

Class	Register Number	Name
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南洋女子中學校
Nanyang Girls' High School

**Mid-Year Examination 2016
Secondary Three**

Advanced Literature (HP)

2 hours

Thursday

12 May 2016

1030 hrs – 1230 hrs

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

1. Write your name on your answer script.
2. Use **dark blue or black ink**.
3. Do not use correction fluid / tape.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

1. Answer **both Question 1 (Section A) and Question 2 (Section B)**.
2. Begin your answer to Section B on a **fresh** sheet of paper.
3. Number your answers clearly.
4. You are reminded of the need for good English and **legible** handwriting.

Setter:
V Heng

This document consists of 5 printed pages,
including this cover page.

[Turn over]

SECTION A: SET TEXT [30 marks]

A Streetcar Named Desire – Tennessee Williams

1. Read the extract below and answer the question that follows.

It is a few hours later that night.

Blanche has been drinking fairly steadily since Mitch left. She has dragged her wardrobe trunk into the centre of the bedroom. It hangs open with flowery dresses thrown across it. As the drinking and packing went on, a mood of hysterical exhilaration came into her and she has decked herself out in a somewhat soiled and crumpled white satin evening gown and a pair of scuffed silver slippers with brilliants set in their heels. 5

Now she is placing the rhinestone tiara on her head before the mirror of the dressing-table and murmuring excitedly as if to a group of spectral admirers.

BLANCHE: How about taking a swim, a moonlight swim at the old rock-quarry? If anyone's sober enough to drive a car! Ha-ha! Best way in the world to stop your head buzzing! Only you've got to be careful to dive where the deep pool is—if you hit a rock you don't come up till tomorrow.... 10

Tremblingly she lifts the hand mirror for a closer inspection. She catches her breath and slams the mirror face down with such violence that the glass cracks. She moans a little and attempts to rise. 15

...

Stanley has had a few drinks on the way and has brought some quart beer bottles home with him.

BLANCHE: How is my sister?
STANLEY: She is doing okay. 20

BLANCHE: And how is the baby?

STANLEY: *[grinning amiably]* The baby won't come before morning so they told me to go home and get a little shut-eye.

BLANCHE: Does that mean we are to be alone in here?

STANLEY: Yep. Just me and you, Blanche. Unless you got somebody hid under the bed. What've you got on those fine feathers for? 25

BLANCHE: Oh, that's right. You left before my wire came.

STANLEY: You got a wire?

BLANCHE: I received a telegram from an old admirer of mine.

STANLEY: Anything good? 30

BLANCHE: I think so. An invitation.

STANLEY: What to? A fireman's ball?

BLANCHE *[throwing back her head]*: A cruise of the Caribbean on a yacht!

STANLEY: Well, well. What do you know?

BLANCHE: I have never been so surprised in my life. 35

STANLEY: I guess not.

BLANCHE: It came like a bolt from the blue!

STANLEY: Who did you say it was from?

BLANCHE: An old beau of mine.

STANLEY: The one that give you the white fox-pieces? 40

BLANCHE: Mr Shep Huntleigh. I wore his ATO pin my last year at college. I hadn't seen him again until last Christmas. I ran in to him on Biscayne Boulevard. Then—just now—this wire—inviting me on a cruise of the Caribbean! The

problem is clothes. I tore into my trunk to see what I have that's suitable for the tropics!	45
STANLEY: And come up with that—gorgeous—diamond tiara?	
BLANCHE: This old relic! Ha-ha! It's only rhinestones.	
STANLEY: Gosh. I thought it was Tiffany diamonds. [<i>He unbuttons his shirt.</i>]	
BLANCHE: Well, anyhow, I shall be entertained in style.	
STANLEY: Uh-huh. It goes to show, you never know what is coming.	50
BLANCHE: Just when I thought my luck had begun to fail me—	
STANLEY: Into the picture pops this Miami millionaire.	
BLANCHE: This man is not from Miami. This man is from Dallas.	
STANLEY: This man is from Dallas?	
BLANCHE: Yes, this man is from Dallas where gold spouts out of the ground!	55
STANLEY: Well, just so he's from somewhere! [<i>He starts removing his shirt.</i>]	
BLANCHE: Close the curtains before you undress any further.	
STANLEY [<i>amiably</i>]: This is all I'm going to undress right now.	
...	
BLANCHE: When I think of how divine it is going to be to have such a thing as privacy once more—I could weep with joy!	60
STANLEY: This millionaire from Dallas is not going to interfere with your privacy any?	
BLANCHCE: It won't be the sort of thing you have in mind. This man is a gentleman and he respects me. [<i>Improvising feverishly.</i>] What he wants is my companionship. Having great wealth sometimes makes people lonely!	
STANLEY: I wouldn't know about that.	65
BLANCHE: A cultivated woman, a woman of intelligence and breeding, can enrich a man's life—immeasurably! I have those things to offer, and this doesn't take them away. Physical beauty is passing. A transitory possession. But beauty of the mind and richness of the spirit and tenderness of the heart—and I have all of those things—aren't taken away, but grow! Increase with the years! How strange that I should be called a destitute woman! When I have all of these treasures locked in my heart. [<i>A choked sob comes from her.</i>] I think of myself as a very, very rich woman! But I have been foolish—casting my pearls before swine!	70
STANLEY: Swine, huh?	

Extract adapted from *A Streetcar Named Desire* – Tennessee Williams
(from Scene X)

- (a) What does the extract reveal about the character of Blanche?
- (b) With reference to character and plot development, explain how this extract contributes to the tension that has been building between Blanche and Stanley since the start of the play.

[Please turn over]

SECTION B: LITERARY RESPONSE [30 marks]

2. Read the texts below and answer the question that follows.

(i)

Mezzo Cammin

Half of my life is gone, and I have let
The years slip from me and have not fulfilled
The aspiration of my youth, to build
Some tower of song with lofty parapet.
Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret
of restless passions that would not be stilled,
But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,
Kept me from what I may accomplish yet;
Though, half-way up the hill, I see the Past
Lying beneath me with its sounds and sights, –
A city in the twilight dim and vast,
With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming lights, –
And hear above me on the autumnal blast
The cataract of Death far thundering from the heights.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1886)

(ii)

Ageing

i

Since early middle-age
(say around forty)
I've been writing about ageing,
poems in many registers:
fearful, enraged or accepting
as I moved through the decades.

Now that I'm really old
there seems little left to say.
Pointless to bewail
the decline, bodily and mental;
undignified; boring
not to me only but everyone,

and ridiculous to celebrate
the wisdom supposedly gained
simply by staying alive.
--Nevertheless, to have faith
that you'll be adored as an ancient
might make it all worthwhile.

ii

Ageing means smiling at babies
in their pushchairs and strollers
(wondering if I look as crazy
as Virginia or Algernon -
though I don't plan to bite!)
Realising I'm smiling at strangers.

It means no more roller-skating.
That used to be my favourite
sport, after school, every day:
to strap on my skates,
spin one full circle in place,
then swoop down the hill and away.

When I saw that young girl on her blades,
wind in her hair, sun on her face,
like a magazine illustration
from childhood days, racing
her boyfriend along the pavement:
--then I understood ageing.

Ruth Fainlight (2011)

(a) With reference to form, imagery and tone, compare and contrast the poets' treatment of the subject-matter.

(b) Say which of the poems you prefer, making clear the reason(s) for your choice.