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ENG 125  
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### **Directions to [ ]**

Open your eyes and greet the world before you. Take hold of the wheel, of your hands, your feet.  
Make a choice, turn left or turn right.

Turning left, a man sits in the confined space of his car, met with solitude in the midst of solidarity as he looks out at the other passengers trapped within the underwater highway. Work was long and home was far, but life is stable—he's not wealthy by any means, but his daily grind pays the bills that keep him in his conch shell by the canyon. Gazing out at the blues beyond the tinted windows of his car is all he can do as he inches forward with the traffic. The slow transition from clarity to static emitting from his car's speakers as he moves out of the radio station's range reminds him that time is real and he is alive. No sight beyond the school of cars and the ever darkening skyline, no sound beyond the radio's static, no touch beyond the peeling leather of the steering wheel, no taste beyond the lingering coffee in his system, no scent beyond the constant nothingness of the water around—blank, that's what he felt it was, it was all blank. The sound of construction filled the man's ears, forcing him to look up and confront the change before him. His usual route home was cut off, evolving through the construction confronting it. He had a choice, turn left or turn right.



- a. Turning left, a man pulls his car into a diner's parking lot. The yellow of the diner's exterior broke the man from his daze, from the endless blue that was his drive home. Pushing at the metal door of the submarine he stops and looks for the source of the resounding ring of a bell that went off as he stepped inside. Unsure how to proceed, he let his nose and his ears lead the way—the way to the scent of grilled meat atop a stove, golden fries dipped in oil, and lively chatter among staff and customers alike. Catching the eye of a waitress he found a table. The soft orange and white cushions of a table of four given all to himself were a welcome break from the discomfort of the tearing fabric and confined space that was his car, and the smooth music from the jukebox a needed break from the static of his radio. The waitress smiled as she placed his food on the table,

and he smiled back, happy in his solidarity with the other passengers of this submarine diner. With a moment of rest, a break from the traffic, he could finally breathe. At a slow pace he ate his meal, reveling in the grease of each fry and the cold of each sip of milkshake. The meal was finished and the check was paid and his excursion was over. Looking out the window revealed his car and the highway, waiting where they left him. With his keys weighing heavily in his pocket, and then his hand, the man got back on the road. He had a choice, look left or look right.



- i. Looking left, a man reaches a toll booth. The sight that greeted him was the same one he saw many times along his daily trip. Blue roof, white construct, sign faded



everywhere except for the bright red letters shouting *TOLL* at him each time he crossed them. With each toll booth he was one step closer to home, but shorter on his daily earnings than he had been at the end of the workday. Making a choice, he decided to meet the eyes of the toll booth operator, seeing that he who collected everyone's pay was in the same solitude and solidarity as those he charged. It was a slow process, the blue of the water darkening being the only sign that it would be coming to an end. Maybe one day they'd all be able to leave these lives behind and journey beyond the underwater highway, but today was not that day, and neither would tomorrow be. Passing beyond the checkpoint and continuing on his way home, the man heard the distress of the driver behind him as they were unable to pay the toll. He continued forward.



ii. Looking right, a man saw that the traffic enveloping him was at a standstill.

Unable to do anything but watch, he turned his head to look at the water beyond the highway, beyond the traffic, beyond the construction. He could faintly see the lights from the city and if he focused he could hear the sound of the schools of fish that swam through the water, free from the constraints of traffic and cars.

When the sights and sounds lost their novelty and the traffic still refused to move, he decided that it was time to see what had caused the halt in his routine. Now dozens of cars up from his, he found the source of the freeze in time. In front of him was a car dented from having hit the roadkill that now blocked the street. A fish that once swam freely about the ocean was struck by the traffic it was never meant to be a part of. He felt nauseous staring at the red rising from the carcass and melding with the blue. He returned to his car. He continued forward.



- b. Turning right, a man realizes he is near his childhood home. After a moment of consideration he chooses to leave the humming of cars and construction behind and visit his parents. A knock on the door to that familiar salmon pink clamshell house of days past brings with it a moment of silence, filled only with the gentle sway of the water around. The shock on his parents' faces lasts for just a second before he is pulled into an embrace, and suddenly, he feels warm within the cool of the deep blue. Despite offers to help with the familiar lasagna he smells being prepared halfway across the house, he is made to relax, to sit upon the fabric couch, to rest. Pictures of his youth fill his sight—class field trips, family vacations, constant companionship, and endless smiles in each frame. If possible, he wishes he could climb into those frames and trap himself within those singular moments, within his youth, when his only worry was what vegetables he'd be forced to eat with dinner. A meal at the dining table, the murmur of a TV left on a couple rooms over filling the empty space between conversation, brings with it a multiplication of the warmth he felt earlier. When it's time to sleep he lays in a bed now too small for him knowing that tomorrow he'll awake to the smell of sizzling bacon and his mother calling him for breakfast. Lost in pre-sleep thought, he has a choice to make, turn left or turn right.





- i. Turning onto his left side, a man makes a decision. Packing his bags, he unceremoniously quits his job and moves to a new city. Leaving the blue of the underwater highway and the comfort of the familiar was less frightening than he felt it should have been. Instead of being afraid, he eagerly threw himself into the purple of his new home, of the outer space subway. Bags in tow, he rode the subway for the first time, reveling in the sight of the passengers who sat next to him—not separated by the confinements of their cars, in the sound of the subway that sped faster than his car ever could, in the taste of the new cuisines he tried along his way, in the touch of the cool pole he held onto for support. Life, this city was full of life. The purple of the sky was broken up by stars painted upon its

canvas. For the first time since he left his childhood home he felt alive, he felt new, he felt colorful. With a temporary vigor, he set upon what would become his new daily routine, his new blue. He continued forward.



- ii. Turning onto his right side, a man makes a decision. Staring into the photo of his youth framed on the desk before him, he resolved to put in his request for time off. Taking a vacation brought with it the break in the monotony of the blue that the man yearned for. The cave system cruise line was one he knew well, having taken it with his parents at various points in his childhood. Within the caves the world he knew was blocked off and all he could see before him was an endless



horizon of stalagmites that brought with them the threat of danger and novelty he had been lacking. The cruise sailed through spaces away from the blue above, away from his car, and away from the traffic. No other cruises in sight could force his ship to halt in its place, no toll booths could rid his ship of its hard earned gains. Within a week the vacation was done, and he had no choice but to return from his escape to the highway he knew well. He continued forward.



Turning right, a woman releases her parachute and joins the crowd of people on the skyhigh railway. In the clear string of tubes that make up the express route, she ends her plummeting and glides wherever the wind will take her. Looking out at the baby blue of the sky and the gray of the clouds, she spots the train tracks she chose not to venture on, not wanting to waste her time

on a train for hours upon hours when she could plummet to her destination in a matter of minutes. Speaking of her destination, she would need to decide that soon. As per routine—or lack thereof—she jumped from the station without a plan, desperate for something new, but not wanting to dedicate time to selecting a dropping point that she could spend elsewhere. Whizzing through the tube she sparsely had the time to register the world around her. All she saw was everything at once, the entire blue sky and all its clouds making themselves known to her for a mere moment as she fell, all she tasted was the occasional bug that landed in her open mouth, all she heard was the sound of rushing air and the murmurs of her fellow passengers, some eager, some tired, and all she felt was the wind forcefully molding her face into a distorted form. A split in the tubes was approaching rapidly. She had a choice, turn left or turn right.



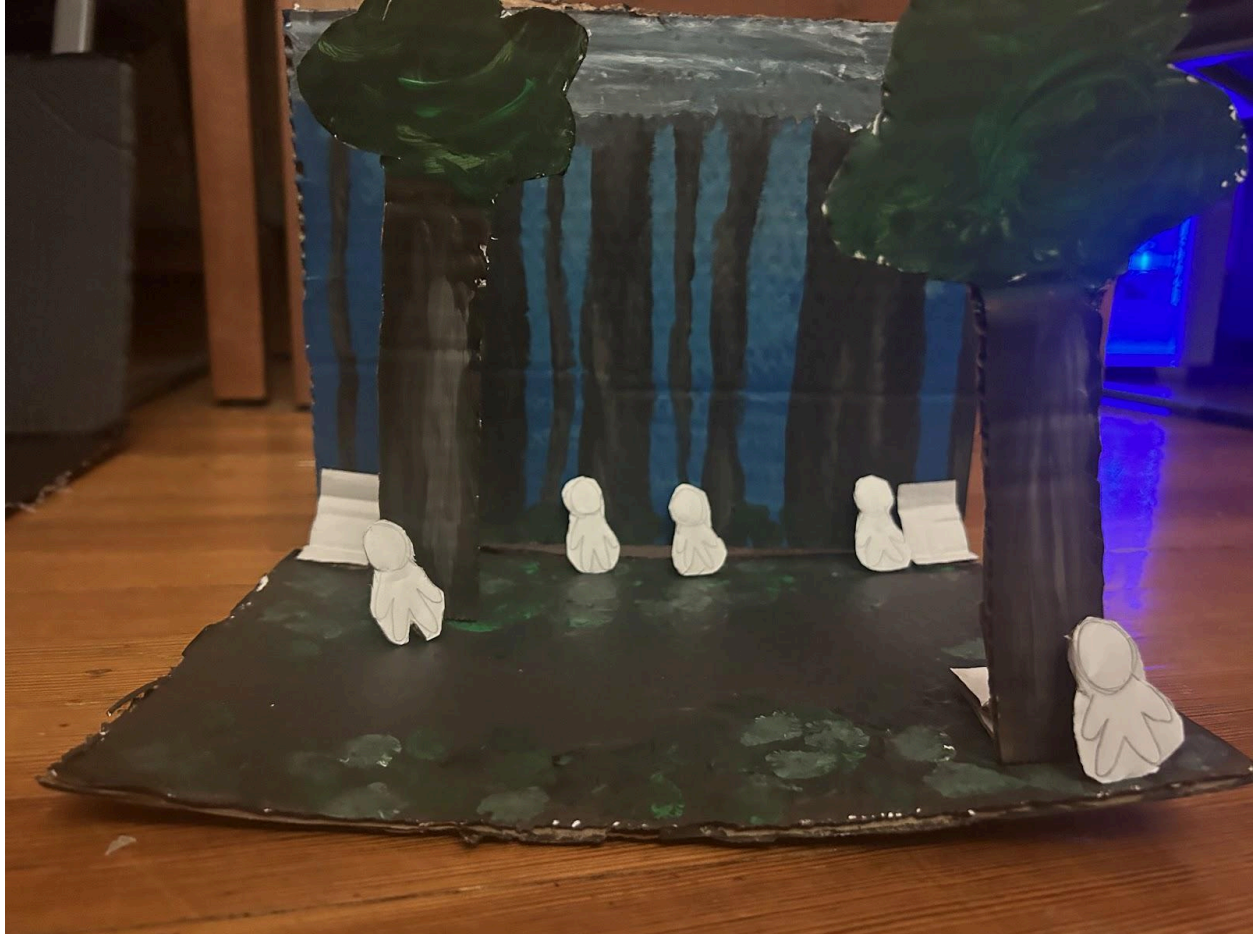
- a. Turning left, a woman plummets along a new route and strikes up a conversation with the commuter beside her. In contrast to the woman's desire for speed, the commuter beside her slows his plummet, choosing instead to take in the floating islands and running trains surrounding the tube. As she studies his face she notes that he is older than her, both in mind and body. Eager to know what the future may look like for someone such as herself, she implores him to pass his tales, his life, onto her. In the middle of the expansive blue sky she learned of his adventures, forcing herself to slow down for just a moment so that she may have something to take from the old man's tales and make into her own as she travels along the skyhigh railway. A wrinkled face, shaped permanently by the wind's hands, gazed upon her with a look of reminiscence and regret, taking in every detail of the woman before him. The ground was rapidly nearing, she had no more time to talk. Thanking the man, she continued her speeding, knowing they'd never meet again in the ever changing landscape of the skyhigh railway. She had a choice, go left or go right.





- i. Going left, a woman lands in a vast forest filled densely with monumental trees, each one piercing the clouds. In searching for a thrill she noted the kindred spirits present within these woods, each person trying to scale the trees around them, eager to leave a mark at the top of the world that no one else could. Desperate to reach the peak as well, she failed to notice the pleasant prick of the blades of grass underfoot, the hum of a firepit that brought with it a gaggle of bards playing lutes delicately, the soft breeze that carried with it the scent of lavenders and the remnants of someone's dandelion wish, and the shade of the trees that blocked out the sun's light and the blue sky, creating an earthly paradise. Unwilling to wait,

ready to grasp her chance, she began to climb, ignoring her fellow adventurers that fell along the way. She continued forward.



- ii. Going right, a woman lands in a series of connected islands among the clouds. Recognizing the sights and sounds of pastel cathedrals and bells that sounded like geese from the stories of the old man, she decided to follow in his footsteps and make his story her own. Walking swiftly, she sampled each local delicacy she could find, adding them to her repertoire and gaining the ability to say she gave them a try, leaving her with a hodgepodge of flavors swirling inside her as she wandered. Those settled within the villages of the sky spoke slowly, choosing to



rattle on about mundane topics like the weather or a pretty flower they saw on their walk that morning. Bored and weighed down by such topics, she chose to guide the conversations herself, retelling the stories of the old man who led her here, waiting for her listeners' faces to light up in recognition. When none of her encounters remembered the previous traveler she prattled on about, whether by face or name, she felt dread build in her stomach, suddenly desperate to accomplish something grand. She continued forward.



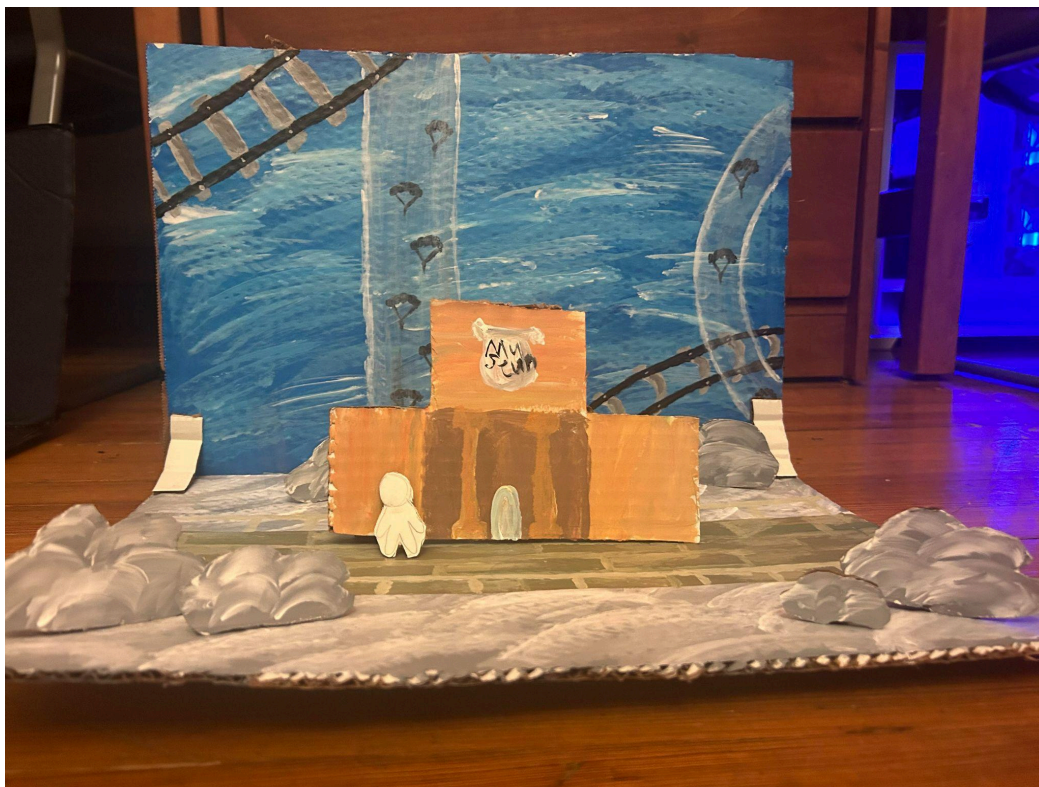
- b. Turning right, a woman travels until the blue of the day has become the blue of the night. Tired from a day of wandering, she decides to exit the tube for a moment to rest upon a



nearby cloud. Laying on her back she stares at the sky above, tracing the stars with her hand, stitching an illusionary pattern of a phoenix. Remaining still for the first time all day she takes a breath, deep and long, as she feels the building breeze on her skin, hears the distinct sound of a train's whistle as it moves overhead, and notes the comforting nature of the soft cloud beneath her. Within a few seconds she has sunk halfway into the cloud; should she remain any longer she would risk falling through. Knowing her rest time is up, she looks from her vantage point to the land below, ready to choose her destination. She breathes again, this time in disappointment. Everything in the world below appeared so dull, so gray, so lifeless, so blank. She had been there and done that already, nothing she could see from this patch of sky would give her the new, greater thrill she so desperately yearned for. Resolving to remain in the sky for the time being, she had a choice, look left or look right.



- i. Looking left, a woman noticed an orange museum populating a small floating island by itself. Entering the space presented her with the remnants of countless travelers that came before her, each represented by the artifacts they left behind. In contrast to the building's colorful facade, inside it was all white—the floors, the ceiling, the stairs, the pillars—the very foundation of the space was white. The sterile space flooded her senses with nothing, leaving her blank. The only relief from the daunting, expansive white of the museum was the artifacts it held, colorful and vibrant in contrast to their shell, each holding its own story. Dedicating herself to exploring the museum she spent several seconds looking at each piece, focusing on the physical marvels before her, but not wanting to waste her time by reading the plaques that accompanied them. With every object glanced at she had accomplished her due diligence in acknowledging the adventurers that came before her. Returning to the tubes she gave the orange behemoth one final glance. She continued forward.



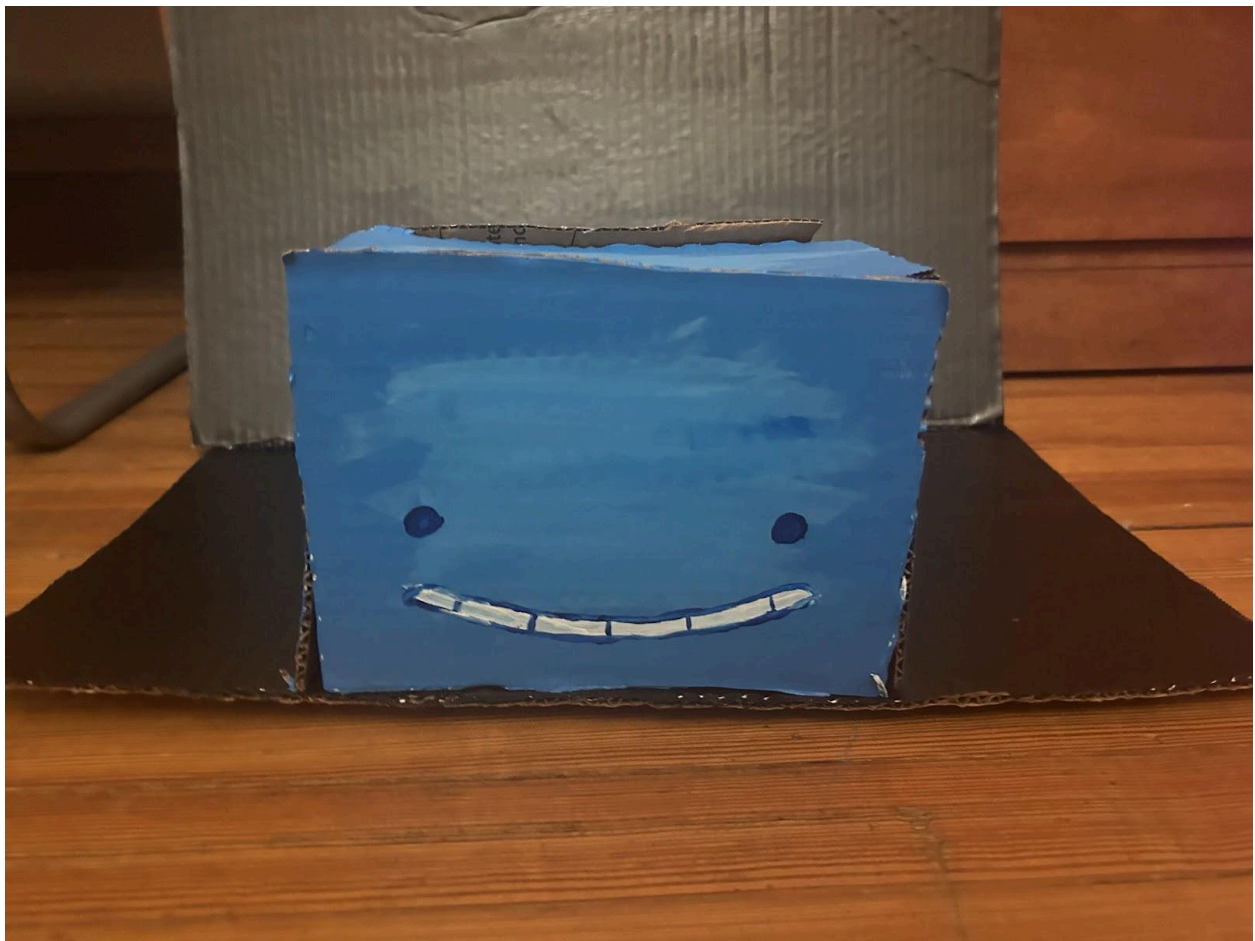


ii. Looking right, a woman noticed nothing of interest, her eyes barely able to stay open enough to search the landscape before her. Deciding that it would be fine if she were to rest for just another while, she set off to find a more secure cloud to nap on. Reveling in the comfort she often denied herself on her journeys she closed her eyes and slept. Her rest was interrupted by a storm, rain and thunder replacing the calm of the blue sky with a frantic, ever changing scene. Upset with herself for having slept too long and allowing this to happen she set off to find shelter. Hopping from island to island she found that each hotel was at capacity, having been fully booked weeks in advance. Trying her hand at traveling away from the rain led to further frustration as she discovered that the tubes had closed during the storms. Desperate to escape the storm she resolved to take the leisurely train she avoided each day, only to find that the next train would not arrive until morning. Drenched and blinded by the storm, she curled up on the hard wood of the train station's bench and slept the night away. She continued forward.





Continuing forward, a man and a woman face the end of infinity. Joining them is everyone and everything. At the end of the separate roads they have walked is the same sight, a hungry whale devouring all that's known. If one has anything on them they can choose to feed their possessions to the whale, only being devoured themselves when they can no longer stall. If you, reading this, never made a choice, never turned, never looked, and never continued forward, then direct your gaze downward.



- a. If you directed your gaze downward then link hands with the man and the women and join them as you, too, face the end of infinity and enter the whale's maw.
- b. If you failed to follow these directions then read result "a" above.

