Close Reading Chapter 6 Skill Focus: Imagery

. . . One autumn night, five years before, they had been walking down the street when the leaves were falling, and they came to a place where there were no trees and the sidewalk was white with moonlight. They stopped here and turned toward each other. Now it was a cool night with that mysterious excitement in it which comes at the two changes of the year. The quiet lights in the houses were humming out into the darkness and there was a stir and bustle among the stars. Out of the corner of his eye Gatsby saw that the blocks of the sidewalks really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees—he could climb to it, if he climbed alone, and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder.

His heart beat faster and faster as Daisy’s white face came up to his own. He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning-fork that had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips’ touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete.

1. Consider the diction (word choice) of the passage. What mood does it invoke? How would you describe the feeling a reader would get from reading Nick’s descriptions of Gatsby and Daisy in the passage?
2. What sort of imagery is invoked? (What images can you see in your head?)
3. How do the images relate to those in the rest of the chapter? Are they similar or different and how?

Chapter 6 Response: Based on all of this information and observation, construct a thesis that ties the details together.

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Skill Focus: Characterization
―Self-control!‖ Repeated Tom incredulously. ―I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr. Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife. Well, if that’s the idea you can count me out.... Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions, and next they’ll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white.‖ Flushed with his impassioned gibberish, he saw himself standing alone on the last barrier of civilization.

Note the capitalization in the first sentence; what is Tom specifically objecting to?
What does this reveal about Tom?
How is this characterization of Tom ironic?
Why does Nick think Tom ―[sees] himself standing alone on the last barrier of civilization‖?

Chapter 7 Response: Compare and contrast Gatsby’s characterization versus Tom’s in this scene.

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