HL Essay Planning Framework

Line of Inquiry: How does Ocean Vuong use motifs of writing and speaking to respond to violence in Night Sky with Exit Wounds?

Stage 1	
Claim	Vuong uses motifs of writing to tell the stories of victims of violence.
Evidence	Seventh Circle of Earth: "A gay couple... was murdered by immolation" "Faces blackening in the photographs along the wall" "Understand me... Speak... Tell me the story..."
Analyze	"immolation" shows violence of the murder "gay people" reduces victims of violence to sexual identity and "Faces blackening" shows individual identity erased "Understand... speak... tell..." imperative tense
Explain	Vuong finds official story of murder inadequate so wants to retell the story. He presents the poem as footnotes to show erasure of men's identity.
Impact	Readers can feel poet's anger at the deaths and at the way the story had been told in the newspaper. Imperatives give feeling of urgency to retell the story.
Connect to Context	Motifs of writing used to tell the story of victims of violence because of sexuality. Other poems like Anaphora as Coping Mechanism and Because It's Summer also tell the stories of AIDS victims and gay men who had to hide sexuality.

Stage 2	
Claim	Vuong uses motifs of writing to show how violence can also be the chance for new beginnings.
Evidence	Aubade in Burning City: "The city so white it is ready for ink" Notebook Fragments: "No bombs = no family = no me. Yikes!"
Analyze	"white" is blank, like paper for writing "=" links violence directly to own existence "Yikes!" = onomatopoeia, exclamation
Explain	Images imply that war is a force of destruction, but also creates conditions for new beginnings, such as his own birth.
Impact	Through "Yikes!" readers can feel Vuong struggling to come to terms with violence being directly responsible for his own existence.
Connect to Context	Violence creates a paradox in the collection. Violence destroys but also sets the conditions for Vuong's creation and is the starting point of his story.

Stage 3	
Claim	Motifs of writing show how violence and creation are two sides of the same coin.
Evidence	Torso of Air: "You take a knife to the wall. You carve & carve until a coin of light shines through." Seventh Circle of Earth: "Sparrows who flew from falling Rome, their blazed wings."
Analyze	"Carve & carve" repetition shows violence, but also determination "Coin of light" visual imagery, something precious, reward at the end? "Sparrows falling… blazed wings" visual imagery violent and beautiful at same time.
Explain	Vuong shows the knife like a pen, 'writing' a violent action to create at the same time. Images that are destructive and beautiful are more than simple factual accounts like in the Dallas Voice.
Impact	Readers can see how violence actions can also be creative or beautiful.
Connect to Context	Vuong is using writing and speaking to create an alternative story for himself and the gay community. Making something beautiful out of something ugly?

Stage 4 (optional)	
Claim	Some motifs of writing show how reconstruction after violence is impossible.
Evidence	Telemachus: "His knuckles carving a trail the waves rush in to erase" In Newport: "His right arm inked with three falling phoenixes – torches marking the lives he had or had not taken."
Analyze	"Carving" again, trying to 'write' "Erase the trail" – impossibility of knowing the past or reconstructing after violence "Inked" a symbol of writing. "Had or had not" shows difficulty of knowing the truth
Explain	Even when 'writing' exists, it's not possible to always know what the writing means.
Impact	Readers can see how Vuong is unable to fully reconstruct his father's story. He wants to find clues but the sea keeps erasing them.
Connect to Context	The book is an attempt to reconstruct the past, but always going to be inadequate or ambiguous. Is there a paradox in using the motifs of writing?