

**UNIVERSITY OF BOLTON**

**SCHOOL OF THE ARTS**

**ENGLISH STUDIES**

**SEMESTER 1 EXAMINATIONS 2018/2019**

**PERSPECTIVES OF POETRY**

**MODULE NO: EST 5003**

**Date: 17 January 2019**

**Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm**

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**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES:**

**Instructions over the page**

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University of Bolton  
School of the Arts  
English Studies  
Semester 1 Examinations 2018/2019  
Perspectives of Poetry  
Module No. EST5003

**Write a short essay that gives a close reading to one of the following four pre-1940s poems. Remember: a close reading means to analyze the poem in fine detail, to consider the ways in which form and content together are working towards meaning.**

**The Voice** by Thomas Hardy

Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me,  
Saying that now you are not as you were  
When you had changed from the one who was all to me,  
But as at first, when our day was fair.

Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then,  
Standing as when I drew near to the town  
Where you would wait for me: yes, as I knew you then,  
Even to the original air-blue gown!

Or is it only the breeze, in its listlessness  
Travelling across the wet mead to me here,  
You being ever dissolved to wan wistlessness,  
Heard no more again far or near?

Thus I; faltering forward,  
Leaves around me falling,  
Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward,  
And the woman calling.

**To a Steam Roller** by Marianne Moore

The illustration  
is nothing to you without the application.  
You lack half wit. You crush all the particles down  
into close conformity, and then walk back and forth on them.

Sparkling chips of rock  
are crushed down to the level of the parent block.  
Were not 'impersonal judgment in aesthetic  
matters, a metaphysical impossibility,' you

might fairly achieve  
it. As for butterflies, I can hardly conceive  
of one's attending upon you, but to question  
the congruence of the complement is vain, if it exists.

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**[Through these pale cold days]** by Isaac Rosenberg

Through these pale cold days  
What dark faces burn  
Out of three thousand years,  
And their wild eyes yearn,

While underneath their brows  
Like waifs their spirits grope  
For the pools of Hebron again –  
For Lebanon's summer slope.

They leave these blond still days  
In dust behind their tread  
They see with living eyes  
How long they have been dead.

**O What Is That Sound** by W.H. Auden

O what is that sound which so thrills the ear  
Down in the valley drumming, drumming?  
Only the scarlet soldiers, dear,  
The soldiers coming.

O what is that light I see flashing so clear  
Over the distance brightly, brightly?  
Only the sun on their weapons, dear,  
As they step lightly.

O what are they doing with all that gear,  
What are they doing this morning, this morning?  
Only their usual manoeuvres, dear,  
Or perhaps a warning.

O why have they left the road down there,  
Why are they suddenly wheeling, wheeling?  
Perhaps a change in their orders, dear.  
Why are you kneeling?

O haven't they stopped for the doctor's care,  
Haven't they reined their horses, their horses?  
Why, they are none of them wounded, dear,  
None of the forces.

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O is it the parson they want, with white hair,  
Is it the parson, is it, is it?  
No, they are passing his gateway, dear,  
Without a visit.

O it must be the farmer who lives so near.  
It must be the farmer so cunning, so cunning?  
They have passed the farmyard already, dear,  
And now they are running.

O where are you going? Stay with me here!  
Were the vows you swore deceiving, deceiving?  
No, I promised to love you, dear,  
But I must be leaving.

O it's broken the lock and splintered the door,  
O it's the gate where they're turning, turning;  
Their boots are heavy on the floor  
And their eyes are burning.

PAST EXAMINATION PAPER

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**Write a short essay that gives a close reading to one of the following four Post-1940s poems. Remember: a close reading means to analyze the poem in fine detail, to consider the ways in which form and content together are working towards meaning.**

**Harriet** by Robert Lowell

A repeating fly, blueback, thumbthick—so gross,  
it seems apocalyptic in our house—  
whams back and forth across the nursery bed  
manned by a madhouse of stuffed animals,  
not one a fighter. It is like a plane  
dusting apple orchards or Arabs on the screen—  
one of the mighty...one of the helpless. It  
bumbles and bumps its brow on this and that,  
making a short, unhealthy life the shorter.  
I kill it, and another instant's added  
to the horrifying mortmain of  
ephemera: keys, drift, sea-urchin shells,  
you packrat off with joy...a dead fly swept  
under the carpet, wrinkling to fulfillment.

**Talking In Bed** by Philip Larkin

Talking in bed ought to be easiest,  
Lying together there goes back so far,  
An emblem of two people being honest.

Yet more and more time passes silently.  
Outside, the wind's incomplete unrest  
Builds and disperses clouds in the sky,

And dark towns heap up on the horizon.  
None of this cares for us. Nothing shows why  
At this unique distance from isolation

It becomes still more difficult to find  
Words at once true and kind,  
Or not untrue and not unkind.

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**Sandpiper** by Elizabeth Bishop

The roaring alongside he takes for granted,  
and that every so often the world is bound to shake.  
He runs, he runs to the south, finical, awkward,  
in a state of controlled panic, a student of Blake.

The beach hisses like fat. On his left, a sheet  
of interrupting water comes and goes  
and glazes over his dark and brittle feet.  
He runs, he runs straight through it, watching his toes.

—Watching, rather, the spaces of sand between them  
where (no detail too small) the Atlantic drains  
rapidly backwards and downwards. As he runs,  
he stares at the dragging grains.

The world is a mist. And then the world is  
minute and vast and clear. The tide  
is higher or lower. He couldn't tell you which.  
His beak is focussed; he is preoccupied,

looking for something, something, something.  
Poor bird, he is obsessed!  
The millions of grains are black, white, tan, and gray  
mixed with quartz grains, rose and amethyst.

**Morning Song** by Sylvia Plath

Love set you going like a fat gold watch.  
The midwife slapped your footsoles, and your bald cry  
Took its place among the elements.

Our voices echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue.  
In a drafty museum, your nakedness  
Shadows our safety. We stand round blankly as walls.

I'm no more your mother  
Than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow  
Effacement at the wind's hand.

All night your moth-breath  
Flickers among the flat pink roses. I wake to listen:  
A far sea moves in my ear.

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One cry, and I stumble from bed, cow-heavy and floral  
In my Victorian nightgown.  
Your mouth opens clean as a cat's. The window square

Whitens and swallows its dull stars. And now you try  
Your handful of notes;  
The clear vowels rise like balloons.

**END OF QUESTIONS**

PAST EXAMINATION PAPER