

RAFFLES INSTITUTION

2016 YEAR 6 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

HIGHER 2

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9748/01

Paper 1 Reading Literature

Wednesday 14 September 2016

**3 hours
1330 – 1630**

Additional Materials: Answer Paper

Set texts may be taken into the examination room. They may bear underlining or highlighting. Any kind of folding or flagging of papers in texts (e.g. use of post-its, tape flags or paper clips) is not permitted.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

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

At the end of the examination tie your answer sheets to each section securely.
Hand in your answers separately.
All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

Section A

1

Either (a) Write a critical comparison of the following poems, considering in detail ways in which language, style and form contribute to each poet's portrayal of poetic inspiration.

A

DETAIL

I was watching a robin fly after a finch—the smaller
 chirping with excitement, the bigger, its breast blazing, silent
 in light-winged earnest chase—when, out of nowhere
 over the chimneys and the shivering front gardens,
 flashes a sparrowhawk headlong, a light brown burn 5
 scorching the air from which it simply plucks
 like a ripe fruit the stopped robin, whose two or three
 cheeps of terminal surprise twinkle in the silence
 closing over the empty street when the birds have gone 10
 about their business, and I began to understand
 how a poem can happen: you have your eye on a small
 elusive detail, pursuing its music, when a terrible truth
 strikes and your heart cries out, being carried off.

Eamon Grennan (1941—)

B

THE THOUGHT-FOX

I imagine this midnight moment's forest:
 Something else is alive
 Besides the clock's loneliness
 And this blank page where my fingers move.

Through the window I see no star: 5
 Something more near
 Though deeper within darkness
 Is entering the loneliness:

Cold, delicately as the dark snow,
 A fox's nose touches twig, leaf; 10
 Two eyes serve a movement, that now
 And again now, and now, and now

Sets neat prints into the snow
 Between trees, and warily a lame 15
 Shadow lags by stump and in hollow
 Of a body that is bold to come

Across clearings, an eye,
 A widening deepening greenness,
 Brilliantly, concentratedly, 20
 Coming about its own business

Till, with sudden sharp hot stink of fox
 It enters the dark hole of the head.
 The window is starless still; the clock ticks,
 The page is printed.

Ted Hughes (1930—1998)

- Or (b) Write a critical comparison of the following poems, considering in detail ways in which language, style and form contribute to each poet's portrayal of the weather.

A WEDDING WIND

The wind blew all my wedding-day,
 And my wedding-night was the night of the high wind;
 And a stable door was banging, again and again,
 That he must go and shut it, leaving me
 Stupid in candlelight, hearing rain, 5
 Seeing my face in the twisted candlestick,
 Yet seeing nothing. When he came back
 He said the horses were restless, and I was sad
 That any man or beast that night should lack
 The happiness I had. 10

Now in the day
 All's unravelled under the sun by the wind's blowing.
 He has gone to look at the floods, and I
 Carry a chipped pail to the chicken-run,
 Set it down, and stare. All is the wind 15
 Hunting through clouds and forests, thrashing
 My apron and the hanging cloths on the line.
 Can it be borne, this bodying-forth by wind
 Of joy my actions turn on, like a thread
 Carrying beads? Shall I be let to sleep 20
 Now this perpetual morning shares my bed?
 Can even death dry up
 These new delighted lakes, conclude
 Our kneeling as cattle by all-generous waters?

Philip Larkin (1922—1985)

B STORM ON THE ISLAND

We are prepared: we build our houses squat,
 Sink walls in rock and roof them with good slate.
 The wizened earth had never troubled us
 With hay, so as you can see, there are no stacks
 Or stooks¹ that can be lost. Nor are there trees 5
 Which might prove company when it blows full
 Blast: you know what I mean - leaves and branches
 Can raise a chorus in a gale
 So that you can listen to the thing you fear
 Forgetting that it pummels your house too. 10
 But there are no trees, no natural shelter.
 You might think that the sea is company,
 Exploding comfortably down on the cliffs
 But no: when it begins, the flung spray hits
 The very windows, spits like a tame cat 15
 Turned savage. We just sit tight while wind dives
 And strafes invisibly. Space is a salvo.
 We are bombarded by the empty air.
 Strange, it is a huge nothing that we fear.

Seamus Heaney (1939—2013)

[Turn over

¹ Stooks - sheaves of grain
 2016 H2 P1RI LIT PRELIM

Section B

IAN MCEWAN: *ATONEMENT*

2

Either (a) 'The journey from childhood to adulthood is not an easy one.'

Consider the means by which McEwan reveals the growth of Briony in *Atonement*.

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the presentation of the relationship between Robbie and Cecilia, here and elsewhere in the novel.

When she entered the café, wearing her nurse's cape, startling him from a pleasant daze, he stood too quickly and knocked his tea. He was conscious of the oversized suit his mother had saved for. The jacket did not seem to touch his shoulders at any point. They sat down, looked at each other, smiled and looked away. Robbie and Cecilia had been making love for years — by post. In their coded exchanges they had drawn close, but how artificial that closeness seemed now as they embarked on their small talk, their helpless catechism of polite query and response. As the distance opened up between them, they understood how far they had run ahead of themselves in their letters. This moment had been imagined and desired for too long, and could not measure up. He had been out of the world, and lacked the confidence to step back and reach for the larger thought. *I love you, and you saved my life.* He asked about her lodgings. She told him.

'And do you get along all right with your landlady?'

He could think of nothing better, and feared the silence that might come down, and the awkwardness that would be a prelude to her telling him that it had been nice to meet up again. Now she must be getting back to work. Everything they had, rested on a few minutes in a library years ago. Was it too frail? She could easily slip back into being a kind of sister. Was she disappointed? He had lost weight. He had shrunk in every sense. Prison made him despise himself, while she looked as adorable as he remembered her, especially in a nurse's uniform. But she was miserably nervous too, incapable of stepping around the inanities. Instead, she was trying to be lighthearted about her landlady's temper. After a few more such exchanges, she really was looking at the little watch that hung above her left breast, and telling him that her lunch break would soon be over. They had had half an hour.

He walked with her to Whitehall, toward the bus stop. In the precious final minutes he wrote out his address for her, a bleak sequence of acronyms and numbers. He explained that he would have no leave until his basic training was over. After that, he was granted two weeks. She was looking at him, shaking her head in some exasperation, and then, at last, he took her hand and squeezed. The gesture had to carry all that had not been said, and she answered it with pressure from her own hand. Her bus came, and she did not let go. They were standing face to face. He kissed her, lightly at first, but they drew closer, and when their tongues touched, a disembodied part of himself was abjectly grateful, for he knew he now had a memory in the bank and would be drawing on it for months to come. He was drawing on it now, in a French barn, in the small hours. They tightened their embrace and went on kissing while people edged past them in the queue. Some card squawked in his ear. She was crying onto his cheek, and her sorrow stretched her lips against his. Another bus arrived. She pulled away,

squeezed his wrist, and got on without a word and didn't look back. He watched her find her seat, and as the bus began to move realised he should have gone with her, all the way to the hospital. He had thrown away minutes in her company. He must learn again how to think and act for himself. He began to run along Whitehall, hoping to catch up with her at the next stop. But her bus was far ahead, and soon disappearing toward Parliament Square. 45

Throughout his training, they continued to write. Liberated from censorship and the need to be inventive, they proceeded cautiously. Impatient with living on the page, mindful of the difficulties, they were wary of getting ahead of the touch of hands and a single bus-stop kiss. They said they loved each other, used "darling" and "dearest," and knew their future was together, but they held back from wilder intimacies. Their business now was to remain connected until those two weeks. Through a Girton friend she found a cottage in Wiltshire they could borrow, and though they thought of little else in their moments of free time, they tried not to dream it away in their letters. Instead, they spoke of their routines. 50 55

Part II

[Turn over

Section C

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *HAMLET*

3

- Either (a)** Hamlet accuses Guildenstern of trying to 'pluck out the heart of my mystery'. To what extent can Hamlet's character and actions be explained?
- Or (b)** Write a critical commentary on the following passage, paying particular attention to the presentation of deception here and elsewhere in the play.

Hamlet: ...Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia. – Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remembered.

Ophelia: Good my lord,
How does your honour for this many a day?

Hamlet: I humbly thank you, well, well, well. 5

Ophelia: My lord, I have remembrances of yours
That I have longed long to re-deliver.
I pray you, now receive them.

Hamlet: No, not I,
I never gave you aught.

Ophelia: My honoured lord, you know right well you did, 10
And, with them words of so sweet breath composed
As made the things more rich. Their perfume lost,
Take these again, for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There my lord. 15

Hamlet: Ha, ha, are you honest?

Ophelia: My lord?

Hamlet: Are you fair?

Ophelia: What means your lordship?

Hamlet: That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should 20
admit no discourse to your beauty.

Ophelia: Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than
with honesty?

Hamlet: Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner 25
transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than
The force of honesty can translate beauty into his
likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now the
time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Ophelia: Indeed, my lord you made me believe so.

Hamlet: You should not have believed me, for virtue cannot 30
so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it.
I loved you not.

Ophelia: I was the more deceived.

Hamlet: Get thee to a nunnery, why wouldst thou be a 35
breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest,
but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it
were better my mother had not borne me. I am
very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more
offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put

	them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves all, believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?	40
<i>Ophelia:</i>	At home my lord.	45
<i>Hamlet:</i>	Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play The fool no where but in 's own house. Farewell.	
<i>Ophelia:</i>	O help him, you sweet heavens!	
<i>Hamlet:</i>	If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy Dowry – be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery go, and quickly too. Farewell!	50 55
<i>Ophelia:</i>	O heavenly powers, restore him!	
<i>Hamlet:</i>	I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another; you jig, you amble, and you lisp, you nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on 't; it hath made me mad. I say we will have no more marriages. Those that are married already, all but one, shall live, the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery go.	60 65

Exit

Act 3, Scene1

BLANK PAGE