



MACHAKOS UNIVERSITY

University Examinations 2018/2019

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES

APRIL SESSSION EXAMINATION FOR

BACHELOR OF EDUCATION

ALT 400: LITERARY AESTHETICS

DATE: SCHOOLBASED

TIME:

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer Question One and Any Other Two.

1. a) Using relevant examples, demonstrate your understanding of literary aesthetics.
(10 marks)
- b) Discuss the concept of mimesis as variously interpreted by Plato and Aristotle.
(20 marks)
2. Using David Orr's "Daniel" overleaf, demonstrate your understanding of literary language.
(20 marks)
3. How does the title "Burial" in Koleka Putuma's text overleaf contribute to the understanding of content?
(20 marks)
4. Discuss the literary beauty, if any, in Kevin Wilson's "Educating Lilian" overleaf. (20 marks)
5. Explain the supervenient theory that proposes to read a literary work through aesthetic judgement.
(20 marks)

Text A
Daniel

--by David Orr

On the day we moved in, the pings, bumps, and snaps
Were scary, it's true, but probably normal;
A house accepting new patterns of weight
With protest, the way no conviction goes gently.
We laughed a little, and called it "our spirit."

Later that night, when the power conked out
And the kids were crying, the ghost got a name,
"Daniel," and a history of whispered exploits,
All of them harmless, like nursery rhymes,
Or like the little fibs we tell ourselves
To explain why this or that has led to suffering.

Pretty soon, we were using him for everything.
When the Christmas tree fell, it was "Daniel";
When my wife lost her ring, it was "Daniel";
When the kids forgot to feed the goldfish
And it turned up dead, its eyes silvered over
Like water shadowed under sheets of ice,

Well, that became Daniel too, which was curious;
And pauses me now as I make the long walk
Down the hall to the bathroom in darkness,
And hear, in soft concert, the sound of my footfalls
Answered at once by my children's voices

Still calling to Daniel behind their door.

Source: Poetry Foundation Magazine (December 2007 Issue)

Text B

Burial

By Koleka Putuma

We took turns to bury each other, excited to be underneath the weight of sand in our bathing suits, with just our tiny heads peering through the top. Whoever played the mother of the deceased would wail hysterically. We all wanted a chance to play the mother of the deceased, so we could sob dramatically and throw our small bodies over the sand and seashell coffin. The deceased would always come to life from too much giggling, we all giggled through the procession. At the funeral we were long-lost aunts and uncles and cousins and neighbours who have not been home in years. We fought over who would be the custodians of the castles we built. Those who were not given property shares threw tantrums and dismissed playing altogether and went swimming or collecting shells, or went about building homes of their own. Acquiring land was easy then. Owning something you had built was simple then. The castle bulldozed by the sea was something we mourned and forgot in the morning. Letting go of what you believed belonged to you was easy then. Coming home then, as long-lost aunts, uncles, cousins and neighbours was not complicated or loaded with years of unanswered questions. We spoke without choking. We spoke without the burden of grief or responsibilities. Coffins could be dismantled. We died and rose again. We were fragile and immortal. We played God. Came and went as we pleased. Life and death then was a game we had a remote for.

--from *Collective Amnesia*, p.95 (2017)

Text C

Educating Lillian

By Kevin Wilson

I grew up in the valley of that mountain, just poor enough that I could imagine a way out. I lived with my mom and a rotating cast of her boyfriends, my father either dead or just checked out. My mother was so vague about him, not a single picture. It seemed like maybe some Greek god had assumed the form of a stallion and impregnated my mother before returning to his home atop a mountain. More likely it was just a pervert in one of the fancy homes that my mom cleaned. I preferred to think he was dead, that he wholly was incapable of saving me from my unhappiness.

This school, the Iron Mountain Girls Preparatory School, offered one or two full scholarships each year to girls in the valley who showed promise. And, though it might be hard to believe now, I showed a fucking lot of promise. I had spent my childhood gritting my teeth and smashing everything to bits in

the name of excellence. I taught myself to read at three years old, and when I was eight, my mother put me in charge of our finances, the weekly budgeting from the envelopes of cash that she brought home at night. I made straight A's. At first, it was purely out of an instinctual desire to be superlative, as if I suspected that I was a superhero and was merely testing the limits of my powers. But once teachers started to tell me about Iron Mountain and the scholarship, information that my mother could not have cared less about, I redirected my efforts. I didn't know that the school was just some ribbon that rich girls obtained on their way to a destined future. I thought it was a training ground for Amazons. I made other students cry at the spelling bee. I plagiarized scientific studies and dumbed them down just enough to win county science fairs. I memorized poems about Harlem and awkwardly recited them to my mom's boyfriends, who thought I was some weird demon speaking in tongues. I played point guard on the boys' traveling basketball team because there wasn't one for girls. I made people in my town, whether they were poor or middle-class, especially upper-middle-class, feel good, like I was something they could agree on, a sterling representative of this little backwoods county. I wasn't destined for greatness; I knew this. But I was figuring out how to steal it from someone stupid enough to relax their grip on it.

An excerpt from a forthcoming novel *Children Made of Fire* which tells the story of Lillian, whose life changes when she enrolls "at a fancy girl's school hidden on a mountain in the middle of nowhere."