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ENGLISH A1 – STANDARD LEVEL – PAPER 1
ANGLAIS A1 – NIVEAU MOYEN – ÉPREUVE 1
INGLÉS A1 – NIVEL MEDIO – PRUEBA 1

Tuesday 1 November 2011 (morning)
Mardi 1 novembre 2011 (matin)
Martes 1 de noviembre de 2011 (mañana)

1 hour 30 minutes / 1 heure 30 minutes / 1 hora 30 minutos

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Write a commentary on one passage only. It is not compulsory for you to respond directly to the guiding questions provided. However, you may use them if you wish.

INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATS

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Rédigez un commentaire sur un seul des passages. Le commentaire ne doit pas nécessairement répondre aux questions d'orientation fournies. Vous pouvez toutefois les utiliser si vous le désirez.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ALUMNOS

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un comentario sobre un solo fragmento. No es obligatorio responder directamente a las preguntas que se ofrecen a modo de guía. Sin embargo, puede usarlas si lo desea.

Write a commentary on **one** of the following:

1.

The room was full of people, young black men and women, even a few children. As her apprehension grew into a sudden shyness, Devi reassured herself that this was just like India—the throng of voices competing with the loud, blaring music, the high-pitched voices of excited children in the background.

5 They spoke to each other, over the music, in a shorthand that fascinated Devi, but she could not bring herself to play impostor and speak like them.

The more serious conversations, carried out in little huddles in various corners of the room, were about being black in white America. Devi leaned forward to listen to an intense young woman with a spectacular head of a hundred little plaits. Her frizzy, snake-like braids were held
10 in place with blue and green beads at regular intervals.

“So this nurse—all polite and freezing cold—I had paid for the hospital room, see—said, ‘I’ll take the baby to the nursery for the night, you get some rest alone.’ She didn’t want me to be disturbed by my baby. ‘Disturbed!’ I screamed into her icy face. ‘When are you people going to learn that black love is black wealth?’”

15 Devi saw the principle of the thing, she admired this beautiful spitfire¹ who was so sure of her rights, and of the inevitable chorus of confirmation she would draw out of her audience. But Devi also found she had less and less to say, and she spent the entire evening quiet, watching. The music throbbed in her head, and she listened to snatches of conversation, words that drifted by and that she recognized, but separate, fragmented, like words in a foreign language she had
20 recently learnt, but still could not put together to make sense.

Devi sat surrounded by people, in increasing isolation, terrified of drawing attention to herself, but aching for any means to do just that.

Hours later, her eyes watering in the smoke-filled room, she remembered she had brought the host an Indian gift, a wall hanging of cotton cloth, hand-printed with vegetable dye.
25 The host held it up for them all to see, and they looked at the blue, baby-faced man on the cloth, bare-chested and crowned with a peacock feather, dancing as he played the flute. For the first time, the image struck Devi as almost grotesque: a grown man, practically naked, wearing a perpetual² baby-mask.

“That’s Krishna, the dark god who loved milk, butter and women,” said Devi.

30 “They couldn’t bear to have a black god, so they made him blue, huh?” said the intent young woman Devi had earlier admired. She smiled, but her voice was edged with contempt.

Devi laughed with the rest of them, but she knew she had brought the wrong gift. A brass goddess holding a lamp could have been used as an ethnic ashtray. Or safer still, a bottle of wine. It would have been less original, but it would not have set her apart from the others with
35 such finality.

The Thousand Faces of Night by Githa Hariharan. Copyright © 1996 by Githa Hariharan.

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¹ spitfire: quick-tempered person

² perpetual: everlasting

- How does the central character feel in this situation?
- What are some sources of tension in the passage?
- What do the brief instances of dialogue contribute to the passage?
- How does the range of imagery contribute to the atmosphere of the passage?

2.

The Express

After the first powerful, plain manifesto
The black statement of pistons¹, without more fuss
But gliding like a queen, she leaves the station.
Without bowing and with restrained unconcern
5 She passes the houses which humbly crowd outside,
The gasworks, and at last the heavy page
Of death, printed by gravestones in the cemetery.
Beyond the town, there lies the open country
Where, gathering speed, she acquires mystery,
10 The luminous self-possession of ships on ocean.
It is now she begins to sing—at first quite low
Then loud, and at last with a jazzy madness—
The song of her whistle screaming at curves,
Of deafening tunnels, brakes, innumerable bolts.
15 And always light, aerial, underneath,
Retreats the elate² metre of her wheels.
Steaming through metal landscape on her lines,
She plunges new eras of white happiness,
Where speed throws up strange shapes, broad curves
20 And parallels clean like trajectories³ from guns.
At last, further than Edinburgh or Rome,
Beyond the crest of the world, she reaches night
Where only a low stream-line brightness
Of phosphorus on the tossing hills is light.
25 Ah, like a comet through flame, she moves entranced,
Wrapt in her music no bird song, no, nor bough
Breaking with honey buds, shall ever equal.

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¹ piston: a sliding piece used in mechanisms such as steam engines

² elate: joyful

³ trajectory: the path of a moving body through space

- In what ways is the poet’s attitude to the central focus of the poem revealed?
- What effect is achieved by the use of nouns and pronouns?
- What sensory imagery is used to convey different aspects of the journey of the Express?
- How, and with what effect, do the final lines complete the way the Express is viewed?