Optional Take-Home Final Examination

Exam Guidelines

You may use your notes and textbooks to complete this exam; however, I caution you not to use outside sources (such as those available from the internet), as these are frequently misleading, inaccurate, and—on occasion—flat-out wrong.

Remember that explication=excavation and that I want your close analysis of the text, supported with examples from the text, not your unfounded opinion.

To complete your exam,
1. Type your explication in Times New Roman (12 point), using one-inch margins all around.
2. Sign your name on this exam paper.
3. Print your exam using a laser printer).
4. Staple your printed pages to this exam paper (with this exam paper on top). 
   Note: I will give any exam that I receive without receiving this exam paper a zero.

This exam is optional. If you turn in an exam, your exam will be worth 10 percent of your final grade and your portfolio will be worth 40 percent as stated on your course syllabus. If you decide not to take the exam, your portfolio will be worth 50 percent of your final grade. If you exercise the option to take the exam, you must turn in your completed exam with your portfolio no later than Friday, May 13, at 1:00 p.m.

Good luck!

Explication

Write a cogent, short essay for Passage A. Then, write a second essay for either B or C. In each essay, analyze language, content, rhetorical structure, and literary devices. Remember that plot summary and paraphrase are not analysis. (PS=BS, in other words.)

A. The old woman remembered a swan she had bought many years ago in Shanghai for a foolish sum. This bird, boasted the market vendor, was one a duck that stretched its neck in hopes of becoming a goose, and now look!—it is too beautiful to eat.

Then the woman and the swan sailed across an ocean many thousands of li wide, stretching their necks toward America. On her journey she cooed to the swan: “In America I will have a daughter just like me. But over there nobody will say her worth is measured by the loudness of her husband’s belch. Over there nobody will look down on her, because I will make her speak only perfect American English. And over there she will always be too full to swallow any sorrow! She will know my meaning, because I will give her this swan—a creature that became more than what was hoped for.”

But when she arrived in the new country, the immigration officials pulled her swan away from her, leaving the woman fluttering her arms and with only one swan feather for a memory. And then she had to fill out so many forms she forgot why she had come and what she had left behind.

Now the swan was old. And she had a daughter who grew up speaking only English and swallowing more Coca-Cola than sorrow. For a long time now the woman had wanted to give her daughter the single swan feather and tell her, “This feather may look worthless, but it comes from afar and carries with it all my good intentions.” And she waited, year after year, for the day she could tell her daughter this in perfect American English.
B. I lost an arm on my last trip home. My left arm.

And I lost about a year of my life and much of the comfort and security I had not valued until it was
gone. When the police released Kevin, he came to the hospital and stayed with me so that I would
know I hadn’t lost him too.

But before he could come to me, I had to convince the police that he did not belong in jail. That took
time. The police were shadows who appeared intermittently at my bedside to ask me questions I had to
struggle to understand.

“How did you hurt your arm?” They asked. “Who hurt you?” My attention was captured by the word
they used: Hurt. As though I’d scratched my arm. Didn’t they think I knew it was gone?

“Accident,” I heard myself whisper. “It was an accident.”

C. “It is with considerable difficulty that I remember the original aera of my being; all the events of that
period appear confused and indistinct. A strange multiplicity of sensations seized me, and I saw, felt,
heard, learned to distinguish between the operations of my various senses. By degrees, I remember, a
stronger light pressed upon my nerves, so that I was obliged to shut my eyes. Darkness then came over
me, and troubled me; but hardly had I felt this, when, by opening my eyes, as I now suppose, the light
poured in on me again.”