

**CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS**  
**General Certificate of Education Advanced Level**

**LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**  
PAPER 6 20th Century Writing

**9695/6**

**OCTOBER/NOVEMBER SESSION 2002**

2 hours

Additional materials:  
Answer paper

**TIME** 2 hours

**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

Write your name, Centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on the answer paper/answer booklet.

Answer **two** questions.

Write your answers on the separate answer paper provided.

If you use more than one sheet of paper, fasten the sheets together.

**INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES**

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

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**This question paper consists of 15 printed pages and 1 blank page.**



MARGARET ATWOOD: *Cat's Eye*

- 1 **Either (a)** 'I don't want to be nine years old forever'.

Write about the depiction and importance of the experience of childhood in the novel.

- Or (b)** The following chapter ends the novel. How far, and in what ways, does it seem to you to be an effective conclusion?

## 75

I'm on the plane, flying or being flown, westward towards the watery coast, the postcard mountains. Ahead of me, out the window, the sun sinks in a murderous, vulgar, unpaintable and glorious display of red and purple and orange; behind me the ordinary night rolls forward. Down on the ground the prairies unscroll, vast and mundane and plausible as hallucinations, dusted already with snow and scrawled with sinuous rivers. 5

I have the window seat. In the two seats beside me are two old ladies, old women, each with a knitted cardigan, each with yellowy-white hair and thick-lensed glasses with a chain for around the neck, each with a desiccated mouth lipsticked bright red with bravado. They have their trays lowered and are drinking tea and playing Snap, fumbling the slippery cards, laughing like cars on gravel when they cheat or make mistakes. From time to time they get up, unbuckling themselves laboriously, and hobble to the back of the plane, to smoke cigarettes and line up for the washroom. When they return they make bathroom jokes, quips about wetting your pants and running out of toilet paper, eyeing me cunningly while they do so. I wonder how old they think they are, underneath the disguise of their bodies; or how old they think I am. Perhaps, to them, I look like their mother. 10 15

They seem to me amazingly carefree. They have saved up for this trip and they are damn well going to enjoy it, despite the arthritis of one, the swollen legs of the other. They're rambunctious, they're full of beans; they're tough as thirteen, they're innocent and dirty, they don't give a hoot. Responsibilities have fallen away from them, obligations, old hates and grievances; now for a short while they can play again like children, but this time without the pain. 20

This is what I miss, Cordelia: not something that's gone, but something that will never happen. Two old women giggling over their tea. 25

\* \* \*

Now it's full night, clear, moonless and filled with stars, which are not eternal as was once thought, which are not where we think they are. If they were sounds, they would be echoes, of something that happened millions of years ago: a word made of numbers. Echoes of light, shining out of the midst of nothing.

It's old light, and there's not much of it. But it's enough to see by. 30

SAMUEL BECKETT: *Waiting For Godot*

- 2 **Either** (a) 'Pozzo: Guess who taught me all these beautiful things. (*Pause. Pointing to Lucky*) My Lucky!'

Discuss the characterisation and importance of Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*.

- Or (b) What insight does a close examination of the following passage give into Beckett's comic methods in *Waiting for Godot*?

*Estragon:* I'm going.  
*Vladimir:* (*seeing Lucky's hat*). Well!  
*Estragon:* Farewell.  
*Vladimir:* Lucky's hat. (*He goes towards it.*) I've been here an hour and never saw it. (*Very pleased.*) Fine! 5

*Estragon:* You'll never see me again.  
*Vladimir:* I knew it was the right place. Now our troubles are over. (*He picks up the hat, contemplates it, straightens it.*) Must have been a very fine hat. (*He puts it on in place of his own which he hands to Estragon.*) Here. 10

*Estragon:* What? 10  
*Vladimir:* Hold that.  
*Estragon takes Vladimir's hat. Vladimir adjusts Lucky's hat on his head. Estragon puts on Vladimir's hat in place of his own which he hands to Vladimir. Vladimir takes Estragon's hat. Estragon adjusts Vladimir's hat on his head. Vladimir puts on Estragon's hat in place of Lucky's which he hands to Estragon. Estragon takes Lucky's hat. Vladimir adjusts Estragon's hat on his head. Estragon puts on Lucky's hat in place of Vladimir's which he hands to Vladimir. Vladimir takes his hat. Estragon adjusts Lucky's hat on his head. Vladimir puts on his hat in place of Estragon's which he hands to Estragon. Estragon takes his hat. Vladimir adjusts his hat on his head. Estragon puts on his hat in place of Lucky's which he hands to Vladimir. Vladimir takes Lucky's hat. Estragon adjusts his hat on his head. Vladimir puts on Lucky's hat in place of his own which he hands to Estragon. Estragon takes Vladimir's hat. Vladimir adjusts Lucky's hat on his head. Estragon hands Vladimir's hat back to Vladimir who takes it and hands it back to Estragon who takes it and hands it back to Vladimir who takes it and throws it down.* 15  
 How does it fit me?  
*Estragon:* How would I know?  
*Vladimir:* No, but how do I look in it? 20  
*He turns his head coquettishly to and fro, minces like a mannequin.*

*Estragon:* Hideous.  
*Vladimir:* Yes, but not more so than usual?  
*Estragon:* Neither more nor less.  
*Vladimir:* Then I can keep it. Mine irked me. (*Pause.*) How shall I say? (*Pause.*) It itched me. 25  
*He takes off Lucky's hat, peers into it, shakes it, knocks on the crown, puts it on again.*

*Estragon:* I'm going. 40  
*Silence*

*Vladimir:* Will you not play?  
*Estragon:* Play at what?  
*Vladimir:* We could play at Pozzo and Lucky.  
*Estragon:* Never heard of it.  
*Vladimir:* I'll do Lucky, you do Pozzo. (*He imitates Lucky sagging under the weight of his baggage. Estragon looks at him with stupefaction.*) Go on. 45

*Estragon:* What am I to do?  
*Vladimir:* Curse me!  
*Estragon:* (after reflection). Naughty!  
*Vladimir:* Stronger! 50  
*Estragon:* Gonococcus! Spirochaete!  
*Vladimir sways back and forth, doubled in two.*  
*Vladimir:* Tell me to think.  
*Estragon:* What?  
*Vladimir:* Say, Think, pig! 55  
*Estragon:* Think, pig!  
*Silence.*  
*Vladimir:* I can't.  
*Estragon:* That's enough of that.  
*Vladimir:* Tell me to dance. 60  
*Estragon:* I'm going.  
*Vladimir:* Dance, hog! (He writhes. Exit Estragon left, precipitately.) I can't! (He looks up, misses Estragon.) Gogo! (He moves wildly about the stage. Enter Estragon left, panting. He hastens towards Vladimir, falls into his arms.) There you are again at last! 65  
*Estragon:* I'm accursed!  
*Vladimir:* Where were you! I thought you were gone for ever.  
*Estragon:* They're coming!  
*Vladimir:* Who?  
*Estragon:* I don't know. 70  
*Vladimir:* How many?  
*Estragon:* I don't know.  
*Vladimir:* (triumphantly). It's Godot! At last! Gogo! It's Godot! We're saved! Let's go and meet him!

T. S. ELIOT: *Selected Poems*

- 3 **Either** (a) 'We think of a key, each in his prison  
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison...'

In what sense could the figures in Eliot's verse be considered prisoners?

- Or** (b) How far do you find the techniques and concerns of the following poem characteristic of Eliot's work?

*Gerontion*

*Thou hast nor youth nor age  
But as it were an after dinner sleep  
Dreaming of both.*

Here I am, an old man in a dry month,  
Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain.  
I was neither at the hot gates  
Nor fought in the warm rain  
Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass, 5  
Bitten by flies, fought.  
My house is a decayed house,  
And the Jew squats on the window sill, the owner,  
Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,  
Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London. 10  
The goat coughs at night in the field overhead;  
Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds.  
The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea,  
Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter.  
I an old man, 15  
A dull head among windy spaces.

Signs are taken for wonders. 'We would see a sign!'  
The word within a word, unable to speak a word,  
Swaddled with darkness. In the juvescence of the year  
Came Christ the tiger 20

In depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering judas,  
To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk  
Among whispers; by Mr. Silvero  
With caressing hands, at Limoges 25  
Who walked all night in the next room;  
By Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians;  
By Madame de Tornquist, in the dark room  
Shifting the candles; Fräulein von Kulp  
Who turned in the hall, one hand on the door. Vacant shuttles  
Weave the wind. I have no ghosts, 30  
An old man in a draughty house  
Under a windy knob.

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now  
 History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors  
 And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions, 35  
 Guides us by vanities. Think now  
 She gives when our attention is distracted  
 And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions  
 That the giving famishes the craving. Gives too late  
 What's not believed in, or if still believed, 40  
 In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives too soon  
 Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with  
 Till the refusal propagates a fear. Think  
 Neither fear nor courage saves us. Unnatural vices  
 Are fathered by our heroism. Virtues 45  
 Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes.  
 These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing tree.

The tiger springs in the new year. Us he devours.  
 Think at last  
 We have not reached conclusion, when I 50  
 Stiffen in a rented house. Think at last  
 I have not made this show purposelessly  
 And it is not by any concitation  
 Of the backward devils.  
 I would meet you upon this honestly. 55  
 I that was near your heart was removed therefrom  
 To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.  
 I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it  
 Since what is kept must be adulterated?  
 I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch: 60  
 How should I use them for your closer contact?

These with a thousand small deliberations  
 Protract the profit of their chilled delirium,  
 Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled,  
 With pungent sauces, multiply variety 65  
 In a wilderness of mirrors. What will the spider do,  
 Suspend its operations, will the weevil  
 Delay? De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs. Cammel, whirled  
 Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear  
 In fractured atoms. Gull against the wind, in the windy straits 70  
 Of Belle Isle, or running on the Horn.  
 White feathers in the snow, the Gulf claims,  
 And an old man driven by the Trades  
 To a sleepy corner.

Tenants of the house, 75  
 Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season.

E. M. FORSTER: *A Passage to India*

- 4 **Either** (a) Discuss the presentation and the significance of the character of Professor Godbole in your reading of *A Passage to India*.
- Or** (b) The following passage closes the book. How far and in what ways do you find it an effective conclusion to the novel?

Aziz grew more excited. He rose in his stirrups and pulled at his horse's head in the hope it would rear. Then he should feel in a battle. He cried: 'Clear out, all you Turtons and Burtons. We wanted to know you ten years back – now it's too late. If we see you and sit on your committees, it's for political reasons, don't you make any mistake.' His horse did rear. 'Clear out, clear out, I say. Why are we put to so much suffering? We used to blame you, now we blame ourselves, we grow wiser. Until England is in difficulties we keep silent, but in the next European war – aha, aha! Then is our time.' He paused, and the scenery, though it smiled, fell like a gravestone on any human hope. They cantered past a temple to Hanuman – God so loved the world that he took monkey's flesh upon him – and past a Saivite temple, which invited to lust, but under the semblance of eternity, its obscenities bearing no relation to those of our flesh and blood. They splashed through butterflies and frogs; great trees with leaves like plates rose among the brushwood. The divisions of daily life were returning, the shrine had almost shut.

'Who do you want instead of the English? The Japanese?' jeered Fielding, drawing rein. 15

'No, the Afghans. My own ancestors.'

'O, your Hindu friends will like that, won't they?'

'It will be arranged – a conference of oriental statesmen.'

'It will indeed be arranged.' 20

'Old story of "We will rob every man and rape every woman from Peshawar to Calcutta", I suppose, which you get some nobody to repeat and then quote every week in the *Pioneer* in order to frighten us into retaining you! We know!' Still he couldn't quite fit in Afghans at Mau, and, finding he was in a corner, made his horse rear again until he remembered that he had, or ought to have, a mother-land. Then he shouted: 'India shall be a nation! No foreigners of any sort! Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and all shall be one! Hurrah! Hurrah for India! Hurrah! Hurrah!' 25

India a nation! What an apotheosis! Last comer to the drab nineteenth-century sisterhood! Waddling in at this hour of the world to take her seat! She, whose only peer was the Holy Roman Empire, she shall rank with Guatemala and Belgium perhaps! Fielding mocked again. And Aziz in an awful rage danced this way and that, not knowing what to do, and cried: 'Down with the English anyhow. That's certain. Clear out, you fellows, double quick, I say. We may hate one another, but we hate you most. If I don't make you go, Ahmed will, Karim will, if it's fifty or five hundred years we shall get rid of you, yes, we shall drive every blasted Englishman into the sea, and then' – he rode against him furiously – 'and then,' he concluded, half kissing him, 'you and I shall be friends.' 30

'Why can't we be friends now?' said the other, holding him affectionately. 'It's what I want. It's what you want.' 35

But the horses didn't want it – they swerved apart; the earth didn't want it, sending up rocks through which riders must pass single-file; the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House, that came into view as they issued from the gap and saw Mau beneath: they didn't want it, they said in their hundred voices, 'No, not yet,' and the sky said, 'No, not there.' 40

KAZUO ISHIGURO: *An Artist of the Floating World*

5 **Either** (a) 'Whatever we did, we did at the time in the best of faith.'

How far does your reading of *An Artist of the Floating World* lead you to agree with Masuji Ono's judgement on himself and his colleagues?

**Or** (b) How far, and in what ways, do you find the following passage characteristic of Ishiguro's handling of dialogue and situation in the novel?

'I cannot begin to tell you, sir, what I owe to Mr Kuroda. Why, as you can see, I am now even lodging here in his apartment. I have been here for almost two weeks. I was thrown out of my previous lodgings, and Mr Kuroda came to my rescue. It is impossible to tell you, sir, all he has done for me.'

'You say you were thrown out of your lodgings?' 5

'I assure you, sir,' he said, with a small laugh, 'I paid my rent. But you see, as much as I tried, I could not avoid getting paint on the tatami, and eventually the landlord threw me out.'

We both laughed at this. Then I said:

'I'm sorry, I don't mean to be unsympathetic. It's just that I remember just such problems myself when I was starting out. But you'll soon acquire the right conditions to work if you persevere, I assure you.' 10

We both laughed again.

'You're very encouraging, sir,' the young man said, and began to pour the tea. 'I don't suppose Mr Kuroda will be long now. I beg you not to hurry away. Mr Kuroda will be most glad for the opportunity to thank you for all you have done.' 15

I looked at him in surprise. 'You think Mr Kuroda wishes to thank me?'

'Excuse me, sir, but I was assuming you are from the Cordon Society.'

'The Cordon Society? I'm sorry, what is that?'

The young man glanced towards me, some of his earlier awkwardness returning. 'I'm sorry, sir, it's my mistake. I assumed you were from the Cordon Society.' 20

'I'm afraid I'm not. I'm simply an old acquaintance of Mr Kuroda's.'

'I see. An old colleague?'

'Indeed. I suppose you could say that.' I gazed up again at the young man's painting on the wall. 'Yes, indeed,' I said. 'Very talented. Very talented indeed.' I had become aware that the young man was now looking at me carefully. Eventually, he said: 25

'I'm sorry, sir, but may I ask your name?'

'I'm sorry, you must think me most rude. My name is Ono.'

'I see.' 30

The young man rose to his feet and went over to the window. For a moment or two, I watched the steam rising from the two cups on the table.

'Will Mr Kuroda be long now?' I asked, eventually.

At first, I did not think the young man was going to reply. But then he said, without turning from the window: 'Perhaps if he has not returned soon, you should not detain yourself further from your other business.' 35

'If you don't mind, I'll wait a little longer, now that I've made the journey out here.'

'I will inform Mr Kuroda of your visit. Perhaps he will write to you.'

Out in the corridor, the children seemed to be banging their tricycle against the wall not far from us and shouting at each other. It struck me then how much like a sulking child the young man at the window looked. 40

'Forgive me for saying this, Mr Enchi,' I said. 'But you are very young. Indeed, you could only have been a boy when Mr Kuroda and I first knew each other. I would ask you not to jump to conclusions about matters of which you do not know the full details.'

'The full details?' he said, turning to me. 'Excuse me, sir, but are you yourself 45



aware of the full details? Do you know what he suffered?’

‘Most things are more complicated than they appear, Mr Enchi. Young men of your generation tend to see things far too simply. In any case, there seems little point in the two of us debating such matters at this moment. I will, if you don’t mind, wait for Mr Kuroda.’ 50

‘I would suggest, sir, you delay yourself no further from your other business. I will inform Mr Kuroda when he returns.’ Until this point, the young man had managed to maintain a polite tone in his voice, but now he seemed to lose his self-control. ‘Frankly, sir, I am amazed at your nerve. To come here as though you were simply a friendly visitor.’ 55

‘But I am a friendly visitor. And if I may say so, I think it is for Mr Kuroda to decide whether or not he wishes to receive me as such.’

‘Sir, I have come to know Mr Kuroda well, and in my judgement it is best you leave. He will not wish to see you.’ 60

ELIZABETH JENNINGS: *Selected Poems*

- 6 **Either** (a) 'We each put out an empty hand  
Longing for something to forgive'

Discuss Jennings's treatment of relations between adults and children in your selection, with close reference to at least **two** poems.

- Or** (b) Write a careful critical appreciation of the following poem, showing how far you think its methods and concerns are characteristic of Jennings's work that you have read.

*Lazarus*

It was the amazing white, it was the way he simply  
 Refused to answer our questions, it was the cold pale glance  
 Of death upon him, the smell of death that truly  
 Declared his rising to us. It was no chance  
 Happening, as a man may fill a silence 5  
 Between two heart-beats, seem to be dead and then  
 Astonish us with the closeness of his presence;  
 This man was dead, I say it again and again.  
 All of our sweating bodies moved towards him  
 And our minds moved too, hungry for finished faith. 10  
 He would not enter our world at once with words  
 That we might be tempted to twist or argue with:  
 Cold like a white root pressed in the bowels of earth  
 He looked, but also vulnerable—like birth.

WOLE SOYINKA: *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *Jero's Metamorphosis*

- 7 **Either** (a) Consider the ways in which women are represented in the two plays.
- Or** (b) Looking closely at the following passage, consider its comic effects, showing what impression of Jero is created here.

*Jero:* [going progressively into a 'sermonic' chanting style]. Brother Chume, you should thank the good Lord, not blame him for the situation in which you found yourself. When he, in his wisdom saw fit to place wings on my feet and make me fly upon the deserted beach away from your flaming cutlass of wrath, it was not, be assured, my life upon which he set such value. No, Brother Chume, it was yours. Yours! Consider, if you had indeed achieved your nefarious intention and martyred me upon the sands, would not your soul be damned for ever? Picture my blood sinking into the sand and mingling with the foam, your feet sinking into the gruesome mixture and growing heavy with the knowledge of eternal damnation. What man, be he so swift of foot can run unaided upon a sandy shore? Could you think to escape the hounds of God's judgement and the law? See yourself as you would be, a fugitive from man and God, a dark soul lost and howling in the knowledge of damnation. Or would you fling yourself upon the waves and seek to drown yourself? If you succeeded, you were doubly damned. If you failed and the sea rejected you, flung your tainted body back upon the shore, think what a life of rejection yours would be, unable to seek solace even in death! Did you not yourself mention the moral tale of Cain and Abel only this minute? Was Cain not damned for ever? Was he not cursed by the Almighty himself? But I knew it was not in you to perform such an evil act. It was, obviously, the work of the devil. Your mind was turned away from the light of reason and your judgement clouded for a while. Was it then wrong for me to protect you the only way I could? For three months you received tender care and treatment. Your good woman, Amope, seeing her husband in danger of losing his reason proved once again that a heart of gold beat beneath her shrewish nature. For the first time since your marriage, Brother Chume, you saw that a voice of honey may lurk beneath the sandy tongue of a termagant. She showed you the care and love which she had denied you these many years. And so at last, seeing that you had recovered your reason, the good Lord sent unto you a deliverer just as he did deliver Nebuchadnessar of old from the horror of darkness and insanity. Oh, Brother Chume, Brother Chume, great is the Lord and full of kindness. Let us kneel down and praise his name. Praise the Lord, Brother Chume, praise the Lord. Praise the Lord for the gift of reason and the gift of life. Then praise him also for your coming promotion, yes, your coming promotion for this is the glad tidings of which I am the humble bearer.

*Chume:* [hesitant]. Promotion?

*Jero:* Of whose glad tidings I am made humble bearer. I send you, Prophet Jero, said the Lord. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall inherit the kingdom. Make your peace with Brother Chume and take with you this peace-offering, the good tidings of his coming promotion.

*Chume:* Promotion? How can?

*Jero:* [sternly]. Do you doubt, Brother Chume? Do you doubt my prophecy? Has your sojourn among lunatics made you forget who prophesied war and have we not lived to see it come to pass? Do you trust in me and praise the Lord or do you confess yourself a waverer at this hour of trial.

*Chume:* Praise the Lord.  
*Jero:* In his new image, brother, sing his praise. 50  
*Chume:* Sing his praise.  
*Jero:* Through blood has he purged us, as prophesied by me.  
*Chume:* Sing his praise.  
*Jero:* Sing his praise, hallelujah, sing his praise.  
*Chume:* Hallelujah! 55  
*Jero:* Out of the dark he brought you, into the light.  
*Chume:* Hallelujah!  
*Jero:* [*going all out to truly arouse Chume's 'rhythmic rapport'*]. Out of the dark he brought you, into the light!  
*Chume:* Hallelujah! 60  
*Jero:* Never again to stumble, never again.  
*Chume:* Hallelujah!  
*Jero:* Sent him off howling, praise Him, fire in his tail.  
*Chume:* Hallelujah!  
*Jero:* Praise the Lord Hallelujah praise the Lord. 65  
*Chume:* Hallelujah!  
*Jero:* Praise the Lord, Brother, praise the Lord.  
*Chume:* Praise the Lord, Brother, praise the Lord.  
*Jero:* Praise the Lord, Brother, praise the Lord.  
*Chume:* Hallelujah! Hallelujah, praise the Lord, Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! 70  
Hallelujah, praise the Lord, Hallelujah! Praise the Lord...

[*With Jero clapping in rhythm and Brother Chume swaying and chanting on his knees.*]

*Jero:* [*moves aside and detachedly observes Chume in ecstasy*]. I had my doubts for a while but I should have known better. These Salvation Army 75  
brothers may be washed in the red blood of the Lord, but the black blood of the Bar Beach brotherhood proves stronger every time. [*Sudden shout, turning to Chume.*] Hallelujah, Brother, Hallelujah!

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

- 8 **Either** (a) 'MITCH [*drawing her slowly into his arms*]: You need somebody. And I need somebody, too. Could it be – you and me, Blanche?'

Consider the importance of the relationship of Blanche and Mitch to the dramatic effect of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

- Or (b) Discuss the dramatic effects of the following passage, in relation to your own view of the play's methods and concerns.

[*A Vendor comes around the corner. She is a blind Mexican Woman in a dark shawl, carrying bunches of those gaudy tin flowers that lower-class Mexicans display at funerals and other festive occasions. She is calling barely audibly. Her figure is only faintly visible outside the building.*]

5

*Mexican Woman:* Flores. Flores. Flores para los muertos. Flores. Flores.

*Blanche:* What? Oh! Somebody outside....I – lived in a house where dying old women remembered their dead men...

*Mexican Woman:* Flores. Flores. Flores para los muertos...

[*The polka tune fades in.*]

10

*Blanche* [*as if to herself*]: Crumble and fade and – regrets – recriminations... 'If you'd done this, it wouldn't've cost me that!'

*Mexican Woman:* Coronas para los muertos. Coronas...

*Blanche:* Legacies! Huh...And other things such as blood-stained pillow-slips – 'Her linen needs changing' – 'Yes, Mother. But couldn't we get a coloured girl to do it?' No, we couldn't of course. Everything gone but the –

15

*Mexican Woman:* Flores.

*Blanche:* Death – I used to sit here and she used to sit over there and death was as close as you are....We didn't dare even admit we had ever heard of it!

20

*Mexican Woman:* Flores para los muertos, flores – flores...

*Blanche:* The opposite is desire. So do you wonder? How could you possibly wonder! Not far from Belle Reve, before we had lost Belle Reve, was a camp where they trained young soldiers. On Saturday nights they would go in town to get drunk –

25

*Mexican Woman* [*softly*]: Coronas...

*Blanche:* – and on the way back they would stagger on to my lawn and call – 'Blanche! Blanche!' – The deaf old lady remaining suspected nothing. But sometimes I slipped outside to answer their calls....Later the paddy-wagon would gather them up like daisies...the long way home...

30

[*The Mexican Woman turns slowly and drifts back off with her soft mournful cries. Blanche goes to the dresser and leans forward on it. After a moment, Mitch rises and follows her purposefully. The polka music fades away. He places his hands on her waist and tries to turn her about.*]

35

*Blanche:* What do you want?

*Mitch* [*fumbling to embrace her*]: What I been missing all summer.

*Blanche:* Then marry me, Mitch! 40  
*Mitch:* I don't think I want to marry you any more.  
*Blanche:* No?  
*Mitch* [*dropping his hands from her waist*]: You're not clean enough to bring in the house with my mother.  
*Blanche:* Go away, then. [*He stares at her.*] Get out of here quick before I start screaming fire! [*Her throat is tightening with hysteria.*] Get out of here quick before I start screaming fire. 45

[*He still remains staring. She suddenly rushes to the big window with its pale blue square of the soft summer light and cries wildly.*] 50

Fire! Fire! Fire!

[*With a startled gasp, Mitch turns and goes out of the outer door, clatters awkwardly down the steps and around the corner of the building. Blanche staggers back from the window and falls to her knees. The distant piano is slow and blue.*] 55



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