



88060081

ENGLISH A1 – HIGHER LEVEL – PAPER 1
ANGLAIS A1 – NIVEAU SUPÉRIEUR – ÉPREUVE 1
INGLÉS A1 – NIVEL SUPERIOR – PRUEBA 1

Friday 10 November 2006 (afternoon)
Vendredi 10 novembre 2006 (après-midi)
Viernes 10 de noviembre de 2006 (tarde)

2 hours / 2 heures / 2 horas

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Write a commentary on one passage only.

INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATS

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Rédigez un commentaire sur un seul des passages.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ALUMNOS

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un comentario sobre un solo fragmento.

Write a commentary on *one* of the following:

1. (a)

Hippolyta was a half-American half-Italian girl who lived in Rome overlooking the Borghese gardens. She was rich, and her flat was often full of the poets, drug-addicts, and hairdressers that are symbols of the fashionable world. Hippolyta was a large girl of twenty-eight who walked with her eyes half closed and her hands pushing behind her as if she was in a gale.
5 She was separated from her husband, who was a minor Italian aristocrat and lived in the country. They had little communication with each other except on the subject of their two-year-old child, whom they used as a weapon with which to fight and keep themselves going. When talking to her husband on the telephone Hippolyta would laugh slowly until he was in a frenzy and then she would hold the receiver out for the amusement of her friends. Her husband’s voice buzzed like a
10 trapped fly. When Hippolyta herself was in a frenzy she would hit her fist against her body like a parachutist searching for a failed ripcord.

I had come to Rome to do research work for a book. Rome was a place where once cruelty had been normal; it had been necessary for grandiose society. I did not like Rome. Hippolyta’s flat was close to where Caligula had once walked and had watched men being kept alive in tiny cages.
15 I had no friends in Rome. I had been given Hippolyta’s address as someone who would put me up and feed me. I was told that she was kind to stray writers. Approaching her flat was like coming across fields towards a castle; a crenellated* building round which traffic swam in a moat. I had imagined Hippolyta as powerful and matronly: when she opened the door she was this tall thin girl with the way of pushing herself off furniture as if on a ship. She said “Hullo”; then – “Excuse me,
20 my husband is on the telephone.” She went along a passage to a kitchen where she sat on a marble-topped table beside a toaster. She did her slow laugh into the receiver; held it out to me. I heard her husband’s voice a long way off yelling as if from a satellite.

Hippolyta had been brought up in Los Angeles by an American mother and an Italian father; had been orphaned, had come to Rome as a girl. Los Angeles is a place without a centre;
25 a civilization spread out like spilt milk. Rome is the centre of law, order, religion. I forget what Hippolyta told me about her childhood; someone had been neglectful, someone weak, someone cruel. Most origins are ambivalent; can produce either a saint or a devil. Discussions about origins are boring unless concerned strictly with what is to be done: like discussions of motorists about routes.

In the kitchen Hippolyta’s child, the two-year-old, sat in a high chair while its mother and father failed to communicate. It emptied a bowl of soup on to the floor. It was one of those children that cannot be distinguished as boy or girl – a pudding-basin haircut above a face like a war-leader. Hippolyta seemed still attached to her husband by the umbilicus of the telephone; although separated, no one had cut her free. I thought – Her lifeblood will run back to
35 her destruction. The child poured more soup on to the floor and looked alertly to see what its enemies would do. Hippolyta lunged either to hit it or to love it; the child might have liked either. But Hippolyta could not get far enough because of the cord of the telephone. I took a dishcloth and wiped the floor.

Afterwards she said “You shouldn’t have done that.”
40 I rinsed the cloth and hung it on a plastic clothes line.
She said “Do you like my kid?”

I said “Yes.”

When she spoke she had her half-American half-Italian accent that was somewhere in the Atlantic on the ship on which she rolled.

45 She said “I’d be dead without that kid.”

In her drawing room were silk-covered chairs and high windows looking over the garden. It was spring and the trees were like low clouds. There were children riding on ponies. Lovers lay on the grass. I thought – Hippolyta has health, money, good looks, a child; so she wants to hurt other people and destroy herself. Rome lay beneath us with its rooftops and turrets. From its
50 fountains horses struggled as if from an earthquake.

She said “What are you doing in Rome?”

I said “Writing a book.”

She said “What on?”

I said “A biography of Nietzsche.”

55 She said “Would you like to stay here?”

I thought we would get on well. She had this bright flat, a bed, a drink, a view, a gramophone.

Nicholas Mosley, *Impossible Object* (1968)

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* crenellated: indented features of a fortress wall

1. (b)

Winter Syntax

A sentence starts out like a lone traveler
heading into a blizzard at midnight,
tilting into the wind, one arm shielding his face,
the tails of his thin coat flapping behind him.

- 5 There are easier ways of making sense,
the connoisseurship of gesture, for example.
You hold a girl's face in your hands like a vase.
You lift a gun from the glove compartment
and toss it out the window into the desert heat.
- 10 These cool moments are blazing with silence.

The full moon makes sense. When a cloud crosses it
it becomes as eloquent as a bicycle leaning
outside a drugstore or a dog who sleeps all afternoon
in a corner of the couch.

- 15 Bare branches in winter are a form of writing.
The unclothed body is autobiography.
Every lake is a vowel, every island a noun.

- 20 But the traveler persists in his misery,
struggling all night through the deepening snow,
leaving a faint alphabet of bootprints
on the white hills and the white floors of valleys,
a message for field mice and passing crows.

- 25 At dawn he will spot the vine of smoke
rising from your chimney, and when he stands
before you shivering, draped in sparkling frost,
a smile will appear in the beard of icicles,
and the man will express a complete thought.

Billy Collins, *Sailing Alone Around the Room* (2001)
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