Name _____ Date _____

Extended Metaphor in a Poem: Moving Day

Directions: Read the poem carefully, noticing how the speaker keeps comparing the house to a body from one stanza to the next. Then answer each question, checking every choice against the exact words of the poem before you decide.

Moving Day

All week the house has held its breath:
its hallway is a long spine, its rafters are ribs,
and the kitchen, where we argued and ate and laughed,
has always been the warm, loud heart of it.

Today we carry the house out of itself, box by box:
the closets empty like lungs letting go of air,
the walls give up their pictures one by one,
and every room grows thinner until the bones show through.

On the pantry doorframe, pencil lines climb
from the height of my knee to the height of my shoulder,
small scars that mark how fast I grew inside this body.
We cannot pack them, so we leave them where they are.

Tonight the rooms are quiet, and I understand at last
that the heart of a house was never the kitchen at all.
It was the noise we made, the five of us, the slam
of doors and the clatter of dinner, and we are taking it with us.

Tomorrow, in a new house with a stranger's hallway,
we will set that heart down in an empty kitchen,
and slowly, the way a sleeper wakes, the rooms will learn to breathe.

1. In the first stanza of "Moving Day," the speaker calls the hallway "a long spine," the rafters "ribs" and the kitchen "the warm, loud heart of it." What do these comparisons set up for the rest of the poem?

A. A comparison between moving day and a dangerous storm

B. A description of the repairs the house needs before the family leaves

C. A comparison between the house and an abandoned ship at sea

D. An extended metaphor in which the house is a body

2. The first stanza describes the kitchen, "where we argued and ate and laughed," as the "warm, loud heart" of the house. What does this metaphor suggest about the kitchen?

A. It was the most fragile and easily damaged part of the house.

B. It was the center of the family's life together, full of their voices and activity.

C. It was the room that the family used least often.

D. It was the hottest and noisiest room because of the stove.

3. The second stanza begins with the line "Today we carry the house out of itself, box by box" and goes on to list what the family empties. What does this opening line suggest?

A. The family is throwing away everything it has ever owned.

B. The house is too small to hold all of the family's boxes.

C. Packing empties the house of everything that filled it, so the family seems to carry the house "out of itself" along with the boxes.

D. The family is lifting the building itself and moving it to a new street.

4. Which two images show the house being emptied as if it were a body? Select two.

☐ A. "small scars that mark how fast I grew inside this body"

☐ B. "its hallway is a long spine, its rafters are ribs"

☐ C. "the rooms will learn to breathe"

☐ D. "the closets empty like lungs letting go of air"

☐ E. "every room grows thinner until the bones show through"

5. In the third stanza, the pencil lines on the pantry doorframe become "small scars that mark how fast I grew inside this body." What does the speaker's choice to call the pencil lines "scars" suggest?

A. The speaker was physically injured while living in the house.

B. The lines are lasting marks that the speaker's years of growing up have left on the house.

C. The pencil lines are ugly and should have been erased long ago.

D. The speaker is embarrassed about having grown so quickly.

6. The third stanza ends, "We cannot pack them, so we leave them where they are." What does this line suggest about moving away from a home?

A. Some marks of the family's past belong to the house itself and must stay behind.

B. The new owners have asked the family to leave the doorframe alone.

C. The family accidentally forgot to pack the pencil lines in the rush.

D. The speaker wants to forget everything about growing up in the house.

7. In the fourth stanza, the speaker says that "the heart of a house was never the kitchen at all." How does this line change the direction of the extended metaphor?

A. It shows that the speaker never liked spending time in the kitchen.

B. It reveals that the house never had a heart, so the metaphor was a mistake.

C. It moves the heart from a room in the house to the family's life together, which is something they can take with them.

D. It shows that the family plans to bring the old kitchen to the new house.

8. In the last stanza, the family will be "in a new house with a stranger's hallway" by tomorrow. Since the first stanza called the hallway the house's "long spine," what does this phrase suggest about the new house?

A. It does not yet feel like the family's own; its spine, the hallway, still feels unfamiliar to them.

B. The family will be sharing the new house with several strangers.

C. The new house has no hallway or entrance at all.

D. The new house is dangerous because a stranger is living in it.

9. The last stanza says that "we will set that heart down in an empty kitchen," in the new house. What does this image suggest about the family's life there?

A. The family's life together, the heart they carried from the old house, will become the center of the new one.

B. The new kitchen will stay empty because the family will not use it.

C. The speaker will keep the old kitchen's heart in a box and never unpack it.

D. The family will leave all of its feelings behind in the old house.

10. "Moving Day" begins with a house that "has held its breath" and ends with new rooms that "will learn to breathe." What does this pairing of the opening and closing lines suggest?

A. Both houses are sick and struggling to breathe.

B. The poem moves from an old house waiting to be emptied to a new one whose rooms will slowly learn to breathe, which suggests that a house's life comes from the people living in it.

C. The family hopes to return to the old house once the new one is ready.

D. The move happens so quickly that no one has time to breathe.