



2014 Preliminary Examination II Pre-University 3

**Literature in English
Higher 2**

9748/01

Paper 1: Reading Literature

16 September 2014

3 hours

Additional Materials: Foolsap Paper

Set texts may be taken into the examination room.

They may bear underlining or highlighting.

Any kind of folding or flagging of pages in texts (e.g. use of post-its, tape flags or paper clips) is not permitted.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name, class and index number on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **three** questions, one from each of Sections A, B and C.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

This question paper consists of 9 printed pages.

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Either (a) Write a critical commentary on the following poem, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by the writer's language, style and form.

We stood by a pond that winter day,
And the sun was white, as though chidden of God,
And a few leaves lay on the starving sod;
— They had fallen from an ash, and were gray.

The smile on your mouth was the deadeſt thing
 Alive enough to have ſtrength to die; 10
 And a grin of bitterneſs ſwept thereby
 Like an ominous bird a-wing....

Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,
And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me
Your face, and the God curst sun, and a tree,
And a pond edged with grayish leaves.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

B. Hours

Love's time's beggar, but even a single hour
bright as a dropped coin, makes love rich.
We find an hour together, spend it not on flowers
or wine, but the whole of the summer sky and a grass ditch.
For thousands of seconds we kiss; your hair 5
like treasure on the ground; the Midas light
turning your limbs to gold. Time slows, for here
we are millionaires, backhanding the night
so nothing dark will end our shining hour,
no jewel hold a candle to the cuckoo spit 10
hung from the blade of grass at your ear,
no chandelier or spotlight see you better lit
than here. Now. Time hates love, wants love poor,
but love spins gold, gold, gold from straw.

Carol Ann Duffy (1955-)

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Or (b) Write a critical comparison of the following poems. Pay close attention to ways in which language, style and form contribute to each poet's portrayal of emotions.

A. Joy and Pleasure

Now, joy is born of parents poor,
And pleasure of our richer kind;
Though pleasure's free, she cannot sing
As sweet a song as joy confined.

Pleasure's a Moth, that sleeps by day
And dances by false glare at night;
But Joy's a Butterfly, that loves
To spread its wings in Nature's light. 5

Joy's like a Bee that gently sucks
Away on blossoms its sweet hour;
But pleasure's like a greedy Wasp,
That plums and cherries would devour. 10

Joy's like a Lark that lives alone,
Whose ties are very strong, though few;
But Pleasure like a Cuckoo roams,
Makes much acquaintance, no friends true. 15

Joy from her heart doth sing at home,
With little care if others hear;
But pleasure then is cold and dumb,
And sings and laughs with strangers near. 20

W.H Davies (1871- 1940)

B. The School Boy

I love to rise in a summer morn,
 When the birds sing on every tree;
 The distant huntsman winds his horn,
 And the sky-lark sings with me.
 O! what sweet company. 5

But to go to school in a summer morn,
 O! it drives all joy away;
 Under a cruel eye outworn.
 The little ones spend the day,
 In sighing and dismay. 10

Ah! then at times I drooping sit,
 And spend many an anxious hour,
 Nor in my book can I take delight,
 Nor sit in learnings bower,
 Worn thro' with the dreary shower. 15

How can the bird that is born for joy,
 Sit in a cage and sing.
 How can a child when fears annoy.
 But droop his tender wing.
 And forget his youthful spring. 20

O! father & mother. if buds are nip'd,
 And blossoms blown away,
 And if the tender plants are strip'd
 Of their joy in the springing day,
 By sorrow and care's dismay. 25

How shall the summer arise in joy.
 Or the summer fruits appear.
 Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy
 Or bless the mellowing year.
 When the blasts of winter appear. 30

William Blake (1757-1827)

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Section B
Graham Swift: *Waterland*

2.

Either (a) In *Waterland* we see 'the powerful randomness of time over characters' lives.'
 Discuss Swift's presentation of time in the light of the above statement.

Or (b) Write a critical appreciation of the following passage, paying particular attention to Swift's presentation of the contrast between human actions and nature's actions, here and elsewhere in the novel.

And with the sound, a smell also. The smell of something hauled from primitive depths. The smell that haunts Dick's bedroom.

He's here. He knows his place. He knows his station. He keeps the ladder turning, the buckets scooping. The noise of the churning machinery drowns the fleeting aerial clamour of global strife. He hears no bombers, sees no bombers. And this smell of silt is the smell of sanctuary, is the smell of amnesia. He's here, he's now. Not there or then. No past, no future. He's the mate of the *Rosa II*. 5

And he's the saviour of the world ...

Fifty, forty yards. The water is rumbling, juddering. Beneath the *Rosa* the giant snout of the bucket-ladder is biting, gnawing with its rotating teeth into the soft, defenceless belly of the river-bed. Thirty yards. Dad can't restrain himself from another bout of hailing. Cupping his hands once more, he yells against the competition of the ladder. 'Dick, we're coming! We're coming – to take you home, Dick! Home!' Twenty yards. 'Dick, we'll—' 10

And then—

Then. 15

But memory can't keep fixed and clear those final moments. Memory can't even be sure whether what I saw, I saw first in anticipation before I actually saw it, as if I had witnessed it somewhere already – a memory before it occurred. Dick's head and shoulders (for we're close enough now to have to crane our necks to view the *Rosa's* deck) appear above the dredger's rail about three yards forward of the steadily spewing sludge-chute. For a second he stares at the approaching boat. For the same second I see what he must see: an overladen dinghy, three familiar faces and two inexplicable (inexplicable?) attendants in uniform. In uniform. He scurries forward of our intended point of contact with the dredger's hull just downstream of the sludge-barge, so that we pass wide and abeam of him. Above the uproar comes the distinct chink of glass against metal. 20

Was it Nat, or Joe who spoke first? 'Hey feller, take it easy!' Or Stan Booth (wrenching head over shoulder): 'Dick, Dick bor, blust you! Turn off the blusted ladder!' Or was it Dad who shouted before either of these (to the further astonishment of our American visitors, not to say Stan Booth): 'Dick, it's all right! Dick. I'll be your father ...' 25

Was it really the case (but how could I have been sure, in that fading light, at that bobbing distance?) that his eyelids were quite motionless and that his gaze, luminous and intent, ceased at a certain point to be aimed at us, but turned to contemplate the rippling, furling, vibrant surface of the Ouse? Did he move first or did I shout first? And did I really shout aloud, or did the words only ring in my brain (and echo ever after)? 35

'Dick – don't do it!'

But we all saw, we all agreed – whisky-fuddled or sober – what happened next.

He turns. He lurches to the fo'c'sle, to the very prow of the *Rosa* (which is not, like many a prow, sharp and nobly arched, designed to cleave and affright the waves, but stubby, rounded and dented, and crowned by a derrick for hoisting the sling-lines of the bucket-ladder). He clambers on to the rail; stands, shoeless, upon it, disdaining the 40

hand-hold of the adjacent derrick stanchions. Stretches to full height.

For a moment he perches, poises, teeters on the rail, the dull glow of the western sky behind him. And then he plunges. In a long, reaching, powerful arc. Sufficiently long and reaching to quite discount the later theory that he must have become entangled in the anchor-chain or the sling-lines; sufficiently reaching and powerful for us to observe his body, in its flight through the air, form a single, taut and seemingly limbless continuum, so that an expert on diving might have judged that here indeed was a natural, here indeed was a fish of a man.

And punctures the water, with scarcely a splash. And is gone.

Gone. Stan Booth digs in an oar to bring the dinghy around. We watch, wait for the up-bobbing head. Watch and start to distrust our eyes. Watch and drift down on the current (yes, the tide has turned, the ebb has begun); cross and recross an imaginary line projecting downstream from the *Rosa's* bows. Shout into the watery gloom (even the aircraftmen from far-off Arizona give vent to repeated and strangely impassioned 'Dick!'s, as if beseeching some old buddy). Shout; shout again. All, that is, except a sixteen-year-old boy who, sitting crammed beside his father in the stern of the dinghy, goes implacably silent. Because he knows (though he doesn't say; he'll never say: a secret he and Mary will share for ever): there'll be no bobbing top-knot. There'll come no answering, gurgling, rescue-me cry. He's on his way. Obeying instinct. Returning. The Ouse flows to the sea ...

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Section C
Arthur Miller: *All My Sons*

3.

Either (a) '*The stage is hedged on right and left by tall, closely planted poplars which lend the yard a secluded atmosphere.*' Discuss the importance of setting in *All My Sons*.

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, paying particular attention to Miller's portrayal of the romantic relationship between Chris and Ann, here and elsewhere in the play.

Ann: (with a sudden touch of sadness) It's all right. It's a good thing. (*She looks about*) You know? It's lovely here. The air is sweet.

Chris: (*hopefully*) You're not sorry you came?

Ann: Not sorry, no. But I'm ... not going to stay.

Chris: Why? 5

Ann: In the first place, your mother as much as told me to go.

Chris: Well...

Ann: You saw that... and then you... You've been kind of...

Chris: What?

Ann: Well... kind of embarrassed ever since I got here. 10

Chris: The trouble is I planned on kind of sneaking up on you over a period of a week or so. But they take it for granted that we're all set.

Ann: I know they would. Your mother anyway.

Chris: How did you know?

Ann: From her point of view, why else would I come? 15

Chris: Well... would you want to? (*Ann still studies him*) I guess you know this is why I asked you to come.

Ann: I guess this is why I came.

Chris: Ann, I love you. I love you a great deal. (finally) I love you. (*Pause. She waits*) I have no imagination That's all I know to tell you. (*Ann is waiting, ready*) 20
 I'm embarrassing you. I didn't want to tell it to you here. I wanted some place we'd never been, a place where we'd be brand new to each other... You feel it's wrong here, don't you? This yard, this chair? I want you to be ready for me. I don't want to win you away from anything.

Ann: (*putting her arms around him*) Oh, Chris, I've been ready a long, long time. 25

Chris: Then he's gone for ever. You're sure.

Ann: I almost got married two years ago.

Chris: Why didn't you?

Ann: You started to write me... *(slight pause)*

Chris: You felt something that far back?

30

Ann: Every day since.

Chris: Ann, why didn't you let me know?

Ann: I was waiting for you, Chris. Till then you never wrote. And when you did, what did you say? You sure can be ambiguous, you know.

Chris: *(looks toward house, then at her, trembling)* Give me a kiss, Ann. Give me a ...*(they kiss)* God, I kissed you, Annie, I kissed Anni. How long, how long I've been waiting to kiss you!

35

Ann: I'll never forgive you. Why did you wait all these years? All I've done is sit and wonder if I was crazy for thinking of you.

Chris: Annie, we're going to live now! I'm going to make you so happy. *(He kisses her, but without their bodies touching)*

40

Ann: *(A little embarrassed)* Not like that you're not.

Chris: I kissed you...

Ann: Like Larry's brother. Do it like you, Chris. *(He breaks away from her abruptly)* What is it, Chris?

45

Chris: Let's drive some place... I want to be alone with you.

(Act Three)

_____**End of Paper**_____

[Turn over

