



VICTORIA JUNIOR COLLEGE, SINGAPORE

Higher 2

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9748/01

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

Paper 1 Reading Literature

September 2016

3 hours

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 pages in text (e.g. use of post-its, tape flags or paper clips) is not permitted.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your class and name 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, fasten the essays separately and label them accurately.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

This document consists of **8** printed pages.

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 home.

A *The Émigrée*

There once was a country... I left it as a child
 but my memory of it is sunlight-clear
 for it seems I never saw it in that November
 which, I am told, comes to the mildest city.
 The worst news I receive of it cannot break
 my original view, the bright, filled paperweight. 5
 It may be at war, it may be sick with tyrants,
 but I am branded by an impression of sunlight.

The white streets of that city, the graceful slopes
 glow even clearer as time rolls its tanks 10
 and the frontiers rise between us, close like waves.
 That child's vocabulary I carried here
 like a hollow doll, opens and spills a grammar.
 Soon I shall have every coloured molecule of it.
 It may by now be a lie, banned by the state 15
 but I can't get it off my tongue. It tastes of sunlight.

I have no passport, there's no way back at all
 but my city comes to me in its own white plane.
 It lies down in front of me, docile as paper;
 I comb its hair and love its shining eyes. 20
 My city takes me dancing through the city
 of walls. They accuse me of absence, they circle me.
 They accuse me of being dark in their free city.
 My city hides behind me. They mutter death,
 and my shadow falls as evidence of sunlight. 25

Carol Rumens (b.1944)

B *Living Space*

There are just not enough straight lines. That is the problem. Nothing is flat or parallel. Beams	5
balance crookedly on supports thrust off the vertical. Nails clutch at open seams. The whole structure leans dangerously towards the miraculous.	10
Into this rough frame, someone has squeezed a living space	
and even dared to place these eggs in a wire basket, fragile curves of white hung out over the dark edge of a slanted universe, gathering the light into themselves,	15 20
as if they were the bright, thin walls of faith.	

Imtiaz Dharker (b.1954)

- 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 relationships.

A *Hawk's Shadow*

Embracing in the road
 for some reason I no longer remember
 and then drawing apart, seeing
 a shape ahead—how close was it?
 We looked up to where the hawk 5
 hovered with its kill; I watched them
 veering toward West Hill, casting
 their one shadow in the dirt, the all-inclusive
 shape of the predator—
 Then they disappeared. And I thought, 10
 one shadow. Like the one we made,
 you holding me.

Louise Glück (b. 1943)

B *Night Drive*

The closest, Mother, we have been in years
 was a night drive back from Achill on our own.
 Our tyres pressed their smooth cheeks to the ice,
 gripping nothing, squealing, barely holding on.

Something stepped into our beam and stood there, 5
 dumbly, ready to confront its death.
 I remember your right hand in the darkness —
 a white bird frightened from its fastness

in your lap, bracing yourself for the impact,
 hearing you whisper 'Jesus' under your breath, 10
 preparing your soul for the moment of death.
 Then, just as suddenly, nothing happened —

the sheep stepped back into the verge
 for no reason, attracted by a clump of grass.
 For days I felt the pressure of your hand on mine. 15
 You would've led me to the next world, Mother, like a child.

Tom French (b. 1966)

Section B

KAZUO ISHIGURO: *The Remains of the Day*

2

Either (a) 'The novel is as much about the personal and the private as it is about the public and political.'

How far do you agree with this comment?

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to Stevens's relationship with his father, here and elsewhere in the novel.

The next day, the discussions in the drawing room appeared to reach a new level of intensity and by lunchtime, the exchanges were becoming rather heated. My impression was that utterances were being directed accusingly, and with increasing boldness, towards the armchair where M. Dupont sat fingering his beard, saying little. Whenever the conference adjourned, I noticed, as no doubt his lordship did with some concern, that Mr Lewis would quickly take M. Dupont away to some corner or other where they could confer quietly. Indeed, once, shortly after lunch, I recall I came upon the two gentlemen talking rather furtively just inside the library doorway, and it was my distinct impression they broke off their discussion upon my approach. 5

In the meantime, my father's condition had grown neither better nor worse. As I understood, he was asleep for much of the time, and indeed, I found him so on the few occasions I had a spare moment to ascend to that little attic room. I did not then have a chance actually to converse with him until that second evening after the return of his illness. 10

On that occasion, too, my father was sleeping when I entered. But the chambermaid Miss Kenton had left in attendance stood up upon seeing me and began to shake my father's shoulder. 15

'Foolish girl!' I exclaimed. 'What do you think you are doing?'

'Mr Stevens said to wake him if you returned, sir.'

'Let him sleep. It's exhaustion that's made him ill.'

'He said I had to, sir,' the girl said, and again shook my father's shoulder. 20

My father opened his eyes, turned his head a little on the pillow, and looked at me.

'I hope Father is feeling better now,' I said.

He went on gazing at me for a moment, then asked: 'Everything in hand downstairs?'

'The situation is rather volatile. It is just after six o'clock, so Father can well imagine the atmosphere in the kitchen at this moment.' 25

An impatient look crossed my father's face. 'But is everything in hand?' he said again.

'Yes, I dare say you can rest assured on that. I'm very glad Father is feeling better.'

With some deliberation, he withdrew his arms from under the bedclothes and gazed tiredly at the backs of his hands. He continued to do this for some time.

'I'm glad Father is feeling so much better,' I said again eventually. 'Now really, I'd best be getting back. As I say, the situation is rather volatile.' 30

He went on looking at his hands for a moment. Then he said slowly: 'I hope I've been a good father to you.'

I laughed a little and said: 'I'm so glad you're feeling better now.'

'I'm proud of you. A good son. I hope I've been a good father to you. I suppose I haven't.' 35

'I'm afraid we're extremely busy now, but we can talk again in the morning.'

My father was still looking at his hands as though he were faintly irritated by them.

'I'm so glad you're feeling better now,' I said again and took my leave.

*

On descending, I found the kitchen on the brink of pandemonium, and in general, an extremely tense atmosphere amongst all levels of staff. However, I am pleased to recall that by the time dinner was served an hour or so later, nothing but efficiency and professional calm was exhibited on the part of my team. 40

Day Two – Morning

Section C

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Hamlet*

3

Either (a) Discuss the role and significance of loyalty in *Hamlet*.**Or (b)** Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the theme of justice, here and elsewhere in the play.

OSRIC: Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To th' ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

HAMLET: O I die, Horatio,
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit.
I cannot live to hear the news from England, 5
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras, he has my dying voice;
So tell him, with th' occurrents more and less
Which have solicited. The rest is silence.

[*Dies*

HORATIO: Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince, 10
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.
Why does the drum come hither?

*Enter FORTINBRAS with Drum and colours, the ENGLISH
AMBASSADORS, and others*

FORTINBRAS: Where is this sight?

HORATIO: What is it ye would see?
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

FORTINBRAS: This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death, 15
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck?

FIRST

AMBASSADOR: The sight is dismal,
And our affairs from England come too late.
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing, 20
To tell him his commandment is fulfilled,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.
Where should we have our thanks?

HORATIO: Not from his mouth,
 Had it th' ability of life to thank you;
 He never gave commandment for their death. 25
 But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
 You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
 Are here arrived, give order that these bodies
 High on a stage be placed to the view,
 And let me speak to the yet unknowing world 30
 How these things came about; so shall you hear
 Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
 Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
 Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,
 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook 35
 Fall'n on the inventors' heads. All this can I
 Truly deliver.

FORTINBRAS: Let us haste to hear it,
 And call the noblest to the audience.
 For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune.
 I have some rights of memory in this kingdom, 40
 Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

HORATIO: Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
 And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more.
 But let this same be presently performed,
 Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance 45
 On plots and errors happen.

FORTINBRAS: Let four captains
 Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,
 For he was likely, had he been put on,
 To have proved most royal: and for his passage,
 The soldiers' music and the rite of war 50
 Speak loudly for him.
 Take up the bodies – such a sight as this
 Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.
 Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*Exeunt marching, after which a peal of ordnance is shot off*

Act 5 Scene 2

END OF PAPER