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

Wednesday 2 May 2012 (morning)
Mercredi 2 mai 2012 (matin)
Miércoles 2 de mayo de 2012 (mañana)

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.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is *[25 marks]*.

INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATS

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Rédigez un commentaire sur un seul des passages.
- Le nombre maximum de points pour cette épreuve d'examen est *[25 points]*.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ALUMNOS

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un comentario sobre un solo fragmento.
- La puntuación máxima para esta prueba de examen es *[25 puntos]*.

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

1.

Birth of the Owl Butterflies

They hung in our kitchen for days:
a row of brown lanterns that threw no light,
merely darkened with their growing load.
Pinned to a shelf among the knick-knacks
5 and the cookery books;
ripening in the radiator's heat:
six Central American *Caligo* chrysalids,
five thousand miles from their mountain home.

My father had brought them here,
10 carefully packed in cotton wool,
to hatch, set, identify, and display:
these unpromising dingy shells plumped up
like curled leaves, on each a silver spur,
a tiny gleam or drop of dew,
15 Nature had added as a finishing touch
to perfect mimicry.

For weeks the wizened fruit had been maturing.
Now, one by one, the pods exploded,
crackling in the quiet kitchen,
20 and a furry missile emerged – quickly,
as if desperate to break free –
unhinged its awkward legs,
hauling behind it, like a frilly party dress,
the rumpled mass of its soft wings.

25 It clung unsteadily to the cloven¹ pod,
while slow wings billowed with the blood
that pumped them full.
The dark velvet began to glow
with a thousand tiny striations²,
30 and there, in each corner,
boldly ringed in black and gold,
two fierce owl-eyes widened.

Uneasy minutes, these, before *Caligo*
can flex its nine-inch wings and fly.
35 They drooped still, gathering strength,
limp flags loosely flowing.
When two butterflies hatched too close,
and clashed, each scrabbling for a footing,
one fell and its wings flopped
40 fatly on the kitchen floor.

I pictured them shattering later
on taps and cupboard corners;
but my father gauged his moment well,
allowed a first few timid forays,
45 then swooped down gentle-fingered
with his glass jar for the kill.
The monstrous wings all but filled it,
beat vigorously, fluttered, and were still.

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¹ cloven: split in two

² striations: an academic term for stripes

2.

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