





They look upon his eyes  
Fill'd with deep surprise:  
And wondering behold, 35  
A spirit arm'd in gold.

On his head a crown  
On his shoulders down,  
Flow'd his golden hair.  
Gone was all their care. 40

Follow me he said,  
Weep not for the maid:  
In my palace deep,  
Lyca lies asleep.

Then they followed, 45  
Where the vision led:  
And saw their sleeping child,  
Among tygers wild.

To this day they dwell  
In a lonely dell 50  
Nor fear the wolvish howl,  
Nor the lions growl.

SYLVIA PLATH: *Ariel*

- 2 **Either** (a) Referring to **two** poems in your answer, discuss ways in which Plath presents extreme emotional states.
- Or** (b) Comment closely on how the structure and language of the following poem develop its meaning.

*The Night Dances*

A smile fell in the grass.

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Nowhere.

*Songs of Ourselves*

- 3 **Either** (a) ‘... Woman! Rise, assert thy right!’

In the light of this quotation, discuss ways in which **two** poems present a woman's voice.

- Or** (b) Comment closely on the following poem, considering ways in which its language and imagery present the complexities of a relationship.

*Marrysong*

He never learned her, quite. Year after year  
 that territory, without seasons, shifted  
 under his eye. An hour he could be lost  
 in the walled anger of her quarried hurt  
 on turning, see cool water laughing where 5  
 the day before there were stones in her voice.  
 He charted. She made wilderness again.  
 Roads disappeared. The map was never true.  
 Wind brought him rain sometimes, tasting of sea –  
 and suddenly she would change the shape of shores 10  
 faultlessly calm. All, all was each day new;  
 the shadows of her love shortened or grew  
 like trees seen from an unexpected hill,  
 new country at each jaunty helpless journey.  
 So he accepted that geography, constantly strange. 15  
 Wondered. Stayed home increasingly to find  
 his way among the landscapes of her mind.

Dennis Scott

## Section B: Prose

HENRY JAMES: *Washington Square*

- 4 **Either** (a) 'At a late stage of the novel, Catherine recognises her aunt's meddlesome folly.'

In the light of this, discuss the role and characterisation of Mrs Penniman.

- Or** (b) Comment closely on the following passage, paying particular attention to ways in which it presents Dr Sloper's attitudes to Catherine and Morris Townsend.

It was a regular custom with the family in Washington Square to go and spend Sunday evening at Mrs Almond's. On the Sunday after the conversation I have just narrated this custom was not intermitted; and on this occasion, towards the middle of the evening, Doctor Sloper found a reason to withdraw to the library with his brother-in-law, to talk over a matter of business. He was absent some twenty minutes, and when he came back into the circle, which was enlivened by the presence of several friends of the family, he saw that Morris Townsend had come in, and had lost as little time as possible in seating himself on a small sofa beside Catherine. In the large room, where several different groups had been formed, and the hum of voices and of laughter was loud, these two young persons might confabulate, as the Doctor phrased to it himself, without attracting attention. He saw in a moment, however, that his daughter was painfully conscious of his own observation. She sat motionless, with her eyes bent down, staring at her open fan, deeply flushed, shrinking together as if to minimize the indiscretion of which she confessed herself guilty. 5

The Doctor almost pitied her. Poor Catherine was not defiant; she had no genius for bravado, and as she felt that her father viewed her companion's attentions with an unsympathizing eye, there was nothing but discomfort for her in the accident of seeming to challenge him. The Doctor felt, indeed, so sorry for her that he turned away, to spare her the sense of being watched; and he was so intelligent a man that, in his thoughts, he rendered a sort of poetic justice to her situation. 10

'It must be deucedly pleasant for a plain, inanimate girl like that to have a beautiful young fellow come and sit down beside her, and whisper to her that he is her slave – if that is what this one whispers. No wonder she likes it, and that she thinks me a cruel tyrant; which of course she does, though she is afraid – she hasn't the animation necessary – to admit it to herself. Poor old Catherine!' mused the Doctor; 'I verily believe she is capable of defending me when Townsend abuses me!' 15

And the force of this reflection, for the moment, was such in making him feel the natural opposition between his point of view and that of an infatuated child, that he said to himself that he was perhaps after all taking things too hard, and crying out before he was hurt. He must not condemn Morris Townsend unheard. He had a great aversion to taking things too hard; he thought that half the discomfort and many of the disappointments of life come from it; and for an instant he asked himself whether, possibly, he did not appear ridiculous to this intelligent young man, whose private perception of incongruities he suspected of being keen. At the end of a quarter of an hour Catherine had got rid of him, and Townsend was now standing before the fireplace in conversation with Mrs Almond. 20

'We will try him again,' said the Doctor. And he crossed the room and joined his sister and her companion, making her a sign that she should leave the young man to him. She presently did so, while Morris looked at him, smiling, without a sign of evasiveness in his affable eye. 25

'He's amazingly conceited!' thought the Doctor; and then he said, aloud, 'I am told you are looking out for a position.' 30

'Oh, a position is more than I should presume to call it,' Morris Townsend answered. 'That sounds so fine. I should like some quiet work – something to turn an honest penny.'

'What sort of thing should you prefer?'

'Do you mean what am I fit for? Very little, I am afraid. I have nothing but my good right arm, as they say in the melodramas.'

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'You are too modest,' said the Doctor. 'In addition to your good right arm you have your subtle brain. I know nothing of you but what I see; but I see by your physiognomy that you are extremely intelligent.'

'Ah,' Townsend murmured, 'I don't know what to answer when you say that. You advise me, then, not to despair?'

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And he looked at his interlocutor as if the question might have a double meaning. The Doctor caught the look and weighed it a moment before he replied. 'I should be very sorry to admit that a robust and well-disposed young man need ever despair. If he doesn't succeed in one thing, he can try another. Only, I should add, he should choose his line with discretion.'

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Chapter 9



- 5 **Either** (a) 'My American life has been such a disappointment.'

Discuss ways in which the narrator's perception of America is presented in the novel.

- Or** (b) Discuss in detail the writing of the following passage, commenting on ways in which it presents the Mother's strength and determination in her fight with the ghost.

She did not know whether she had fallen asleep or not when she heard a rushing coming out from under the bed. Cringes of fear seized her soles as something alive, rumbling, climbed the foot of the bed. It rolled over her and landed bodily on her chest. There it sat. It breathed airlessly, pressing her, sapping her. 'Oh, no. A Sitting Ghost,' she thought. She pushed against the creature to lever herself out from underneath it, but it absorbed this energy and got heavier. Her fingers and palms became damp, shrinking at the ghost's thick short hair like an animal's coat, which slides against warm solidity as human flesh slides against muscles and bones. She grabbed clutches of fur and pulled. She pinched the skin the hair grew out of and gouged into it with her fingernails. She forced her hands to hunt out eyes, furtive somewhere in the hair, but could not find any. She lifted her head to bite but fell back exhausted. The mass thickened. 5

She could see the knife, which was catching the moonlight, near the lamp. Her arm had become an immensity, though, too burdensome to lift. If she could only move it to the edge of the bed, perhaps it would fall off and reach the knife. As if feeding on her very thoughts, the ghost spread itself over her arm. 15

A high ringing sound somewhere had grown loud enough so that she heard it, and she understood that it had started humming at the edge of her brain before the ghost appeared. She breathed shallowly, panting as in childbirth, and could not shout out. The room sang, its air electric with the ringing; surely someone would hear and come help. 20

Earlier in the night, on the other side of the ringing, she could hear women's voices talking. But soon their conversations had ceased. The school slept. She could feel that the souls had gone travelling; there was a lightness not in the dormitory during the day. Without looking at the babies on her back or in their cribs, she had always been able to tell – after the rocking and singing and bedtime stories and keeping still not to startle them – the moment when they fell asleep. A tensing goes out of their bodies, out of the house. Beyond the horror in the ghost room, she felt this release throughout the dormitory. No one would come to see how she was doing. 25

'You will not win, Boulder,' she spoke to the ghost. 'You do not belong here. And I will see to it that you leave. When morning comes, only one of us will control this room, Ghost, and that one will be me. I will be marching its length and width; I will be dancing, not sliding and creeping like you. I will go right out that door, but I'll come back. Do you know what gift I will bring you? I'll get fire, Ghost. You made a mistake haunting a medical school. We have cabinets full of alcohol, laboratories full. We have a communal kitchen with human-sized jars of oil and cooking fat, enough to burn for a month without our skipping a single fried meal. I will pour alcohol into my washbucket, and I'll set fire to it. Ghost, I will burn you out. I will swing the bucket across the ceiling. Then from the kitchen my friends will come with the lard; when we fire it, the smoke will fill every crack and corner. Where will you hide, Ghost? I will make this room so clean, no ghost will ever visit here again. 30

'I do not give in,' she said. 'There is no pain you can inflict that I cannot endure. You're wrong if you think I'm afraid of you. You're no mystery to me. I've heard of you Sitting Ghosts before. Yes, people have lived to tell about you. You kill babies, you cowards. You have no power over a strong woman. You are no more dangerous than a nesting cat. My dog sits on my feet more heavily than you can. You think 35

this is suffering? I can make my ears ring louder by taking aspirin. Are these all tricks you have, Ghost? Sitting and ringing? That is nothing. A Broom Ghost can do better. You cannot even assume an interesting shape. Merely a boulder. A hairy butt boulder. You must not be a ghost at all. Of course. There are no such things as ghosts.'

*Shaman*

- 6 **Either** (a) Compare the presentation of violence in **two** stories from the selection.
- Or** (b) Paying close attention to the writing of the following passage, discuss ways in which it presents Mr Mitra's view of the gathering.

He felt bored; and he noticed a few others, too, some of whom he knew, looking out of place. Shraddh ceremonies weren't right without their mixture of convivial pleasure and grief; and he couldn't feel anything as complete as grief. He'd known Anjali slightly; how well do you know your wife's distant relations, after all? He'd known more about her academic record, one or two charming anecdotes to do with her success at school, her decent first-class degree, and about her husband, Gautam Poddar, diversifying into new areas of business, than about her. 5

'Saab?'

Thank God! A man was standing before him with a platter of sandesh – he picked up one; it was small and soft; he took a tiny bite. It must be from Banchharam or Nepal Sweets; it had that texture. There was another man a little farther away, with a tray of Fanta and Coca-Cola. Mr Mitra hesitated for a second and then walked towards the man. He groped for a bottle that was less cold than the others; he had a sore throat developing. 10

'Mr Mitra!'

There was a man smiling widely at him, a half-empty Coke bottle with a straw in one hand. 15

'I hope you remember me; or do I need to introduce myself?'

'No, I don't remember you; but I spoke to someone at the club just the other day who looks very like you, a Mr Amiya Sarbadhikari,' said Mr Mitra jovially, taking a sip of faintly chilled Fanta. A large painting of a middle-aged woman holding flowers faced them. 20

They talked equably of recent changes in their companies, catching up from where they'd left it in their last exchange; then to their children, and a brief disagreement about whether civil engineering had a future as a career today. 25

'Oh, I think so,' said Mr Sarbadhikari, 'certainly in the developing world, in the Middle East, if not in the West.' His Coke bottle was now almost empty; he held it symbolically, putting off finishing the dregs to a moment later. There was an uneasiness in their conversation, though, as if they were avoiding something; it was their being here they were avoiding. Of course, people never remembered the dead at shraddh ceremonies; they talked about other things; but that forgetfulness occurred effortlessly. In this case, the avoidance was strategic and self-conscious; the conversation tripped from subject to subject. 30

'Mr Mitra, all this Coke has swollen my bladder,' said Sarbadhikari suddenly, 'and, actually, from the moment I stepped in ...' 35

From his manner it looked like he was familiar with Talukdar's flat. Gathering the folds of his dhuti in one hand, he turned histrionically and padded off in the direction of a bathroom door. A child, the only one among the people who'd come, ran from one end of the hall to the other. There were a few people on the balcony; Mr Mitra decided to join them. 40

'I told them,' a woman was saying to a companion, 'this is no way to run a shop; if you don't exchange a purchase, say so, but don't sell damaged goods.'

He quietly put down the bottle of Fanta on the floor. There wasn't much of a view; there was the wall, which ran towards the street you couldn't see, and another five-storeyed building with little, pretty balconies. Below him was the porch to the left, and the driveway, which seemed quite close. A young woman, clearly not a maidservant, was hanging towels from the railing in one of the balconies opposite. 45

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