

STELLA MARIS COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS) CHENNAI 600 086
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

B.A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, SEPTEMBER 2020
BRANCH XII – ENGLISH
SIXTH SEMESTER

COURSE: MAJOR ELECTIVE

COURSE CODE: 15EL/ME/CA55

**COURSE TITLE: LITERATURES OF AUSTRALIA,
CANADA AND NEW ZEALAND**

TIME: 1 ½ hours
MAX. MARKS: 50

SECTION A

Answer any three of the following in about 150 words each. (3x5=15)

1. What is the significance of the bonfire started by Monroe Swimmer in Thomas King's *Truth and Bright Water*?
2. How can Jeannette Armstrong's poem "Indian Woman" be seen as a "double poem" of suffering as well as strength?
3. Comment on the significance of the lines "The past is still so much a part of us, Still about us, still within us" in Noonuccal's poem.
4. Discuss the importance of family in *No Sugar*.
5. What are the issues raised in the story "American Dreams"?

SECTION B

Answer any two of the following in about 300 words each. (2x10=20)

6. Discuss the significance of the title of George Ryga's play *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*.
7. "Many Pacific writers draw extensively upon their own pre-colonial oral, mythopoeic, and artistic traditions—but it is nevertheless the case that much contemporary Pacific writing is still engaged with colonialism and its legacies". Discuss with reference to *The Whale Rider*.
8. With reference to the texts prescribed, comment on the predominant themes and motifs in the literatures of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

SECTION C

Attempt an analysis of any one of the following two extracts in about 500 words: (1x15=15)

9. Wilderness Tips

By Margaret Atwood

"Where's George?" Portia asks, knowing she shouldn't.

"How the hell should I know?" says Prue. Her tone is peevish, as if she's wondering the same thing. "What's the matter--he slipped his leash? Funny, there's no bimbo secretaries up here." In the sunlight she has a disorderly look: her too-orange lipstick is threading into the tiny wrinkles around her mouth; her bangs are brazen; things are going askew.

"There's no need to be nasty," says Portia. This is what their mother used to say to Prue, over the body of some dismembered doll, some razed sandbox village, a bottle of purloined nail polish hurled against the wall; and Prue never had an answer then. But now their mother isn't here to say it.

"There is," says Prue with vehemence. "There is a need."

Ordinarily, Portia would just walk away, pretending she hadn't heard. Now she says, "Why?"

"Because you always had the best of everything," says Prue.

Portia is astounded. Surely she is the mute one, the shadow; hasn't she always played wallflower to Prue's frantic dancer? "What?" she says. "What did I always have?"

"You've always been too good for words," says Prue with rancour. "Why do you stay with him, anyway? Is it the money?"

"He didn't have a bean when I married him," says Portia mildly. She's wondering whether or not she hates Prue. She isn't sure what real hatred would feel like. Anyway, Prue is losing that taut, mischievous body she's done such damage with, and, now that's going, what will she have left? In the way of weapons, that is.

"When he married you, you mean," says Prue. "When Mother married you off. You just stood there and let the two of them do it, like the little suck you were."

Portia wonders if this is true. She wishes she could go back a few decades, grow up again. The first time, she missed something; she missed a stage, or some vital information other people seemed to have. This time she would make different choices. She would be less obedient; she would not ask for permission. She would not say "I do" but "I am."

"Why didn't you ever fight back?" says Prue. She sounds genuinely aggrieved.

Portia can see down the path to the lake, to the dock. There's a canvas deck-chair down there with nobody in it. George's newspaper, tucked underneath, is fluttering: there's a wind coming up. George must have forgotten to put his chair away. It's unlike him.

"Just a minute," she says to Prue, as if they're going to take a short break in this conversation they've been having in different ways for fifty years now. She goes out the screen door and down the path. Where has George got to? Probably the outhouse. But his canvas chair is rippling like a sail.

She stoops to fold up the chair, and hears. There's someone in the boathouse; there's a scuffling, a breathing. A porcupine, eating salt off the oar handles? Not in broad daylight. No, there's a voice. The water glitters, the small waves slap against the dock. It can't be Prue; Prue is up on the veranda. It sounds like her mother, like her mother opening birthday presents—that soft crescendo of surprise and almost pained wonder. Oh. Oh. Oh. Of course, you can't tell what age a person is, in the dark.

Portia folds the chair, props it gently against the wall of the boathouse. She goes up the path, carrying the paper. No sense in having it blow all over the lake. No sense in having the clear waves dirtied with stale news, with soggy human grief. Desire and greed and terrible disappointments, even in the financial pages. Though you had to read between the lines.

She doesn't want to go into the house. She skirts around behind the kitchen, avoiding the woodshed where she can hear the chock, chock of Roland piling wood, goes back along the path that leads to the small, sandy bay where they all swam as children, before they were old enough to dive in off the dock. She lies down on the ground there and goes to sleep. When she wakes up there are pine needles sticking to her cheek and she has a headache. The sun is low in the sky; the wind has fallen; there are no more waves. A dead flat calm. She takes off her clothes, not bothering even to listen for motorboats. They go so fast anyway she'd just be a blur.

She wades into the lake, slipping into the water as if between the layers of a mirror: the glass layer, the silver layer. She meets the doubles of her own legs, her own arms, going down. She floats with only her head above water. She is herself at fifteen, herself at twelve, herself at nine, at six. On the shore, attached to their familiar reflections, are the same rock, the same white stump that have always been there. The cold hush of the lake is like a long breathing-out of relief. It's safe to be this age, to know that the stump is her stump, the rock is hers, that nothing will ever change.

There's a bell, ringing faintly from the distant house. The dinner bell. It's Pamela's turn to cook. What will they have? A strange concoction. Pamela has her own ideas about food.

The bell rings again, and Portia knows that something bad is about to happen. She could avoid it; she could swim out further, let go, and sink.

She looks at the shore, at the water line, where the lake ends. It's no longer horizontal: it seems to be on a slant, as if there'd been a slippage in the bedrock; as if the trees, the granite outcrops, Wacousta Lodge, the peninsula, the whole mainland were sliding gradually down, submerging. She thinks of a boat--a huge boat, a passenger liner--tilting, descending, with the lights still on, the music still playing, the people talking on and on, still not aware of the disaster that has already overcome them. She sees herself running naked through the ballroom--an absurd, disturbing figure with dripping hair and flailing arms, screaming at them, "Don't you see? It's coming apart, everything's coming apart, you're sinking. You're finished, you're over, you're dead!"

She would be invisible, of course. No one would hear her. And nothing has happened, really, that hasn't happened before.

[Your analysis can include, but needn't be restricted to (a) the significance of the lake (b) the relationship between Portia, her sisters and her husband (c) the relevance of Wacousta Lodge as a portrayal of wealth, and (d) the appropriation of the wilderness.]

10. **Remember Something Like This**

Lionel Fogarty

Long ago a brown alighted story was told
as a boy looked up on the hall walls
water flowed to his eyes
for Starlight was carrying snake in his shirt
gut belly
and around the fires a tall man

frightened the mobs that black eyes promised
that night at giant tree, way up
bushes crept in the ant hill
was the wild blackfella
from up north, they said.
Soldier chained him down at the waterhole
but as they bent to dip, sip
behind their backs, old man Waterflow
flew clear, magic
undoing the shackles, without keys
or sounds of saw
saw . . . nuh . . . you didn't saw him.
He's old Waterflow, even I'm too young
to remember everything.
Yet clever than pictures them show off
making fun of old Boonah
sitting outside waiting for dreaming
to come in reality.
After that somebody broke into the store.
Oh, the police were everywhere
at every door, roof, in laws
Where's this and that, you know.
So they find out where him came from
by looking at the tracks.
He's headed for the caves
just near Milky Way.
Happy in strength, we took off
but the hills hid this tribal
bull-roaring feather foot
under Jimmy's Scrub
place up deep
where you have to leave smoke
if you want to hunt there
If you don't, you'll get slewed . . .
On earth our people are happy
but we couldn't find that food.
Musta been up the Reservoir
or expecting a life to run over near Yellow Bar cave
again.
But we bin told, one man got badly porcupine.
Bring him home and not supposed to.
So him get sick, all life time

like green hands touch Murri legs
that's why you don't swim too late
at this creek created.
A spoiled boy one afternoon, went repeating
the bell bird singing.
And he went and went
and sent to Green Swamp, back of the grid.
Then as eels were caught
Aunties sang out, this the biggest
I've ever seen.
Come boys get more wood, we'll stay
here all night.
So sat waiting, a bit dark, tired light
the lines pulling in slowly
for fish seem to be in message
but two-headed creature appeared
legs chucked back
fires went out
the fish swam back
we raced home.
All cold that night, back of the bend
and rocks.
Just near the bunya tree you can see
this middle age woman, long black hair
walk past our Nanna Rosies' place
up to the graveyards
but she flows
and many moons came shone in our minds
watching Dimmydum and Kingy doing corroboree
on stage
in front of her children.
A light story past thru windows
on to you all
never forget
remember more . . .

[Your analysis can include, but needn't be restricted to (a) the oral tradition (b) aboriginal myths (c) colonial rule and violence and (d) language.]
