

Section A: Unseen Prose and Drama

Answer **one** question from this section.

1

Rebellion, individuality

Either (a) The following is an extract from *This is Happiness* (2019) by Niall Williams. Ganga and Doady are the grandparents of seventeen-year-old Noel. Rushe is an engineer bringing electricity to the small Irish parish of Faha.

Write a critical appreciation of the passage, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by the writer's use of form, style and language.

The debate between my grandparents as to why Ganga refused to take the electricity never happened. Doady knew her husband too well. She knew which things she could argue, and which she couldn't. She could berate him for all manner of inconsistencies: 'What kind of man puts the knives in with the forks? The spoons, I could find them anywhere!' But this was a fray without casualties. The electricity, she could tell, was not for arguing. Wives have to be wiser than their husbands. She didn't need to say anything to Ganga. She had lived with him so long she could look at his face in profile and read all that was in his head. She knew that it was not backwardness that made him reject the electricity, there were few men who would enjoy the wonders of it more. It was fear of what world they would be hurtled into the moment a switch was flicked. My grandmother understood. She understood the tightrope balance they had sustained for nearly half a century, a topsy-turvy way of living they had made up on the model of their own parents' and grandparents', which had survived the rearing of a dozen tearaway sons in four rooms in a drowned place on the far margin of the world, where belts could be tightened or loosened as needs be, and without anyone's say-so but your own. What Doady knew, without saying a word, was that, within the one-foot-after-the-other confines of that tightrope, they were free.

That she didn't bring up the question of the electricity with my grandfather was an act of love, and marriage.

'Boss at home?' was Rushe's greeting.

I put down the fiddle. Rushe had a deep-fried look, ginger and crispy. He took a planted stance in front of the low fire. He didn't take off his hat. The turf sent a few tongues of smoke towards the draught of him. There were two empty cans of peas sitting in the embers, an egg in each of them. Doady came in from the milking parlour, her hands pressing in a cloth.

'Boss around?'

'He's up the back.'

'I'll get him,' I said.

She offered the courtesies, going for the kettle.

'I won't have tea,' the last thing I heard.

I found Ganga up in the back meadow. He could be in that field, just standing and watching it, at any time, and you couldn't say exactly what he was doing, and if you asked maybe he wouldn't have been able to say, but the sight of him out there alone had a kind of sustenance in it and has remained with me as one of the certain good things in this life.

'Rushe is here,' I told him.

He smiled his round smile.

'Rushe, he wants to see you. He's in the house.'

When we came into the kitchen Rushe was still planted full-square in the same spot. Doady had had to invent a behaviour for a visitor who wouldn't take tea. It was plumping unplump cushions, including the dead one of *Old Moore's Almanac*. She needn't have bothered. Rushe was not for sitting.

45

'You decided to go against common sense,' was his opener. He pressed his tongue against the gumboil¹. For an engineer, he had exceptional narrowness of mind, or his focus was so sharp it only saw the one thing straight ahead all the time. At this moment that thing was my grandfather, who was also a gumboil.

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Ganga's expression didn't change. It was the same round, open, hopeless hopeful look that had nothing in it but kindness and wonder. 'O now!' he said and bent to scratch Joe's head.

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And the moment he said it, the way a light comes on, and shows you clearly the thing you knew was there all along, I realised he was losing his hearing.

When Rushe asked, 'Have ye considered what ye'll be missing?' and Ganga made no reply at all, I realised he had lost it. I looked to my grandmother, and knew at once that she knew, and that the deafness fell inside the pact of them, and it was all I could do not to be overwhelmed by the presence of love.

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'We have,' Doady said. 'We're not taking it.'

Rushe had something in him that needed letting off. That's what I thought later. It was not so much that he saw an opponent in my grandfather, but the pressure of rolling out the network and dealing with every kind of unforeseeable delay, doltish and contrary, human and operational, had built up a head of steam that was all but visible hissing past the hairs in his ears.

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'Ye'll be in darkness,' he said. The bad timing of the beautiful weather weakened the power of this. He resettled his stance square as a boxer. 'Ye'll be left behind. The rest of the world will move on. Not you. Your neighbours will have it. You won't. You'll be in nothing but hardship and loneliness.' He turned his look from Ganga to Doady. 'Once we leave we won't be coming back.' His eyes were grey stones, there was nothing giving in them.

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To cover for her husband's silence, with a Kerrywoman's² forthrightness, Doady said, 'We'll go our own way.'

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¹gumboil: a bump or swelling on the gums

²Kerrywoman: a woman from County Kerry, Ireland

Or (b) The following passage is an extract from the play Skin (2011) by Naveen Bahar Choudhury. Both Robby and Angie are Bangladeshi-Americans and in their early twenties. They are seated in the waiting area of a college campus health clinic. Angie is alone in a corner typing on her iPhone. Pretending to read a copy of Henry David Thoreau's Walden³, Robby gets up from his seat and sits in the empty seat next to her. item RP

Write a critical appreciation of this extract from the play, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by the writer's use of form, style and language.

ROBBY: I'm Robby.
ANGIE: Angie.
ROBBY: Angie? What kinda Bengali name is Angie? It's short for something? Anjana? Anjali?
ANGIE: I'm not Bengali.
ROBBY: Okay, what are you?
ANGIE: I'm just like ... like ... like a regular Indian.
ROBBY: Yeah, okay.
(ROBBY tries a different approach and starts to sing a cheesy Bengali love song.)
(Singing.) Chirodini! Tumi je amar, jube jube ami tomari.
Chirodini! Tumi je amar, jube jube ami tomari ...
(ANGIE, recognizing the song, cracks up.)
Yeah, dass what I thought! You got that look. That Bengali look. Like that intellectual, pretentious kinda look ... Like you read Tagore⁴ while drinking chai, and listening to sitar music or somethin'.
ANGIE: (Laughing.) Why, is that what you do? Angie is short for Gitanjali.
ROBBY: Gitanjali? You must write poetry?
ANGIE: (Defensive.) No. Well. Maybe.
ROBBY: I knew it! I feel like I know you already, like I know you my whole life. You prolly writin' a poem on your iPhone!
ANGIE: (Uncomfortable.) Whatever.
ROBBY: I like you.
ANGIE: You don't know me.
ROBBY: You are different from anybody I've ever met in my whole life!
ANGIE: Everybody is different from everyone else you've met in your whole life.
ROBBY: Not true. Some people completely indistinguishable from the next dude. No colour. No flava. They personality is like watchin' somebody drink tap water on a black-and-white television set.
(ANGIE laughs.)
You got a pretty laugh. Your laugh is like ... rose-coloured.

³ Walden: Walden is a record of Thoreau's experiment in simple living over the course of two years, in a cabin he built near Walden Pond, Massachusetts (1845-47). Walden is viewed as a philosophical treatise on labour, leisure, self-reliance, and individualism.

⁴ Tagore: Rabindranath Tagore was a renowned Bengali poet, writer, composer, philosopher, social reformer, and painter (1861-1941). He is celebrated for reshaping Bengali literature and music and for his contributions to Indian art and culture.

S
S
A

Starlie,
Cdd
dth

Realistic
Babble
game

Human
interaction &
priorities

stage direction on tone → relate
it to delivery of line

① Exposition

① ~~Exposition~~ Different

② Expressive?

③ Complex

Notif of
colour

5

10

15

20

25

30

35

juxtaposition
parallel
- is

ANGIE: (Intrigued.) So ... I don't really get you ... are you like ... a hip-hop guy? Or a guy who watches Bangla movies? Or a guy who reads Thoreau? You can't be all three. 40

ROBBY: I versatile. I got all the colours goin' on. I'm like what you see when you look through a prism.

ANGIE: I'm gonna go back to the Bubble Wrap game now.

ROBBY: Why you say you not Bengali?

ANGIE: I don't want you to think we have anything in common. 45

ROBBY: We already got somethin' in common –

ANGIE: Why is it that if one Bengali sees another Bengali somewhere in public, they *insist* on making conversation? My dad, everywhere he goes, manages to find another Bengali and then it starts: *Where are you from? Bangali nake? Ohhh, do you know Noor Bhai?* We have to add like twenty minutes to our travel time everywhere we go to account for possible Bengali sightings. Nobody else does this. Do you ever see Jewish people stopping each other on the street to ask, *Oh, you're Jewish too! Which of the twelve tribes of Israel are your ancestors from?* NO! Why can't you people just be cool? I get it. We're both Bengali. Big fucking deal. 50

(Beat.)

ROBBY: I was juss gonna say I like poetry, too, but. Whateva. (ROBBY, frustrated, gets up and moves to a different seat and opens up his book.) 55

ANGIE: I don't feel like talking. I just want to be left alone. So I don't want you to make small talk with me, and I don't want you to make me laugh, and I don't want you to be charming. 60

ROBBY: Dass gonna be really difficult. I'm not like a charm robot that you can clap on and clap off. My charm is like ... organic. It's like the wind. 65

(ANGIE starts crying.)

Oh shit. I'm sorry – I'll stop being charming – I promise – what's wrong?

ANGIE: It's bad enough that I had to have all these blood tests alone today – I just see a needle and I pass out – 70

ROBBY: I scareda needles, too! Why do they put the people waiting to see the doctor in the same room as the people waiting for results? It's like two totally different levels of anxiety. Half the people shakin' cause they scared of a needle, the other half scared they sick – 75

ANGIE: I'm not scared I'm sick. I'm scared I'm pregnant. (Beat.)

commonality vs difference

ambivalence vs frustration

→ vulnerability & connection

must discuss
ethnicity

Section B: The English Romantic Period (1785-1832)

Answer **one** question from this section, using **two** texts that you have studied.

2

- Either (a) Compare some of the ways in which **two** writers from the English Romantic period confront the unknowable.
Nature? ambition for knowledge supernatural Walton Victor Monster Everything.
- (b) With reference to the work of **two** writers from the English Romantic period, compare the ways in which they capture the optimism of their age.

Frankie - analytical
 patterns

abbaaccbdee

PBS $\begin{cases} MB \\ OITWW \end{cases}$ $\begin{cases} Victor \\ Walton \end{cases}$

In Asylark - Monster

Section C: Pre-20th Century Writing

Answer one question from this section.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *King Lear*

3

Either

(a) Assess the view that Lear redeems himself by the end of the play.

Or

(b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the dramatic presentation of justice, here and elsewhere in the play.

Handwritten notes:
~~At~~ Cordelia
 Fool (& Kent)
 — but still mad
 (my of wild flowers & death of Cordelia)

	<i>Enter Kent [disguised] and Gloucester</i>	
Gloucester	Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can. I will not be long from you.	
Kent	All the power of his wits have given way to his impatience. The gods reward your kindness.	5
	<i>Exit [Gloucester]</i>	
	<i>Enter Lear, Edgar [disguised as Poor Tom] and Fool.</i>	
Edgar	Frateretto calls me, and tells me <u>Nero</u> is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.	
Fool	Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman, or a yeoman?	
Lear	A king, a king.	10
Fool	No, he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son; for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him.	
Lear	To have a thousand with red burning spits Come hissing in upon 'em!	
Edgar	The foul fiend bites my back.	15
Fool	He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love or a whore's oath.	
Lear	It shall be done; I will arraign them straight. [to Edgar] Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer; [to the Fool] Thou sapient sir, sit here. No, you she — foxes --	20
Edgar	Look where she stands and glares! Want'st thou eyes at trial, madam?	
	Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me.	
Fool	Her boat hath a leak, And she must not speak. Why she dares not come over to thee.	25
Edgar	The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale. Hoppedance cries in Tom's belly for two white herring. Croak not, black angel, I have no food for thee.	30
Kent	How do you, sir? Stand you not so amazed. Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?	
Lear	I'll see their trial first. Bring in their evidence. [to Edgar] Thou robed man of justice, take thy place. [to the Fool] And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity, Bench by his side. [to Kent] You are o'the commission; Sit you too.	35
Edgar	Let us deal justly. Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd? Thy sheep be in the corn;	40

	And for one blast of thy minikin mouth Thy sheep shall take no harm.	
	Purr, the cat is grey.	
Lear	Arraign her first, 'tis Goneril – I here take my oath before this honourable assembly – kicked the poor King her father.	45
Fool	Come hither, mistress: is your name Goneril?	
Lear	She cannot deny it.	
Fool	Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.	
Lear	And here's another whose warped looks proclaim What store her heart is made on. Stop her there!	50
	Arms, arms, sword, fire, corruption in the place! False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?	
Edgar	Bless thy five wits.	
Kent	O pity! Sir, where is the patience now That you so oft have boasted to retain?	55
Edgar	My tears begin to take his part so much	
[aside]	They mar my counterfeiting.	
Lear	The little dogs and all, Trey, Blanch and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me.	
Edgar	Tom will throw his head at them: avaunt, you curs! Be thy mouth or black or white, Tooth that poisons if it bite; Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim, Hound or spaniel, brach or him, Or bobtail tyke or trundle-tail,	60
	Tom will make him weep and wail; For with throwing thus my head, Dogs leap the hatch and all are fled.	65
	Do, de, de, de. Cessez! Come, march to wakes and fairs and market towns. Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.	70
Lear	Then let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that make these hard hearts? [to Edgar] You, sir, I entertain you for one of my hundred; only I do not like the fashion of your garments. You will say they are Persian attire, but let them be changed.	75
Kent	Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile.	
Lear	Make no noise, make no noise, draw the curtains. So, so, so; we'll go to supper i'the morning so, so, so. [He sleeps]	
Fool	And I'll go to bed at noon.	

Act 3 Sc 6