



## **AP Literature Essay Contest**

The English Department at Western Kentucky University is pleased to announce the First AP English Essay Contest. Students should visit [wku.edu/english/essay-contest.php](http://wku.edu/english/essay-contest.php) to complete an application and submit a 500-750-word essay (MLA style; pdf format) based on the prompt below. The English Department will invite finalists, their teachers, and family to campus for a reception and ceremony on March 29<sup>th</sup> where they will be recognized. The winners will receive scholarships if they choose to major or minor in English at WKU and cash prizes whether or not they attend WKU. First Place: \$500 Scholarship and \$300 cash; Second Place: \$300 Scholarship and \$200 cash; Third Place: \$200 Scholarship and \$100 cash. The winners' schools will receive \$50 contributions to their PTA funds. **Applications and Essays are due March 8.**

The following poem is by Jim Wayne Miller. Read the poem carefully, and then write a well-organized, 500-750-word essay analyzing how effectively the poet uses poetic devices to develop attitudes about labor.

### **CHOPPING WOOD**

Idling traffic, fumes  
at a busy intersection of nerves.  
Dances on the deck  
of coffee-laden freighters plying arteries.  
Smoke-filled meetings floating  
through veins, tables turning.  
The sting of nicotine  
laid like a lash on a horse's rump.  
That screech and snort,  
that babble and grunt  
disappears around a bend in the blood.

Merciful, hard labor numbs the nerves as it  
advances, snuffs our every light  
in a steady rain of darkness. Pain goes to sleep  
as night falls over any small farm of flesh.

And the resurrection and miracle of rest  
after labor: arms awakening, a hundred  
tingling lights lit along creeks and ridges;  
a rooster crowing in flesh becoming light  
with birdsong from the meshed branches of nerves  
casting shadows like trees along the river.