

## NEW CRITICISM / *CATHEDRAL* QUESTION PROMPTS

### **Question Prompt 1:**

What's the purpose of New Criticism? As an analytical tool, how does it help us understand literature better, and what exactly does it help us understand? What are we supposed to examine and talk about when we analyze a poem or a piece of literature as New Critics? What does Lynn mean when he says, as New Critics do, that a poem or a work of literature "should be seen as an object of an extraordinary and somewhat mysterious kind, a silent object ... that is unchanging, existing somehow both within and outside of time" (49, 50)?

Reference specific passages to help you address these questions, and be specific in your answers.

### **Question Prompt 2:**

Using one or more of the Carver stories you read this week as your starting place, try out some of the theoretical principals you've learned from your recent study of New Criticism. Are these Carver stories perfect, organic wholes? In what way? Are they filled with tensions and ambiguities (of speaker, tone, point of view, or metaphor) that mysteriously resolve into a unified whole by the end? Do the ironic endings serve to illuminate a transcendent truth only evident in the closing moments of the work? How does the end of each story relate to the rest of the story? Look again at the vocabulary terms at the end of Chapter 3 in *Texts and Contexts* to help you with this discussion response.

Reference specific passages to help you address these questions, and be specific in your answers.

### **Question Prompt 3:**

Using one or more of the Carver stories you read this week as your starting place, try out some of the theoretical principals you've learned from your recent study of New Criticism. Are these Carver stories perfect, organic wholes? In what way? Are they filled with tensions and ambiguities (of speaker, tone, point of view, or metaphor) that mysteriously resolve into a unified whole by the end? Do the ironic endings serve to illuminate a transcendent truth only evident in the closing moments of the work? How does the end of each story relate to the rest of the story? Look again at the vocabulary terms at the end of Chapter 3 in *Texts and Contexts* to help you with this discussion response.

Reference specific passages to help you address these questions, and be specific in your answers.