat stretches.
B. palm trees.
C. oak trees.
D. perpendicular streets.

10. When the narrator refers to science as "that rock of immutable truths" (lines 69–70), he is most likely directly referring to:

F. the unchanging nature believed to be characteristic of scientific knowledge.
G. the physicist's inability to understand the recent advances in science.
H. the body of research conducted in the physicist's field during his coma.
J. the ten years' worth of scientific advances that the narrator had missed.