

# UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

## FINAL EXAMINATION 2007

**COURSE TITLE:** A STUDY OF POETRY

**COURSE CODE:** ENG206

**TIME ALLOWED:** TWO HOURS

- INSTRUCTIONS:**
1. Answer QUESTION ONE, and one other question.
  2. Correct use of English and literary conventions will be rewarded; grammatical errors and incorrect use of conventions will be penalized.
  3. This paper consists of 6 pages, cover page included.
  4. Each question carries 30 marks.

**THIS PAPER SHOULD NOT BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN  
GRANTED BY THE INVIGILATOR**

Question One (Compulsory)

Drawing your illustrations from any of the poems below (wherever possible), **identify** and **discuss** the steps followed when analysing a poem as outlined on the course:

(i) "The Mesh"

We have come to the cross-roads  
And I must either leave or come with you.  
I lingered over the choice  
But in the darkness of my doubts  
You lifted the lamp of love  
And I saw in your face  
The road that I should take.

(ii) "The Sky"

The sky at night is like a big city  
where beasts and men abound,  
but never once has anyone  
killed a fowl or a goat,  
and no bear has ever killed a prey.  
There are no accidents; there are no losses.  
Everything knows its way.

(iii) "One Perfect Rose"

A single flow'r he sent me, since we met.  
All tenderly his message he chose;  
Deep-hearted, pure, with scented dew still wet –  
One perfect rose.

I knew the language of the floweret;  
"My fragile leaves," it said, "his heart enclose."  
Love long has taken for his amulet  
One perfect rose.

Why is it no one ever sent me yet  
One perfect limousine, do you suppose?  
Ah no, it's always just my luck to get  
One perfect rose.

## Question Two

Using the poem below for illustration, identify its subgenre and discuss the characteristic formal and content features specific to the genre:

“Porphyria’s Lover” Robert Browning

The rain set early in tonight,  
The sullen wind was soon awake,  
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,  
And did its worst to vex the lake:  
I listened with heart fit to break.  
When glided in Porphyria; straight  
She shut the cold out and the storm,  
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate  
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;  
Which done, she rose, and from her form  
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,  
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied  
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,  
And, last, she sat down by my side  
And called me. When no voice replied,  
She put my arm about her waist,  
And made her smooth white shoulder bare,  
And all her yellow hair displaced,  
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,  
And spread, o’er all, her yellow hair,  
Murmuring how she loved me –she  
Too weak, for all her heart’s endeavour,  
To set its struggling passion free  
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,  
And give herself to me forever.  
But passion sometimes would prevail,  
Nor could tonight’s gay feast restrain  
A sudden thought of one so pale  
For love of her, and all in vain:  
So, she was come through wind and rain.  
Be sure I looked up at her eyes  
Happy and proud; at last I knew  
Porphyria worshiped me: surprise  
Made my heart swell, and still it grew  
While I debated what to do.  
That moment she was quite mine, mine, fair,  
Perfectly pure and good: I found  
A thing to do, and all her hair  
In one long yellow string I wound

Three times her little throat around,  
 And strangled her. No pain felt she;  
 I am quite sure she felt no pain.  
 As a shut bud that holds a bee,  
 I warily oped her lids: again  
 Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.  
 And I untightened next the tress  
 About her neck; her cheek once more  
 Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:  
 I propped her head up as before,  
 Only, this time my shoulder bore  
 Her head, which droops upon it still:  
 The smiling rosy little head,  
 So glad it has its utmost will,  
 That all it scorned at once is fled,  
 And I, its love, am gained instead!  
 Porphiria's love: she guessed not how  
 Her darling one wish would be heard.  
 And thus we sit together now,  
 And all night long we have not stirred,  
 And yet God has not said a word!

### Question 3

Carefully read each excerpt below and thereafter identify its genre and give reasons for your choice:

- (i) Pray why are you so bare, so bare,  
 Oh, bough of the old oak-tree;  
 And why, when I go through the shade you throw,  
 Runs a shudder over me?

My leaves were green as best, I throw,  
 And sap ran free in my veins,  
 But I saw in the moonlight dim and weird  
 A guiltless victim's pains.

- (ii) So peaceful they lie, so dead.  
 A gloomy cell their bed.  
 But yet they live in me  
 Who now their course doth see –  
 The course by them begun  
 Beneath our African sun.  
 You sons of Africa  
 You are our guiding star.

- (iii) Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,  
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,  
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
 What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape  
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?  
 What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?  
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?
- (iv) The price seemed reasonable, location  
 Indifferent. The landlady swore she lived  
 Off premises. Nothing remained  
 But self-confession. 'Madam,' I warned.  
 'I hate a wasted journey – I am African.'  
 Silence. Silenced transmission of  
 Pressurized good-breeding. Voice, when it came,  
 Lipstick coated, long gold-rolled  
 Cigarette-holder pipped. Caught I was, foully.  
 'HOW DARK?' ...I had not misheard ...

#### Question 4

Read the sonnet below and answer the questions that follow:

"E Tenebris" (Out of Darkness") Oscar Wilde

Come down, O Christ, and help me! Reach thy hand,  
 For I am drowning in a stormier sea  
 Than Simon on thy lake of Galilee:  
 The wine of life is spilt upon the sand,  
 My heart is as some famine-murdered land  
 Whence all good things have perished utterly,  
 And well I know my soul in Hell must lie  
 If I this night before God's throne should stand.  
 "He sleeps perchance, or rideth to the chase,  
 Like Baal, when his prophets howled that name  
 From morn to noon on Carmel's smitten height."  
 Nay, peace, I shall behold, before the night,  
 The feet of brass, the robe more white than flame,  
 The wounded hands, the weary human face.

- a) Briefly highlight the situation that is captured in this sonnet, along with the persona's tone and the poem's prevalent mood. [10]

- b) Identify the sonnet's volta and account for its location in the sonnet. [5]
- c) Discuss the use of language and allusion to vivify meaning. [10]
- d) Scan the sonnet's end-line rhyme scheme and thereafter identify the sonnet's subgenre. [5]