**MWANGAZA SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**APRIL HOLIDAY ASSIGNMENT 2014**

**FORM 4 ENGLISH**

**Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow.**

**“Sympathy”**

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!

When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;

When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass.

And the river flows like a stream of grass;

When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,

And the faint perfume from its petals steals-

I know what the caged birds feels!

I know why the caged bird beats its wings

Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;

For he must fly back to his perch and cling

When he rather would be on the branch a – swing;

And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars

And they pulse again with a keener sting-

I know why he beats his wing!

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,

When his wing is bruised and his bossom sore,

When he beats his bars and would be free;

It is not a song of joy or glee,

But a prayer that he sends from his heart’s deep core,

But a plea that upward to heaven he fings –

I know why the caged bird sings!

***(Adapted frmthe poem by Laurence Donbar in ‘American Negro Poetry’ edited by ArnaBomtemps. New York: Hill and Waug 1974)***

**Questions**

1. Explain briefly what the poem is about. (3 marks)
2. What does the poet focus on in each of the three stanzas? (6 marks)
3. How would you describe the persona’s feelings towards the caged bird? (4 marks)
4. What can we infer about the persona’s own experiences? (3 marks)
5. Identify a simile in the first stanza and explain why it is used. (2 marks)
6. Explain the meaning of the following lines:
7. And the faint perfume from the petals steals. (1 mark)
8. Supply another suitable title for this poem. (1 mark)