13+ Entrance Scholarships

ENGLISH

March 2013

Time allowed – 2 hours

RADLEY

There are three questions. You should spend roughly the same amount of time on each question. You should leave between 5 and 10 minutes at the end for checking your work carefully.

Section A
Answer both questions. Each question is worth 25 marks.

Section B
There is one question, worth 25 marks.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar throughout the paper (25 marks)

You are expected to be able to write accurate, grammatical, well-punctuated prose throughout this paper.

SECTION A

The following extract was written by Edward Thomas. Thomas was originally known for his prose writing, and published numerous articles and books in the early part of the 20th century. In 1915, he became friendly with the American poet Robert Frost. Frost persuaded Thomas that he ought to write poetry, insisting that Thomas's prose writing had all the qualities of good poetry, if he would only give it a try. Thomas was reluctant at first, but eventually, in December 1914, Thomas wrote his first poem, and in the next two years wrote a further 141. He became one of the most celebrated poets of the century.

Read the extract, and answer both questions.

Snow succeeded, darkening the air, whitening the sky, on the wings of a strong wind from the north of north-west, for a minute only, but again and again, until by five o'clock the sky was all blue except at the horizon, where stood a cluster of white mountains, massive and almost motionless, in the south above the Downs, and round about them some dusty fragments not fit to be used in the composition of such mountains. They looked as if they were going to last forever. Yet by six o'clock the horizon was dim, and the clouds all but passed away, the Downs clear and extended; the blackbird singing as if the world were his nest, the wind cold and light, but dying utterly to make for a beautiful evening of one star and many owls hooting.

The next day was the missel-thrush's and the north-west wind's. The missel-thrush sat well up in a beech at the wood edge and hailed the rain with his rolling, brief song; so rapidly and oft was it repeated that it was almost one long, continuous song. But as the wind snatched away the notes again and again, or the bird changed his perch, or another answered him or took his place, the music was roving like a hunter's.

Days of cloudy brightness, brightened cloudiness, rounded off between half-past five and half-past six by blackbirds singing. The nights were strange children for such days, nights of frantic wind and rain, threatening to undo all the sweet work in a swift, howling revolution. Trees were thrown down, branches broken, but the buds remained. With the day came snow, hail, and rain, each impotent to silence the larks for one minute after it had ceased.

Another day, a wide and windy day, is the jackdaw's, and he goes straight and swift and high like a joyous rider crying aloud on an endless savannah. Towards the end of March there are six nights of frost giving birth to still mornings of weak sunlight of an opaque yet not definitely misty air. The sky is of a milky, uncertain pale blue without one cloud. Eastward the hooded sun is warming the slope fields and melting the sparkling frost. In many trees the woodpeckers laugh so often that their cry is song.

It is not spring yet. Spring is being dreamed, and the dream is more wonderful and more blessed than ever was spring. What the hour of waking will bring forth is not known. Catch at the dreams as they hover in the warm thick air. Up against the grey tiers of beech stems and the mist of the buds and fallen leaves rise two columns of blue smoke from two white cottages among trees; they rise perfectly straight and then expand into a balanced cloud, and thus make and unmake continually two trees of smoke. No sound comes from the cottages. The dreams are over them. With inward voices of persuasion those dreams hover and say that all is to be made new, that all is yet before us, and the lots are not yet drawn out of the urn.

QUESTIONS:

1. By referring closely to the writing in this extract, explain what you think Frost means when he describes Thomas's prose as having poetic qualities.

[25]

2. Turn the above extract into a short poem of no more than 16 lines.

You may change, add to or delete from the extract as much as you like. You should NOT attempt to make the poem rhyme, but you should attempt to show some degree of poetic craftsmanship by bringing out the natural poetic rhythms, sounds, and other qualities which exist in the prose.

[25]

SECTION B

What have you enjoyed about the reading you have done over the last 6 months?

You may write about fiction or non-fiction, or both. Try to discuss at least three different books. Feel free to write about books other than those you have studied in class. Feel free also to write about *how* you have read, as well as *what* you have read.

[25]

Marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar throughout the paper [25]

You should spend between 5 and 10 minutes checking your work for accuracy at the end.

Total [100]

END OF PAPER