



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2016

ART

Imaginative Composition and Still Life

Higher Level

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

Tuesday, 3 May – Friday, 13 May Morning, 9.30 – 12.00

This paper should be handed to candidates on **Tuesday, 19 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** confirming 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

At first sight my mother was right: in the blazing sunshine, Aix was a platter of delights. From the sweeping avenue of the Cours Mirabeau, lined with fountains and plane trees, to the brooding presence of the Montagne Sainte-Victoire to the east, Aix felt classy. The campsite where we had so briefly stayed, was just as impressive. It felt spacious, with a picnic area at its base and a steep road that wound up towards the *patron's* office. Our pitch was at the top end of a slope, providing us with beautiful views to the north and south, surrounded by the smell of herbs: rosemary and thyme that grew wild all about us. The mountain, which had so inspired Cézanne, was our immediate backdrop and we sat on that first evening, watching in silence as the limestone rock changed in a symphony of subtle colours, all pinks and reds, as the sun made its westward descent. Amazing cloudless skies, where the stars assumed an incredible depth and meteorites delighted, were our evening's entertainment. We needed nothing more.

It felt dangerous to even be contemplating it, but as we got up the next morning, there was an air of calm. One we weren't used to. Even I, consumed with self-conscious discomfort, felt relaxed and, dare I say it, verging on happy. The sun was radiating a lazy glow, one that offered nothing but respite from our immediate troubles, and the camp seemed packed with Dutch families, all of whom were extremely friendly. Our immediate neighbours were from just outside Amsterdam, spoke perfect English and were so beautiful, they looked as if they'd been popped out of moulds. There were two children, a boy of my age and a girl a few years younger. They were bronzed, blonde and bubbly. I was instantly drawn towards them.

Juriaan, the boy, was confident beyond his years and did a lot of standing around, hands on hips, with a towel tossed over one shoulder. The girl, Miah, was a scrap of a thing, full of energy, and seemed to be greatly enamoured with bouncing up and down on the spot as if she were attached to a spring. Both of them were fascinated by our Land Rover, Bessy, still a relatively rare sight on mainland Europe, and so Dad let them go inside it, stand on the side plates and sit up on the bonnet. It brought me instant kudos. Suddenly, and against all odds, I found myself being regarded as 'cool'. I was thrilled. My parents, palpably relieved that I had found some playmates, had heaved a collective sigh of relief: I hadn't scowled at them in over twenty-four hours. This really was a holiday.

The facilities at the campsite were excellent. There was a massive pool, an area for playing badminton, a covered table tennis hut and, in addition to the usual onsite camp shop, a small but none the less breathtaking takeaway van that did frites and crêpes. I was obsessed with it. I had never watched crêpes being made before and found the whole thing wondrous as if I was witnessing the birth of high art. I was used to British pancakes, all lumpy bits of flour served in a collapsed heap. But in France, crêpes were an art form, from the first ladle of batter, to the spreading thin over the hot round plate, to the delicate flip with the spatula through to the intricate folding that left you with a fan of glory stuffed with a whole host of delights. I thought you could only have sugar and lemon with a pancake. The fact that you could spice things up with chocolate, blueberries, ice cream, Chantilly cream, strawberries, toffee and nuts or – and this totally blew my mind – cheese and ham was like being transported to a fairyland of miracles. I couldn't get over it.

Adapted from *The Tent, The Bucket and Me: My Family's Disastrous Attempts to go Camping in the 70s*, by Emma Kennedy, Ebury Press, 2010.

Passage B

Meereen was as large as Astapor and Yunkai combined. Like her sister cities she was built of brick, but where Astapor had been red and Yunkai yellow, Meereen was made with bricks of many colours. Her walls were higher than Yunkai's and in better repair, studded with bastions and anchored by great defensive towers at every angle. Behind them, huge against the sky, could be seen the top of the Great Pyramid, a monstrous thing eight hundred feet tall with a towering bronze harpy at its top. "The harpy is a craven thing," Daario Naharis said when he saw it. "She has a woman's heart and a chicken's legs. Small wonder her sons hide behind their walls."

But the hero did not hide. He rode out the city gates, armoured in scales of copper and jet and mounted upon a white charger whose striped pink-and-white barding matched the silk cloak flowing from the hero's shoulders. The lance he bore was fourteen foot long, swirled in pink and white, and his hair was shaped and teased and lacquered into two great curling ram's horns. Back and forth he rode beneath the walls of multicoloured bricks, challenging the besiegers to send a champion forth to meet him in single combat.

Her bloodriders were in such a fever to go meet him that they almost came to blows. "Blood of my blood," Dany told them, "your place is here by me. This man is a buzzing fly, no more. Ignore him, he will soon be gone." Aggo, Jhogo and Rakharo were brave warriors, but they were young, and too valuable to risk. They kept her *khalasar* together, and were her best scouts too.

"That was wisely done," Ser Jorah said as they watched from the front of her pavilion. "Let the fool ride back and forth and shout until his horse goes lame. He does us no harm."

"He does," Arstan Whitebeard insisted. "Wars are not won with swords and spears alone, ser. Two hosts of equal strength may come together, but one will break and run whilst the other stands. This hero builds courage in the hearts of his own men and plants the seed of doubt in ours."

Ser Jorah snorted. "And if our champion were to lose, what sort of seed would that plant?"

"A man who fears battle wins no victories, ser."

"We're not speaking of battle. Meereen's gates will not open if that fool falls. Why risk a life for naught?"

"For honour, I would say."

Dany did not need their squabbling on top of all the other troubles that plagued her. Meereen posed dangers far more serious than one pink-and-white hero shouting insults, and she could not let herself be distracted. Her host numbered more than eighty thousand after Yunkai, but fewer than a quarter of them were soldiers. The rest... well, Ser Jorah called them mouths with feet, and soon they would be starving.

Adapted from *Game of Thrones, a Storm of Swords* by George R. R. Martin, Voyager, 2001.

Passage C

Swarms of bees in search of new homes are creating a buzz in streets across Ireland by latching onto shopfronts, hairdressing salons and even estate agencies amid a surge in untrained hobbyists struggling to control new hives in towns and cities.

Between April and the end of June, honeybees swarm as a new queen bee flies out from her hive and takes half the worker bees with her. Together, they seek out temporary lodgings while the queen's scout bees seek out a more permanent location.

These balloon-like clusters of bees were usually seen hanging off branches in the countryside, but swarms are increasingly being spotted by an unsuspecting public in new and unusual locations amid a growing fashion for beekeeping among the urban middle classes.

Because of a damp and windy May, peak swarming season was interrupted and has just begun in earnest. In the last week alone, experienced apiarists were called in to capture swarms from the roof of a car in Greyabbey, Co Down, a chimney pot above a Sherry FitzGerald office, a Vodafone shop in Athy, Co Kildare, an underground telecommunications box in a Navan housing estate and a street in Gorey, Co Wexford.

At the end of May, High Street in Kilkenny had to be cordoned off for an entire Saturday afternoon after a swarm latched onto the front of M.L. Dore, a café and deli in the city centre. The local council told the café to ring a city veterinarian and beekeeper to remove the swarm. A café employee, who asked not to be identified, said: "The whole street was closed because there were bees flying around. It was like a car crash – everyone wanted to have a look."

Beekeeping has been enjoying a resurgence among urban dwellers since the depths of the recession, when those who lost jobs often sought to reconnect with nature by tending to hives and allotment plots. As a result, membership of the Federation of Irish Beekeepers' Associations has doubled to 3,500 since 2005. But there are plenty more non-members who quietly keep hives in urban locations without signing up for training and mentoring from experienced beekeepers, according to Philip McCabe, the federation's president. Untrained beekeepers who do not inspect their hives every week can miss signs that their bees are preparing to embark on a perilous journey to a new home or they don't know to split their colonies to prevent unwanted swarms.

Keith Pierce, a Dublin fireman and a master beekeeper said: "Of course the public think they pose a danger. People have a natural fear of bees and they think it's a mass attack."

Brian Condren, president of South Kildare Beekeepers, said town dwellers have nothing to fear from the natural process of swarming. "Bees only stay somewhere at their own discretion and they'll head off when they find some place that suits them better."

Adapted from *Urban Bees take Towns by Swarm*, by Gabrielle Monaghan, *The Sunday Times*, April 2015.

Passage D

If you're going to Cuba, go soon. The island has been frozen in time since 1959, when the revolutionaries Fidel Castro and Che Guevara came to power. Apart from a few Stalinist statues and some nasty 1970's tourist hotels, the centre of Havana still consists of gloriously crumbling Spanish colonial buildings. The cigars are still rolled by hand, the men still wear moustaches and panama hats, and the terrace of the Hotel Nacional is still the place to people-watch while sipping a *mojito*.

Most excitingly of all, though, there are the cars – Havana's streets are still full of huge US cruisers from the 1950's. In 1960, the US imposed a partial trade embargo on its newly socialist neighbour, extending this to a total blockade in 1962. As well as devastating the economy, this meant no new cars could be brought into the country, and so the existing fleet were simply repaired and resprayed, coaxed along with home-made spare parts and lots of love and care. Some are as sprightly as the septuagenarian musicians of the Buena Vista Social Club, while others crawl round Havana coughing and belching blue smoke as if desperate for a long overdue retirement. It's estimated that there are 50,000 such cars – Chevrolets, Buicks, Cadillacs, Pontiacs and Fords.

But recently things have begun to change. Even the most determined mechanic can only keep a car going for so long, and these cars are already well past their sell-by date. Soon the cost of repairs will be more than scrapping them and starting again. At the same time, more modern cars are arriving on Cuba – Toyotas, Kias and a host of cheap Far Eastern imports. And finally, there is mounting speculation that the US will relax its embargo sometime soon, at which point the time bubble will burst forever.

So go now, and spend a few days touring Havana and the rest of Cuba in a great whale of a car. Unfortunately foreigners are not allowed to drive these cars, but you can rent them with a driver, either officially from an agency, or usually far cheaper from your guesthouse. The roads are good and there aren't many cars around at all – you can be driving along a dual carriageway and only spot a few other vehicles. Of course there are beaches, palm trees and jungle-covered hillsides, but for me the highlight of Cuba is cruising the streets in an old open-top Chevy, soaking up the unique atmosphere at sunset. And best of all, because you have to have a driver, there's nothing to stop you getting in the mood by stopping to sample a few *mojitos* and *Cuba libres* along the way.

Viva la Revolución!

Adapted from *Big Earth: 101 Amazing Adventures from Long Weekends to Epic Expeditions* by Russ Malkin, Bantam Press, 2011.

Passage E

Perhaps I go beachcombing simply to keep the sea in view. Where I live, if I don't see the ocean every day, even if it's just the eight a.m. ritual of rolling by the jetty for a minute where everyone in this town seems to gather before work to see the state of things, then I become restless and anxious. I have the same feeling if I don't have a book to read, or when I haven't worked for several days in a row. I just never get tired of looking at the sea. I don't quite know what it means to be constantly looking outward. I am not restless to travel or longing for the Europe of my ancestors. I feel part of the land I live on, but I still stare out at the blinding field. And so do others, from every jetty, headland and carpark along the coast.

Beachcombing combines this obsession with the habit of scavenging. A long, bare beach, like the sea itself, is capable of many surprises. The unexpected is what I'm after when I go trudging along the firm white sand with not a building or human in sight. True, I'm after solitude as well, and enough sameness to give me the peace to think or maybe sing without feeling self-conscious. But it's the possibility of finding something strange that keeps me walking. I collect floats, rope, sea boots, the usual jetsam from fishermen who still treat the sea as their marine dispose-all. I pick up the murderous six-pack loops and the plastic straps that wash up season after season. This year I came upon a TV washed up inside Fence Reef. It looked like an exhibit in one of those Emperor's-new-clothes art shows. Even the dog looked doubtful about it.

Driftwood in bizarre shapes finds its way atop high buttresses of weed thrown up after storms, parts of foreign-looking trees, packing cases with Cyrillic script or Japanese characters. Whole fields of bluebottles lie stranded, bursting underfoot like little landmines. Sponges, great limbs of coral, sea cucumbers. The wind and the huge Leeuwin current drive many creatures out of their way: one year a vast hatch of baby loggerhead turtles from the Kimberley, another year a leopard seal, exhausted and dangerously cranky after his extraordinary swim from Antarctica.

From a distance every found object is merely a black mark on the sand, and half the pleasure of beachcombing lies in wondering, anticipating the find. Everything you find looks ancient and mysterious. Things brought home from the sea and its margins become emblems, talismans to the beachcomber. Beach shacks are full of this stuff; it's a kind of kitsch beyond taste. The crossed whalebones over the door, the abalone shells and bleached corals, like dead fingers and brains, on dressers and bookshelves. Smooth stones, pieces of glass, dried seahorses, the skeletons of boxfish and jaws of small sharks. You can only sneer at it if you've never felt that sense of bounty, of excitement, stooping to pick up something that breaks the bareness of the beach, the loneliness of the morning, like a small gift.

Adapted from *Land's Edge, A Coastal Memoir* by Tim Winton, Picador, 2012.

Blank Page