



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2014

ART

Imaginative Composition and Still Life

Ordinary Level

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

Monday, 28 April – Friday, 9 May

Morning, 9:30 – 12:00

This paper should be handed to candidates on **Tuesday, 8 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 or 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 or 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 or 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

Nan and Grandad gave me the oil paints for Christmas. And brushes and turpentine and linseed oil and ten specially prepared canvasses. Grandad even made me an easel, a board tacked to the back of an old chair. Nan sewed one of Grandad's old shirts into a special painting smock and cut up an even older shirt into squares for painting rags. It is the most elaborate present they have ever given me. They usually give me a diary, a scrapbook, photo-album, books or something like a fountain pen or a wristwatch. And the new volume of my Mother's diary, only there isn't one this year. She stopped writing them when she was my age. She spent all her spare time painting. She had oil paints for her fifteenth Christmas present. She took all her paintings away with her when she got married. Otherwise I daresay I'd have been given her dried up tubes of paint, her stubby brushes, her screwed up painting rags, old palettes and smock.

Her first proper oil painting was a portrait. It hangs in the living room above the fireplace. It's like a mirror reflecting the past. Grandad and Nan sit on the carefully painted sofa, the same dull cracking leather sofa, but she's done a highlight or two to show off the gleam of the leather when it was new. Grandad ponders the newspaper crossword, his lips pursed as if he's testing each word for flavour. He looks bare without his glasses. And Nan looks positively girlish at the other end of the sofa. She's knitting of course, but her head is at a perky angle and there's a bright lipstick smile on her face.

Adapted from *The Power of the Shade* by Jacqueline Wilson, 1987.

Passage B

My mother was mad for the colour green. She carpeted rooms in it, upholstered furniture with it and assembled her wardrobe from it, in all of its shades: Kelly and hunter, pistachio and olive, moss and myrtle. For my sister's wedding she wore an emerald dress. I thought back then that she was trying to match her eyes. I realized only recently that something bigger and deeper was at work.

You see, I finally visited Ireland. I say "finally" because I should have gone long ago, in tribute to her, in acknowledgment of the Irish in her background, her blood and mine. But that part of our heritage got lost when she married an Italian and was swept into his Italian clan, which was so thoroughly steeped in its ethnicity, and so exuberant about it, that none other had any chance. She learned to make ravioli and frittata with the best of them.

I went in mid-September, and we covered as much of the country as we could in a week's time. It was on Day 2, when it hit me that the greens that decorated Mom's days were the greens that decorate Ireland. You read about them before you come, about their depth, shimmer and variety but books can't capture the way the hue of the hillside in front of you, fleeced with sheep, will be markedly different from that of the hillside behind you, flecked with cows. Nor can books convey the sudden shift in these colours with the arrival of a cloud or the onset of rain, which seems to fall four or five times daily and would be infuriating were it not the very agent of this verdant patchwork.

Day 3, we set out that morning for Skellig Michael, a tiny, rocky, almost entirely vertical island, about eight miles from shore, with the remains of a sixth or seventh-century monastery near its summit. It's one of those riddles of human ambition, how, and why, did people build in such a forbidding place? And it's reachable only by crude fishing trawlers, which pack in a dozen tourists apiece and make the trip only on days when the ocean isn't too turbulent.

The captain of our trawler waited until an hour before our departure to determine that we could go, and we pulled slowly away from the fishing village, with its red, blue and yellow storefronts, and chugged past mountainsides where cows grazed in pastures so steep, with such precipitous drop-offs

to the bay below them, that I braced myself for a bovine avalanche. As we moved into open water, the waves on each side of our boat surged so high that, in the sloughs between the crests, we could see nothing but curving, menacing walls of water.

“This isn’t safe,” said Tom, who had begun to turn his own shade of green. I pretended not to hear him, put a few additional inches between us and pointed out the dolphin alongside our trawler, hoping it would serve as a distraction.

About an hour after we’d left, we caught sight of a few seals and a few thousand white seabirds. Then we approached Skellig Michael itself, and merely circled the island, marvelling at its crazy topography of spikes and swirls. I mean to say that some of us marvelled, while the rest, including Tom, put their heads between their knees, and stayed that way for the duration of the brutally choppy voyage back.

Adapted from *To Ireland, A Son’s Journey Home*, by Frank Bruni, courtesy of The New York Times, October 2012.

Passage C

I pedal fast down the street, where houses swim in pools of orange streetlight and people sit on verandas, hoping to catch a breeze under a sky bleeding out and turning black. Let me make it in time. Let me meet Shadow, the guy who paints in the dark. Paints birds trapped on brick walls and people lost in ghost forests, figures with grass growing from their hearts and girls with buzzing lawn mowers.

At the top of Singer Street I see the city, neon blue and rising. There’s lightning deep in the sky, working its way through the heat to the surface. There’s laughter somewhere far away. There’s one of Shadow’s pieces, a painting on a crumbling wall of a heart cracked by an earthquake with the words Beyond the Richter scale written underneath. It’s not a heart like you see on a Valentine’s Day card. It’s the heart how it really is: fine veins and atriums and arteries.

I take my hands off the brakes and let go. The trees and the fences mess together and the concrete could be the sky and the sky could be the concrete and the factories spread out before me like a light-scattered dream.

I turn a corner and fly down Al’s street. Toward his studio, toward him sitting on the steps, little moths above him, playing in the light.

Adapted from *Graffiti Moon* by Cath Crowley, Knopf Books for Young Readers, a division of Random House Inc. 2012.

Passage D

After awhile I set to work rather hurriedly. Except for about an hour, I was at work from seven in the morning till a quarter past nine at night; first at washing crockery, then at scrubbing the tables and floors of the employees’ dining-room, then at polishing glasses and knives, then at fetching meals, then at washing crockery again, then at fetching more meals and washing more crockery. It was easy work, and I got on well with it except when I went to the kitchen to fetch meals. The kitchen was like nothing I had ever seen or imagined, a stifling, low-ceilinged inferno of a cellar, red-lit from the fires, and deafening with oaths and the clanging of pots and pans. It was so hot that all the metal-work except the stoves had to be covered with cloth. In the middle were furnaces, where twelve cooks skipped to and fro, their faces dripping sweat in spite of their white caps. Round that were counters where a mob of waiters clamoured with trays. Everyone seemed to be in a hurry and a rage. The head cook, a fine, scarlet man with big moustache, stood in the middle booming continuously, except when he broke off to curse at a waiter. There were three counters, and the first

time I went to the kitchen I took my tray unknowingly to the wrong one. The head cook walked up to me, twisted his moustache, and looked me up and down. Then he beckoned to the breakfast cook and pointed at me.

I don't remember all our duties, but they included making tea, coffee and chocolate, fetching meals from the kitchen, wines from the cellar and fruit and so forth from the dining-room, slicing bread, making toast, rolling pats of butter, measuring jam, opening milk-cans, counting lumps of sugar, boiling eggs, cooking porridge, pounding ice, grinding coffee – all this for from a hundred to two hundred customers. Not to mention the chocolate éclairs, cupcakes, muffins, croissants and doughnuts for breakfast, lunch, and tea. The kitchen was thirty yards away, and the dining-room sixty or seventy yards. All in all, it was a complicated job.

Adapted from *Down and out in Paris and London*, by George Orwell, Mariner Books, 1972.

Passage E

I always thought that fame happened to other people. When I was little, all I wanted was to be a nurse. But instead, I formed a band.

I suppose if I've learned something, it's that life takes funny turns when you're not looking. It was raining, and Jane and Tara and I had a free double period, I think, or maybe we were skiving off French because Jane hadn't done her homework. Anyway, we were hanging out in the music room because it was heated and had a great view of the back of the art college opposite. I know it was me who decided that we should form a band. But we were always coming up with these ridiculous schemes to get a bit of respect. Not even respect, just to be *noticed* by someone. By anyone.

I already had a guitar. It was a present that I'd begged and sulked for and promptly discarded when I realized that strumming was going to wreck my nails. I dragged it out from under my bed, cut my nails right down and worked out where to put my fingers on the fret board until I could play three chords. Jane borrowed her brother's bass guitar and mastered one bass line, which we reckoned would do, and then we persuaded Tara to blow her baby-sitting money on a simple, stand-up drum kit.

Jane had made us these freakish outfits out of this cheap silver material. The day before our first official gig, Jane nagged me to put a red rinse in my hair and wear something more exciting than jeans, but I ignored her. Jane turned up on my doorstep with a packet of bleach and some Manic Panic hair dye in Very Cherry and dragged me into the bathroom, where she shoved a chair under the door handle. I looked in the mirror and caught sight of my fire-engine red hair, reluctantly stepping out of the bathroom, my parents greeted me. They were so glad that I was finally showing a bit of normal teen rebellion that Dad went and got his stupid digital camera and decided to record the moment for posterity. And when Jane informed them that we were in a band (I only ever tell my parents the finer details of my life on a strictly need-to-know basis), they got all misty-eyed and started reminiscing about their honeymoon at a music festival.

I only started to freak out in the dressing room just before we went on stage. But once I was actually on stage, it was too late to feel frightened. In actual fact, the warm glow of the spotlights felt comforting and safe, and it wasn't as if I could actually see anybody's faces. It was like being back in my bedroom but with much, much better lighting. Plus there was applause and shouts of encouragement, and for about the first time in my life, I felt like I belonged somewhere.

Adapted from *Guitar Girl* by Sarra Manning, Dutton Juvenile, 2005.

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