

**UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND**  
**SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATIONS 2009/10**

COURSE CODE: ENG 206 / IDE-ENG 206

COURSE TITLE: A STUDY OF POETRY

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Answer **Question One**, and one other question.
2. Good expression and adherence to literary conventions will be rewarded and the reverse will be penalised.
3. All questions carry equal marks.
4. This paper contains 8 pages, cover page included.

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

**Question One** (Compulsory): Answer **either** A or B -

A) Focusing on ONE poem, demonstrate the steps followed when analyzing a poem at the level of **meaning**. [30]

1. **"The Donkey"** G.K. Chesterton

When fishes flew and forests walked  
And figs grew upon thorn,  
Some moment when the moon was blood  
Then surely I was born

With monstrous head and sickening cry  
And ears like errant wings,  
The devil's walking parody  
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,  
Of ancient crooked will;  
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,  
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;  
One far fierce hour and sweet;  
There was a shout about my ears,  
And palms before my feet.

2. **"Drought"** David John Darlow

The burning skies are steel,  
The parched earth is dry,  
And we die,  
The little children die.

The mealies cannot grow,  
The grass is burnt away,  
And grim death  
Is haunting us always.

The God who lives on high  
Is no Father to us now,  
For we die,  
In agony we die.

The cattle are all gone,  
The children reel and faint,  
    And they die,  
O Father God, they die.

3. "At Heaven's Door" Mbuyiseni Oswald Mtshali

Something  
is not right  
there upstairs,  
maybe the wrong  
is down here.

I have  
been knocking  
at the Door  
since I learned  
how to pray.

There  
is only silence.  
Where are the servants –  
I mean the angels?

I don't see them  
peering through curtains  
to see who is calling.

When  
the Master at last  
says  
    "Come in,"

Will they  
let me in  
through the front  
or at the back entrance?

**OR**

B) Using the poem below for illustration, discuss the depth and rich diversity of poetic language:

**“Before the Sun” Charles Mungoshi**

Intense blue morning  
promising early heat  
and later in the afternoon,  
heavy rain.

The bright chips  
fly from the sharp axe  
for some distance through the air,  
arc,  
and eternities later,  
settle down in showers  
on the dewy grass.

It is a big log:  
but when you are fourteen  
big logs  
are what you want.

The wood gives off  
a sweet nose-cleansing odour  
which (unlike sawdust)  
doesn't make one sneeze.

It sends up a thin spiral  
of smoke which later straightens  
and flutes out  
to the distant sky: a signal  
of some sort,  
or a sacrificial prayer.

The wood hisses,  
The sparks fly.  
And when the sun  
finally shows up  
in the East like some  
latecomer to a feast  
I have got two cobs of maize  
ready for it.

I tell the sun to come share  
with me the roasted maize  
and the sun just winks  
like a grown-up.

So I go ahead, taking big  
alternative bites:  
one for the sun,  
one for me.  
This one for the sun,  
this one for me:  
till the cobs  
are just two little skeletons  
in the sun.

## Question Two

- a) Scan the sonnets below and write out their respective rhyme scheme. [14]  
b) Classify them accordingly and justify your classification. [16]

### 1. "Anthem to Doomed Youth"

What passing bells for these who die as cattle?  
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
Can patter out their hasty orisons.  
No mockeries for them from prayers or bells  
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs –  
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;  
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?  
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes  
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.  
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;  
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,  
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

### 2. "God's Grandeur"

The world is charged with the grandeur of God  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;  
    There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
    Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs –  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
    World broods with warm breast and with ah! Bright wings.

### 3. "Sonnet 73"

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,  
But came the waves and washed it away;  
Agayne I wrote it with a second hand,  
But came the tyde, and made my paynes his prey.  
"Vayne man, sayd she, "that doest in vaine assay,  
A mortal thing so to immortalize,  
For I my selve shall lyke to this decay,  
And eek my name bee wiped out lykewize."  
"Not so," quod I, "let baser things devize  
To dy in dust, but you shall live by fame;  
My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,  
And in the heavens write your glorious name.  
Where when as death shall all the world subdew,  
Our love shall live, and later life renew."

### 4. "The Soldier"

If I should die, think only this of me:  
    That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
    In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
    Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
    Washed by the rivers, blessed by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
    A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
    Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
    And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
    In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

### Question Three

- a) Read the poem below and briefly comment on the situation it presents. [5]
- b) Identify the poem's speaker or persona. [2]
- c) Identify its subgenre. [3]
- d) Support your identification by citing and discussing four examples from the poem. [20]

#### **"My Story Is on the Leaves"** Sarah Mkhonza

Write my story on the trees  
Dig it out from down there  
Where it lies with me in the grave  
Spread the red ochre on the trees  
Powder them with red  
And write on every leaf.

I want to rustle in the wind  
My welts like veins on a leaf  
Written on all the mountains  
For I no longer live contained

Plant me on every meadow  
Like grass I want to sway  
Cast me on the rivers  
My leaves floating on the river  
Going into all corners  
That float undirected  
Like leaves after a flood  
For they cluster on the banks  
Like confused thoughts  
Disturbing sad stories  
Knowing the killer of their teller

Tell my story daily  
Wash my tears off me  
For I died too young  
To live and leave the very world  
That buries my story  
Here in silence from all

They will talk to the wind  
When they see storied trees  
That once grew on a branch  
That beat me and scarred me  
And left me bleeding on the earth

Till to death off I went  
Only to be revived  
In the words of the dead  
Who are speaking in the trees

Make up what went down  
My face, my head, on the crown  
Of tall trees and short ones  
Tell of my muffled cries with dignity  
The way my corpse went down  
Leaving an unmoving silence  
To be revived by you

#### Question Four

Read the extracts below and answer the questions that follow:

1

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,  
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven, like a ghost from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
Pestilence stricken multitudes: O Thou,  
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

2

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;  
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
With sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
Until they think warm days will never cease;  
For Summer has o'erbrimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?

- a) Identify the extracts' respective subgenre(s). [6]
- b) Support your answer with at least four examples from the extracts. [24]