Romanticism – reading questions

“Ozymandias” – p. 399

1. Note the framing device of the poem. How does Shelley identify the rather mysterious framed narrator?
2. Line 8 is tricky. The hand and the heart seem to be objects of the transitive verb “survive” (7). Whose hand would “mock” the king’s passions? (what does Shelley mean by “mock”? hint: not just “poke fun of”). Whose heart would “feed” those passions?
3. There’s a kind of frame with in the frame as we see Ozymandias’ words, too. Is there anything ironic about his words? Try contrasting them with Shelley’s follow up line, line 12.
4. This poem presents two kinds of human ambition, or human attempts to “make” / “create” something. What are the kinds (i.e. who represents each kind in the poem)?
5. What does Shelley seem to be saying about such human ambition? Note the last image. Explain your reasoning.

“Infant Joy” and “Infant Sorrow”

1. Identify and analyze elements of imagery, language, and symbolism in both poems.
2. After you have read each poem, identify a theme (not just a thematic subject…make sure you include Blake’s message/intent).

“Infant Joy”

1. What happens to us when we transition from a nameless being to one that has been endowed with a name? What is gained? What is lost?
2. What is the significance of the fact that the child names herself?

“Infant Sorrow”

1. Why is the child sad following upon the trial of birth?
2. What relationship to the father and mother does the infant-speaker assert?