

**English A: literature – Standard level – Paper 1**  
**Anglais A : littérature – Niveau moyen – Épreuve 1**  
**Inglés A: literatura – Nivel medio – Prueba 1**

Wednesday 3 May 2017 (afternoon)  
Mercredi 3 mai 2017 (après-midi)  
Miércoles 3 de mayo de 2017 (tarde)

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 guided literary analysis on one passage only. In your answer you must address both of the guiding questions provided.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[20 marks]**.

**Instructions destinées aux candidats**

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Rédigez une analyse littéraire dirigée d'un seul des passages. Les deux questions d'orientation fournies doivent être traitées dans votre réponse.
- Le nombre maximum de points pour cette épreuve d'examen est de **[20 points]**.

**Instrucciones para los alumnos**

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un análisis literario guiado sobre un solo pasaje. Debe abordar las dos preguntas de orientación en su respuesta.
- La puntuación máxima para esta prueba de examen es **[20 puntos]**.

Write a guided literary analysis on **one** passage only. In your answer you must address both of the guiding questions provided.

1.

In retrospect, I was fortunate not to be wearing my uniform, stained with Linh's blood. I had shed it in favor of the madras shirt and chinos in my rucksack, but the General, having lost his luggage at the airport, still wore his stars on his collar. Outside our barracks and in the tent city, few knew who he was by face. What they saw was his uniform and rank, and when he said hello to the civilians and asked how they were faring, they met him with sullen silence. The slight crinkle between his eyes and his hesitant chuckling told me he was confused. My sense of unease increased with every step down the dirt lane between the tents, civilian eyes on us and the silence unbroken. We had barely walked a hundred meters into the tent city when the first assault came, a dainty slipper sailing from our flank and striking the General on his temple. He froze. I froze. An old woman's voice croaked out, Look at the hero! We swiveled to the left and saw the one thing charging us that could not be defended against, an enraged elderly citizen we could neither beat down nor back away from. Where's my husband? she screamed, barefoot, her other slipper in her hand. Why are you here when he's not? Aren't you supposed to be defending our country with your life like he is?

She smacked the General across the chin with her slipper, and from behind her, from the other side, from behind us, the women, young and old, firm and infirm, came with their shoes and slippers, their umbrellas and canes, their sun hats and conical hats. Where's my son? Where's my father? Where's my brother? The General ducked and flung his arms over his head as the furies beat him, tearing at his uniform and his flesh. I was hardly unscathed, suffering several blows from flying footwear and intercepting several strokes from canes and umbrellas. The ladies pressed around me to get at the General, who had sunk to his knees under their onslaught. They could hardly be blamed for their ill temper, since our vaunted premier had gone on the radio the day before to ask all soldiers and citizens to fight to the last man. It was pointless to point out that the premier, who was also the air marshal and who should not be confused with the president except in his venality\* and vanity, had himself left on a helicopter shortly after broadcasting his heroic message. Nor would it have helped to explain that this general was not in charge of soldiers but the secret police, which would hardly have endeared him to civilians. In any case, the ladies were not listening, preferring to scream and curse. I pushed my way through the women who had come between the General and myself, shielding him with my body and absorbing many more whacks and globs of spit until I could drag him free. Go! I shouted in his ear, propelling him in the correct direction. For the second straight day we ran for our lives, but at least the rest of the people in the tent city left us alone, touching us with nothing except contemptuous gazes and catcalls. Good for nothings! Villains! Cowards! Bastards!

While I was used to such slings and arrows, the General was not. When we finally stopped outside our barracks, the expression on his face was one of horror. He was disheveled, the stars torn from his collar, his sleeves ripped, half his buttons gone, and bleeding from scratches on his cheek and neck. I can't go in there like this, he whispered. Wait in the showers, sir, I said. I'll find you some new clothes. I requisitioned a spare shirt and pants from officers in the barracks, explaining my own bruised and tattered condition as being the result of a run-in with our ill-humored competitors in the Military Security Service. When I went to the showers, the General was standing at a sink, his face rinsed clean of everything except the shame.

45           General—  
          Shut up! The only person he was looking at was himself in the mirror. We will never  
          speak of this again.  
          And we never did.

Excerpts from THE SYMPATHIZER copyright © 2015 by Viet Thanh Nguyen. Used by permission of Grove/Atlantic, Inc. Any third party use of this material, outside of this publication, is prohibited.

---

\* venality: open to corrupt influence and bribery

- (a) What do you learn about the narrator and the General and their situation in the passage?
- (b) How do the stylistic choices guide your sympathies and create drama in the passage?

2.

**To my nine-year-old self**

You must forgive me. Don't look so surprised,  
perplexed, and eager to be gone,  
balancing on your hands or on the tightrope.  
You would rather run than walk, rather climb than run  
5 rather leap from a height than anything.

I have spoiled this body we once shared.  
Look at the scars, and watch the way I move,  
careful of a bad back or a bruised foot.  
Do you remember how, three minutes after waking  
10 we'd jump straight out of the ground floor window  
into the summer morning?

That dream we had, no doubt it's as fresh in your mind  
as the white paper to write it on.  
We made a start, but something else came up –  
15 a baby vole, or a bag of sherbet lemons<sup>1</sup> –  
and besides, that summer of ambition  
created an ice-lolly<sup>2</sup> factory, a wasp trap  
and a den by the cesspit.

I'd like to say that we could be friends  
20 but the truth is we have nothing in common  
beyond a few shared years. I won't keep you then.  
Time to pick rosehips for tuppence a pound,  
time to hide down scared lanes  
from men in cars after girl-children,

25 or to lunge out over the water  
on a rope that swings from that tree  
long buried in housing –  
but no, I shan't cloud your morning. God knows  
I have fears enough for us both –

30 I leave you in an ecstasy of concentration  
slowly peeling a ripe scab from your knee  
to taste it on your tongue.

Helen Dunmore, *Glad of These Times* (Bloodaxe Books, 2007) by permission of the publisher.  
Reproduced with permission of Bloodaxe Books. [www.bloodaxebooks.com](http://www.bloodaxebooks.com)

---

<sup>1</sup> sherbet lemons: lemon drops

<sup>2</sup> ice-lolly: popsicle

- (a) What do you discover about the different concerns and preoccupations of the adult and child in this poem?
- (b) How is imagery of childhood used to develop the mood in this poem?
-