

English A: literature – Higher level – Paper 1
Anglais A : littérature – Niveau supérieur – Épreuve 1
Inglés A: literatura – Nivel superior – Prueba 1

2 hour 15 minutes / 2 heures 15 minutes / 2 horas 15 minutos

Instructions to candidates

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Answer both questions.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[40 marks]**.

Instructions destinées aux candidats

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Répondez aux deux questions.
- Le nombre maximum de points pour cette épreuve d'examen est de **[40 points]**.

Instrucciones para los alumnos

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Conteste ambas preguntas.
- La puntuación máxima para esta prueba de examen es **[40 puntos]**.

Write an analysis on each of the texts. It is not compulsory for you to address the guiding questions in your answers.

TEXT A

[20 marks]

In the following passage a stunt man practices tight-rope walking in a field in preparation for a future walk on a tightrope between two skyscrapers.

5 What he has seen often in the meadow: a nest of three red-tailed hawks, chicks, on the ledge of a tree branch, in a thick inter-twine of twigs. The chicks could tell when the mother was returning, even from far away. They began to squawk, a happiness in advance. Their beaks scissored open, and a moment later she winged down toward them, a pigeon in one foot, held by the talons. She hovered and alighted, one wing still stretched out, shielding half the nest from view. She tore off red hunks of flesh and dropped them into the open mouths of the chicks. All of it done with the sort of ease that there was no vocabulary for. The balance of talon and wing. The perfect drop of red flesh into their mouths.

10 It was moments like this that kept his training on track. Six years in so many different places. The meadow just one of them. The grass stretched for the better part of a half mile, though the line ran only 250 feet along the middle of the meadow, where there was the most wind. The cable was guy-lined¹ by a number of well-tightened cavallettis². Sometimes he loosened them so the cable would sway. It improved his balance. He went to the middle of the wire, where it was most difficult. He would try hopping from one foot to the other. He carried a balancing pole that was too heavy, just to instruct his body in change. If a friend was visiting he would get him to thump the high wire with a two-by-four³ so that the cable swung and he learned to sway side to side. He even got the friend to jump on the wire to see if he could knock him off.

20 His favorite moment was running along the wire without a balancing pole—it was the purest bodyflow he could get. What he understood, even when training, was this: he could not be at the top and bottom all at once. There was no such thing as an attempt. He could catch himself with his hands, or by wrapping his feet around the wire, but that was a failure. He hunted endlessly for new exercises: the full turn, the tiptoe, the pretend fall, the cartwheel, bouncing a soccer ball on his head, the bound walk, with his ankles tied together. But they were exercises, not moves he would contemplate on a walk.

25 Once, during a thunderstorm, he rode the wire as if it were a surfboard. He loosened the guy cables so the wire was more reckless than ever. The waves the sway created were three feet high, brutal, erratic, side to side, up and down. Wind and rain all around him. The balancing pole touched against the tip of the grass, but never the ground. He laughed into the teeth of the wind.

30 He thought only later, as he went back to the cabin, that the pole in his hand had been a lightning rod: he could have been lit up with the storm—a steel cable, a balancing pole, a wide-open meadow.

Extract from Column McCann, *Let the Great World Spin* (June 2009)

What tensions are created by the descriptions in these paragraphs?

¹ Guy-line: to restrain the motion of something.

² Cavalletti: a device for fastening.

³ Two-by-four: a length of wood with a rectangular cross section nominally two inches by four inches.

TEXT B

[20 marks]

Late Love

How they strut about, people in love,
how tall they grow, pleased with themselves,
their hair, glossy, their skin shining.
They don't remember who they have been.

5

How filmic they are just for this time.
How important they've become — secret, above
the order of things, the dreary mundane.
Every church bell ringing, a fresh sign.

10

How dull the lot that are not in love.
Their clothes shabby, their skin lustreless;
how clueless they are, hair a mess; how they trudge
up and down the streets in the rain,

15

remembering one kiss in a dark alley,
a touch in a changing room, if lucky, a lovely wait
for the phone to ring, maybe, baby.
The past with its rush of velvet, its secret hush

already miles away, dimming now, in the late day.

Jackie Kay, *Life Mask* (2005)

How is imagery used in this poem to evoke the impact of love in a person's life?