

Response to Mark Strand's Essay "On Becoming a Poet"

Introduction: According to the *Poetry Foundation*, Mark Strand (1934-2014) "was recognized as one of the premier American poets of his generation as well as an accomplished editor, translator, and prose writer.... Named the U.S. Poet Laureate in 1990, Strand's career spanned five decades, and he won numerous accolades from critics and a loyal following among readers."

In his essay "On Becoming a Poet," Strand discusses the first poem he read that made him passionate about poetry. "You, Andrew Marvell," written by Archibald MacLeish, is a Modernist poem that *follows different "rules" than sonnets and other Renaissance poems follow*. In Part I of this essay, Strand not only discusses how this poem affected him when he first read it, but he also explicates the poem—i.e., explains *how the poem unfolds* and *how the poem's different elements* (such as its language, structure, and tone) work together to create a total effect on the reader. Moreover, in Parts II and III, Strand also discusses the key traits of lyric poetry in general and the reasons why lyric poetry has the ability to move us.

Instructions: Please answer both topics below.

1. "You, Andrew Marvell" - In Part I, Strand explicates "You, Andrew Marvell," explaining *how the poem unfolds* and *how the poem's different elements work together to create a total effect* on the reader. From Part I, what are the most illuminating or intriguing observations Strand makes about the *form* of the poem, about how the poem *unfolds*, and about how *specific elements* of the poem help create a meaningful experience for the reader? As a student of imaginative literature, why do you find these specific observations of Strand's intriguing or illuminating?

Quote and respond to at least three specific observations Strand makes about "You, Andrew Marvell" and why they illuminate the poem for you.

2. Lyric Poetry in General - In Parts II and III, Strand also discusses *the key traits of lyric poetry in general* and *the reasons for poetry's ability to move us*. What are a couple illuminating or intriguing observations Strand expresses about poetry in general—e.g., about why Strand became a poet, about the benefits that poems provide for readers, about how and why poetry moves us, about where lyric poems come from, about why people are inspired to write poems, etc.? Or, *alternatively*, what are some illuminating or intriguing observations Strand offers into related themes such as time, mortality, truth, love, etc.?

Quote and respond to at least two observations Strand makes about this topic.