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南洋女子中學校
Nanyang Girls' High School

**End-of-Year Examination 2015
Secondary Three**

Advanced Literature (HP)

**2 hours
0800 - 1000 hrs**

Thursday 8th October 2015

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 **one** question from **Section A** and **one** question from **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.

Setters:

V Heng/S Kaur

This document consists of 9 printed pages,
including this cover page.

[Turn over]

SECTION A: SET TEXT

Answer ONE question from this section

A Streetcar Named Desire – Tennessee Williams

1. 'And so it was I entered the broken world
To trace the visionary company of love, its voice
An instant in the wind [I know not wither hurled]
But not for long to hold each desperate choice.'

Hart Crane
The Broken Tower
Pg XII, *A Street Car Named Desire*

Consider the above verse as a perspective on Blanche and her tragedy. In what way is Blanche a victim of culture?

[30]

OR

The Turn of the Screw – Henry James

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

It struck me that at this he just faintly coloured. He gave, at any rate, like a convalescent slightly fatigued, a languid shake of his head. "I don't – I don't . I want to get away.'

'You're tired of Bly?'

'Oh no, I like Bly.'

'Well then -?'

'Oh *you* know what a boy wants!'

I felt I didn't know so well as Miles, and I took temporary refuge. "You want to go to your uncle?'

Again, at this, with his sweet ironic face, he made a movement on the pillow. 'Ah you can't get off with that!'

I was silent a little, and it was I now, I think, who changed colour. 'My

dear, I don't want to get off!

'You can't even if you do. You can't, you can't!' – he lay beautifully staring. My uncle must come down and you must completely settle things.'

'If we do,' I returned with some spirit, 'you may be sure it will be to take you quite away.'

'Well don't you understand that that's exactly what I'm working for? You'll have to *tell* him – about the way you've let it all drop: you'll have to tell him a tremendous lot!' 20

The exultation with which he uttered this helped me somehow for the instant to meet him rather more. 'And how much will *you*, Miles, have to tell him? There are things he'll ask you!'

He turned it over. 'Very likely. But what things?'

'The things you've never told me. To make up his mind what to do with you. He can't send you back –'

'I don't want to go back!' he broke in. 'I want a new field.'

He said it with admirable serenity, with positive impeachable gaiety; and doubtless it was that very note that most evoked for me the poignancy, the unnatural tragedy, of his probable reappearance at the end of three months with all this bravado and still more dishonor. ...I threw myself upon him and in the tenderness of my pity I embraced him. 'Dear little Miles, dear little Miles -- !' 30

My face was close to his, and he let me kiss him, simply taking it with indulgent good humour. 'Well, old lady?'

'Is there nothing – nothing at all that you want to tell me?'

he turned off a little, facing round toward the wall and holding up his hand to look at as one had seen sick children look. 'I've told you – I told you this morning.' 40

Oh I was sorry for him! 'That you just want me not to worry you?'

He looked round at me now as if in recognition of my understanding him; then ever so gently, 'To let me alone,' he replied.

There was even a strange little dignity in it, something that made me release him, yet, when I had slowly risen, linger beside him.

'I've just begun a letter to your uncle,' I said

'Well then, finish it!'

I waited a minute. 'What happened before?'

He gazed up at me again. 'Before what?'

'Before you came back. And before you went away.' 50

For sometime he was silent, but he continued to meet my eyes. 'What happened?'

'Dear little Miles, dear little Miles, if you *knew* how I want to help you! It's only that, it's nothing but that, and I'd rather die than give you a pain or do you a wrong – I'd rather die than hurt a hair of you. Dear little Miles' – oh I brought it out now even if I *should* go too far – 'I just want you to help me save you!' But I knew in a moment after this that I had gone too far. The

answer to my appeal was instantaneous, but it came in the form of an extraordinary blast and chill, a gust of frozen air and a shake of the room as great as if, in the wild wind, the casement had crashed in. The boy gave a loud high shriek which, lost in the rest of the shock of sound, might have seemed, indistinctly, though I was so close to him, a note either of jubilation or of terror. I jumped to my feet again and was conscious of darkness. So for a moment we remained, while I stared about me and saw the drawn curtains unstirred and the window still tight. 'Why the candle's out!' I then cried.

'It was I who blew it, dear!' said Miles.

Extract adapted from *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James

- a. Examine the extract carefully and state your impression of Miles.
- b. How does this extract foreshadow the increasing tension in the novel?

[30]

SECTION B: LITERARY RESPONSE

Answer either question 3 or 4

Question 3

Read the texts below and answer the question that follows.

- (i) WHAT I LEARNED FROM MY MOTHER by Julia Kasdorf (1992)

I learned from my mother how to love
the living, to have plenty of vases on hand
in case you have to rush to the hospital
with peonies cut from the lawn, black ants
still stuck to the buds. I learned to save jars
large enough to hold fruit salad for a whole
grieving household, to cube home-canned pears
and peaches, to slice through maroon grape skins
and flick out the sexual seeds* with a knife point.
I learned to attend viewings even if I didn't know
the deceased, to press the moist hands
of the living, to look in their eyes and offer
sympathy, as though I understood loss even then.
I learned that whatever we say means nothing,
what anyone will remember is that we came.
I learned to believe I had the power to ease
awful pains materially like an angel.
Like a doctor, I learned to create
from another's suffering my own usefulness, and once
you know how to do this, you can never refuse.
To every house you enter, you must offer
healing: a chocolate cake you baked yourself,
the blessing of your voice, your chaste touch.

* *sexual seeds – for pollination or reproduction of grapes*

(ii) THE GIFT by Li-Young Lee (1986)

To pull the metal splinter from my palm
my father recited a story in a low voice.
I watched his lovely face and not the blade.
Before the story ended, he'd removed
the iron sliver I thought I'd die from.

I can't remember the tale,
but hear his voice still, a well
of dark water, a prayer.
And I recall his hands,
two measures of tenderness
he laid against my face,
the flames of discipline
he raised above my head.

Had you entered that afternoon
you would have thought you saw a man
planting something in a boy's palm,
a silver tear, a tiny flame.
Had you followed that boy
you would have arrived here,
where I bend over my wife's right hand.

Look how I shave her thumbnail down
so carefully she feels no pain.
Watch as I lift the splinter out.
I was seven when my father
took my hand like this,
and I did not hold that shard
between my fingers and think,
Metal that will bury me,
christen it Little Assassin,
Ore Going Deep for My Heart.
And I did not lift up my wound and cry,
Death visited here!
I did what a child does
when he's given something to keep.
I kissed my father.

3. How do the poets differ in their approach to describing what they receive from their parents?

Answer with close reference to imagery, perspective and tone.

[30]

OR

Question 4

Read the texts below and answer the question that follows.

- (i) A SONG ON THE END OF THE WORLD by Czeslaw Milosz (1944)

On the day the world ends
A bee circles a clover,
A fisherman mends a glimmering net.
Happy porpoises jump in the sea,
By the rainspout young sparrows are playing
And the snake is gold-skinned as it should always be.

On the day the world ends
Women walk through the fields under their umbrellas,
A drunkard grows sleepy at the edge of a lawn,
Vegetable peddlers shout in the street
And a yellow-sailed boat comes nearer the island,
The voice of a violin lasts in the air
And leads into a starry night.

And those who expected lightning and thunder
Are disappointed.
And those who expected signs and archangels' trumps
Do not believe it is happening now.
As long as the sun and the moon are above,
As long as the bumblebee visits a rose,
As long as rosy infants are born
No one believes it is happening now.

Only a white-haired old man, who would be a prophet
Yet is not a prophet, for he's much too busy,
Repeats while he binds his tomatoes:
No other end of the world will there be,
No other end of the world will there be.

(ii)

Much of the world's population has been wiped out by a virulent flu strain. This excerpt comes after the end of the world as the writer has imagined it.

AN INCOMPLETE LIST:

No more diving into pools of chlorinated water lit green from below. No more ball games played out under floodlights. No more porch lights with moths fluttering on summer nights. No more trains running under the surface of cities on the dazzling power of the electric third rail. No more cities. No more films, except rarely, except with a generator drowning out half the dialogue, and only then for the first little while until the fuel for the generators ran out, because automobile gas goes stale after two or three years. Aviation gas lasts longer, but it was difficult to come by.

No more screens shining in the half-light as people raise their phones above the crowd to take photographs of concert stages. No more concert stages lit by candy-coloured halogens, no more electronica, punk, electric guitars.

No more pharmaceuticals. No more certainty of surviving a scratch on one's hand, a cut on a finger while chopping vegetables for dinner, a dog bite.

No more flight. No more towns glimpsed from the sky through airplane windows, points of glimmering light; no more looking down from thirty thousand feet and imagining the lives lit up by those lights at that moment. No more airplanes, no more requests to put your tray table in its upright and locked position— but no, this wasn't true, there were still airplanes here and there. They stood dormant on runways and in hangars. They collected snow on their wings. In the cold months, they were ideal for food storage. In summer the ones near orchards were filled with trays of fruit that dehydrated in the heat. Teenagers snuck into them to have sex. Rust blossomed and streaked.

No more countries, all borders unmanned.

No more fire departments, no more police. No more road maintenance or garbage pickup. No more spacecraft rising up from Cape Canaveral, from the Baikonur Cosmodrome, from Vandenburg, Plesetsk, Tanegashima, burning paths through the atmosphere into space.

No more Internet. No more social media, no more scrolling through litanies of dreams and nervous hopes and photographs of lunches, cries for help and expressions of contentment and relationship-status updates with heart icons whole or broken, plans to meet up later, pleas, complaints, desires, pictures of babies dressed as bears or peppers for Halloween. No more reading and

commenting on the lives of others, and in so doing, feeling slightly less alone in the room. No more avatars*.

Station Eleven - Emily St. John Mandel (2014)

**avatar - an icon or figure representing a particular person in a computer game, Internet forum*

4. Milosz and Mandel both explore the idea of the end of the world. Which portrayal do you find more effective? Answer with reference to imagery, mood and form.

[30]

END OF PAPER