

Time allowed: 45 minutes · 25 marks

Read the two poems printed below carefully, then answer the question that follows.

Poem A

Sonnet 1 (from Pamphilia to Amphilanthus)

Lady Mary Wroth (c. 1621)

Unquiet thoughts, whom at the last must part,
And leave the siege you lay against my rest,
Of your own folly let your selves be blest,
No longer bide in my o'ercharged breast.
But pack you hence, since she who views my smart
Disdains my love and will not be possest,
Enjoy your dear delight in scorn and jest,
Fitting a turban'd Turk's or Tartar's heart.
But if you will persist to work my woe,
And seek, as once you did, my thoughts' delight,
And bring those sweet hours back which once I knew,
Then here I vow, e'er long to work your spite,
And by your loss of power your force to show,
And bitter pay you for your pleasing view.

Poem B

I, being born a woman and distressed

Edna St Vincent Millay (1923)

I, being born a woman and distressed
By all the needs and notions of my kind,
Am urged by your propinquity to find
Your person fair, and feel a certain zest
To bear your body's weight upon my breast:
So subtly is the fume of life designed,
To clarify the pulse and cloud the mind,
And leave me once again undone, possessed.
Think not for this, however, the poor treason
Of my stout blood against my staggering brain,
I shall remember you with love, or season
My scorn with pity, — let me make it plain:
I find this frenzy insufficient reason
For conversation when we meet again.

Question

Compare how the poets present the experience of desire as something that conflicts with reason or self-control.

In your response you should:

- compare the methods both poets use to present their ideas
- refer to relevant contexts
- explore different interpretations of each poem.

Poem A: Lady Mary Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* (1621)

Poem B: Edna St Vincent Millay, *Second April* (1923)