

#IX#

Before the test, consciousness a cloud
Overthinking had come back at last
Why follow the *homogenous* crowd?
What's the point? I asked
Millions will enter the exam proud
Yet only half will pass the bell curve's mast

Maybe I should ditch the GRE
Move to Cuba, become *iconoclast*—
But then a happy thought came over me
That helped me concentrate, holdfast:
Every time I hit the button "Next"
I'd be winning my lover's kiss

Thanks to Imagination
I never lost my focus
Became to distractions *imperturbable*
And to test-anxiety *impervious*
For four hours, eighty questions
By following these suggestions:

Thirty minutes an essay's a tight block
But don't be *impetuous*; take your time
Trust you'll beat the *implacable* clock
Save the first five minutes to outline
And the last five to proof like a hawk
Think less *inchoate*, more Gertrude Stein

For simple and *ingenuous* Math
Into these next lines head-dive:
If the sides of a right triangle be
Three and four, then the Hypotenuse is five—
Fractions can look nasty and *inimical*
Until multiplied by their reciprocal

Last, the Verbal, far from *innocuous*
Will good points damage and deduct
Through *intransigent*, ruthless
Passages and *insipid*, technical cuts
With questions whose answers mostly the same
Will *inundate* you with rage to no shame

If angered and *irascible* you swam
You will complete the exam
Laconic as a fish on land
Or a tester indoors

Hesitating to send out his scores
To university admissions boards

Mine? Not worth *lamenting* or *lauding* that score
Though I must admit, I've never gotten
Below average from a practice set before
So stepping out the center
I called you know who
To share good news and ask, "How did you do?"

Her cell all but rang
She had answered with a bang—
November's *lavish* noon prepared a fine praise
Until what she said left me quiet
Lethargic
And walking slow for days

Motor-mouthed, *loquacious*
She went on and on
About how easy the test was
How she answered no question wrong
And after clearing her throat
She shared in clear *lucid* tone
Her three-digit score:

One-seven-oh
"Can you believe it?" she asked
Smiling through the phone
With *luminous* afterglow
"I can get into any grad school," she said
And to any grad school she'd go