



**SERANGOON JUNIOR COLLEGE  
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2017**

**ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**HIGHER 2                    9748/01  
PAPER 1:                    READING LITERATURE**

**TUESDAY    12 SEPTEMBER 2017            3 HOURS**

**TIME:                    0800 – 1100**

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. the use of post-its, tape flags or paper clips) is not permitted.

**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

Write your name, civics group on every answer sheet.

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

You may use a soft pencil for any diagrams or graphs.

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

Write your answers on the separate answer paper provided.

Answer **three** questions.

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

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

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

---

**This question paper consists of 9 printed pages and 1 blank page. [Turn over]**

**Section A**  
**Answer one question in this section**

1

- Either** (a) Compare and contrast the following poems, *Warming Her Pearls* by Carol Ann Duffy and *Touch Me* by Stanley Kunitz, considering how desire is shaped by the poets' language, style and form.

A

Warming Her Pearls

Next to my own skin, her pearls. My mistress  
 bids me wear them, warm them, until evening  
 when I'll brush her hair. At six, I place them  
 round her cool, white throat. All day I think of her,

resting in the Yellow Room, contemplating silk  
 or taffeta<sup>1</sup>, which gown tonight? She fans herself  
 whilst I work willingly, my slow heat entering  
 each pearl. Slack on my neck, her rope.

5

She's beautiful. I dream about her  
 in my attic bed; picture her dancing  
 with tall men, puzzled by my faint, persistent scent  
 beneath her French perfume, her milky stones.

10

I dust her shoulders with a rabbit's foot,  
 watch the soft blush seep through her skin  
 like an indolent sigh. In her looking-glass  
 my red lips part as though I want to speak.

15

Full moon. Her carriage brings her home. I see  
 her every movement in my head.... Undressing,  
 taking off her jewels, her slim hand reaching  
 for the case, slipping naked into bed, the way

20

she always does.... And I lie here awake,  
 knowing the pearls are cooling even now  
 in the room where my mistress sleeps. All night  
 I feel their absence and I burn.

Carol Ann Duffy

---

<sup>1</sup> Taffeta - a fine lustrous silk or similar synthetic fabric with a crisp texture

## B

## Touch Me

*Summer is late, my heart.*  
 Words plucked out of the air  
 some forty years ago  
 when I was wild with love  
 and torn almost in two 5  
 scatter like leaves this night  
 of whistling wind and rain.  
 It is my heart that's late,  
 it is my song that's flown.  
 Outdoors all afternoon 10  
 under a gunmetal sky  
 staking my garden down,  
 I kneeled to the crickets trilling  
 underfoot as if about  
 to burst from their crusty shells; 15  
 and like a child again  
 marveled to hear so clear  
 and brave a music pour  
 from such a small machine.  
 What makes the engine go? 20  
 Desire, desire, desire.  
 The longing for the dance  
 stirs in the buried life.  
 One season only,  
 and it's done. 25  
 So let the battered old willow  
 thrash against the windowpanes  
 and the house timbers creak.  
 Darling, do you remember  
 the man you married? Touch me, 30  
 remind me who I am.

Stanley Kunitz

**Or (b)** Write a critical response to the following poems, *The Planners* by Boey Kim Cheng and *Orange Grove Road* by Felix Fojas, paying close attention to the poets' use of language, style and form.

**A** The Planners

<p>They plan. They build. All spaces are gridded, filled with permutations of possibilities. The buildings are in alignment with the roads which meet at desired points linked by bridges all hang in the grace of mathematics. They build and will not stop. Even the sea draws back and the skies surrender.</p>	5
<p>They erase the flaws, the blemishes of the past, knock off useless blocks with dental dexterity. All gaps are plugged with gleaming gold. The country wears perfect rows of shining teeth. Anaesthesia, amnesia, hypnosis. They have the means. They have it all so it will not hurt, so history is new again. The piling will not stop. The drilling goes right through the fossils of last century</p>	10  15  20
<p>But my heart would not bleed poetry. Not a single drop to stain the blueprint of our past's tomorrow.</p>	25

Boey Kim Cheng

B

## Orange Grove Road

The very air in this place  
 Is charged with disinfectant  
 And is certified germ-free  
 Because in this city  
 Of gleaming skyscrapers 5  
 Cleanliness is an obsession.  
 Even the brown leaves,

As soon as they fall on this road,  
 Are systematically swept away  
 By a legion of street-sweepers. 10  
 Here it is frustrating not to find  
 A single fugitive cigarette-butt  
 Hiding in the bush.  
 And how can a litterbug survive

When the fine is fifty Singaporean 15  
 Dollars! Those two fat ladies  
 Jogging there are no exception  
 Who greet me with their pearly  
 Antiseptic smiles.  
 Personally I think 20  
 Dirty cities have more character.

As a silent protest, I will  
 Not wash for a whole week.  
 Afterwards, I'm sure,  
 A policeman wearing a spotless 25  
 Blue uniform will politely  
 Arrest me  
 For not keeping the city clean.

Felix Fojas

**Section B: *The Remains of the Day***  
**Answer one question in this section**

2

Either

- (a) “Miss Kenton is the sole character in the novel who is perceptive enough to see through Stevens’ masquerade.”

In the light of this statement, comment on the role of Miss Kenton in the novel.

Or

- (b) Write a critical commentary on the following extract, paying special attention to Ishiguro’s presentation of social class, here and elsewhere in the novel.

As I recall, I was rung for late one night – it was past midnight – to the drawing room where his lordship had been entertaining three gentlemen since dinner. I had, naturally, been called to the drawing room several times already that night to replenish refreshments, and had observed on these occasions the gentlemen deep in conversation over weighty issues. When I entered the drawing room on this last occasion, however, all the gentlemen stopped talking and looked at me. Then his lordship said: 5

“Step this way a moment, will you, Stevens? Mr Spencer here wishes a word with you.”

The gentleman in question went on gazing at me for a moment without changing the somewhat languid posture he had adopted in his armchair. Then he said: 10

“My good man, I have a question for you. We need your help on a certain matter we’ve been debating. Tell me, do you suppose the debt situation regarding America is a significant factor in the present low levels of trade? Or do you suppose this is a red herring and that the abandonment of the gold standard is at the root of the matter?” 15

I was naturally a little surprised by this, but then quickly saw the situation for what it was; that is to say, it was clearly expected that I be baffled by the question. Indeed, in the moment or so that it took me to perceive this and compose a suitable response, I may even have given the outward impression of struggling with the question, for I saw the gentlemen in the room exchange mirthful smiles. 20

“I’m very sorry, sir,” I said, “but I am unable to be of assistance on this matter.” 25

I was by this point well on top of the situation, but the gentlemen went on laughing covertly. Then Mr Spencer said:

“Then perhaps you will help us on another matter. Would you say that the currency problem in Europe would be made better or worse if there were to be an arms agreement between the French and the Bolsheviks?” 30

“I’m very sorry, sir, but I am unable to be of assistance on this matter.”

“Oh dear,” said Mr Spencer. “So you can’t help us here either.”

There was even more suppressed laughter before his lordship said: “Very well, Stevens. That will be all.”

“Please, Darlington, I have one more question to put to our good man here,” Mr Spencer said. “I very much wanted his help on the question presently vexing many of us, and which we all realize is crucial to how we should shape our foreign policy. My good fellow, please come to our assistance. What was M. Laval really intending, by his recent speech on the situation in North Africa? Are you also of the view that it was simply a ruse to scupper the nationalist fringe of his own domestic party?” 40

"I'm sorry, sir, but I am unable to assist in this matter."

"You see, gentlemen," Mr Spencer said, turning to the others, "our man is unable to assist us in these matters."

This brought fresh laughter, now barely suppressed. 45

"And yet," Mr Spencer went on, "we still persist with the notion that this nation's decisions be left in the hands of our good man here and to the few million others like him. Is it any wonder, saddled as we are with our present parliamentary system, that we are unable to find any solution to our many difficulties? Why, you may as well ask a committee of the mothers' union to 50  
organize a war campaign."

There was open, hearty laughter at this remark, during which his lordship muttered: "Thank you, Stevens," thus enabling me to take my leave.

While of course this was a slightly uncomfortable situation, it was hardly the most difficult, or even an especially unusual one to encounter in the 55  
course of one's duties, and you will no doubt agree that any decent professional should expect to take such events in his stride. I had, then, all but forgotten the episode by the following morning, when Lord Darlington came into the billiard room while I was up on a step-ladder dusting portraits, and said: 60

"Look here, Stevens, it was dreadful. The ordeal we put you through last night."

I paused in what I was doing and said: "Not at all, sir. I was only too happy to be of service."

"It was quite dreadful. We'd all had rather too good a dinner, I fancy. 65  
Please accept my apologies."

"Thank you, sir. But I am happy to assure you I was not unduly inconvenienced."

(Day Three, Evening)

**Section C: *The Duchess of Malfi***  
**Answer one question in this section**

3

**Either** (a) 'A march towards decline with no hope of regeneration.' Is this an apt evaluation of the play?

**Or** (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating your discussion to how despair is presented here and elsewhere in the play.

	<i>Exeunt all but CARDINAL.</i>	
CARDINAL	The reason why I would not suffer these About my brother, is because at midnight I may with better privacy convey Julia's body to her own lodging. Oh, my conscience!	5
	I would pray now, but the devil takes away my heart For having any confidence in prayer. About this hour I appointed Bosola To fetch the body: when he hath served my turn, He dies.	10
	<i>Exit CARDINAL, enter BOSOLA.</i>	
BOSOLA	Ha? 'Twas the Cardinal's voice: I heard him name Bosola, and my death.-- Listen, I hear one's footing. <i>Enter FERDINAND.</i>	
FERDINAND	Strangling is a very quiet death.	
BOSOLA	<i>[Aside]</i> Nay then, I see I must stand upon my guard.	
FERDINAND	What say to that? Whisper, softly: do you agree to't? So, it must be done i'th' dark – the Cardinal Would not for a thousand pounds the doctor should see it. <i>Exit</i>	15
BOSOLA	My death is plotted. Here's the consequence of murder. 'We value not desert, nor Christian breath, When we know black deeds must be cured with death.'	20
	<i>Withdraws. Enter SERVANT and ANTONIO.</i>	
SERVANT	Here stay, sir, and be confident, I pray. I'll fetch you a dark lantern. <i>Exit.</i>	
ANTONIO	Could I take him at his prayers, There were hope of pardon.	25
BOSOLA	Fall right my sword: I'll not give thee so much leisure as to pray. <i>BOSOLA wounds ANTONIO.</i>	
ANTONIO	O, I am gone! Thou hast ended a long suit In a minute.	
BOSOLA	What art thou?	30
ANTONIO	A most wretched thing, That only have thy benefit in death, To appear myself. <i>Enter SERVANT with a lantern.</i>	
SERVANT	Where are you, sir?	
ANTONIO	Very near my home.-- Bosola?	35
SERVANT	O, misfortune!	

