

**Sample Paper 13****Score for Word Choice \_\_\_\_\_****A Good Place to Visit, But . . .**

Although I watch more than my fair share of television, apparently I don't watch enough medical shows—the kind with eccentric doctors and dedicated nurses. Otherwise, I would have been prepared for the arctic blast that awaited me in the OR (operating room).

People recall different things about surgery—fasting ahead of time, wearing skimpy gowns, waiting to get it over with. Mostly, I recall wishing someone would turn on the heat. I wasn't expecting tropical warmth—but I didn't anticipate shivering until my teeth clashed. It was so icy in the operating room that I thought I saw snowflakes. Everything was stainless steel, adding to the wintry atmosphere. (I could have sworn that the doctors and nurses were wearing parkas and mittens, and that I could see the steam from their breath, but this was probably a side effect of the anesthesia and pain medication.)

The doctors kept asking me how “we” were doing, and while *they* seemed to be doing fine, *my* lips were frozen, so I just rolled my eyes and groaned. As long as you can still make noise, doctors think there is hope. They gave me an IV before rolling me into surgery. This would allow them, they claimed, to pump painkillers and antibiotics into my system without having to wake me in the night. (That sounded good—except they woke me hourly anyway to take my temperature and check my blood pressure.)

Once you're thoroughly frozen, they say you don't feel much pain—but I guess they didn't want to rely *totally* on that approach. They administered enough anesthetic during surgery to knock out a buffalo, so I woke up with blurry vision and a mouth that tasted as if I had been munching on rotten prairie grass. I could not get up to brush my teeth, and in fact, I could hardly raise myself off the pillow.

The nurses told me I could go home as soon as I visited the bathroom on my own and ate something without throwing up. Both sounded as likely as bungee jumping off the Empire State Building. But motivation to get out of a hospital is very strong. (No heat. No sleep. Bad food. *No one* wants to stay.) I felt like one of those guys on the TV reality shows who has to down a dozen live worms to get a prize. I willed myself up onto my feet and propelled myself across the frigid linoleum, and got the prize: freedom and a ride home. Once there, I bundled in as many layers as I could get on and rolled myself in front of the fire, just soaking up the heat and enjoying the beauty of the flames. If you are ever in need of surgery, follow my advice: Do your best to schedule it for the summer. Or sneak in your space heater.