

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATIONS  
JULY, 2017

COURSE CODE:           ENG216 / ENG206  
COURSE NAME:         A STUDY OF POETRY  
DURATION:             TWO HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Answer 2 questions.
2. Make sure that you adhere to poetic and other conventions.
3. Make sure that you proofread your work to eliminate grammatical errors which may lead to loss of marks.
4. This paper is 5 pages long, cover page included.

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

## Question 1

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

### **“Facts”** Thomas Carper

It is important that a son should know  
His role, and should be told the woman’s role,  
And know it is effeminate to show  
Emotion, or the least lapse of control  
That might mean caring for another man –  
Even a father. “Never say, ‘I love  
You,’” I was told. If ever tears began  
After an argument, he would reprove  
Me mockingly: “Only fags cry.” The first  
Time that he said this to me, I misheard  
The slangy phrase, but knew my tears were worst  
Of possible betrayals. Yet that word  
Stays with me, and when my father shall die,  
No man will weep because only facts cry.

- a) Write in descending order the last word of each line and thereafter scan the sonnet’s end-line rhyme. [7]
- b) Write down the sonnet’s rhyme scheme, internal division and type. [7]
- c) In a paragraph, highlight the concept of manhood which the speaker’s father holds. [5]  
Does the speaker agree with his father? Discuss briefly. [3]
- d) Does the sonnet have a volta? If so, where does it occur and what is its purpose? [3]
- e) How did the poem derive its title? [3]
- f) In one word, indicate the sonnet’s tone. [2]

## Question 2

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

### **“The Old Woman’s Message”** Kumalau Tawali

Stick these words in your hair  
And take them to Polin and Manuai  
my sons:  
the ripe fruit falls and returns

5 to the trunk – its mother.  
 But my sons, forgetful of me,  
 are like fruit borne by birds.  
 I see the sons of other women  
 returning. What is in their minds?  
 10 Let them keep the price of their labour  
 but their eyes are mine.  
 I have little breath left  
 to wait for them.  
 I am returning to childhood.  
 15 My stomach goes to my back  
 my hands are like broom sticks,  
 my legs can fit in the sand crab's hole.  
 I am dry like a carved image  
 only my head is God's.  
 20 already I sway like a dry falling leaf  
 I see with my hands –  
 oh tell Pōhīn and Manuai to hurry  
 and come to my death feast.

- a) Write a paragraph long summary of the situation presented by the poem and state its theme. [7]
- b) Discuss how the figurative expressions found in lines 4-7 vivify the poem's meaning. [4]
- c) Explain the meaning of lines 10-11; 19, 21. [4]
- d) Quote the lines which indicate that the speaker's neglect by her sons has affected her physically. [3]
- e) In one sentence, state whether the poem has had any impact on you and why. [2]
- f) Identify at least 2 poetic devices or techniques used in the poem. [2]
- g) Is the poem free verse or conventional? [2] Support your answer by quoting three examples from the poem. [6]

### Question 3

Identify and discuss the characteristics of an elegy *specifically* reflected in the poem below. [30]

“**Nicholson, Suddenly**” Norman Nicholson

So Norman Nicholson is dead!  
 I saw him just three weeks ago  
 Standing outside a chemist's shop,  
 His smile alight, his cheeks aglow.

I'd never seen him looking finer:  
'I can't complain at all,' he said,  
'But for a touch of the old angina.'  
Then hobbled in for his prescription.  
Born in one town, we'd made our start,  
Though not in any way related,  
Two years and three streets apart,  
Under one nominal description:  
'Nicholson, Norman', entered, dated,  
In registers of birth and school.  
In 1925 we sat  
At the same desk in the same class –  
Me, chatty, natty, nervous, thin,  
Quick for the turn of the teacher's chin;  
Silent, shy and smiling, he,  
And fleshed enough for two of me –  
An un-identical near twin  
Who never pushed his presence in  
When he could keep it out.

For seven  
Years after that each neither knew,  
Nor cared much, where or even whether  
The other lived. And then, together,  
We nearly booked out berths to heaven:  
Like a church weathercock, *I* crew  
A graveyard cough and went to bed  
For fifteen months; *he* dropped a lead  
Pipe on his foot and broke them both.  
They wheeled him home to his young wife  
Half-crippled for the rest of his life.  
In three decades or more since then  
We met, perhaps, two years in ten  
In shops or waiting for a bus;  
Greeted each other without a fuss,  
Just : 'How do, Norman?' – Didn't matter  
Which of us spoke – we said the same.  
And now and then we'd stop to natter:  
'How's the leg?' or 'How's the chest?' –  
He a crock below the waist  
And me a crock above it.

Blessed  
Both with a certain home-bred gumption,  
We stumped our way across the cobbles

Of half a life-time's bumps and roughness –  
He short in step and me in wind,  
Yet with a kind of wiry toughness.  
Each rather sorry for the other,  
We chose the road that suited best –  
Neither inscribed the sky with flame;  
Neither disgraced the other's name.  
And now, perhaps, one day a year  
The town will seem for half a minute  
A place with one less person in it,  
When I remember I'll not meet  
My unlike double in the street.  
Postmen will mix us up no more,  
Taking my letters to his door,  
For which I ought to raise a cheer.  
But can I stir myself to thank  
My lucky stars, when there's a blank  
Where his stars were? For I'm left here,  
Wearing his name as well as mine,  
Finding the new one doesn't fit,  
And though I'll make the best of it,  
Sad that such things had to be –  
But glad, still, that it wasn't me.

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