

FLEUR ADCOCK: *Poems 1960–2000*

- 1 **Either** (a) With reference to at least **three** poems, discuss the different poetic methods and effects used by Adcock to explore human vulnerability.
- Or** (b) Paying close attention to language and tone, write a critical appreciation of the following poem, and consider how far this is characteristic of the poems in your selection.

Unexpected Visit

I have nothing to say about this garden.
I do not want to be here, I can't explain
what happened. I merely opened a usual door
and found this. The rain

has just stopped, and the gravel paths are trickling
with water. Stone lions, on each side,
gleam like wet seals, and the green birds
are stiff with dripping pride.

5

Not my kind of country. The gracious vistas,
the rose-gardens and terraces, are all wrong –
as comfortless as the weather. But here I am.
I cannot tell how long

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I have stood gazing at grass too wet to sit on,
under a sky so dull I cannot read
the sundial, staring along the curving walks
and wondering where they lead;

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not really hoping, though, to be enlightened.
It must be morning, I think, but there is no
horizon behind the trees, no sun as clock
or compass. I shall go

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and find, somewhere among the formal hedges
or hidden behind a trellis, a toolshed. There
I can sit on a box and wait. Whatever happens
may happen anywhere,

and better, perhaps, among the rakes and flowerpots
and sacks of bulbs than under this pallid sky:
having chosen nothing else, I can at least
choose to be warm and dry.

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W. H. AUDEN: *Selected Poems*

- 2 **Either** (a) With reference to at least **three** poems, explore how Auden treats the subject of death.
- Or** (b) Paying close attention to language and tone, write a critical appreciation of the following poem, and consider how far it is characteristic of the poems in your selection.

Now the leaves are falling fast,

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Travellers in their last distress.

L. P. HARTLEY: *The Go-Between*

- 3 **Either** (a) By what means and with what effects does Hartley present different kinds of betrayal in the *The Go-Between*?
- Or** (b) Discuss the effects of the writing in the following passage, considering ways it is characteristic of Hartley's methods and concerns.

I was not unduly dismayed by the heat, my dread of which was at least as much moral and hypochondriacal as physical,

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next day the thermometer did not reach
seventy-seven, and I felt calmer in my mind and much less hot.

Chapter 3

KATHERINE MANSFIELD: *Selected Stories*

- 4 **Either** (a) By what means and with what effects does Mansfield present women's experience of marriage? You should refer in detail to at least **two** stories from your selection.
- Or** (b) Discuss the effects of the writing in the following passage, considering ways it is characteristic of Mansfield's narrative methods.

Do you believe that every place has its hour of the day when it really does come alive? That's not exactly what I mean. It's more like this. There does seem to be a moment when you realize that, quite by accident, you happen to have come on to the stage at exactly the moment you were expected. Everything is arranged for you – waiting for you. Ah, master of the situation! You fill with important breath. 5
And at the same time you smile, secretly, slyly, because Life seems to be opposed to granting you these entrances, seems indeed to be engaged in snatching them from you and making them impossible, keeping you in the wings until it is too late, in fact.... Just for once you've beaten the old hag.

I enjoyed one of these moments the first time I ever came in here. That's why I keep coming back, I suppose. Revisiting the scene of my triumph, or the scene of the crime where I had the old bitch by the throat for once and did what I pleased with her. 10

Query: Why am I so bitter against Life? And why do I see her as a rag-picker on the American cinema, shuffling along wrapped in a filthy shawl with her old claws crooked over a stick? 15

Answer: The direct result of the American cinema acting upon a weak mind.

Anyhow, the 'short winter afternoon was drawing to a close', as they say, and I was drifting along, either going home or not going home, when I found myself in here, walking over to this seat in the corner. 20

I hung up my English overcoat and grey felt hat on that same peg behind me, and after I had allowed the waiter time for at least twenty photographers to snap their fill of him, I ordered a coffee.

He poured me out a glass of the familiar, purplish stuff with a green wandering light playing over it, and shuffled off, and I sat pressing my hands against the glass because it was bitterly cold outside. 25

Suddenly I realized that quite apart from myself, I was smiling. Slowly I raised my head and saw myself in the mirror opposite. Yes, there I sat, leaning on the table, smiling my deep, sly smile, the glass of coffee with its vague plume of steam before me and beside it the ring of white saucer with two pieces of sugar. 30

I opened my eyes very wide. There I had been for all eternity, as it were, and now at last I was coming to life....

It was very quiet in the café. Outside, one could just see through the dusk that it had begun to snow. One could just see the shapes of horses and carts and people, soft and white, moving through the feathery air. The waiter disappeared and reappeared with an armful of straw. He strewed it over the floor from the door to the counter and round about the stove with humble, almost adoring gestures. One would not have been surprised if the door had opened and the Virgin Mary had come in, riding upon an ass, her meek hands folded over her big belly.... 35

That's rather nice, don't you think, that bit about the Virgin? It comes from the pen so gently; it has such a 'dying fall'. I thought so at the time and decided to make a note of it. One never knows when a little tag like that may come in useful to round off a paragraph. So, taking care to move as little as possible because the 'spell' was still unbroken (you know that?), I reached over to the next table for a writing pad. 40

No paper or envelopes, of course. Only a morsel of pink blotting-paper, incredibly soft and limp and almost moist, like the tongue of a little dead kitten, which I've never felt. 45

I sat—but always underneath, in this state of expectation, rolling the little dead kitten’s tongue round my finger and rolling the soft phrase round my mind while my eyes took in the girls’ names and dirty jokes and drawings of bottles and cups that would not sit in the saucers, scattered over the writing pad. 50

They are always the same, you know. The girls always have the same names, the cups never sit in the saucers; all the hearts are stuck and tied up with ribbons.

But then, quite suddenly, at the bottom of the page, written in green ink, I fell on to that stupid, stale little phrase: *Je ne parle pas français*. 55

There! it had come—the moment—the *geste*! And although I was so ready, it caught me, it tumbled me over; I was simply overwhelmed. And the physical feeling was so curious, so particular. It was as if all of me, except my head and arms, all of me that was under the table, had simply dissolved, melted, turned into water. Just my head remained and two sticks of arms pressing on to the table. But, ah! the agony of that moment! How can I describe it? I didn’t think of anything. I didn’t even cry out to myself. Just for one moment I was not. I was Agony, Agony, Agony. 60

Je ne parle pas français

HAROLD PINTER: *The Birthday Party*

- 5 **Either** (a) 'The nightmarish qualities of *The Birthday Party* are central to its significance and dramatic effect.'

Discuss your own response to the play in the light of this comment.

- Or** (b) Discuss the effects of the language and action in the following extract, considering how Pinter shapes an audience's response to the characters, here and elsewhere in the play.

Meg: Is the sun shining? [*He crosses to the window, takes a cigarette and matches from his pyjama jacket, and lights his cigarette.*] What are you smoking?

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Tell me, Mrs Boles,
when you address yourself to me, do you ever ask yourself
who exactly you are talking to? Eh?

Act 1

ARUNDHATI ROY: *The God of Small Things*

- 6 **Either** (a) '*The God of Small Things* is a book which connects the smallest things to the very biggest.' (Arundhati Roy)

How far and in what ways does the author's comment contribute to your understanding of the novel's methods and concerns?

- Or** (b) Discuss the effects of the writing in the following passage, considering ways it is characteristic of Roy's methods and concerns.

Rahel was lying on Estha's bed. She looked thinner lying down. Younger. Smaller. Her face was turned towards the window beside the bed. Slanting rain hit the bars of the window-grill and shattered into a fine spray over her face and her smooth bare arm. Her soft, sleeveless T-shirt was a glowing yellow in the dark. The bottom half of her, in blue jeans, melted into the darkness. 5

It was a little cold. A little wet. A little quiet. The Air.

But what was there to say?

From where he sat, at the end of the bed, Estha, without turning his head, could see her. Faintly outlined. The sharp line of her jaw. Her collarbones like wings that spread from the base of her throat to the ends of her shoulders. A bird held down by skin. 10

She turned her head and looked at him. He sat very straight. Waiting for the inspection. He had finished the ironing.

She was lovely to him. Her hair. Her cheeks. Her small, clever-looking hands.

His sister. 15

A nagging sound started up in his head. The sound of passing trains. The light and shade and light and shade that falls on you if you have a window seat.

He sat even straighter. Still, he could see her. Grown into their mother's skin. The liquid glint of her eyes in the dark. Her small straight nose. Her mouth, full lipped. Something wounded-looking about it. As though it was flinching from something. As though long ago someone – a man with rings – had hit her across it. A beautiful, hurt mouth. 20

Their beautiful mother's mouth, Estha thought. Ammu's mouth.

That had kissed his hand through the barred train window. First class, on the Madras Mail to Madras. 25

'Bye, Estha. Godbless, Ammu's mouth had said. Ammu's trying-not-to-cry mouth.

The last time he had seen her.

She was standing on the platform of the Cochin Harbour Terminus, her face turned up to the train window. Her skin grey, wan, robbed of its luminous sheen by the neon station light. Daylight stopped by trains on either side. Long corks that kept the darkness bottled in. The Madras Mail. The Flying Rani. 30

Rahel held by Ammu's hand. A mosquito on a leash. A Refugee Stick Insect in Bata sandals. An Airport Fairy at a railway station. Stamping her feet on the platform, unsettling clouds of settled station-filth. Until Ammu shook her and told her to Stoppit and she Stoppited. Around them the hostling-jostling crowd. 35

Scurrying hurrying buying selling luggage trundling porter paying children shitting people spitting coming going begging bargaining reservation-checking.

Echoing stationsounds.

Hawkers selling coffee. Tea. 40

Gaunt children, blonde with malnutrition, selling smutty magazines and food they couldn't afford to eat themselves.

Melted chocolates. Cigarette sweets.

Orangedrinks.	
Lemondrinks.	45
CocaColaFantaicecreamrosemilk.	
Pink-skinned dolls. Rattles. Love-in-Tokyo.	
Hollow plastic parakeets full of sweets with heads you could unscrew.	
Yellow-rimmed red sunglasses.	
Toy watches with the time painted on them.	50
A cartful of defective toothbrushes.	
The Cochin Harbour Terminus.	

Chapter 17

WOLE SOYINKA: *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *Jero's Metamorphosis*

- 7 **Either** (a) Compare Soyinka's dramatic presentation of Amope and Rebecca.
- Or** (b) Comment in detail on the language and dramatic effects in the following extract, considering ways it is characteristic of Soyinka's dramatic methods here and elsewhere in the plays.

Jero [going progressively into a 'sermonic' chanting style.]:
 Brother Chume, you should thank the good Lord, not blame him for the situation in which you found yourself. When he, in his wisdom saw fit to place wings on my feet and make me fly upon the deserted beach away from your flaming cutlass of wrath, it was not, be assured, my life upon which he set such value. No, Brother Chume, it was yours. Yours! Consider, if you had indeed achieved your nefarious intention and martyred me upon the sands, would not your soul be damned for ever? Picture my blood sinking into the sand and mingling with the foam, your feet sinking into the gruesome mixture and growing heavy with the knowledge of eternal damnation. What man, be he so swift of foot can run unaided upon a sandy shore? Could you think to escape the hounds of God's judgement and the law? See yourself as you would be, a fugitive from man and God, a dark soul lost and howling in the knowledge of damnation. Or would you fling yourself upon the waves and seek to drown yourself? If you succeeded, you were doubly damned. If you failed and the sea rejected you, flung your tainted body back upon the shore, think what a life of rejection yours would be, unable to seek solace even in death! Did you not yourself mention the moral tale of Cain and Abel only this minute? Was Cain not damned for ever? Was he not cursed by the Almighty himself? But I knew it was not in you to perform such an evil act. It was, obviously, the work of the devil. Your mind was turned away from the light of reason and your judgement clouded for a while. Was it then wrong of me to protect you the only way I could? For three months you received tender care and treatment. Your good woman, Amope, seeing her husband in danger of losing his reason proved once again that a heart of gold beat beneath her shrewish nature. For the first time since your marriage, Brother Chume, you saw that a voice of honey may lurk beneath the sandy tongue of a termagant. She showed you the care and love which she had denied you these many years. And so at last, seeing that you had recovered your reason, the good Lord sent unto you a deliverer just as he did deliver Nebuchadnessar of old from the horror of darkness and insanity. Oh, Brother Chume, Brother Chume, great is the Lord and full of kindness. Let us kneel down and praise his name. Praise the Lord, Brother Chume, praise the Lord. Praise the Lord for the gift of reason and the gift of life. Then praise him also for your coming promotion, yes, your coming promotion for this is the glad tidings of which I am the humble bearer.

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- Chume* [*hesitant*]: Promotion?
- Jero*: Of whose glad tidings I am made humble bearer. I send *you*, Prophet Jero, said the Lord. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall inherit the kingdom. Make your peace with Brother Chume and take with you this peace-offering, the good tidings of his coming promotion. 50
- Chume*: Promotion? How can?
- Jero* [*sternly*]: Do you doubt, Brother Chume? Do you doubt my prophecy? Has your sojourn among lunatics made you forget who prophesied war and have we not lived to see it come to pass? Do you trust in me and praise the Lord or do you confess yourself a waverer at this hour of trial? 55
- Chume*: Praise the Lord.
- Jero*: In his new image, Brother, sing his praise. 60
- Chume*: Sing his praise.
- Jero*: Through blood has he purged us, as prophesied by me.
- Chume*: Sing his praise.
- Jero*: Sing his praise, hallelujah, sing his praise.
- Chume*: Hallelujah! 65
- Jero*: Out of the dark he brought you, into the light.
- Chume*: Hallelujah!
- Jero* [*going all out to truly arouse CHUME's 'rhythmic rapport'*]: Out of the dark he brought you, into the light!
- Chume*: Hallelujah! 70

Jero's Metamorphosis. Scene 2

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