Poetry and the American Dream Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Block \_\_\_\_\_\_

Why study American literature? This is the literature that has evolved over two centuries and has reflected the events, the ideals, and the struggles that Americans have faced through the decades. Even though American literature began as the literature of old, (now-dead) white men, it now includes all Americans – from all ethnicities and of both genders, those who are young and old, those who are educated through life experience, and most importantly, those who may teach you about your own life.

* **Select ONE of the poems that is most appealing to you and answer the following questions:**

1. Who is the speaker of the poem? How can you describe the speaker’s experience? (His or her life? Education? Values? Goals? Dreams?) Consider researching the writer/poet/songwriter to help you gain valuable background information.

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2. What is the theme (overall message) of the poem?

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3. Why or how does this poem appeal to you or your experiences?

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4. How does the poet envision or describe America? What does America mean to the poet? Choose 3 specific lines, words, images, the poet’s tone, symbols, or theme to support your answer.

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b-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

c-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_