



ENGLISH A1 – STANDARD LEVEL – PAPER 1
ANGLAIS A1 – NIVEAU MOYEN – ÉPREUVE 1
INGLÉS A1 – NIVEL MEDIO – PRUEBA 1

Tuesday 4 May 2010 (morning)
Mardi 4 mai 2010 (matin)
Martes 4 de mayo de 2010 (mañana)

1 hour 30 minutes / 1 heure 30 minutes / 1 hora 30 minutos

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Write a commentary on one passage only. It is not compulsory for you to respond directly to the guiding questions provided. However, you may use them if you wish.

INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATS

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Rédigez un commentaire sur un seul des passages. Le commentaire ne doit pas nécessairement répondre aux questions d'orientation fournies. Vous pouvez toutefois les utiliser si vous le désirez.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ALUMNOS

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un comentario sobre un solo fragmento. No es obligatorio responder directamente a las preguntas que se ofrecen a modo de guía. Sin embargo, puede usarlas si lo desea.

Write a commentary on **one** passage only. It is not compulsory for you to respond directly to the guiding questions provided. However, you are encouraged to use them as starting points for your commentary.

1.

IN THE MORNING the crow of the rooster intruded into my sleep, and along with it came the crooning cries from Mama: “Janna, come back. Come back to me.”

Her sobs pierced my slumber. I dreamt that a rooster had flown away with Janna, and Mama was chasing after it, calling, “Come back, come back.” When I awoke, excited for our party,
5 I was told there would be no celebration, Janna was dead. All of her blood had vanished, the leukemia had claimed her. She lay stretched out on her bed, next to the brown, rosy-cheeked doll she loved so much.

“My beautiful baby,” Mama sobbed.

I saw no beauty, only a gray version of myself.

10 I CLUNG TO Papa’s legs, moving aside for Mama’s skirts as she paced the floor in a trance. I trembled as the black of the padre’s mournful robes floated by in a swirl of smoke and funeral incense. The cloud of smoke was housed in a silver vessel, which he swung from a chain as he recited prayers that sounded more like incantations.

Janna and I had always been given matching dresses, matching shoes, and matching
15 hairstyles; would it be the same with the sickness?

“Papa, am I sick, too?” I begged to be comforted.

“Shh, *hija*, it is time to be quiet.” Papa patted my head distractedly as he swept up pieces of a broken vase he had thrown in his sorrow.

“Mama, what happened?” I tugged at her skirts, but I could have been a fly on her back.

20 The padre pulled me aside. “Your mother is grieving, child, be still.”

“But what about me?”

No one answered; I had been forgotten. I should have been put to sleep each night like a treasure, with my favorite blanket tucked in on all sides. I should have been comforted and sung to sleep. Instead, I became a ghost child myself.

25 Mama was inconsolable. Having twins had made her special. Without the set she was just a rice farmer’s wife with rotting teeth and clothes to stone clean in the river. She had nothing to separate her from the other women in our village of stilt houses along the Rio Grande.

THE EVENING BEFORE my sister’s burial, we had the “viewing” in our *salas*. It was not much of a living room, but still we called it that. Janna’s body was placed in a wooden coffin lined in
30 pink satin. Chairs and mismatched boxes had been borrowed from the neighbors and arranged as seats in neat rows in front of the body. Even now I hate the feel and look of pink satin. I cannot even have a cup of coffee in my front parlor without the taste of death surrounding me. It curdles my skin.

During the rosary, in between the beads of Hail Mary and Holy Mary, Mother of God,
35 I tried to avoid the coffin. I could see the outline of Janna’s body with her hands folded atop her blue dress. The only dress I would not have a matching set to. Looking at that coffin was to see myself lying there. It is not true what they say about the dead, that they look as though they are asleep. She looked strange, far from sleep, a wooden carving of my sister, with waxen face and bright orange lipstick striped across her lips. Her mouth was a beacon in a sea of pink satin.

40 I prayed that the lips not turn up in a smile.

In all the chaos there was no one to console me. Thankfully Ate Yu saw this and sat beside me. She was my mother’s only true friend. She lived with us, free of rent in exchange for her help around the house. She was full-blooded Chinese but had been raised in the Philippines. She spoke fluent Mandarin and Tagalog. She held in her hand a statue of Kuan Yin, the Chinese goddess of mercy, carved in white jade, and on her neck she wore a crucifix.

45

“Why do you have both?” I asked.

50

“*Ai-ya*, don’t you know me by now, little pig? I wear both to cover double the prayers for your sister’s ascent into heaven,” she explained, brushing my bangs away from my brow. Her name, *Yu*, meant “jade,” and since her statue was made of it, I thought of her as the goddess Kuan Yin herself, or Sister Jade.

“You are ready now to say good-bye to your sister?” Ate Yu asked. “It is our turn before they close the box and lock her away forever.”

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- Comment on the presentation and significance of the relationship between the twin sisters.
- Explore the different responses to Janna’s death.
- Comment on the way the character of the narrator is revealed through the language she uses.
- Comment on the author’s use of structure in this extract.

2.

The Gift

To pull the metal splinter from my palm
my father recited a story in a low voice.
I watched his lovely face and not the blade.
Before the story ended, he'd removed
5 the iron sliver I thought I'd die from.

I can't remember the tale,
but hear his voice still, a well
of dark water, a prayer.
And I recall his hands,
10 two measures of tenderness
he laid against my face,
the flames of discipline
he raised above my head.

Had you entered that afternoon
15 you would have thought you saw a man
planting something in a boy's palm,
a silver tear, a tiny flame.
Had you followed that boy
you would have arrived here,
20 where I bend over my wife's right hand.

Look how I shave her thumbnail down
so carefully she feels no pain.
Watch as I lift the splinter out.
I was seven when my father
25 took my hand like this,
and I did not hold that shard
between my fingers and think,
Metal that will bury me,
christen it Little Assassin,
30 Ore Going Deep for My Heart.
And I did not lift up my wound and cry,
Death visited here!
I did what a child does
when he's given something to keep.
35 I kissed my father.

Li-Young Lee, *The Gift* from *Rose*. Copyright c. (1986) by Li-Young Lee.
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- What does this poem say about the relationship between the past and the present?
 - Comment on the significance of the title.
 - Discuss the poet’s use of language and imagery.
 - How do form and structure support the poem’s meaning?
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