General Certificate of Education
June 2008
Advanced Level Examination

ASSESSMENT and QUALIFICATIONS ALLIANCE

ENGLISH LITERATURE (SPECIFICATION B) LTB6/PM
Unit 6 Exploring Texts

To be issued to candidates on Wednesday 4 June 2008 for examination on Wednesday 11 June 2008 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm

Pre-Release Material

- To be given out on or after Wednesday 4 June 2008.
- On receipt of this material, you are advised to check carefully that the booklet is complete and that no pages are missing or illegible. There should be 16 pages. If you experience problems, you should consult your teacher.
- You should use the time between receiving this material and the examination to familiarise yourself with its contents.
- You are permitted to make **brief** annotations on the pre-release material. Such annotation should amount to no more than cross-references and/or the glossing of individual words or phrases. Highlighting and underlining are permitted.
- You are **not** permitted to bring any additional written material with you into the examination.
- Your teacher is **not** permitted to discuss the pre-release material with you before the examination.
- **You must bring this material with you to the examination.**

Pre-Release Material

The Dramatic Monologue

Contents

Item One

The following dramatic monologue, *Bed Among the Lentils* is by Alan Bennett and was first published in the volume *Talking Heads* in 1988. Bennett's *Talking Heads* was televised, with the focus on the head talking to the camera.

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Turn over for Item Two

Item Two

Extract A:

The following is the opening of 'The Introduction' to *Talking Heads* which appears at the beginning of the 1988 edition of the first six monologues produced for television. For copyright reasons, the whole of the first two paragraphs of this introduction have been reproduced here. In these paragraphs there are references to other monologues in the series, which you can ignore. As you read the item below, focus on aspects which can be related to your reading of *Bed Among the Lentils*.

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Extract B:

Some other views on *Talking Heads*

- Maggie Smith, who played the part of Susan in the BBC production of *Bed Among the Lentils*, said that the boundary between laughter and tears is what a lot of it is about.
- Bennett's irony unerringly reveals his protagonist's flaws, but he writes with immense sympathy for her.
- *Bed Among the Lentils* is a masterpiece of comedy.
- Loneliness is at the heart of *Bed Among the Lentils*.
- Bennett is a past master at creating an individual idiom for each of his protagonists in the monologues.

Turn over for Item Three

Item Three

Many poets also make use of the dramatic monologue. The following is an extract from a critical work by Mark Roberts on the poet Robert Browning, who wrote many poems using this form.

> A dramatic monologue is a poem which differs from other poems in that it is presented as the imagined speech of a 'character', who may be either real or invented, and not as the speech of the author himself. As a rule, the 'character' into whose mouth the dramatic monologue is put is in a situation involving tension or conflict, in which case these things are reflected in the poem.
>
> Now like most definitions this will not be much use to us until we unpack its meaning a little. And the first point to notice is that the dramatic monologue does not speak with the author's own voice: on the contrary, the poem is written by the author on behalf of the character portrayed. It is rather as if a speech of a character in a Shakespeare play, for example, were taken out of its context and separated from the play in which it belongs. But of course such a speech would not be specifically designed to tell us about the character speaking it, as the dramatic monologue is, nor would it stand on its own feet, because it would belong to a larger whole. The dramatic monologue implies its setting *within itself*: you do not—or should not—need anything else to tell you things about the situation of the character who is speaking, though the author can sometimes have a difficult job to get all the information the reader requires plausibly into the mouth of the character supposed to be speaking.
>
> The second point is that the function of the dramatic monologue is to show us the inner nature and experience of the person who is speaking, to reveal him to us as fully as possible. It is seldom, therefore, that the character represented is involved during his speech in any action (though this does just occasionally happen). Action can, of course, reveal character very effectively, but action is clearly something external to the dramatic monologue as such. The character can reveal himself very fully by his words, and he can also describe, when necessary, *past* actions in which he has been involved. But it is rather implausible if a character in a dramatic monologue breaks into his speech in order to do something, resuming his speech when the action is over.

But the dramatic monologue does not simply reveal character. What a man tells a psychiatrist does that. It reveals a character *in a situation which is dramatically presented*, presented, that is to say, as though it were going on here and now in front of your eyes. As a general rule, it is also dramatic in the sense that the character speaking is involved in conflict or stress of some kind.

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Item Three Source: From *Browning's "Men and Women", 1855 (Notes on English Literature)* by Mark Roberts, published by Blackwell, 1967.