

FLEUR ADCOCK: *Poems 1960–2000*

- 1 **Either** (a) With close reference to **three** poems, discuss the ways in which Adcock explores different aspects of change.
- Or** (b) Write a critical appreciation of the following poem, discussing how far it is characteristic of Adcock's poetry in this selection.

Toads

Let's be clear about this: I love toads.

So when I found our old one dying,
washed into the drain by flood-water
in the night and then – if I can bring myself
to say it – scalded by soapy lather
I myself had let out of the sink,
we suffered it through together.

5

It was the summer of my father's death.
I saw his spirit in every visiting creature,
in every small thing at risk of harm:
bird, moth, butterfly, beetle,
the black rabbit lolloping along concrete,
lost in suburbia; and our toad.

10

If we'd seen it once a year that was often,
but the honour of being chosen by it
puffed us up: a toad of our own
trusting us not to hurt it
when we had to lift it out of its den
to let the plumber get at the water-main.

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And now this desperate damage: the squat
compactness unhinged, made powerless.
Dark, straight, its legs extended,
flippers paralysed, it lay lengthwise
flabby-skinned across my palm,
cold and stiff as the Devil's penis.

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I laid it on soil; the shoulders managed
a few slow twitches, pulled it an inch forward.
But the blowflies knew: they called it dead
and stippled its back with rays of pearly stitching.
Into the leaves with it then, poor toad,
somewhere cool, where I can't watch it.

30

Perhaps it was very old? Perhaps it was ready?
Small comfort, through ten guilt-ridden days.
And then, one moist midnight, out in the country,
a little shadow shaped like a brown leaf
hopped out of greener leaves and came to me.
Twice I had to lift it from my doorway:

35

a gently throbbing handful – calm, comely,
its feet tickling my palm like soft bees.

W. H. AUDEN: *Selected Poems*

- 2 **Either** (a) With reference to **three** poems, discuss some of the ways in which Auden presents the individual in society.
- Or** (b) Write a close critical appreciation of the following poem, showing how far it is characteristic of Auden's concerns and techniques.

But I Can't

Time will say nothing but I told you so,
 Time only knows the price we have to pay;
 If I could tell you I would let you know.

If we should weep when clowns put on their show,
 If we should stumble when musicians play, 5
 Time will say nothing but I told you so.

There are no fortunes to be told, although,
 Because I love you more than I can say,
 If I could tell you I would let you know.

The winds must come from somewhere when they blow, 10
 There must be reasons why the leaves decay;
 Time will say nothing but I told you so.

Perhaps the roses really want to grow,
 The vision seriously intends to stay;
 If I could tell you I would let you know. 15

Suppose the lions all get up and go,
 And all the brooks and soldiers run away;
 Will Time say nothing but I told you so?
 If I could tell you I would let you know.

JANET FRAME: *Towards Another Summer*

- 3 **Either** (a) By what means and with what effects does Frame present Grace's relationship with Anne?
- Or** (b) Discuss the effects of the writing in the following passage, considering the ways in which it is characteristic of Frame's narrative methods.

—Do you like cheese on toast?
Whenever Anne made such an enquiry Grace replied by gurgling enthusiastically, —Oh anything, anything, I eat anything.
Now, after having answered thus at the beginning of each weekend meal Grace, trying not to be so impolite and ambiguous, said —Yes, I do like cheese on toast. 5
She wanted to say, —My brother doesn't eat egg, he's never been able to eat egg, and I never knew.
She looked at Philip, remembering that at one spare moment in the weekend when Philip had been out of the room, Anne had said, in a confiding voice, —Philip loves *Spaghetti Bolognese*; he'd be happy if I served *Spaghetti Bolognese* at every meal! 10
Now, Grace looked wonderingly at Philip, marvelling at the quality in human beings which endows a simple commonplace like or dislike with such mystery and magic. He likes *Spaghetti Bolognese*, she said to herself, treasuring her knowledge.
—I've enjoyed your cooking so much. 15
Grace felt proud to have said that. She admired Anne's conjuring ability, for although meal seemed to follow meal, and there were continual preparations, with Anne moving back and forth from sink to stove to sink to table, all was accomplished in such secrecy that if you had stopped Anne at any moment you would not have surprised her with a clod of dough in her hands or a half-peeled potato. The deliberate or unintentional way in which she concealed the preparing and cooking of the meal reminded Grace of the creation of a work of art; yet the final delivery of the food was not made in self-conscious triumph. An artist could learn from her, Grace thought. She knows how to make, to give, without the qualifying —*It's mine*. 20
So often in Grace's home the food had been prepared as a love - or peace - offering, with her mother flying to the girdle to bring forth the calming pikelets, or rushing the date scones into the oven in order that the family might enjoy a few moments of hot buttered forgetfulness; or with morning sternness, accentuating the struggle for survival after the long unconsciousness of night and sleep, their mother, ignoring their chants of 30
'Eat and grow fat,
grow fat and be laughed at!'
would thrust their breakfast before them, —No one will ever say I didn't feed my kiddies!
It seemed to Grace that when Anne, Philip, Noel, Sarah sat down to eat they 35
were not eating directly for survival, prestige, love, peace; nor were they alone; nor were they eating in their kitchen at Holly Road, Winchley. Grace had a strange feeling that their meal had been set thousands of years ago: they shared it with all sorts and conditions of people, sitting in a vast hall at a banqueting table extending to a part of the hall where darkness swirled, changing the host from a human being to an invisible presence. Grace could sense the unknown host in the room. She looked at Philip and knew, by the seriousness in his eyes, that the host was important to him; while Anne's face showed a sensuous pleasure in being alive, in sharing a meal at once with so many unknown guests and so few known, intimately loved. 40
They believe in God, Grace thought, as she observed them. Yet there were no mystical pretensions about their eating. They ate, they talked, they laughed. The children burped and were persuaded to say *Pardon*. 45

BRIAN FRIEL: *Translations*

- 4 **Either** (a) 'The play is about change and what happens to those who try to resist it.'

Discuss this statement with reference to specific episodes in the play.

- Or** (b) Discuss the following extract in detail, considering its significance to the play as a whole.

Yolland: I'm learning to speak Irish, sir.

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Hugh... in a linguistic contour which no longer matches the
landscape of ... fact. Gentlemen. (He leaves.) Act 2, Scene 1

ARUNDHATI ROY: *The God of Small Things*

5 **Either** (a) With close reference to specific episodes in the novel, discuss Roy's presentation of family relationships.

Or (b) Discuss the effects of the writing in the following passage, showing how they contribute to your understanding of the characters and the situation.

It was hot in the church, and the white edges of the arum lilies crisped and curled. A bee died in a coffin flower. Ammu's hands shook and her hymnbook with it. Her skin was cold. Estha stood close to her, barely awake, his aching eyes glittering like glass, his burning cheek against the bare skin of Ammu's trembling, hymnbook-holding arm. 5

Rahel, on the other hand, was wide awake, fiercely vigilant and brittle with exhaustion from her battle against Real Life.

She noticed that Sophie Mol was awake for her funeral. She showed Rahel Two Things.

Thing One was the newly painted high dome of the yellow church that Rahel hadn't ever looked at from the inside. It was painted blue like the sky, with drifting clouds and tiny whizzing jet planes with white trails that crisscrossed in the clouds. It's true (and must be said) that it would have been easier to notice these things lying in a coffin looking up than standing in the pews, hemmed in by sad hips and hymnbooks. 10 15

Rahel thought of the someone who had taken the trouble to go up there with cans of paint, white for the clouds, blue for the sky, silver for the jets, and brushes, and thinner. She imagined him up there, someone like Velutha, bare bodied and shining, sitting on a plank, swinging from the scaffolding in the high dome of the church, painting silver jets in a blue church sky. 20

She thought of what would happen if the rope snapped. She imagined him dropping like a dark star out of the sky that he had made. Lying broken on the hot church floor, dark blood spilling from his skull like a secret.

By then Esthappen and Rahel had learned that the world had other ways of breaking men. They were already familiar with the smell. Sicksweet. Like old roses on a breeze. 25

Thing Two that Sophie Mol showed Rahel was the bat baby.

During the funeral service, Rahel watched a small black bat climb up Baby Kochamma's expensive funeral sari with gently clinging curled claws. When it reached the place between her sari and her blouse, her roll of sadness, her bare midriff, Baby Kochamma screamed and hit the air with her hymnbook. The singing stopped for a 'Whatisit? Whathappened?' and for a furrywhirring and a sariflapping. 30

The sad priests dusted out their curly beards with goldringed fingers as though hidden spiders had spun sudden cobwebs in them.

The baby bat flew up into the sky and turned into a jet plane without a crisscrossed trail. 35

Only Rahel noticed Sophie Mol's secret cartwheel in her coffin.

The sad singing started again and they sang the same sad verse twice. And once more the yellow church swelled like a throat with voices.

When they lowered Sophie Mol's coffin into the ground in the little cemetery behind the church, Rahel knew that she still wasn't dead. She heard (on Sophie Mol's behalf), the softsounds of the red mud and the hardsounds of the orange laterite that spoiled the shining coffin polish. She heard the dullthudding through the polished coffin wood, through the satin coffin lining. The sad priests' voices muffled by mud and wood. 40 45

*We entrust into thy hands, most merciful Father,
The soul of this our child departed,
And we commit her body to the ground,
Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.*

Inside the earth Sophie Mol screamed, and shredded satin with her teeth. But you 50
can't hear screams through earth and stone.

Sophie Mol died because she couldn't breathe.

Her funeral killed her. *Dus to dus to dus to dus to dus*. On her tombstone it said
A Sunbeam Lent To Us Too Briefly.

Ammu explained later that Too Briefly meant For Too Short a While. 55

Chapter 1

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

6 **Either** (a) 'All the prophets on this beach are devils.'

Discuss the presentation and significance of the beach prophets in the plays.

Or (b) Discuss the dramatic effects of the following extract, considering the significance of this scene in the play as a whole.

Amope:

Ho! You're mad, You're mad.

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LIGHTS FADE *The Trials of Brother Jero*, Scene 4

VIRGINIA WOOLF: *To the Lighthouse*

- 7 **Either** (a) Discuss the presentation and effects of conflict in the novel.
- Or** (b) Write a critical appreciation of the following passage, considering Woolf's narrative techniques and their effects.

Thinking no harm, for the family would not come, never again, some said, and the house would be sold at Michaelmas perhaps, Mrs. McNab stooped and picked a bunch of flowers to take home with her. She laid them on the table while she dusted. She was fond of flowers. It was a pity to let them waste. Suppose the house were sold (she stood arms akimbo in front of the looking-glass) it would want seeing to – 5
it would. There it had stood all these years without a soul in it. The books and things were mouldy, for, what with the war and help being hard to get, the house had not been cleaned as she could have wished. It was beyond one person's strength to get it straight now. She was too old. Her legs pained her. All those books needed to be laid out on the grass in the sun; there was plaster fallen in the hall; the rain-pipe 10
had blocked over the study window and let the water in; the carpet was ruined quite. But people should come themselves; they should have sent somebody down to see. For there were clothes in the cupboards; they had left clothes in all the bedrooms . What was she to do with them? They had the moth in them – Mrs. Ramsay's things. Poor lady! She would never want *them* again. She was dead, they said; years ago, 15
in London. There was the old grey cloak she wore gardening. (Mrs. McNab fingered it.) She could see her, as she came up the drive with the washing, stooping over her flowers (the garden was a pitiful sight now, all run to riot, and rabbits scuttling at you out of the beds) – she could see her with one of the children by her in that grey cloak. There were boots and shoes; and a brush and comb left on the dressing-table, for 20
all the world as if she expected to come back to-morrow. (She had died very sudden at the end, they said.) And once they had been coming, but had put off coming, what with the war, and travel being so difficult these days; they had never come all these years; just sent her money; but never wrote, never came, and expected to find things as they had left them, ah dear! Why the dressing-table drawers were full 25
of things (she pulled them open), handkerchiefs, bits of ribbon. Yes, she could see Mrs. Ramsay as she came up the drive with the washing.
'Good-evening, Mrs. McNab,' she would say.
She had a pleasant way with her. The girls all liked her. But dear, many things had changed since then (she shut the drawer); many families had lost their dearest. 30
So she was dead; and Mr. Andrew killed; and Miss Prue dead too, they said, with her first baby; but every one had lost someone these years.

Chapter 8

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