English II Mrs. Gerhardt Name

*Slumdog Millionaire* **CLOSE READING**

**Directions:** Read and annotate the passage below (4+). Pay particular attention to the details and descriptions Ram uses (language). Answer questions that follow (with your table group).

I live in a corner of Mumbai called Dharavi, in a cramped hundred-square-foot shack that has no natural light or ventilation, with a corrugated metal sheet serving as the roof. It vibrates violently whenever a train passes overhead. There is no running water and no sanitation. This is all I can afford. But I am not alone in Dharavi. There are a million people like me, packed in a two-hundred-hectare triangle of swampy urban wasteland, where we live like animals and die like insects. Destitute migrants from all over the country jostle with each other for their own handful of sky in Asia’s biggest slum. There are daily squabbles—over inches of space, over a bucket of water—which at times turn deadly. Dharavi’s residents come from the dusty backwater of Bihar and Up and Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. They came to Mumbai, the city of gold, with dreams in their hearts of striking it rich and living upper-middle-class lives. But that gold turned to lead a long time ago, leaving behind rusted hearts and gangrenous minds. Like my own.

Dharavi is not a place for the squeamish. Delhi’s juvenile home diminished us, but Dharavi’s grim landscape of urban squalor deadens and debases us. Its open drains teem with mosquitoes. Its stinking, excrement-lined communal latrines are full of rats, which make you think less about the smell and more about protecting your backside. Mounds of filthy garbage lie on every corner, from which ragpickers still manage to find something useful. And at times you have to suck in your breath to squeeze through its narrow claustrophobic alleys. But for the starving residents of Dharavi, this is home.

Amid the modern skyscrapers and neon-lit shopping complexes of Mumbai, Dharavi sits like a cancerous lump in the heart of the city. And the city refuses to recognize it. So it has outlawed it. All the houses in Dharavi are “illegal constructions,” liable to be demolished at any time. But when the residents are struggling simply to survive, they don’t care. So they live in illegal houses and use illegal electricity, drink illegal water and watch illegal cable TV. They work in Dharavi’s numerous illegal factories and illegal shops, and even travel illegally—without ticket—on the local trains that pass directly through the colony.

They city may have chosen to ignore the ugly growth of Dharavi, but a cancer cannot be stopped simply by being declared illegal. It still kills with its slow poison.

QUESTIONS: Discuss in your table group and answer in complete sentences.

1. What is the general **mood** of the passage? Provide words or phrases as evidence to explain your choice of mood description.

2. What is Ram feeling (tone) as he describes Dharavi? Provide evidence to explain your answer.

3. What kind of people live in Dharavi (based on Ram’s description of the place)? Provide evidence as you describe these people in your own words.

4. What is the extended simile/metaphor in the passage?

How effective is it? How does it help the reader (you) understand what Dharavi is like for the people who live there?