

Section A: Poetry

WILLIAM BLAKE: *Songs of Innocence and Experience*

- 1 **Either** (a) 'And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.'

In what ways, and to what extent, do you find the *Songs of Innocence* to be 'happy songs'?

- Or** (b) Comment closely on the following poems, comparing ways in which they present the nurse and the children.

Nurse's Song (Innocence)

When the voices of children are heard on the green
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast
And everything else is still.

"Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down 5
"And the dews of night arise;
"Come, come, leave off play, and let us away
"Till the morning appears in the skies."

"No, no, let us play, for it is yet day
"And we cannot go to sleep; 10
"Besides, in the sky the little birds fly
"And the hills are all cover'd with sheep."

"Well, well, go & play till the light fades away
"And then go home to bed."
The little ones leaped & shouted & laugh'd 15
And all the hills echoed.

Nurse's Song (Experience)

When the voices of children are heard on the green
And whisp'rings are in the dale,
The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,
My face turns green and pale.

Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down, 5
And the dews of night arise;
Your spring & your day are wasted in play,
And your winter and night in disguise.

SYLVIA PLATH: *Ariel*

- 2 **Either** (a) With reference to **two** poems, discuss the poetic methods by which Plath shapes private thoughts.
- Or** (b) Comment closely on the following poem, discussing how its language and imagery create its mood.

The Applicant

First, are you our sort of a person?

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Will you marry it, marry it, marry it.

Songs of Ourselves

3 **Either** (a) 'Change is always for the worse.'

In the light of this quotation, discuss ways in which **two** poems explore change.

Or (b) Comment closely on the following poem, considering how its language and form portray a particular moment.

Full Moon and Little Frieda

A cool small evening shrunk to a dog bark and the clank
of a bucket –

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That points at him amazed.

Ted Hughes

Section B: Prose

HENRY JAMES: *Washington Square*

- 4 **Either** (a) Dr Sloper describes Morris Townsend as 'a charming fellow', but also as 'selfish and shallow'.

How far does the presentation of Morris Townsend lead you to agree with Dr Sloper's judgement?

- Or** (b) Comment closely on the presentation of Catherine in the following passage.

He never asked her whether she had seen Morris again, because he was sure that if this had been the case she would tell him. She had, in fact, not seen him; she had only written him a long letter. The letter, at least, was long for her; and, it may be added, that it was long for Morris; it consisted of five pages, in a remarkably neat and handsome hand. Catherine's handwriting was beautiful, and she was even a little proud of it: she was extremely fond of copying, and possessed volumes of extracts which testified to this accomplishment; volumes which she had exhibited one day to her lover, when the bliss of feeling that she was important in his eyes was exceptionally keen. She told Morris, in writing, that her father had expressed the wish that she should not see him again, and that she begged he would not come to the house until she should have 'made up her mind'. Morris replied with a passionate epistle, in which he asked to what, in Heaven's name, she wished to make up her mind. Had not her mind been made up two weeks before, and could it be possible that she entertained the idea of throwing him off? Did she mean to break down at the very beginning of their ordeal, after all the promises of fidelity she had both given and extracted? And he gave an account of his own interview with her father – an account not identical at all points with that offered in these pages. 'He was terribly violent,' Morris wrote, 'but you know my self-control. I have need of it all when I remember that I have it in my power to break in upon your cruel captivity.' Catherine sent him, in answer to this, a note of three lines. 'I am in great trouble; do not doubt of my affection, but let me wait a little and think.' The idea of a struggle with her father, of setting up her will against his own, was heavy on her soul, and it kept her quiet, as a great physical weight keeps us motionless. It never entered into her mind to throw her lover off; but from the first she tried to assure herself that there would be a peaceful way out of their difficulty. The assurance was vague, for it contained no element of positive conviction that her father would change his mind. She only had an idea that if she should be very good, the situation would in some mysterious manner improve. To be good she must be patient, outwardly submissive, abstain from judging her father too harshly, and from committing any act of open defiance. He was perhaps right, after all, to think as he did; by which Catherine meant not in the least that his judgement of Morris's motives in seeking to marry her was perhaps a just one, but that it was probably natural and proper that conscientious parents should be suspicious and even unjust. There were probably people in the world as bad as her father supposed Morris to be, and if there were the slightest chance of Morris being one of these sinister persons, the Doctor was right in taking it into account. Of course he could not know what she knew – how the purest love and truth were seated in the young man's eyes; but Heaven, in its time, might appoint a way of bringing him to such knowledge. Catherine expected a good deal of Heaven, and referred to the skies the initiative, as the French say, in dealing with her dilemma. She could not imagine herself imparting any kind of knowledge to her father; there was something superior even in his injustice, and absolute in his mistakes. But she could at least be good, and if she were only good enough, Heaven would invent some way of reconciling all

things – the dignity of her father’s errors and the sweetness of her own confidence – the strict performance of her filial duties, and the enjoyment of Morris Townsend’s affection.

Chapter 15

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5 **Either** (a) ‘... I told her I also am a story-talker.’

Discuss the importance to the novel of stories and story telling.

Or (b) Comment closely on ways in which the following passage presents the narrator’s behaviour in this episode.

I reached up and took the fatty part of her cheek, not dough, but meat, between my thumb and finger. This close, and I saw no pores. ‘Talk.’ I said. ‘Are you going to talk?’ Her skin was fleshy, like squid out of which the glassy blades of bones had been pulled. I wanted tough skin, hard brown skin. I had callused my hands; I had scratched dirt to blacken the nails, which cut straight across to make stubby fingers. I gave her face a squeeze. ‘Talk.’ When I let go, the pink rushed back into my white thumbprint on her skin. I walked around to her side. ‘Talk!’ I shouted into the side of her head. Her straight hair hung, the same all these years, no ringlets or braids or permanents. I squeezed her other cheek. ‘Are you? Huh? Are you going to talk?’ She tried to shake her head, but I had hold of her face. She had no muscles to jerk away. Her skin seemed to stretch. I let go in horror. What if it came away in my hand? ‘No, huh?’ I said, rubbing the touch of her off my fingers. ‘Say “No,” then,’ I said. I gave her another pinch and a twist. ‘Say “No”.’ She shook her head, her straight hair turning with her head, not swinging side to side like the pretty girls’. She was so neat. Her neatness bothered me. I hated the way she folded the wax paper from her lunch; she did not wad her brown paper bag and her school papers. I hated her clothes – the blue pastel cardigan, the white blouse with the collar that lay flat over the cardigan, the homemade flat, cotton skirt she wore when everybody else was wearing flared skirts. I hated pastels; I would wear black always. I squeezed again, harder, even though her cheek had a week rubbery feeling I did not like. I squeezed one cheek, then the other, back and forth until the tears ran out of her eyes as if I had pulled them out. ‘Stop crying,’ I said, but although she habitually followed me around, she did not obey. Her eyes dripped; her nose dripped. She wiped her eyes with her papery fingers. The skin on her hands and arms seemed powdery-dry, like tracing paper, onion skin. I hated her fingers. I could snap them like breadsticks. I pushed her hands down. ‘Say “Hi,”’ I said. ‘“Hi.” Like that. Say your name. Go ahead. Say it. Or are you stupid? You’re so stupid, you don’t know your own name, is that it? When I say, “What’s your name?” you just blurt it out, OK? What’s your name?’ Last year the whole class had laughed at a boy who couldn’t fill out a form because he didn’t know his father’s name. The teacher sighed, exasperated, and was very sarcastic, ‘Don’t you notice things? What does your mother call him?’ she said. The class laughed at how dumb he was not to notice things. ‘She calls him father of me,’ he said. Even we laughed, although we knew that his mother did not call his father by name, and a son does not know his father’s name. We laughed and were relieved that our parents had had the foresight to tell us some names we could give the teachers. ‘If you’re not stupid,’ I said to the quiet girl, ‘what’s your name?’ She shook her head, and some hair caught in the tears; wet black hair stuck to the side of the pink and white face. I reached up (she was taller than I) and took a strand of hair. I pulled it. ‘Well, then, let’s honk your hair,’ I said. ‘Honk. Honk.’ Then I pulled the other side – ‘ho-o-n-nk’ – a long pull; ‘ho-o-n-n-nk’ – a longer pull. I could see her little white ears, like white cutworms curled underneath the hair. ‘Talk!’ I yelled into each cutworm.

Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe

TURN OVER FOR QUESTION 6.

- 6 **Either** (a) Compare ways in which **two** stories portray different kinds of courage.
- Or** (b) Paying close attention to the writing of the following passage, discuss ways in which it creates the drama of the crash.

And so we started on the five-mile drive for home.

My old car had the gears as they used always to be in notches on a bar. In this car you passed the gear-lever through a gate to get on the higher ones. It was not difficult to master, and soon I thought that I understood it. It was foolish, no doubt, to begin to learn a new system in the dark, but one often does foolish things, and one has not always to pay the full price for them. I got along very well until I came to Claystall Hill. It is one of the worst hills in England, a mile and a half long and one in six in places, with three fairly sharp curves. My park gate stands at the very foot of it upon the main London road. 5

We were just over the brow of this hill, where the grade is steepest, when the trouble began. I had been on the top speed, and wanted to get her on the free; but she stuck between gears, and I had to get her back on the top again. By this time she was going at a great rate, so I clapped on both brakes, and one after the other they gave way. I didn't mind so much when I felt my foot-brake snap, but when I put all my weight on my side-brake, and the lever clanged to its full limit without a catch, it brought a cold sweat out of me. By this time we were fairly tearing down the slope. The lights were brilliant, and I brought her round the first curve all right. Then we did the second one, though it was a close shave for the ditch. There was a mile of straight then with the third curve beneath it, and after that the gate of the park. If I could shoot into that harbour all would be well, for the slope up to the house would bring her to a stand. 10 15 20

Perkins behaved splendidly. I should like that to be known. He was perfectly cool and alert. I had thought at the very beginning of taking the bank, and he read my intention.

'I wouldn't do it, sir,' said he. 'At this pace it must go over and we should have it on the top of us.' 25

Of course he was right. He got to the electric switch and had it off, so we were in the free; but we were still running at a fearful pace. He laid his hands on the wheel.

'I'll keep her steady,' said he, 'if you care to jump and chance it. We can never get round that curve. Better jump, sir.' 30

'No,' said I; 'I'll stick it out. You can jump if you like.'

'I'll stick it with you, sir,' said he.

If it had been the old car I should have jammed the gear-lever into the reverse, and seen what would happen. I expect she would have stripped her gears or smashed up somehow, but it would have been a chance. As it was, I was helpless. Perkins tried to climb across, but you couldn't do it going at that pace. The wheels were whirring like a high wind and the big body creaking and groaning with the strain. But the lights were brilliant, and one could steer to an inch. I remember thinking what an awful and yet majestic sight we should appear to anyone who met us. It was a narrow road, and we were just a great, roaring, golden death to anyone who came in our path. 35 40

We got round the corner with one wheel three feet high upon the bank. I thought we were surely over, but after staggering for a moment she righted and darted onwards. That was the third corner and the last one. There was only the park gate now. It was facing us, but, as luck would have it, not facing us directly. It was about twenty yards to the left up the main road into which we ran. Perhaps I could have done it, but I expect that the steering-gear had been jarred when we ran on the bank. The wheel did not turn easily. We shot out of the lane. I saw the open gate on the left. I whirled round my wheel with all the strength of my wrist. Perkins and 45

I threw our bodies across, and then the next instant, going at fifty miles an hour, my right wheel struck full on the right-hand pillar of my own gate. I heard the crash, I was conscious of flying through the air, and then – and then—!

How It Happened

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