



VICTORIA JUNIOR COLLEGE, SINGAPORE

Higher 2

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

9748/03

Paper 3 The Individual and Society in 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 **6** printed pages.

Section A

Answer one question in this section

1

Either (a) The passage below is from the short story 'Boxes' (1986) by American author Raymond Carver.

Write a critical analysis of the passage, relating it to the theme of the individual and society.

It was too hot for her when she arrived, in August, and in September it started to rain. It rained almost every day for weeks. In October it turned cold. There was snow in November and December. But long before that she began to put the bad mouth on the place and the people to the extent that I didn't want to hear about it anymore, and I told her so finally. She cried, and I hugged her and thought that was the end of it. But a few days later she started in again, same stuff. Just before Christmas she called to see when I was coming by with her presents. She hadn't put up a tree and didn't intend to, she said. Then she said something else. She said if this weather didn't improve she was going to kill herself. 5

"Don't talk crazy," I said.

She said, "I mean it, honey, I don't want to see this place again except from my coffin. I hate this g. d. place. I don't know why I moved here. I wish I could just die and get it over with." 10

I remember hanging on to the phone and watching a man high up on a pole doing something to a power line. Snow whirled around his head. As I watched, he leaned out from the pole, supported only by his safety belt. Suppose he falls, I thought. I didn't have any idea what I was going to say next. I had to say something. But I was filled with unworthy feelings, thoughts no son should admit to. "You're my mother," I said finally. "What can I do to help?" 15

"Honey, you can't do anything," she said. "The time for doing anything has come and gone. It's too late to do anything. I wanted to like it here. I thought we'd go on picnics and take drives together. But none of that happened. You're always busy. You're off working, you and Jill. You're never at home. Or else if you are at home you have the phone off the hook all day. Anyway, I never see you," she said. 20

"That's not true," I said. And it wasn't. But she went on as if she hadn't heard me. Maybe she hadn't.

"Besides," she said, "this weather's killing me. It's too damned cold here. Why didn't you tell me this was the North Pole? If you had, I'd never have come. I want to go back to California, honey. I can get out and go places there. I don't know anywhere to go here. There are people back in California. I've got friends there who care what happens to me. Nobody gives a damn here. Well, I just pray I can get through to June. If I can make it that long, if I can last to June, I'm leaving this place forever. This is the worst place I've ever lived in." 30

What could I say? I didn't know what to say. I couldn't even say anything about the weather. Weather was a real sore point. We said good-bye and hung up.

Other people take vacations in the summer, but my mother moves. She started moving years ago, after my dad lost his job. When that happened, when he was laid off, they sold their home, as if this were what they should do, and went to where they thought things would be better. But things weren't any better there, either. They moved again. They kept on moving. They lived in rented houses, apartments, mobile homes, and motel units even. They kept moving, lightening their load with each move they made. A couple of times they landed in a town where I lived. They'd move in with my wife and me for a while and then they'd move on again. They were like migrating animals in this regard, except there was no 40

pattern to their movement. They moved around for years, sometimes even leaving the state for what they thought would be greener pastures. But mostly they stayed in Northern California and did their moving there. Then my dad died, and I thought my mother would stop moving and stay in one place for a while. But she didn't. She kept moving. I suggested 45 once that she go to a psychiatrist. I even said I'd pay for it. But she wouldn't hear of it. She packed and moved out of town instead. I was desperate about things or I wouldn't have said that about the psychiatrist.

She was always in the process of packing or else unpacking. Sometimes she'd move two or three times in the same year. She talked bitterly about the place she was leaving and 50 optimistically about the place she was going to. Her mail got fouled up, her benefit checks went off somewhere else, and she spent hours writing letters, trying to get it all straightened out. Sometimes she'd move out of an apartment house, move to another one a few blocks away, and then, a month later, move back to the place she'd left, only to a different floor or a 55 different side of the building. That's why when she moved here I rented a house for her and saw to it that it was furnished to her liking. "Moving around keeps her alive," Jill said. "It gives her something to do. She must get some kind of weird enjoyment out of it, I guess." But enjoyment or not, Jill thinks my mother must be losing her mind. I think so, too. But how do you tell your mother this? How do you deal with her if this is the case? Crazy doesn't 60 stop her from planning and getting on with her next move.

- Or (b) Write a critical appreciation of the following poem by Allan Crosbie, paying attention to ways in which it examines relationships between the individual and society.

Manifesto

Our patience will not yield, our resolve will not break.
 We will liberate our children's minds.
 We will protect their innocent hearts.
 Our strong actions will follow our strong words.
 The thirsty will drink, the hungry will eat. 5
 We will teach you to believe what you read.

We will teach you to believe what you read.
 Our patience will not yield, our resolve will not break.
 The thirsty will drink, the hungry will eat.
 We will liberate our children's minds. 10
 Our strong actions will follow our strong words.
 We will protect their innocent hearts.

We will protect your innocent hearts.
 You will learn to believe what you read.
 Strong actions will follow these strong words. 15
 Our patience will not yield, our resolve will not break.
 We will liberate our children's minds.
 The thirsty will drink, the hungry will eat.

The hungry are drunk, the thirsty may eat.
 We will not betray their innocent hearts. 20
 We will not enslave our children's minds.
 They will never disbelieve what they read.
 Our patience will not yield, our resolve will not break.
 Strong actions first demand strong words.

Strong actions first demand strong words 25
 like, *If the thirsty drink and the hungry eat*
our patience will not yield, our resolve will not break.
 We will not betray the innocent heart
 of this manifesto — believe what you read.
 Read my lips: we will enslave your children's minds. 30

To free them, we must enslave your children's minds.
 The actions of the strong speak louder than their words —
 if you refuse to believe what you read,
 the thirsty won't drink, the hungry won't eat.
 We will protect our innocent hearts. 35
 We have patience. You will suffer, yield, break.

We will read your hungry minds.
 We will break your strong, strong hearts.
 You will eat our innocent words.

Section B

**Answer one question in this section, using two texts that you have studied.
The texts used in this section cannot be used in Section C.**

2

Either (a) Compare the ways two writers you have read present individuals as frustrated with their community.

Or (b) Compare the ways two writers you have read present characters in search of a sense of belonging.

Section C

**Answer one question in this section, on one text that you have studied.
The text used in this section cannot be used in Section B.**

BOEY KIM CHENG: *Clear Brightness*

3

- Either (a)** In what ways, and with what effects, does Boey explore ideas about the relationship between an individual and society through his presentation of Chinese customs and traditions? You should refer to at least TWO poems from your selection.
- Or (b)** Discuss Boey's presentation of tension between personal and national narratives. You should refer to at least TWO poems from your selection.

F SCOTT FITZGERALD: *The Great Gatsby*

4

- Either (a)** How, and with what effects, does Fitzgerald explore ideas about an individual and society through Nick Carraway, the narrator of the novel?
- Or (b)** "They were careless people, Tom and Daisy – they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness".
- Discuss Fitzgerald's presentation of "carelessness" in the novel.

PHILIP LARKIN: *Collected Poems*

5

- Either (a)** In relation to ideas about the individual and society, explore Larkin's presentation of the experience of isolation. You should refer to at least TWO poems from your selection.
- Or (b)** Discuss Larkin's presentation of the individual's misgivings about social institutions. You should refer to at least TWO poems from your selection.

End of Paper