



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2009

ART

Imaginative Composition and Still Life

Higher Level

100 marks are assigned to this paper, i.e. 25% of the overall marks for Art

Friday, 8th May Morning, 9.30 – 12.00

This paper should be handed to candidates on **Wednesday, 29th April**

Instructions

- You may work in colour, monochrome, mixed media, collage or any other suitable medium. However, the use of oil paints or perishable organic material is not allowed. You are not allowed to bring aids such as stencils, templates, traced images, preparatory artwork or photographic images into the examination.
- Write your Examination Number clearly in the space provided on your A2 sheet. Write the title – ‘Imaginative Composition’ or ‘Still Life’ immediately below your Examination Number.
- If you wish to work on a coloured sheet, **the superintendent must sign this sheet before the examination commences** stating that it is blank. Maximum size of sheet: A2.

Choose one of the following

- 1.** Make an **Imaginative Composition** inspired by one of the descriptive passages: A, B, C, D, E. **Your starting point and the rationale for your Imaginative Composition should be stated on the reverse side of the sheet indicating their relevance to the descriptive passage you have chosen.**
- 2.** Make a **Still Life** work based on a group of objects suggested by, or described in one of the descriptive passages: A, B, C, D, E. You are required to bring relevant objects to the examination centre for the purpose of setting up **your own individual** still life composition. **This must be done in time for the commencement of the examination.** **Your starting point and the rationale for your Still Life should be stated on the reverse side of the sheet indicating their relevance to the descriptive passage you have chosen.**
- 3.** Make an **Abstract Composition** inspired by and developed from one of the descriptive passages: A, B, C, D, E. **Your starting point and the rationale for your abstract composition should be stated on the reverse side of the sheet indicating their relevance to the descriptive passage you have chosen.** State clearly whether your Abstract Composition is following 1 above – Imaginative Composition, or 2 above – Still Life.

Descriptive Passages

Passage A

The barbecue is the summer symbol of hope. It is representative of Irish optimism that we buy extensive and expensive barbecue paraphernalia, despite the scarcity of opportunities to have barbecues. In this country most barbecues end in a scurry indoors...

As the decking becomes more extensive, the furniture more comfortable, the parasols sturdier, the heaters more numerous, the lighting more subtle and the pergolas and shelters more variable, one could be forgiven for wondering if it might not be easier to eat inside.

Of course the barbecue is not just eating al fresco. The food is different. It involves exotic marinades and delicate skewering. It requires things like teriyaki steak and spicy shrimps and salmon, and alternating red, yellow and green peppers brightening diced meat. It is the smell of smouldering chicken. It is soy sauces and sugar preserves. The barbecue is about big baked potatoes burned to perfection. It is corn in tinfoil oozing butter. It is prawns sizzling on skewers. It is our seasoning and spices, colour, taste and texture and the slow burn of charcoal and wood pellets that flavour food in a unique way.

The barbecue is primarily male territory. It is visceral. It is cooking outside the cave. It is community. It is sharing with the clan. The hunters have returned. They have been successful, the fire has been lit, the spoils prepared and shared. The food is also basic: big steaks and chicken wings and rough vegetables tossed above the flame. It is watching food cook, waiting, salivating, choosing, combining flavours, mixing textures, savouring the pure taste of simple food cooked simply.

The barbecue is the comforting sight of red smouldering coals when the meal is done and darkness descends. It is the hiss of meat remnants spitting on the grill and the intimacy of being within the ring of light when outside the circle the pitch-black of night closes in. Barbecuing replicates how we have eaten together since time began...

That is why we persist in this country with barbecues, regardless of the weather and in spite of the rain. That is why we organise barbecues despite the risk of gales and gusts that topple parasols, fling chairs, lift table cloths, scoot glasses onto decking and send napkins careering away.

We persist in the same way that we wear summer clothes in freezing temperatures, brave cold seas for swims and huddle behind wind breakers on windswept beaches. We persist because we in the northern hemisphere need to believe that we have a season called summer. If we cannot have the weather we would like to have, we can at least pretend that we have the season of summer by doing the kind of summer things that we do. If summer will not entertain us we will feign summer and the barbecue is one of the best ways to do it.

The modern barbecue is, therefore, about optimism. That is why it survives. It is about strategy: finding ways to defeat the Irish weather and claim the right to eat outside in summertime. It is about lifestyle, casual clothes, conviviality and inviting friends to share a meal.

For some it is the joy of accoutrements, the extra-long utensils, the rotisseries, the grilling baskets, meat thermometers and the charcoal chimney starters. It is big aprons, silly slogans and elbow length "welders" gloves. It is about assuming a role, acting as a chef and providing nurturance for the group.

Barbecues today may need high-powered, turbo gas cookers with grills, smokers and variable settings. They may need patio heaters and awnings and a dozen ways to avoid the cold and the rain.

The barbecues of today may be a long way from our ancestors cooking their food in pits of burning wood, but they replicate emotionally all that early ritual entailed and at the same time they are our visible challenge to soggy summers and overcast days.

By Marie Murray from The Irish Times

Passage B

The asteroid hit four days early.

We did not track it because we did not expect it. Down at the lake where we were fishing, we felt the ground shaking.

'It's a stampede,' said Spike. 'I am picking up mass movement of very large mammals.'

And not only mammals: above us, birds the size of light aircraft darkened the sky; in places there was no sky, only wingspan.

On the ground, the heavy-legged huge reptilian creatures, on two legs or four, came crashing along the lakeshore, not even pausing to eat us. We sheltered underneath our vehicle, lying flat, terrified, expecting to be skittled sideways and crushed.

When I dared to raise my head from the warm mud, I saw feet, hoofs, claws, paws, cartoon-size, city-size, thudding and lifting, pushing and raising, running and pausing, and only inches away from where we lay, under what must have seemed like a white boulder to them, and easier to jump or sprint or avoid in the search for safety that had nothing to do with size.

Above us, the caws and calls of the low-flying birds came closer, talons scraping our roof, wing-beat so strong it rocked the vehicle.

This was raw energy and we had released it.

When we could, we ran back towards the Ship, puny and foolish, the smallest stupidest things on the planet. Humans hadn't been expected for millions of years. Twenty of us looked set to destroy the place before it had even begun.

What we saw at the Ship was a dismal sight: the stampede had crashed down the trees, made vulnerable by the sudden space of our opening. The Ship was underneath palms the size of office blocks.

'Get inside,' said Handsome, and he was right: there was nothing else to do.

As we filled in through the emergency doors, the asteroid hit.

The ship went dark.

'There's been a mistake,' said Handsome...

Outside the Ship, the noises grew more desperate and more terrified. In the darkening filthy air, the creatures whose world we had interrupted sought the sun, rearing their heads towards the sky, bellowing and crying though this fading light.

It was getting colder and darker every day.

Creatures thrashed against the Ship, battering it with swinging necks and iron jaws, using it as a landing-place. Only the ground lights kept them away, but the ground lights used power which we had to conserve.

One night, I think it was night, though we had assassinated any difference between day and night, I heard scratching in the hold.

I thought something might be making its way into the damaged hull, so I took a weapon and a glare-torch, and went down there to our abandoned gear and supplies.

Yes, there was something. Something had punctured the already damaged hull-side. I could hear a chewing noise. Whatever I was going to find, I wouldn't recognize it, and it might be very big.

Forcing myself, I turned the glare-torch to the area where the noise was coming from. The chewing stopped, and bolting across the floor, away from the arc of light, ran a creature about the size of an Alsatian dog, but stockier, and with very short legs and three horns. It was so comical, and I was so relieved not to be confronted by a pair of jaws the size of a truck and just as fast, that I laughed.

The creature stopped and looked at me. This was not a sound or a shape it had ever met before: a thing on two legs making bird-like noises.

I dimmed the glare-torch and stepped forward. The Three Horn immediately hid behind a box.

All right, I thought. Let's feed you and see what happens.

What happened was that we found a playful and unexpected companion. Spike took a DNA swab and analysed the creature as a kind of hog-hippo hybrid, probably less than a year old.

'He doesn't know what he is,' she said patting him, 'and neither does nature. Everything on Planet Blue is at the experimental stage. All of these life forms will evolve and alter. Almost all will make way for something better adapted.'...

She seemed quiet, subdued. I forget all the time that she's a robot, but what's a robot? A moving lump of metal. In this case an intelligent, ultra-sensitive moving lump of metal...

I lay down beside Spike and thought how strange it was to lie beside a living thing that did not breathe. There was no rise and fall, no small sighs, no intake of air, no movement of the lips or slight flex of the nostrils. But she was alive, reinterpreting the meaning of what life is, which is, I suppose, what we have done since life began.

Thinking like this, and in strange, half-dreams, I woke up, bolt upright, suffocating. The air system was failing. Spike threw me an oxygen mask and took a reading.

'To reinstate the system would use half of our remaining power. I would rather fill the travel power

packs and leave. If we ever come back to the Ship, we will need something to come back to.’ She told me what to pack and, to wear the thermal gear... We took only the most useful items—tools, torches, a laser-saw, protein mix, compass and radio equipment, lighter for a fire, sleeping-bags with canopy hoods to keep the snow off our faces, a medicine kit that included bandages, sedative injections and lethal injections. Spike strapped herself with power packs, and then, as we were ready to leave, she threw me Handsome’s copy of Captain Cook’s *Journals*, and took down the copy he had given to her of John Donne’s poems.

She is all States, and all Princes I, Nothing else is...

Adapted from *The Stone Gods* by Jeanette Winterson. Courtesy of Hamish Hamilton, 2007

Passage C

In a departure from tradition, the winners of the best-dressed ladies competition were not presented in the parade ring this year.

Apparently, on previous occasions, they had frightened the horses. So instead the climax of the competition took place in one of Ballybrit’s smaller marquees: where, with no horses present, it was only the male journalists that were scared.

The risk involved in having so many pointy hats and parasols – not to mention stilettos – in a confined space was bad enough. But the colours alone would have blinded you. They were of a range and an intensity that, to be seen in one place, would normally require the use of psychedelic drugs.

Yellow, amber, tangerine, burnt orange – those were just the fake tans.

The clothes were even more vibrant. Searches for this season’s new black, or for any predominant theme were useless. It was like an explosion in a paint factory. The male reporter’s stock of colour adjectives – never up to describing Festival Thursday in Ballybrit, even in subdued years—was quickly exhausted.

The sheer extent of participation in Ladies Day at Galway is unmatched anywhere else. Other such events pale alongside it – literally and metaphorically – as almost every woman who goes to the races makes a conspicuous effort to dress up. By comparison, the Irish male looks even more dressed down than usual.

Not even another rain soaked day could diminish the frock wearers’ enthusiasm. For most of the afternoon you had to admire the foresight of the many who had bought their outfits in a chainstore called Monsoon (even if none of them looked particularly waterproof.)

The sky’s colour range – light grey to charcoal – was in stark contrast with most of the outfits on the ground. But although the constant drizzle turned heavy enough at one point for the parasols to be replaced by umbrellas, the real deluge at least waited for the end of the competition.

Of the many thousands of women who sported finery only 10 were chosen for the shortlist. Each of these was awarded a special yellow arm-band, like an exotic bird being ringed (and feathers do tend to be a big part of the outfits). Then after closer examination, 37 were released back into the wild.

It can be a mixed blessing to be one of the three formally recognised as Best Dressed Ladies at Galway. On the plus side, you win prizes and temporary fame. On the minus, you are presented on a platform for the public viewing of several thousand also-rans, who study the chosen few with the hard eyes of horse dealers in a sales yard.

To judge from the expressions of those watching, the winning outfits evoke a whole gamut of emotions: from admiration to physical pain. Comments in the crowd also range from the generous (“Isn’t she lovely?”) to the critical (“I wouldn’t have picked that.”) to the truly damning (“It’s certainly different.”) But the judges somehow arrived at a consensus again this year...

There was racing too at Galway yesterday. Jockey Paul Townsend, wearing a pink silk ensemble with brown stars and a matching cap, won the big race on board the John Kiely-trained Indian Pace.

Nobody in or around the fashion tent passed much notice.

By Frank McNally from The Irish Times.

Passage D

In fact, it was half an hour before lunch arrived. Livia insisted that everyone had to be seated before she served the food – ‘The people wait for the pasta, not the pasta for the people,’ she said firmly.

She also ensured that the table itself held a jug of water, a phial of oil, a dish of salt, and a vase of fresh blossom...

The door opened and she entered. She was bearing an enormous dish of steaming *fettuccine*, tossed in a sauce made with tomatoes, olive oil, chopped onion, celery and garlic, and decorated with freshly torn basil leaves...

As she filled each bowl, she grated a little hard cheese and some pepper over it...

Plunging his fork into the pasta, James twisted it until he had, with some difficulty, managed to get some of the wriggling slippery, mass on the tines. Then he placed it in his mouth.

It was extraordinary. He had never tasted anything like it – certainly not in the long years of rationing, but not even before that, in a decade of eating grey, tasteless, boarding-school food, or even for that matter his mother's dry Sunday roasts, with their accompanying soggy potatoes and overcooked vegetables. Come to that, he had never in his life eaten pepper that was freshly ground, or cheese that coated one's food like this in a thick, white snowfall... The long silence as the other men around the table concentrated on their food suggested that, they, too were experiencing similar epiphanies.

It was hard to get the fettuccine to stay on one's fork: by the time it was in your mouth, stray ribbons of pasta were drooping out. After a little experimentation, James realised that it was easier to suck it in than to bite it off, and made for a more filling mouthful as well. He looked across at Horris. He was slurping cross-eyed at a long ribbon of fettuccine that hung from his lips, like a snake slithering at its own tongue. Only Jefferies was coping with the slippery lengths of pasta with anything like competence. But none of them seemed inclined to stop eating until every last morsel had been cleared from their bowls.

At last Horris pushed his chair back and said, 'That was rather different from what old Malloni gave us.'

'I'm absolutely stuffed,' Walters ventured.

'Me too,' Harris agreed. 'Oh well, back to work.' He started to get to his feet.

The door opened and Livia entered, holding a dish even larger than the one in which she served the pasta.

'The *secondo*,' she said, putting the dish on the table...

'What's this?' Horris asked.

'...It's a typical Neapolitan dish.'

There was a short silence. Walters said, 'Well, I don't want to give offence. I'll just have a taste.' As he spooned some onto his plate the smell of aubergine, baked in layers with tomato, garlic and herbs and topped with grilled cheese, filled the room...

Livia placed two jugs of red wine on the table... 'It isn't a table without wine.' James opened his mouth to protest, but thought better of it.

He dipped his fork into the layers of aubergine and cheese. Moments later it seemed to detonate in his mouth. The pasta, he now realised, had simply been a curtain raiser, carbohydrate to take the edge off his hunger, but this new dish was something else, teasing his appetite awake again, the intensity of its flavours bringing to life taste buds he had never even known existed. The cheese tasted so completely of cheese, the aubergine so rich and earthy, almost smoky; the herbs so full of flavour, requiring only a mouthful of wine to finish them off... He paused reverently and drank, then dug again with his fork.

The *secondo* was followed by a simple desert of sliced pears baked with honey and rosemary. The flesh of the fruit looked as crisp and white as something Michelangelo might have carved with, but when he touched his spoon to it, it turned out to be as meltingly soft as ice cream. Putting it in his mouth, he was at first aware only of a wonderful, unfamiliar taste, a cascade of flavours which gradually broke itself down into its constituent parts. There was the sweetness of the honey, along with a faint floral scent from the abundant Vesuviani blossom on which the bees had fed. Then came the heady, sunshine-filled fragrance of the herbs, and only after that, the sharp tang of the fruit itself. By the time the pears were eaten, both jugs of wine had been emptied too.

Adapted from *The Wedding Officer* by Anthony Capella. Courtesy of Sphere 2006.

Passage E

Most of the market traders were regulars and had set up in their usual places. The smell of hot fat

filled Sajhe's nose the moment he walked into the square. He loitered at a stall where a man was frying pancakes, turning them on a hot griddle. The smell of thick bean soup and warm...bread, made from half barley and half wheat, stimulated his appetite. He walked passed stalls selling buckets and pots, woollen cloths, skins and leather, both local goods and more exotic belts and purses from Córdoba or further afield even, but he didn't stop. He paused a while by a stall offering scissors for shearing sheep and knives, before moving to the corner of the square where most of the live animals were penned. There were always lots of chickens and capons in wooden cages, sometimes larks and wrens, which fluted and whistled. His favourite were the rabbits, all squashed together in a heap of brown, black and white fur.

Sajhe walked past the stalls selling grain and salt, white meats, ale from casks and wine, until he found himself at a stand selling herbs and exotic spices. In front of the table was a merchant. Sajhe had never seen a man so tall, so black. He was dressed in long, shimmering blue robes, a shining silk turban and red and gold pointed slippers. His skin was darker even than that of the gypsies who travelled from Navarre and Aragon over the mountains.

The merchant had laid out his display in the shape of a wheel: greens and yellows, oranges, browns and reds, ochre. At the front were rosemary and parsley, garlic, marigold and lavender, but at the back there were more expensive spices, such as cardamom, nutmeg and saffron. Sajhe didn't recognise any of the others, but he was already looking forward to telling his grandmother what he had seen.

He was about to step forward to get a better look, when the Merchant roared in a voice like thunder. His heavy dark hand grabbed the skinny wrist of a cutpurse who'd tried to steal a coin from the embroidered purse that hung from a twisted cord around his waist. He cuffed the boy around the head, sending him flying back into a woman standing behind who started shouting. Straight away a crowd started to gather.

Sajhe slipped away. He didn't want to get caught up in any trouble.

Adapted from *Labyrinth* by Kate Moss. Courtesy of Orion, 2005.

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