

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
SECOND SEMESTER EXAMINATION, MAY 2013

COURSE NAME: A Study of Poetry

COURSE CODE: ENG206 / IDE-ENG206

TIME ALLOWED: Two Hours

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Answer **Question One**, plus one other question (two questions in all).
2. Read the instructions carefully to avoid giving irrelevant answers.
3. Make sure you proofread your work to avoid losing marks due to grammatical and conventional errors.
4. Each question carries 30 marks.
5. This paper is 7 pages long, cover page included.

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Question 1

Choose ONE poem below and discuss how the **emotional state of the persona**, the **situation it presents** and the **poetic and literary devices it uses** contribute to its overall meaning and form.
[30]

“Beatings” by Roger McGough

My father beats me up
Just like his father did
And granddad he was beaten
By great-granddad as a kid

From generation to generation 5
A poisoned apple passed along
Domestic daily cruelty
No one thinking it was wrong.

And it was:

Not the cursing and the bruising 10
The frustration and the fear
A normal child can cope with that
It grows easier by the year

But the ignorance, believing
That the child is somehow owned 15
Property paid for
Violence condoned.

“African Grass” Shimmer Chinodya

Grass grows here, enough
To thatch a thousand roofs.
Tall khaki African grass
Two heads taller than I, laden
With beads of dew 5
In the early morning. Shove armfuls aside
To pass.

Grass caressing my bare thighs
Sweeping past me, rustling softly
like lovers. 10
Adam and Eve once walked here
Naked and innocent in this wild savannah;
When the world was young

Question 2

Using the sonnets below for reference, discuss **everything you know** about the sonnet form. [30]

1. "In Bondage" Claude McKay

I would be wandering in distant fields
Where man, and bird, and beast, lives leisurely,
And the old earth is kind, and ever yields
Her goodly gifts to all her children free;
Where life is fairer, lighter, less demanding, 5
And boys and girls have time and space for play
Before they come to years of understanding –
Somewhere I would be singing, far away.
For life is greater than the thousand wars
Men wage for it in their insatiate lust, 10
And will remain like the eternal stars,
When all that shines today is drift and dust.

But I am bound with you in your mean graves,
O Black men, simple slaves of ruthless slaves.

2. "Putting in the Seed" Robert Frost

You come to fetch me from my work tonight
When supper's on the table, and we'll see
If I can leave off burying the white
Soft petals from the apple tree
(Soft petals, yes, but not so barren quite, 5
mingled with these, smooth bean and wrinkled pea).
And go along with you ere you lose sight
Of what you came for and become like me,
Slave to a springtime passion for the earth.
How Love burns through the Putting in the Seed 10
On through the watching for that early birth
When, just as the soil tarnishes with weed,
The sturdy seedling with arched body comes
Shouldering its way and shedding the earth crumbs.

3. "How Do I Love Thee?" Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and the ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's 5
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
 I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
 I love thee with the passion put to use
 In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith. 10
 I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
 With my lost saints, - I love thee with the breath,
 Smiles, tears, of all my life! - and, if God choose,
 I shall but love thee better after death.

4. Sonnet 1

Happy ye leaves* when as those lilly hands,	<i>pages of a book</i>
Which hold my life in their dead doing* might,	<i>killing</i>
Shall handle you and hold in loves soft bands*,	<i>bonds</i>
Lyke captives trembling at the victors sight.	
And happy lines, on which with starry light,	
Those lamping* eyes will deigne sometimes look	<i>flashing</i>
And reade the sorrowes of my dying spright*,	<i>spirit</i>
Written with teares in harts close* bleeding book.	<i>secret</i>
And happy rymes bath'd in the sacred brooke	
Of Helicon* whence she derived is,	<i>name of a river</i>
When ye behold that Angels blessed looke,	
My soules long lacked foode, my heavens blis.	
Leaves, lines, and rymes, seeke her to please alone,	
Whom if ye please, I care for other none.	

Question 3

Discuss with the aid of examples why the poem below qualifies as a (literary) ballad. [30]

“Ballad of Birmingham” Dudley Randall

(Four black children were killed when the Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, was bombed in 1963).

“Mother dear, may I go downtown
 Instead of out to play,
 And march the streets of Birmingham
 In a Freedom March today?”

“No, baby, no, you may not go, 5
 For the dogs are fierce and wild,
 And clubs and hoses, guns and jails
 Aren't good for a little child.”

“But, mother, I won't be alone.

Other children will go with me, 10
And march the streets of Birmingham
To make our country free.”

“No, baby, no, you may not go,
For I fear those guns will fire.
But you may go to church instead 15
And sing in the children’s choir.”

She has combed and brushed her night-dark hair,
And bathed rose petal sweet,
And drawn white gloves on her small brown hands,
And white shoes on her feet. 20

The mother smiled to know her child
Was safe in a sacred place.

But that smile was the last smile
To come upon her face.

For when she heard the explosion, 25
Her eyes grew wet and wild.
She raced through the streets of Birmingham
Calling for her child.

She clawed through bits of glass and brick,
Then lifted out a shoe. 30
“Oh, here’s the shoe my baby wore,
But, baby, where are you?”

Question 4

Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow it:

“**Hurry Up to It**” Sipho Sepamla

By all means
Get married,
That’s been the idea
These past ten years

And so, 5
You must hurry,
Hurry up for your sake and mine
For age can move ahead of wishes.

You say
 You love her 10
 Love her face:
 Eyes brighter than house lights
 Nostrils wider than windows
 Limbs firmer than men's hearts.

But son, 15
 Make certain she is a desirable person;
 For love is:
 Knowing the girl's homeland,
 Knowing her papers are right,
 Knowing she has permission to marry, 20
 And above all
 Love is:
 Knowing if you can make children;
 For remember, son,
 You will be required 25
 To buzz thoughts of manhood
 In a man's hostel;
 She will be expected
 To nurse the ache
 Of an ill-used womb 30
 In a woman's hostel.

Hurry up
 You need to register
 For a certified permit
 To have sex – 35
 In good time!

- a) Discuss how the poem uses sarcasm to mock the systematic suppression of blacks in South Africa under apartheid. [15]
- b) Cite and discuss four aspects which render the poem free verse. [15]