



## 1e ENTRANCE TEST

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### Thomas Wolfe in *Of Time and the River*

October is the richest of the seasons. The fields are cut, the granaries are full, the bins are loaded to the brim with fatness, and from the cider press the rich brown ooings of the York Imperials run. The bee bores to the belly of the yellowed grape, the fly gets old and fat and blue, he buzzes loud, crawls slow, creeps heavily to death on sill and ceiling, the sun goes down in blood and pollen across the bronzed and mown fields of old October.

The corn is shocked: it sticks out in hard yellow rows upon dried ears, fit now for great red barns in Pennsylvania, and the big stained teeth of crunching horses. The indolent hooves kick swiftly at the boards, the barn is sweet with hay and leather, wood and apples – this, and the clean dry crunching of teeth is all: the sweat, the labor and the plow is over. The late pears mellow on a sunny shelf, smoked hams hang to the warped barn rafters, the pantry shelves are loaded with 300 jars of fruit. Meanwhile the leaves are turning, turning, up in Maine, the chestnut burrs plop thickly to the earth in gusts of wind, and in Virginia the chinkapins are falling.

There is a smell of burning in small towns in afternoon, and men with buckles on their arms are raking leaves in yards as boys come by with straps slung back across their shoulders. The oak leaves, big and brown, are bedded deep in yard and gutter: they make deep wadings to the knee for children in the streets. The fire will snap and crackle like a whip, sharp acrid smoke will sting the eyes, in mown fields the little vipers of the flame eat past the black coarse edges of burned stubble like a line of locusts. Fire drives a thorn of memory in the heart.

### Questions (to be answered on a separate sheet of copy paper)

1. The first sentence states an overall impression of October. What general statement does the sentence make?
2. Details in the three paragraphs were selected to support the general statement that October is the richest of the seasons. In each paragraph find three details that seem especially effective in conveying an impression of richness. Should any details have been omitted? If so, explain why.

P.T.O.

3. Notice that an impression of the month is evoked by details that appeal not only to the sense of sight but also to the senses of hearing, taste, and smell. To which sense or senses does each of the details in the three paragraphs appeal?
  
4. Consider your reactions to the different months of the year (excluding October). Which one creates a particularly strong impression? Write one to two paragraphs describing that month, beginning, like Thomas Wolfe, with a general statement of the impression in the first sentence. Then develop the composition with details that create a similar impression for your readers. Select details that appeal not only to the sense of sight, but to the senses of hearing, taste, touch, and smell as well. Use precise words and comparisons to make details vivid. Exclude any details that do not contribute to the overall impression.