

Answer Question 1 and **one** other question.

All questions carry equal marks.

In your answers you should comment closely on effects of language, style and form in the poems or passages and pay close attention to features that are characteristic of their period and context.

- 1 Write a critical comparison of the following poems, considering in detail ways in which your responses are shaped by the poets' language, style and form.

A

True ways of knowing

Not an ounce excessive, not an inch too little,
Our easy reciprocations. You let me know
The way a boat would feel, if it could feel,
The intimate support of water.

The news you bring me has been news forever, 5
So that I understand what a stone would say
If only a stone could speak. Is it sad a grassblade
Can't know how it is lovely?

Is it sad that you can't know, except by hearsay 10
(My gossiping failing words) that you are the way
A water is that can clench its palm and crumple
A boat's confiding timbers?

But that's excessive, and too little. Knowing 15
The way a circle would describe its roundness,
We touch two selves and feel, complete and gentle,
The intimate support of being.

The way that flight would feel a bird flying 20
(If it could feel) is the way a space that's in
A stone that's in a water would know itself
If it had our way of knowing.

Norman MacCaig (1910–1996)

B *Husband to Wife: Party-Going*

Turn where the stairs bend
 In this house; statued in other light,
 Allow the host to ease you from your coat.
 Stand where the stairs bend,
 A formal distance from me, then descend 5
 With delicacy conscious but not false
 And take my arm, as if I were someone else.

Tonight, in a strange room
 We will be strangers: let our eyes be blind
 To all our customary stances – 10
 Remark how well I'm groomed,
 I will explore your subtly-voiced nuances
 Where delicacy is conscious but not false,
 And take your hand, as if you were someone else.

Home forgotten, rediscover 15
 Among chirruping of voices, chink of glass,
 Those simple needs that turned us into lovers,
 How solitary was the wilderness
 Until we met, took leave of hosts and guests,
 And with delicate consciousness of what was false 20
 Walked off together, as if there were no one else.

Brian Jones (1938–2009)

- 2 Write a critical appreciation of the following extract, making clear your view of its dramatic effectiveness.

[SCENE: *As curtain rises, we see a divided stage, only the center part of which is lighted and furnished as MRS. STEVENSON's bedroom. Expensive, rather fussy furnishings. A large bed, on which MRS. STEVENSON, clad in bed-jacket, is lying. A night-table close by, with phone, lighted lamp, and pill bottles. A mantel, with clock, right. A closed door, right. A window, with curtains closed, rear. The set is lit by one lamp on night-table. Beyond this central set, the stage, on either side, is in darkness.* 5

MRS. STEVENSON *is dialling a number on phone, as curtain rises. She listens to phone, slams down receiver in irritation. As she does so, we hear sound of a train roaring by in the distance. She reaches for her pill bottle, pours herself a glass of water, shakes out pill, swallows it, then reaches for phone again, dials number nervously. SOUND: Number being dialled on phone: Busy signal.* 10

Mrs. Stevenson [a querulous, self-centered neurotic]: Oh—dear! [Slams down receiver. Dials OPERATOR]. 15

[SCENE: *A spotlight picks up out of peripheral darkness figure of 1ST OPERATOR, sitting with headphones at small table. If spotlight not available, use flashlight, clicked on by 1ST OPERATOR, illumining her face.* 20

Operator: Your call, please?
Mrs. Stevenson: Operator? I have been dialling Murray Hill 4-0098 now for the last three-quarters of an hour, and the line is always busy. But I don't see how it *could* be busy that long. Will you try it for me, please? 25

Operator: Murray Hill 4-0098? One moment, please. [SCENE: *She makes gesture of plugging in call through a switchboard.*]

Mrs. Stevenson: I don't see how it could be busy all this time. It's my husband's office. He's working late tonight, and I'm all alone here in the house. My health is very poor—and I've been feeling so nervous all day. ... 30

Operator: Ringing Murray Hill 4-0098. ... [SOUND: *Phone buzz. It rings three times. Receiver is picked up at other end.*] 35

[SCENE: *Spotlight picks up figure of a heavy-set man, seated at desk with phone on right side of dark periphery of stage. He is wearing a hat. Picks up phone, which rings three times.*]

Man: Hello.
Mrs. Stevenson: Hello ... ? [a little puzzled]. Hello. Is Mr. Stevenson there? 40

Man [into phone, as though he had not heard]: Hello. ... [Louder]. Hello.

[SCENE: *Spotlight on left now moves from OPERATOR to another man, GEORGE. A killer type, also wearing hat, but standing as in a phone booth. A three-sided screen may be used to suggest this.* 45

2nd Man [slow heavy quality, faintly foreign accent]: Hello.
1st Man: Hello. George?

- George: Yes, sir.
Mrs. Stevenson [*louder and more imperious, to phone*]: Hello. Who's this? What number am I calling, please? 50
- 1st Man: We have heard from our client. He says the coast is clear for tonight.
- George: Yes, sir.
1st Man: Where are you now? 55
George: In a phone booth.
1st Man: Okay. You know the address. At eleven o'clock the private patrolman goes around to the bar on Second Avenue for a beer. Be sure that all the lights downstairs are out. There should be only one light visible from the street. At eleven-fifteen a subway train crosses the bridge. It makes a noise in case her window is open, and she should scream. 60
- Mrs. Stevenson [*shocked*]: Oh—HELLO! What number is this, please?
George: Okay. I understand. 65
1st Man: Make it quick. As little blood as possible. Our client does not wish to make her suffer long.
- George: A knife okay, sir?
1st Man: Yes. A knife will be okay. And remember—remove the rings and bracelets, and the jewelry in the bureau drawer. Our client wishes it to look like simple robbery. 70
- George: Okay—I get—
- [SCENE: *Spotlight suddenly goes out on GEORGE.*] [SOUND: *A bland buzzing signal*]. [SCENE: *Spotlight goes off on 1ST MAN.*]
- Mrs. Stevenson [*clicking phone*]: Oh ... ! [*Bland buzzing signal continues. She hangs up*]. How awful! How unspeakably ... 75
- [SCENE: *She lies back on her pillows, overcome for a few seconds, then suddenly pulls herself together, reaches for phone*]. [SOUND: *Dialling. Phone buzz*]. [SCENE: *Spotlight goes on at 1ST OPERATOR's switchboard. 1ST and 2ND MAN exit as unobtrusively as possible, in darkness.*] 80
- Operator: Your call, please?
Mrs. Stevenson [*unnerved and breathless, into phone*]: Operator. I—I've just been cut off. 85
- Operator: I'm sorry, madam. What number were you calling?
Mrs. Stevenson: Why—it was supposed to be Murray Hill 4-0098, but it wasn't. Some wires must have crossed—I was cut into a wrong number—and—I've just heard the most dreadful thing—a—a murder—and—[*Imperiously*] Operator, you'll simply have to retrace that call at once. 90
- Operator: I beg your pardon, madam—I don't quite—
Mrs. Stevenson: Oh—I know it was a wrong number, and I had no business listening—but these two men—they were cold-blooded fiends—and they were going to murder somebody—some poor innocent woman—who was all alone—in a house near a bridge. 95

From *Sorry, Wrong Number*
by Lucille Fletcher (1912–2000)

- 3 Write a critical appreciation of the following passage, making clear ways in which your responses are shaped by the writer's language, style and form.

While we were strolling round the garden, I perceived, walking with a party of ladies at some distance, Lord Orville! I instantly retreated behind Miss Branghton, and kept out of sight till we had passed him: for I dreaded being seen by him again, in a public walk, with a party of which I was ashamed. 5

Happily I succeeded in my design, and saw no more of him; for a sudden and violent shower of rain made us all hasten out of the gardens. We ran till we came to a small green-shop,¹ where we begged shelter. Here we found ourselves in company with two footmen, whom the rain had driven into the shop. Their livery, I thought, I had before seen; and upon looking from the window, I perceived the same upon a coachman belonging to a carriage, which I immediately recollected to be Lord Orville's. 10

Fearing to be known, I whispered Miss Branghton not to speak my name. Had I considered but a moment, I should have been sensible of the inutility of such a caution, since not one of the party call me by any other appellation than that of *Cousin* or of *Miss*; but I am perpetually involved in some distress or dilemma from my own heedlessness. 15

This request excited very strongly her curiosity; and she attacked me with such eagerness and bluntness of enquiry, that I could not avoid telling her the reason of my making it, and, consequently, that I was known to Lord Orville: an acknowledgment which proved the most unfortunate in the world; for she would not rest till she had drawn from me the circumstances attending my first making the acquaintance. Then, calling to her sister, she said, "Lord, Polly, only think! Miss has danced with a Lord!" 20

"Well," cried Polly, "that's a thing I should never have thought of! And pray Miss, what did he say to you?" 30

This question was much sooner asked than answered; and they both became so very inquisitive and earnest, that they soon drew the attention of Madame Duval and the rest of the party, to whom, in a very short time, they repeated all they had gathered from me. 35

"Goodness, then," cried young Branghton, "if I was Miss, if I would not make free with his Lordship's coach to take me to town."

"Why, ay," said the father, "there would be some sense in that; that would be making some use of a Lord's acquaintance, for it would save us coach-hire." 40

"Lord, Miss," cried Polly, "I wish you would, for I should like of all things to ride in a coronet-coach."

"I promise you," said Madame Duval, "I'm glad you've thought of it, for I don't see no objection; – so let's have the coachman called." 45

"Not for the world," cried I, very much alarmed, "indeed it is utterly impossible."

"Why so?" demanded Mr. Branghton; "pray, where's the good of your knowing a Lord, if you're never the better for him?" 50

"*Ma foi*,² child," said Madame Duval, "you don't know no more of the world than if you was a baby. Pray, Sir, (to one of the

footmen), tell that coachman to draw up, for I wants to speak to him.” 55

The man stared, but did not move. “Pray, pray, Madam,” said I, “pray, Mr. Branghton, have the goodness to give up this plan; I know but very little of his Lordship, and cannot, upon any account, take so great a liberty.”

“Don’t say nothing about it,” said Madame Duval, “for I shall have it my own way: so if *you* won’t call the coachman, Sir, I’ll promise you I’ll call him myself.” 60

The footman, very impertinently, laughed and turned upon his heel. Madame Duval, extremely irritated, ran out in the rain, and beckoned the coachman, who instantly obeyed her summons. Shocked beyond all expression, I flew after her, and entreated her with the utmost earnestness, to let us return in a hackney-coach: – but, oh! – she is impenetrable to persuasion! She told the man she wanted him to carry her directly to town, and that she would answer for him to Lord Orville. The man, with a sneer, thanked her, but said he should answer for himself; and was driving off, when another footman came up to him, with information that his Lord was gone into Kensington Palace, and would not want him for an hour or two. 65

“Why then, friend,” said Mr. Branghton, (for we were followed by all the party), “where will be the great harm of your taking us to town?” 70

“Besides,” said the son, “I’ll promise you a pot of beer for my own share.”

These speeches had no other answer from the coachman than a loud laugh, which was echoed by the insolent footmen. 80

From *Evelina*
by Frances Burney (1752–1840)

¹ *green-shop*: greengrocer’s shop

² *Ma foi*: Indeed

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