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ENGLISH A: LITERATURE – HIGHER LEVEL – PAPER 1
ANGLAIS A : LITTÉRATURE – NIVEAU SUPÉRIEUR – ÉPREUVE 1
INGLÉS A: LITERATURA – NIVEL SUPERIOR – PRUEBA 1

Monday 5 May 2014 (morning)
Lundi 5 mai 2014 (matin)
Lunes 5 de mayo de 2014 (mañana)

2 hours / 2 heures / 2 horas

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Write a literary commentary on one passage only.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is *[20 marks]*.

INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATS

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Rédigez un commentaire littéraire sur un seul des passages.
- Le nombre maximum de points pour cette épreuve d'examen est *[20 points]*.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ALUMNOS

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un comentario literario sobre un solo pasaje.
- La puntuación máxima para esta prueba de examen es *[20 puntos]*.

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

1.

I'd long quit the idea of living away from home when, on that nineteenth birthday, my mother threw me out of the house. She closed the town tourist office that she owned and ran, came home early, and said: Mona, happy birthday, my present to you is this. Putting her hands on my shoulders, she marched me out of the front door, and stood me on the lawn.

5 I love you, she said, but you are too old to live here.
But I love it here, I said.

Her hair blew around in the air. You're lying, she said, and what's worse is that you don't even know it.

10 I wasn't sure if she was adamant or just a lot of talk until she rolled my bed into the front hallway. My father, confused, just sidled around the sloppy pillow and comforter, and for two nights, I dreamt in the space where wall nearly met wall. On the second morning, I woke, went to the bathroom, came back, and found the bed was gone again. And the front door was open. My mother stood in the doorway, her back to me, shoulders lifting and lowering from laughter at the sight of it, covers rumpled, standing in the middle of the front lawn like a cow.

15 So I'll sleep out there then, I said, heading towards it.

She caught me in her arms and held me close. I could feel the laughter, warm in her arms and her chest.

20 I went apartment hunting that Saturday. My mother was off at work, but before I left, my father called to me from the living room. He was feeling feverish, and lay on the couch, a washcloth sprawled on his forehead like the limp flag of a defeated country. Central heating, he advised. Do you need anything? I asked, but he shook his head. And Mona, he said, make sure you get a place with a toilet that flushes. I nodded. I brought him a glass of water before I left.

25 The whole idea of moving made me nervous, so I kept company with the number 19 as I walked around town by myself. 19: the third centered hexagonal number. A prime. The amount of time alive of my chin, my toes, my brain. I wandered through the tree-lined streets, to the edge of town where the gray ribbon of highway dressed the hills in the distance like a lumpy yellow gift. I did pass a few FOR RENT signs, but the apartment I finally chose was only three blocks away from my parents' house, sparkled with color, came with a toilet so powerful it could flush socks, and had an address that I liked: 9119.

30 The day I moved in, I placed my furniture pretty much where it had been at home. My bed, formerly grayish from the dimmed atmosphere of my parents' house, was already picking up its old pink tones. I hadn't seen it pink for nine years, and it looked like the color ads in newspapers that retain a steely quality of black-and-white even though they're newly splotted with reds and blues.

35 I called my mother when the phone was hooked up.
I'm here, I said. What now?

She was eating something crunchy. Decorate, she told me. Have a party.

The blank walls loomed white and empty. I ran through the rooms and said my name in each one.

40 Mona, I told the kitchen.

Mona, I whispered into the hall closet.

When it hit eleven o'clock, I put myself into the bed I'd slept in my entire life, in a room I'd never slept in, ever, and switched off the lights. The shadows made moving dark spirits on the walls, and I reached over to the potted tree my mother had given me as a housewarming present,
45 and knocked on the trunk. I knocked and knocked. I didn't knock just a few times. I knocked maybe fifty. One hundred knocks. More knocks. One hundred and fifty. More. I stopped and then something felt wrong, my stomach felt wrong, so I knocked some more.

The new place held its own around me, learning. This is me, I wanted to tell it. Hello. This is me protecting the world.

50 I knocked until midnight. I'd finish and then go back for more. This is how I imagine drugs are. You close in on the wood, pull in your breath, and you want to get it just right and your whole body is taut, breath held, tight with getting it just right and awaiting the release—ssss—which lasts about five seconds and when it's over it's not right again yet, more, you need to go back. Just one more time. Just one more time and I'll get it exactly right this time and be done for the rest of
55 my life.

Once I was all settled in, and each drawer had a purpose, and the bathroom was well-stocked with toilet paper and window cleaner, I invited my mother over for lunch.

Aimee Bender, *An Invisible Sign of My Own* (2000)

2.

Watching for Dolphins

- In the summer months on every crossing to Piraeus¹
One noticed that certain passengers soon rose
From seats in the packed saloon and with serious
Looks and no acknowledgement of a common purpose
5 Passed forward through the small door into the bows
To watch for dolphins. One saw them lose
- Every other wish. Even the lovers
Turned their desires on the sea, and a fat man
Hung with equipment to photograph the occasion
10 Stared like a saint, through sad bi-focals; others,
Hopeless themselves, looked to the children for they
Would see dolphins if anyone would. Day after day
- Or on their last opportunity all gazed
Undecided whether a flat calm were favourable
15 Or a sea the sun and the wind between them raised
To a likeness of dolphins. Were gulls a sign, that fell
Screeching from the sky or over an unremarkable place
Sat in a silent school? Every face
- After its character implored the sea.
20 All, unaccustomed, wanted epiphany,
Praying the sky would clang and the abused Aegean²
Reverberate with cymbal, gong and drum.
We could not imagine more prayer, and had they then
On the waves, on the climax of our longing come
- 25 Smiling, snub-nosed, domed like satyrs³, oh
We should have laughed and lifted the children up
Stranger to stranger, pointing how with a leap
They left their element, three or four times, centred
On grace, and heavily and warm re-entered,
30 Looping the keel. We should have felt them go

Further and further into the deep parts. But soon
We were among the great tankers, under their chains
In black water. We had not seen the dolphins
But woke, blinking. Eyes cast down
35 With no admission of disappointment the company
Dispersed and prepared to land in the city.

David Constantine, *Watching for Dolphins* (1983)

¹ Piraeus: the main port of Athens, the biggest port in Greece and one of the busiest in the Mediterranean

² Aegean: the Aegean sea lies between the coasts of Greece and Turkey. It contains over 2000 islands which were settled by the ancient Greeks.

³ Satyrs: mythical, a type of ancient Greek woodland god, with the body of a man on the legs of a goat, often associated with riotous or debauched behaviour.
