



## Sixth Form Entrance Examination: English Literature

### Summary

The purpose of the examination is to provide you with an opportunity to show your literary understanding, and your ability to write in a clear and coherent style. Your response should take the form of one extended essay and the paper will offer you a choice of two questions. One of the options will always ask you to respond to a piece of unseen prose and the other will ask you to respond to an unseen poem.

### Sample Paper

Either,

#### Unseen Prose

*The Narrow Road to the Deep North* by Richard Flanagan was written in 2013. This part of the novel is set in 1940 in Adelaide, Australia, during the Second World War. Dorrigo, a military doctor, meets Amy (by chance) for the first time in a bookshop that is hosting a party.

'Dorrigo is both challenged and disturbed by Amy's interest in him'. In light of this statement, examine closely the following prose extract and make close reference to the writer's methods in your response.

(30 marks)

Her eyes burnt like the blue in a gas flame. They were ferocious things. For some moments her eyes were all he was aware of. And they were looking at him. But there was no look in them. It was as if she were just drinking him up. Was she assessing him? Judging him? He didn't know. Maybe it was this sureness that made him both resentful and unsure. He feared it was all some elaborate joke, and that in a moment she would burst out laughing and have her ring of men joining in, laughing at him. He took a step backwards, bumped into the bookcase and could retreat no more. He stood there, one hand jammed between him and the bookcase shelf, his body twisted at an awkward angle to her.

I saw you come into the bookshop, she said, smiling.

Afterwards, if asked to say what she looked like, he would have been stumped. It was the flower, he decided finally, something about her audacity in wearing a big red flower in her hair, stem tucked behind her ear, that summed her up. But that, he knew, really told you nothing at all about her.

Your eyes, she said suddenly.

He said nothing. In truth, he had no idea what to say. He had never heard anything so ridiculous. Eyes? And without meaning to, he found himself returning her stare, looking at her intently, drinking her up as she was him. She seemed not to care. There was some strange and unsettling intimacy, an inexplicable knowledge in this that shocked him – that he could just gaze all over a woman and she not give a damn as long as it was him looking at her.

It was as dizzying as it was bewildering. She seemed a series of slight flaws best expressed in a beauty spot above her right lip. And he understood that the sum of all these blemishes was somehow beauty, and there was about this beauty a power, and that power was at once conscious and unconscious. Perhaps, he resolved, she thinks her beauty allows her the right to have whatever she wants. Well, she would not have him.

So black, she said, now smiling. But I'm sure you get told that a lot.

No, he said.

It wasn't entirely true, but then no one had ever said it exactly how she had just said it. Something stopped him from turning away from her, from her outlandish talk, and walking out. He glanced at the ring of men at the far end of the bookcases. He had the unsettling sensation that she meant what she said, and that what she said was meant only for him.

Your flower, Dorrigo Evans said. It's –

He had no idea what the flower was.

Stolen, she said.

Or,

### Unseen Poetry

'The poets mixes feelings of anticipation with a sense of anxiety and denial.' In light of this statement, examine closely the following poem and make close reference to the writer's methods in your response.

(30 marks)

#### Love in a Life

I.	
Room after room,	1
I hunt the house through	
We inhabit together.	
Heart, fear nothing, for, heart, thou shalt find her—	
Next time, herself!—not the trouble behind her	5
Left in the curtain, the couch's perfume!	
As she brushed it, the cornice-wreath blossomed anew:	
Yon looking-glass gleamed at the wave of her feather.	
II.	
Yet the day wears,	
And door succeeds door;	10
I try the fresh fortune—	
Range the wide house from the wing to the centre.	
Still the same chance! She goes out as I enter.	
Spend my whole day in the quest,—who cares?	
But 'tis twilight, you see,—with such suites to explore,	15
Such closets to search, such alcoves to importune!	

Robert Browning