National Qualifications 2017

X724/77/12

English
Textual Analysis

THURSDAY, 11 MAY
2:50 PM – 4:20 PM

Total marks — 20

Attempt **ONLY** Part A **OR** Part B **OR** Part C **OR** Part D

PART A — POETRY — 20 marks

Attempt the question.

PART B — PROSE FICTION — 20 marks

Attempt the question.

PART C — PROSE NON-FICTION — 20 marks

Attempt the question.

PART D — DRAMA — 20 marks

Attempt the question.

Write your answers clearly in the answer booklet provided. In the answer booklet, you must clearly identify the question number you are attempting.

Use **blue** or **black** ink.

Before leaving the examination room you must give your answer booklet to the Invigilator; if you do not, you may lose all the marks for this paper.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS — 20 marks

Your answer should take the form of a CRITICAL ANALYSIS appropriately structured to meet the demands of your selected question.

Attempt ONLY Part A OR Part B OR Part C OR Part D.

PART A — POETRY

Read carefully *Sestina* by Elizabeth Bishop (1956) and then answer the question that follows it.

Sestina[1]

September rain falls on the house.
In the failing light, the old grandmother
sits in the kitchen with the child
beside the Little Marvel Stove,
reading the jokes from the almanac[2],
laughing and talking to hide her tears.

She thinks that her equinoctial tears
and the rain that beats on the roof of the house
were both foretold by the almanac,
but only known to a grandmother.
The iron kettle sings on the stove.
She cuts some bread and says to the child,

It's time for tea now; but the child
is watching the teakettle's small hard tears
dance like mad on the hot black stove,
the way the rain must dance on the house.
Tidying up, the old grandmother
hangs up the clever almanac

on its string. Birdlike, the almanac
hovers half open above the child,
hovers above the old grandmother
and her teacup full of dark brown tears.
She shivers and says she thinks the house
feels chilly, and puts more wood in the stove.

It was to be, says the Marvel Stove.
I know what I know, says the almanac.
With crayons the child draws a rigid house
and a winding pathway. Then the child
puts in a man with buttons like tears
and shows it proudly to the grandmother.

[1] *Sestina*: a particular poetic form of which the printed poem is an example

[2] *almanac*: an annual reference book containing a wide range of information and articles, including important dates, astronomical data and predictions for the year to come

But secretly, while the grandmother
busies herself about the stove,
the little moons fall down like tears
from between the pages of the almanac
into the flower bed the child
has carefully placed in the front of the house.

Time to plant tears, says the almanac.
The grandmother sings to the marvelous stove
and the child draws another inscrutable house.

Question

Discuss the features of the poem that you found interesting and the ways in which they helped to shape your understanding and appreciation of it.

[Turn over

OR

PART B — PROSE FICTION

Read carefully this extract of *South Riding* (1936) by Winifred Holtby and then answer the question that follows it.

The novel begins by focusing on Midge, the only child of Robert Carne, a gentleman farmer. It is raining and Midge is stuck indoors, alone in the family home, Maythorpe Hall, formerly a grand house in the country. Midge waits for her father to return home to find out if he has been appointed as a parish alderman — an important position in local government.

South Riding

Daddy had been disappointed. She was always disappointing him. He had wanted his daughter to be beautiful and proud and fearless like her mother, and Midge was ugly and thin and delicate and afraid and wore spectacles and a gold bar across her teeth. And she flew into horrible passions that made her lie on the floor and kick and scream. A fiend entered into her. She knew all about the man in the Bible who had an evil spirit. One moment she would feel nothing but good and gentle and polite and then these storms would seize her for no purpose, lashing her into fury. And afterwards she would feel ill and sick all over. It was no fun having an evil spirit.

If only Daddy would come home and be pleased and talk to her, and tell her what it was like to be an alderman.

The afternoon had lasted for ever and ever already.

It seemed to Midge that more than half her life had been spent shut up in the house with rain on the window waiting for someone to come home and talk to her. Yet often enough when Daddy came, he would sit silent drinking whisky and soda, companioned only by the dark oil paintings of ancestors in the dining-room and by Mother's lovely terrifying portrait; or he would work, bent over his desk adding columns of figures that never came out right, because there was a slump, because the labour bill was double what it used to be and because men worked for half the time and prices stayed the same. Midge knew all about the agricultural crisis.

And if Daddy was not worried about the Bank and money and Midge, there was always Mother — Mother, the brilliant and gay and regal, for whom the whole house lay waiting. But she was ill, and away in a nursing home, and did not return. If only Daddy would come home quickly and be happy because he was an alderman.

If only all grown-ups could be less unhappy.

From a window at the top of the house, there was a northward view along the road from Kiplington. Perhaps, thought Midge, if she went there she would be able to see Father driving with Hicks in the dogcart, and wave to him, and run downstairs and wait for him in the stable-yard, and greet him.

She wandered slowly along the first-floor passage, delaying mistrustfully to give fate a chance.

If she wanted anything very much, she would count to fifty and then another fifty before she let herself think that it might happen.

She paused at the door of the Big Spare Bedroom and counted fifty. The furniture there was shrouded with holland dustcloths. One brass ball from the foot of the bed was missing. Midge had once unscrewed it too far, playing there last year, dropped it, and let it lie.

She went on to the Bachelor's Room and counted fifty. It smelled of dust and boot polish and tobacco. A man's smell. Yet no man had slept there for years.

She dawdled up the stairs to the second landing that ran from end to end of the long old house. Now she was far away from Elsie singing in the kitchen. Ivy overgrew the windows. Chestnut branches darkened them. Yet in Cook's Room the pink wallpaper had faded to dingy cream, except on the squares where pictures once had hung. The black iron bedsteads were bare; a pair of discarded shoes, bulging to fit Cook's bunions, lay against the wall, exposing their battered soles, a home for spiders. In the open drawers of the dressing-table, Midge had already found two big black hairpins, a twist of tape fluffy with dust, and an artificial daisy. But when she had picked up the daisy, last summer, an earwig had run out of it, and she had dropped it in disgust, to lie on the floor with the shoes, an old box lid and a coil of grey hair combings.

The window was hard to open, but Midge knew its tricks, thrusting up the warped frame, showering down white petals of flaking paint. She knelt and looked on to the tops of lilac bushes, the stable roofs, and the red moss-grown bricks of the back-yard. Beyond the roofs lay the Kiplington Road, twisting away among the wet green fields.

If I shut my eyes and count to a hundred, thought Midge, I shall see him coming.

She shut her eyes. She counted. But time stood still. Endless, amorphous, ominous, time enfolded the crumbling house.

It can't be That. They can't want That of me, thought Midge with rising terror. She clutched the window-sill, on to which rain was dripping.

She shut her eyes and counted, praying silently that no further devoir[1] should be exacted from her. If she prayed, if she counted, surely that was enough to propitiate Them and bring her father home, an alderman.

It must be so. Surely now she could hear the clop of horsehooves, the sound of wheels splashing through the puddles?

She screwed her eyes tight. Ninety-seven, ninety-eight; he was coming nearer, her darling, her God, her father; ninety-nine. Oh, she would give them due measure; she would not cheat.

'A hundred!'

She shouted it aloud and opened her eyes and saw Mr. Dickson's milk-float turning into the stable-yard.

Her prayers had failed her.

Then, with a shock like a blow, she thought, "He's had an accident. They're bringing the body home in the milk-float like Mr. Banner from the hunting-field." She was almost sick with terror.

But Mr. Dickson had climbed stiffly from the back of the float, let Dolly go loose, and clumped to the back door, where Elsie had greeted him.

"Is Maister in?"

Then he had not found the body.

"He's at Flintonbridge, getting hisself made alderman."

Like most of her generation and locality, Elsie was trilingual. She talked BBC English to her employer, Cinema American to her companions, and Yorkshire dialect to old milkmen like Eli Dickson.

[1] *devoir*: duty

[Turn over

"He's not, then. Astell's alderman."

"Go on."

"I've just heard from Mrs. Tadman, who's been to Kingsport by bus, and got it from a chap in Flintonbridge."

"Get away with you. Our Maggie saw Mr. Tubbs in Kingsport, Wednesday week, and he said it was sure as death. An' *he's* a councillor."

"I tell you, Astell's alderman. Socialist chap. They put it about that Carne's failing, and no one likes to county-court an alderman."

"Failing? Mr. Carne? You're crazy."

"Then why don't he do up my cow-house? That's what I say. He promised to do it a twelve-month back and now muck from yard's running right through to dairy. I'll be having government chaps on me . . ."

They went into the house. The back door clapped to.

It didn't mean anything. Nasty old man, with his little fringe of beard and greasy hat. He smelled.

Midge crumbled flakes of paint between thin, dirty fingers.

What right had people to prevent her father, father, father from getting what he wanted? What did it mean — to county-court an alderman?

Oh, she had failed him. She had not prayed enough, not thought enough. If she counted to a million, that would be inadequate to propitiate destiny.

The stern inimical force of fate brooded over the house.

Daddy was not an alderman.

Midge, Lord Sedgmire's granddaughter, knew what she must do.

With lips compressed and fire burning in her sallow cheeks, she went out of Cook's bedroom and set off downstairs, leaving the window open so that the rains blew in and seeped through the crack in the oil-cloth and moistened the rotting boards until a brown patch spread across the North Room ceiling.

She went, like a victim to the sacrifice, into her Mother's Room.

It was a big southward–facing bedroom on the first floor, over-looking the lawn and the rose-garden, and the willows and the duck pond. Ever since Mrs. Carne had been carried out, dazed and unresisting, her rebellion quenched, the room had lain ready awaiting her return. The curtains were drawn; their green taffeta, faded and rotting at the folds, left only a whispering light, shifting in the great mirror the reflections of silver and glass and walnut wood. On the dressing-table, the creams cracked in their jars, and the nail polish crumbled to powder, the scents evaporated from cut-glass bottles among the rusting files and pins and scissors. In the wardrobes hung Mrs. Carne's deserted dresses, her thirty pairs of shoes on their wooden trees, her three riding habits, her cloak of mink and velvet.

When Midge had nothing better to do, she came up here, exploring. No one had ever told her not to, nor scolded her for it as they scolded her when she was found reading Elsie's love-letters from the blue biscuit box on the maids' dressing-table. No one had ever found her at it. She opened drawers filled with embroidered cambric, smelling of lavender and camphor moth-balls. She tried on gloves and scarves and evening dresses, stuffing the bodices with tissue paper or rolled silk stockings. She paraded up and down in front of the swinging mirror. She was her mother. She was Lord Sedgmire's daughter. She fell in love with Father, Carne of Maythorpe, in the hunting field. He carried her off and her relations cursed her. They hung out of castle windows, shaking fists, cutting her off with a shilling. Their curses doomed her. She was ill, imprisoned. Midge could never see her. Curses could be lifted by spells. Midge was always trying them, inventing her own runes and incantations.

From time to time the obligation came to her, challenging her to perform terrific devoirs. It might be to catch at a bough as the trap span under it, to lean far out from a window to touch a sprig of ivy, to climb across the central rafter in the high barn, dizzily straddling far above the stone-paved floor. But for three years now a central challenge confronted her — reserved for some crisis when all other resources failed.

She had had a dream.

In her dream she was playing with her mother's things, dressed up in a black velvet coat and a great plumed hat, parading, when suddenly terror had come upon her.

Her terrors, like her tempers, descended without warning out of calm and safety, sending her screaming, frenzied, towards the kitchen, the dining-room, wherever were lights and fires and grown-up people. But from this dream terror she had not fled. Instead, she had turned to God, kneeling down, dressed as she was in velvet and lace and feathers, beside the ottoman where the furs were kept at the foot of her mother's bed, and she had prayed while dusk fell and the room grew darker until through her latticed fingers she saw the door from her father's dressing-room open slowly, slowly, revealing — what?

She never knew. The scream with which she awoke dispelled that knowledge.

But she had been aware, ever since, with relentless certainty, that one day she would have to put herself to the test.

This was the way out. This was what They demanded. Thus alone could she serve her father, restore her mother, and bring back to Maythorpe its legendary happiness, when the silver polo cups on the sideboard winked and glittered, and men drank deep after a long day's hunting, toasting her mother the bride, the brave, the beautiful, lifting their glasses, tossing them, emptied, to splinter on the wainscot, when the lawns were clipped like velvet below the feet of sauntering silk-shod ladies, and the bedrooms were lit by firelight, and there was hot water in all the muffled cans, and scented soap upon the washstands.

Oh, Midge knew, from Cook, and Hicks and Castle, what Maythorpe Hall had been in its glory.

Trembling, her pulses thumping, her eyes brilliant with fear and resolution, she opened the wardrobe, starting at every creak of the door.

There hung the velvet jacket, its swaggering skirts spread like a highwayman's, its collar high, its cuffs and lacy jabot. She wrapped the skirt around her; she buttoned the jacket above her cotton overall; she arranged the yellowing lace, the braid, the pockets. From its tissue paper she took the immense black picture hat and set it sideways on her tumbled elf-locks. Her mouse-coloured hair hung each side of her pointed, resolute face.

She must do this thing. She must face her destiny. To this hour had pointed the nods, the nudges, the sentences broken off, the stories curtailed at her appearance. All the fragmentary enlightenment about doom and flight and darkness, her "poor," "ill-fated" or "unfortunate" mother, the Maythorpe tragedy, her father's "trouble," led to this awful, inevitable moment.

Her stumbling figure passed the wardrobe mirror. She started from her own grotesque reflection. She fell on her knees beside the ottoman, facing the dressing-room door. Her hat lurched sideways, heavy, weighted with feathers. She pressed her hands against her staring eyeballs.

"Our Father, which art in Heaven . . ."

She began slowly and firmly.

Through her fingers she watched the green unearthly twilight, the bed, the mirror. Her mounting panic urged her on, louder and louder, till at a gallop she took the "Power and the Glory, for Ever and Ever, Amen," and plunged straight into, "Please God bless Father and Mother and make Mother well and bring her back again . . ."

Her eyes were still open, yet she saw no longer anything but the slanting mirror. Her voice rang out, shrill and frantic, drowning all other noises. She was no longer conscious of what she said, "and bring her back again, for Christ's sake, for Christ's sake, for Christ's sake."

The door was opening. Like doom it swung towards her. In the mirror she saw what in her dreams she had not seen — the tall black figure, the blazing ball of a face.

"For Christ's sake! For Christ's sake! For Christ's sake!" she screamed, on her feet, beating away from her in maniacal horror her father, who stood, seeing his wife, in 1918, frenzied, in her gallant highwayman's costume, beating him off in the outburst of hysteria with which she accompanied her announcement that she was going to bear his child.

Question

Discuss the ways in which you find the opening of this novel effective in establishing setting and character.

OR

PART C — PROSE NON-FICTION

Read carefully this extract from *Mountains of the Mind* (2003) by Robert Macfarlane and then answer the question that follows it.

Mountains of the Mind

The book which undoubtedly made the deepest impression on me was Maurice Herzog's *Annapurna*, dictated by Herzog from a hospital bed in 1951. He couldn't write it himself because he had no fingers left. Herzog was the leader of a team of French mountaineers which, in the spring of 1950, travelled to the Nepal Himalaya with the aim of being the first group to summit one of the world's fourteen 8,000-metre peaks.

After an arduous month of reconnaissance, and with time running out before the arrival of the monsoon, the French team made their way into the heart of the Annapurna range, a lost world of ice and rock locked off by a ring of the highest mountains on earth. "*We were in a savage and desolate cirque of mountains never before seen by man*," wrote Herzog.

> *No animal or plant could exist here. In the pure morning light this absence of all life, this utter destitution of nature, seemed only to intensify our own strength. How could we expect anyone else to understand the peculiar exhilaration that we drew from this barrenness, when man's natural tendency is to turn towards everything in nature that is rich and generous?*

Gradually, the team moved up the mountain, establishing successively higher camps. The altitude, the extreme cold and the load-bearing began to take their toll. But as Herzog grew physically weaker, so his conviction strengthened that the summit was attainable. Eventually, on 3 June, he and a climber called Louis Lachenal left Camp V, the highest camp, in a bid for the top of Annapurna.

This final stage of the mountain involved the ascent of a long, curving ramp of ice the team had nicknamed the Sickle glacier, and then of a steep band of rock which protected the summit itself. Aside from this band, the route offered nothing serious in the way of technical obstacles and, keen to save weight, Lachenal and Herzog left their rope behind them.

The weather was immaculate when they departed Camp V, with a pristine sky. Clear skies bring the lowest temperatures, though, and the air was so cold that both men felt their feet freezing inside their boots as they climbed higher. Quite soon it became apparent that they would have to turn back or run the risk of severe frostbite. They carried on.

In his account of the climb, Herzog describes becoming progressively more detached from what was happening to him. The clarity and thinness of the air, the crystalline beauty of the mountains and the strange painlessness of frostbite conspired to send him into a state of numbed serenity, which made him insensitive to his worsening injuries:

> *There was something unusual in the way I saw Lachenal and everything around us. I smiled to myself at the paltriness of our efforts. But all sense of exertion was gone, as though there were no longer any gravity. This diaphanous landscape, this quintessence of purity — these were not the mountains I knew; they were the mountains of my dreams.*

[Turn over

Still in this trance — still immune to pain — he and Lachenal forced a way through the final rock band, and reached the summit:

> *I felt my feet freezing, but paid little attention. The highest mountain to be climbed by man lay under our feet! The names of our predecessors on these heights chased each other through my mind: Mummery, Mallory and Irvine, Bauer, Welzenbach, Tilman, Shipton. How many of them were dead — how many had found on these mountains what, to them, was the finest end of all . . . I knew the end was near, but it was the end that all mountaineers wish for — an end in keeping with their ruling passion. I was consciously grateful to the mountains for being so beautiful for me that day, and as awed by their silence as if I had been in church. I was in no pain, and had no worry.*

The pain and the worry came later. While descending the rock-band, Herzog dropped his gloves and, by the time he reached Camp IV, he was barely able to walk. Both his feet and his hands were severely frostbitten. During the desperate retreat down steep ground to Base Camp, he fell and smashed several bones in his already devastated feet. When he was forced to abseil, the ropes ripped away the flesh of his hands in thick strips.

Once the terrain became less precipitous, it was possible for Herzog to be carried, and he was portaged off the mountain first by piggy-back, then in a basket, then on a sledge and finally on a stretcher. During the retreat, his feet and hands were wrapped and bagged in plastic to save them from further harm. When they reached camp each night, Oudot, the expedition doctor, injected novocaine, spartocamphor and penicillin into Herzog's femoral and brachial arteries, pushing the long needle in through the left and right flanks of his groin, and the bends of his elbows: an experience so painful that Herzog begged for death in preference. By the time he was off the mountain, Herzog's feet had turned black and brown; by the time they reached the safety of Gorakpur, Oudot had amputated almost all of his toes and fingers.

I read *Annapurna* three times that summer. It was obvious to me that Herzog had chosen wisely in going for the top, despite the subsequent costs. For what, he and I were agreed, were toes and fingers compared to having stood on those few square yards of snow? If he had died it would still have been worth it. This was the lesson I took away from Herzog's book: that the finest end of all was to be had on a mountain-top — from death in valleys preserve me, O Lord.

***

Twelve years after I first read *Annapurna* — twelve years during which I had spent most of my holidays in the mountains — running my finger along the spines in a second-hand bookshop in Scotland, I came across another copy. That night I sat up late and read it through again, and again fell under its spell. Soon afterwards, I booked flights and a climbing partner — an Army friend of mine called Toby Till — for a week in the Alps.

We arrived in Zermatt in early June, hoping to climb the Matterhorn before the summer crowds clogged it up. But the mountain was still thickly armoured with ice: too dangerous for us to attempt. So we drove round to the next valley, where the thaw was supposed to be a little more advanced. Our plan was to camp high overnight, and then the following morning ascend a mountain called the Lagginhorn by its easy south-east ridge. At 4,010 metres, I reflected briefly, the Lagginhorn was almost exactly half the height of Annapurna.

It snowed that night, and I lay awake listening to the heavy flakes falling on to the flysheet of our tent. They clumped together to make dark continents of shadow on the fabric, until the drifts became too heavy for the slope of the tent and slid with a soft hiss down to the ground. In the small hours the snow stopped, but when we unzipped the tent door at 6 a.m. there was an ominous yellowish storm light drizzling through the clouds. We set off apprehensively towards the ridge.

Once we were on it, the ridge turned out to be harder than it looked from below. The difficulty came from the old, rotten snow which was cloaking the ridge to a depth of several feet, together with six inches of fresh fall lying on top of it, uncompacted and sticky. Rotten snow is either granular, like sugar, or forms a crunchy matrix of longer, thinner crystals which have been hollowed out and separated from one another. Either way, it is unstable.

Instead of picking our way cleanly from rock to rock, we had to clamber along the snow, never sure if there was a rock beneath each foot placement, or air. There was no path broken to guide us, either: evidently nobody had been up the ridge since the previous summer. And it was cold, too, violently cold. Where my nose ran, the liquid froze to my face in plump trails. The wind made my eyes water, and the eyelashes on my right eye froze together. I had to separate them by pulling my eyelids apart.

After two hours of work we were nearing the summit, but the angle of the ridge was becoming more severe and our progress had become even slower. I could feel the cold chilling me deep inside. My brain, too, felt slower, more slurred, as though the temperature had congealed my thought processes, turned them viscous. We could have turned back, of course. We carried on.

The final fifty feet of the mountain were very steep indeed, and deep in old, unsound snow. I stopped and assessed the situation. It looked as though the mountain could shuck all the snow off at any moment, like shrugging off a coat. Now and again little avalanches scurried past me. I heard the clatter of a rock-fall on the east face of the mountain.

I was jammed into the snow with the toes of my boots, the slope rearing up in front of my face. I tilted my head right backwards and looked up to the skyline. Clouds were hurtling over the summit, and for a moment it felt as though the mountain was toppling slowly on to me.

I turned back and called down to Toby, twenty feet below me, “Do we go on? I don’t like the look of this stuff at all. I reckon the whole lot could go at any time.”

Below Toby, the slope narrowed down to a chute which funnelled out over the precipices on the south face of the ridge. If I slipped, or the snow gave way, I’d slide past Toby, pull him off, and we’d free-fall hundreds of feet down to the glacier.

“Of course we do, Rob, of course we do,” Toby called up.

“Right.”

I had only one ice-axe with me, but the slope was severe enough to need two. Some improvisation was necessary. I transferred the axe to my left hand and made the fingers of my right hand as rigid as possible. I would try to stab them into the snow, using them as an axe-head to give myself purchase. Nervously, I started to climb.

The snow held, the ad hoc axe worked, and suddenly we were there, on a summit the size of a kitchen table, clasping the iron-piping cross which peeked out of the thick snow on the summit, terrified and elated at once. To every side of us the mountain fell away. It felt as though we were balanced on the pinnacle of the Eiffel Tower. The clouds had cleared and a glossy white light had replaced the murk of the early morning. I spotted the yellow dot of our tent thousands of feet below. Seen from this height, the glacier which we had crossed the previous day to reach the base of the ridge resolved itself into a pattern of shallow pale billows. I could see dozens of tiny meltwater lakes which had formed in the hollows between the billows, winking at me like shields in the sun. Their blueness was startling. To our west, the light of the rising sun poured down the mountain faces of the Mischabel range. The wind was fierce, drumming against the skin of my cheeks until it was numb, and pushing coldly through the gaps in my clothing.

I looked down at my hands. I had been wearing thin gloves all the way up and, from jabbing them into the ice slope, three fingertips on the right-hand glove had been ripped off. I couldn’t feel those fingers. In fact, I realised with a strange lack of alarm, I couldn’t feel the hand at all. I held it up close to my streaming eyes. The fingertips which were exposed to the freezing air had turned a waxy yellow colour and become translucent, like old cheese.

I didn't have any spare gloves. But there wasn't time to worry about it anyway, because the rotten snow which had just about tolerated our weight during the ascent would already be melting in the morning sun. We needed to get down as fast as possible.

We moved quickly and efficiently during the descent, until we reached what looked like our final obstacle. It was a snow bridge, a thin, sagging ridge of snow maybe thirty feet long suspended between two rock pinnacles — like a sheet pegged up at either end. It was far too sharp and fragile to walk along the top of, and there was no way to climb down and round it. We'd have to climb out along its side, as we had done on the way up, with even less guarantee that the whole structure wouldn't collapse and send us plummeting down to the glacier.

Toby began to kick himself a little bucket seat in the soft snow.

"I take it from your behaviour that you'd like me to go first?" I asked.

"Yes, please, that'd be grand."

I edged out along the near-vertical side of the ridge, kicking my feet into its side, the rope bowing horizontally between me and Toby. Where I kicked my feet in, the snow slid away like wet sugar, with a hiss. Here I am, I thought, standing on a more or less vertical wall of slushy snow, edging crabwise across its face, with frostnip in three fingers and only one axe. I cursed Maurice Herzog. Then I glanced down.

Between my legs I could see a whole lot of nothing. I kicked another crampon in, and a big slab of rotten snow lurched off from beneath my foot and cart-wheeled away towards the glacier, disintegrating as it went. I hung there, my arms raised above me, watching the snow tumble. A tingling began in my buttocks and then scampered to my groin and my thighs, and soon my whole midriff was encased in a humming, jostling swarm of fear. The space felt vast and malevolently active, as though it were inhaling me; pulling me off into its emptiness.

One axe only — why did I bring only one? Again, I used my right hand, the hand with the waxy fingers, to stab into the snow. The fingers didn't hurt, which helped. And so I carried on, keeping up a rhythm. Kick, kick, stab, stab, swear. Kick, kick, stab, stab, swear.

We made it, of course — I wouldn't be writing this otherwise — and as we sledged down the remaining slopes to our tent on our rucksacks, we whooped with joy and relief at having got the summit and made it back.

Sitting on a boulder outside the tent two hours later, I stared at my fingers with a fatigued disinterest. It had turned into a bright day, warm and windless, and the landscape was illuminated with the exact, egalitarian sunlight of high places. Sound carried precisely through the thin air, and I could hear the clanking and talking of climbers descending the Weissmies, half a mile or so away. My right hand didn't particularly feel like part of me. But, I was vaguely relieved to notice, only the pads of three fingers were affected, and those not to any serious depth. When I tapped them against the rock they made a hard, hollow sound, like wood knocking on metal. I got out my penknife and started to whittle at them. On the flat grey rock between my knees grew a pile of little iotas of skin. Eventually, when I had whittled down to pink skin, and my fingers had started to hurt at each scrape of the knife, I cremated the pyre of shavings in the orange flame of a lighter. They went with a crackle and the scent of charred flesh.

Question

Discuss the effectiveness of Macfarlane's description of and reflection upon the experience of climbing.

OR

PART D — DRAMA

Read carefully the extract below from Act 1 of *Buried Child* (1978) by the American playwright Sam Shepard and then answer the question that follows it.

The extract opens near the beginning of Act 1 with Dodge sitting watching TV as he hears the sound of his wife's voice coming from off stage.

Characters in this extract:

DODGE: in his seventies
HALIE: his wife, mid-sixties
TILDEN: their eldest son

Other characters mentioned in this extract:

BRADLEY: their next eldest son, an amputee
ANSEL: their youngest son, who is dead
FATHER DEWIS: a Protestant minister

Buried Child

***from* ACT 1**

HALIE'S VOICE: Dodge?

[*DODGE just stares at the TV. Long pause. He stifles two short coughs.*]

HALIE'S VOICE: Dodge! You want a pill, Dodge?

[*He doesn't answer. Takes the bottle out again and takes another long swig. Puts the bottle back, stares at TV, pulls blanket up around his neck.*]

HALIE'S VOICE: You know what it is, don't you? It's the rain! Weather. That's it. Every time. Every time you get like this, it's the rain. No sooner does the rain start then you start. [*Pause*] Dodge?

[*He makes no reply. Pulls a pack of cigarettes out from his sweater and lights one. Stares at TV. Pause.*]

HALIE'S VOICE: You should see it coming down up here. Just coming down in sheets. Blue sheets. The bridge is pretty near flooded. What's it like down there? Dodge?

[*DODGE turns his head back over his left shoulder and takes a look out through the porch. He turns back to the TV.*]

DODGE: [*to himself*] Catastrophic.

HALIE'S VOICE: What? What'd you say, Dodge?

DODGE: [*louder*] It looks like rain to me! Plain old rain!

HALIE'S VOICE: Rain? Of course it's rain! Are you having a seizure or something! Dodge? [*Pause*] I'm coming down there in about five minutes if you don't answer me!

DODGE: Don't come down.

HALIE'S VOICE: What!

DODGE: [*louder*] Don't come down!

[*He has another coughing attack. Stops.*]

HALIE'S VOICE: You should take a pill for that! I don't see why you just don't take a pill. Be done with it once and for all. Put a stop to it.

[*He takes bottle out again. Another swig. Returns bottle.*]

HALIE'S VOICE: It's not Christian, but it works. It's not necessarily Christian, that is. We don't know. There's some things the ministers can't even answer. I, personally, can't see anything wrong with it. Pain is pain. Pure and simple. Suffering is a different matter. That's entirely different. A pill seems as good an answer as any. Dodge? [*Pause*] Dodge, are you watching baseball?

DODGE: No.

HALIE'S VOICE: What?

DODGE: [*louder*] No!

HALIE'S VOICE: What're you watching? You shouldn't be watching anything that'll get you excited! No horse racing!

DODGE: They don't race on Sundays.

HALIE'S VOICE: What?

DODGE: [*louder*] They don't race on Sundays!

HALIE'S VOICE: Well they shouldn't race on Sundays.

DODGE: Well they don't!

HALIE'S VOICE: Good. I'm amazed they still have that kind of legislation. That's amazing.

DODGE: Yeah, it's amazing.

HALIE'S VOICE: What?

DODGE: [*louder*] It is amazing!

HALIE'S VOICE: It is. It truly is. I would've thought these days they'd be racing on Christmas even. A big flashing Christmas tree right down at the finish line.

DODGE: [*shakes his head*] No.

HALIE'S VOICE: They used to race on New Year's! I remember that.

DODGE: They never raced on New Year's!

HALIE'S VOICE: Sometimes they did.

DODGE: They never did!

HALIE'S VOICE: Before we were married they did!

[*DODGE waves his hand in disgust at the staircase. Leans back in sofa. Stares at TV.*]

HALIE'S VOICE: I went once. With a man.

DODGE: [*mimicking her*] Oh, a "man."

HALIE'S VOICE: What?

DODGE: Nothing!

HALIE'S VOICE: A wonderful man. A breeder.

DODGE: A what?

HALIE'S VOICE: A breeder! A horse breeder! Thoroughbreds.

DODGE: Oh, Thoroughbreds. Wonderful.

HALIE'S VOICE: That's right. He knew everything there was to know.

DODGE: I bet he taught you a thing or two huh? Gave you a good turn around the old stable!

HALIE'S VOICE: Knew everything there was to know about horses. We won bookoos[1] of money that day.

DODGE: What?

HALIE'S VOICE Money! We won every race I think.

DODGE: Bookoos?

HALIE'S VOICE: Every single race.

DODGE: Bookoos of money?

HALIE'S VOICE: It was one of those kind of days.

DODGE: New Year's!

HALIE'S VOICE: Yes! It might've been Florida. Or California! One of those two.

DODGE: Can I take my pick?

HALIE'S VOICE: It was Florida!

DODGE: Aha!

HALIE'S VOICE: Wonderful! Absolutely wonderful! The sun was just gleaming. Flamingos. Bougainvilleas. Palm trees.

DODGE: [*to himself, mimicking her*] Bougainvilleas. Palm trees.

HALIE'S VOICE: Everything was dancing with life! There were all kinds of people from everywhere. Everyone was dressed to the nines. Not like today. Not like they dress today.

DODGE: When was this anyway?

HALIE'S VOICE: This was long before I knew you.

DODGE: Must've been.

HALIE'S VOICE: Long before. I was escorted.

DODGE: To Florida?

HALIE'S VOICE: Yes. Or it might've been California. I'm not sure which.

DODGE: All that way you were escorted?

HALIE'S VOICE: Yes.

DODGE: And he never laid a finger on you I suppose? [*Long silence*] Halie?

[*No answer. Long pause*.]

HALIE'S VOICE: Are you going out today?

DODGE: [*gesturing toward rain*] In this?

HALIE'S VOICE: I'm just asking a simple question.

DODGE: I rarely go out in the bright sunshine, why would I go out in this?

HALIE'S VOICE: I'm just asking because I'm not doing any shopping today. And if you need anything you should ask Tilden.

DODGE: Tilden's not here!

[1] *bookoos*: mock French, playing on *beaucoup* (much, a great deal)

HALIE'S VOICE: He's in the kitchen.

[*DODGE looks toward stage left, then back toward TV.*]

DODGE: All right.

HALIE'S VOICE: What?

DODGE: [*louder*] All right!

HALIE'S VOICE: Don't scream. It'll only get your coughing started.

DODGE: All right.

HALIE'S VOICE: Just tell Tilden what you want and he'll get it. [*Pause*] Bradley should be over later.

DODGE: Bradley?

HALIE'S VOICE: Yes. To cut your hair.

DODGE: My hair? I don't need my hair cut!

HALIE'S VOICE: It won't hurt!

DODGE: I don't need it!

HALIE'S VOICE: It's been more than two weeks Dodge.

DODGE: I don't need it!

HALIE'S VOICE: I have to meet Father Dewis for lunch.

DODGE: You tell Bradley that if he shows up here with those clippers, I'll kill him!

HALIE'S VOICE: I won't be very late. No later than four at the very latest.

DODGE: You tell him! Last time he left me almost bald! And I wasn't even awake! I was sleeping! I woke up and he'd already left!

HALIE'S VOICE: That's not my fault!

DODGE: You put him up to it!

HALIE'S VOICE: I never did!

DODGE: You did too! You had some fancy, stupid meeting planned! Time to dress up the corpse for company! Lower the ears a little! Put up a little front! Surprised you didn't tape a pipe to my mouth while you were at it! That woulda' looked nice! Huh? A pipe? Maybe a bowler hat! Maybe a copy of The Wall Street Journal casually placed on my lap!

HALIE'S VOICE: You always imagine the worst things of people!

DODGE: That's not the worst! That's the least of the worst!

HALIE'S VOICE: I don't need to hear it! All day long I hear things like that and I don't need to hear more.

DODGE: You better tell him!

HALIE'S VOICE: You tell himself yourself! He's your own son. You should be able to talk to your own son.

DODGE: Not while I'm sleeping! He cut my hair while I was sleeping!

HALIE'S VOICE: Well he won't do it again.

DODGE: There's no guarantee.

HALIE'S VOICE: I promise he won't do it without your consent.

DODGE: [*after pause*] There's no reason for him to even come over here.

HALIE'S VOICE: He feels responsible.

DODGE: For my hair?

HALIE'S VOICE: For your appearance.

DODGE: My appearance is out of his domain! It's even out of mine! In fact, it's disappeared! I'm an invisible man!

HALIE'S VOICE: Don't be ridiculous.

DODGE: He better not try it. That's all I've got to say.

HALIE'S VOICE: Tilden will watch out for you.

DODGE: Tilden won't protect me from Bradley!

HALIE'S VOICE: Tilden's the oldest. He'll protect you.

DODGE: Tilden can't even protect himself!

HALIE'S VOICE: Not so loud! He'll hear you. He's right in the kitchen.

DODGE: [*yelling off left*] Tilden!

HALIE'S VOICE: Dodge, what are you trying to do?

DODGE: [*yelling off left*] Tilden, get in here!

HALIE'S VOICE Why do you enjoy stirring things up?

DODGE: I don't enjoy anything!

HALIE'S VOICE: That's a terrible thing to say.

DODGE: Tilden!

HALIE'S VOICE: That's the kind of statement that leads people right to the end of their rope.

DODGE: Tilden!

HALIE'S VOICE: It's no wonder people turn to Christ!

DODGE: TILDEN!!

HALIE'S VOICE: It's no wonder the messengers of God's word are shouted down in public places!

DODGE: TILDEN!!

[DODGE *goes into a violent, spasmodic coughing attack as* TILDEN *enters from stage left, his arms loaded with fresh ears of corn*. TILDEN *is* DODGE'S *oldest son, late forties*. *Something about him is profoundly burned out and displaced*. *He stops centre stage with the ears of corn in his arms and just stares at* DODGE *until he slowly finishes his coughing attack*. DODGE *looks up at him slowly. He stares at the corn*. *Long pause as they watch each other.*]

HALIE'S VOICE: Dodge, if you don't take that pill nobody's going to force you.

[*The two men ignore the voice*.]

DODGE: [*to* TILDEN] Where'd you get that?

TILDEN: Picked it.

DODGE: You picked all that?

[TILDEN *nods*.]

DODGE: You expecting company?

TILDEN: No.

DODGE: Where'd you pick it from?

TILDEN: Right out back.

DODGE: Out back where?

TILDEN: Right out in back.

DODGE: There's nothing out there!

TILDEN: There's corn.

DODGE: There hasn't been corn out there since about nineteen thirty-five! That's the last time I planted corn out there!

TILDEN: It's out there now.

DODGE: [*yelling at stairs*] Halie!

HALIE'S VOICE: Yes dear!

DODGE: Tilden's brought a whole bunch of corn in here! There's no corn out in back is there?

TILDEN: [*to himself*] There's tons of corn.

HALIE'S VOICE: Not that I know of!

DODGE: That's what I thought.

HALIE'S VOICE: Not since about nineteen thirty-five!

DODGE: [*to* TILDEN] That's right. Nineteen thirty-five.

TILDEN: It's out there now.

DODGE: You go and take that corn back to wherever you got it from!

TILDEN: [*after pause, staring at* DODGE] It's picked. I picked it all in the rain. Once it's picked you can't put it back.

DODGE: I haven't had trouble with neighbors here for fifty-seven years. I don't even know who the neighbors are! And I don't wanna know! Now go put that corn back where it came from!

[TILDEN *stares at* DODGE *then walks slowly over to him and dumps all the corn on* DODGE'S *lap and steps back.* DODGE *stares at the corn then back to* TILDEN. *Long pause*.]

DODGE: Are you having trouble here, Tilden! Are you in some kind of trouble?

TILDEN: I'm not in any trouble.

DODGE: You can tell me if you are. I'm still your father.

TILDEN: I know you're still my father.

DODGE: I know you had a little trouble back in New Mexico. That's why you came out here.

TILDEN: I never had any trouble.

DODGE: Tilden, your mother told me all about it.

TILDEN: What'd she tell you?

[TILDEN *pulls some chewing tobacco out of his jacket and bites off a plug*.]

DODGE: I don't have to repeat what she told me! She told me all about it!

TILDEN: Can I bring my chair in from the kitchen?

DODGE: What?

TILDEN: Can I bring in my chair from the kitchen?

DODGE: Sure. Bring your chair in.

[TILDEN *exits left*. DODGE *pushes all the corn off his lap onto the floor. He pulls the blanket off angrily and tosses it at one end of the sofa, pulls out the bottle and takes another swig*. TILDEN *enters again from left with a milking stool and a pail*. DODGE *hides the bottle quickly under the cushion before* TILDEN *sees it*. TILDEN *sets the stool down by the sofa, sits on it, puts the pail in front of him on the floor.* TILDEN *starts picking up the ears of corn one at a time and husking them*.]

DODGE: [*after pause*] Sure is nice-looking corn.

TILDEN: It's the best.

DODGE: Hybrid?

TILDEN: What?

DODGE: Some kinda fancy hybrid?

TILDEN: You planted it. I don't know what it is.

DODGE: [*pause*] Tilden, look, you can't stay here forever. You know that, don't you?

TILDEN: [*spits in spittoon*] I'm not.

DODGE: I know you're not. I'm not worried about that. That's not the reason I brought it up.

TILDEN: What's the reason?

DODGE: The reason is I'm wondering what you're gonna do.

TILDEN: You're not worried about me, are you?

DODGE: I'm not worried about you.

TILDEN: You weren't worried about me when I wasn't here. When I was in New Mexico.

DODGE: No, I wasn't worried about you then either.

TILDEN: You shoulda worried about me then.

DODGE: Why's that? You didn't do anything down there, did you?

TILDEN: I didn't do anything.

DODGE: Then why should I have worried about you?

TILDEN: Because I was lonely.

DODGE: Because you were lonely?

TILDEN: Yeah. I was more lonely than I've ever been before.

DODGE: Why was that?

TILDEN: [*pause*] Could I have some of that whiskey you've got?

DODGE: What whiskey? I haven't got any whiskey.

TILDEN: You've got some under the sofa.

DODGE: I haven't got anything under the sofa! Now mind your own damn business! Jesus God, you come into the house outa the middle of nowhere, haven't heard or seen you in twenty years and suddenly you're making accusations.

TILDEN: I'm not making accusations.

DODGE: You're accusing me of hoarding whiskey under the sofa!

TILDEN: I'm not accusing you.

DODGE: You just got through telling me I had whiskey under the sofa!

HALIE'S VOICE: Dodge?

DODGE: [*to* TILDEN] Now she knows about it!

TILDEN: She doesn't know about it.

HALIE'S VOICE: Dodge, are you talking to yourself down there?

DODGE: I'm talking to Tilden!

HALIE'S VOICE: Tilden's down there?

DODGE: He's right here!

HALIE'S VOICE: What?

DODGE: [*louder*] He's right here!

HALIE'S VOICE: What's he doing?

DODGE: [*to* TILDEN] Don't answer her.

TILDEN: [*to* DODGE] I'm not doing anything wrong.

DODGE: I know you're not.

HALIE'S VOICE: What's he doing down there?

DODGE: [*to* TILDEN] Don't answer.

TILDEN: I'm not.

HALIE'S VOICE: Dodge!

[*The men sit in silence*. TILDEN *keeps husking corn, spits tobacco now and then in spittoon*.]

HALIE'S VOICE: Dodge! He's not drinking anything, is he? You see to it that he doesn't drink anything! You've gotta watch out for him. It's our responsibility. He can't look after himself anymore, so we have to do it. Nobody else will do it. We can't just send him away somewhere. If we had lots of money we could send him away. But we don't. We never will. That's why we have to stay healthy. You and me. Nobody's going to look after us. Bradley can't look after us. Bradley can hardly look after himself. I was always hoping that Tilden would look out for Bradley when they got older. After Bradley lost his leg. Tilden's the oldest. I always thought he'd be the one to take responsibility. I had no idea in the world that Tilden would be so much trouble. Who would've dreamed. Tilden was an All-American, don't forget. Don't forget that. Fullback. Or quarterback. I forget which.

TILDEN: [*to himself*] Fullback. [*Still husking*]

HALIE'S VOICE: Then when Tilden turned out to be so much trouble, I put all my hopes on Ansel. Of course Ansel wasn't as handsome, but he was smart. He was the smartest probably. I think he probably was. Smarter than Bradley, that's for sure. Didn't go and chop his leg off with a chain saw. Smart enough not to go and do that. I think he was smarter than Tilden too. Especially after Tilden got in all that trouble. Doesn't take brains to go to jail. Anybody knows that. Course then when Ansel died that left us all alone. Same as being alone. No different. Same as if they'd all died. He was the smartest. He could've earned lots of money. Lots and lots of money.

[HALIE *enters slowly from the top of the staircase as she continues talking. Just her feet are seen at first as she makes her way down the stairs, a step at a time. She appears dressed completely in black, as though in mourning. She remains absorbed in what she's saying as she descends the stairs*.]

HALIE: He would've took care of us, too. He would've seen to it that we were repaid. He was like that. He was a hero. Don't forget that. A genuine hero. Brave. Strong. And very intelligent. Ansel could've been a great man. One of the greatest. I only regret that he didn't die in action. It's not fitting for a man like that to die in a motel room. A soldier. He could've won a medal. He could've been decorated for valor. I've talked to Father Dewis about putting up a plaque for Ansel. He thinks it's a good idea. He agrees. He knew Ansel when he used to play basketball. Went to every game. Ansel was his favourite player. He even recommended to the City Council that they put up a statue of Ansel. A big, tall statue with a basketball in one hand and a rifle in the other. That's how much he thinks of Ansel.

Question

Discuss in detail the dramatic techniques Shepard uses in this extract to portray the complexities of family life in the interactions between Dodge, Halie, and Tilden.

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

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