

# UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION – DECEMBER, 2015

COURSE CODE: ENG206 / IDE-ENG206

COURSE NAME: A STUDY OF POETRY

TIME ALLOWED: 2 HOURS

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read the instructions carefully before answering the questions.
2. Answer 2 questions; one from each section.
3. Each question is worth 30 marks.
4. Make sure you adhere to literary conventions to avoid loss of marks.
5. Make sure you proofread your work to eliminate grammatical and other errors.
6. The paper is 5 pages long, cover page included.

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

## SECTION A – Critical approaches to poetry appreciation

*Answer One question from this section.*

### Question 1

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

#### **“A Sudden Storm” Pius Oleghe**

The wind howls, the trees sway,  
The loose house-top sheets clatter and clang,  
The open window shuts with a bang,  
And the sky makes night of the day.

Helter-skelter the parents run,  
Pressed with a thousand minor cares:  
“Hey, you there, pack the house-wares!  
And where on earth’s my son?”

Home skip the little children:  
“Where have you been, you naughty boy?”  
The child can feel nothing but joy,  
For he loves the approach of the rain.

The streets clear, the houses fill,  
The noise gathers as children shout  
To rival the raging wind without,  
And naught that can move is still –

A bright flash! – a lighted plain;  
Then, from the once-black heavens,  
Accompanied by noise that deafens,  
Steadily pours the rain.

- In not more than 15 lines, summarise the situation presented by the poem. [7]
- Identify and discuss the figures of speech or images used by the poet to communicate his meaning, and the senses to which they appeal. [10]
- In not more than 2 lines, state the poem’s theme. [3]
- Is the poem free verse or conventional? [2]
- Support your answer to d above by briefly highlighting 4 aspects of its form. [8]

## Question 2

Using the two sonnets below as a point of departure, give a comprehensive account of the sonnet form – types, structure, rhyme scheme, form and meaning, volta, etc.:

### **“A Sonnet” John Milton**

When I consider how my light is spent  
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
And that one Talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent  
To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest he returning chide,  
Doth God exact day-labor, light deny'd  
I fondly ask. But Patience to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need  
Either man's work or his own gifts, who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best, his state  
Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed,  
And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:  
They also serve who only stand and wait.

### **“A Sonnet” Sir Philip Sidney**

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,  
That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain,  
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,  
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,  
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe:  
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain,  
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow  
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburn'd brain.  
But words came halting forth, wanting invention's stay;  
Invention, Nature's child, fled stepdame study's blows;  
And others' feet still seem'd but strangers in my way.  
Thus great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,  
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite:  
'Fool,' said my Muse to me, 'look in thy heart and write!'

## SECTION B – Subgenres

*Answer One question from this section.*

### Question 3

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

What does he do with them all, the old king:  
Having such a shining haul of boys in his sure net,  
How does he keep them happy, lead them to forget  
The world above, the aching air, birds, spring?

Tender and solicitous must be his care  
For these whom he takes down into his kingdom one by one  
- Why else would they be taken out of the sweet sun,  
Drowning towards him, water plaiting their hair?

Unless he loved them deeply how could he withstand  
The voices of parents calling, calling like birds by the water's edge,  
By swimming-pool, sand-bar, river-bank, rocky ledge,  
The little heaps of clothes, the futures carefully planned?

Yet even an old acquisitive king must feel  
Remorse poisoning his joy, since he allows  
Particular boys each evening to arouse  
From leaden-lidded sleep, softly to steal

Away to the whispering shore, there to plunge in,  
And fluid as porpoises swim upward, upward through the dividing  
Waters until, soon, each back home is striding  
Over thresholds of welcome dream with wet and moonlit skin.

- a) Identify the poem's sub-genre and support your choice by giving a brief definition of the subgenre. [5]
- b) Cite and discuss three characteristic features of the subgenre found in the poem. [12]
- c) (i) Briefly define tone and mood. [2]  
(ii) Using a couple of words, identify the tone and mood of the poem. [2]  
(iii) Briefly discuss how its tone fits the poem's subject. [2]  
(iv) Do poems under this subgenre all exhibit the same tone and mood? Discuss with the aid of examples. [7]

#### Question 4

Identify the following excerpts according to subgenre and cite and discuss three characteristics for each to support your choice. [30]

a) She sat down below a thorn,  
*Fine flowers in the valley*  
And there she has her sweet babe born.  
*And the green leaves they grow rarely*

‘Smile na sae sweet, my bonie babe,  
And ye smile sae sweet, ye’ll smile me dead.’

She’s taen out her little pen-knife,  
And twinnd the sweet babe o its life.

b) Thou still unravish’d bride of quietness,  
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,  
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
What leaf-fring’d legend haunts about thy shape  
Of deities or mortals, or both,  
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

c) When he was here,  
We planned each tomorrow  
With him in mind  
For we saw no parting  
Looming beyond the horizon.

d) The price seemed reasonable, location  
Indifferent. The landlady swore she lived  
Off premises. Nothing remained  
But self-confession. ‘Madam,’ I warned.  
‘I hate a wasted journey – I am African.’  
Silence. Silenced transmission of  
Pressurized good-breeding. Voice, when it came,  
Lipstick coated, long-gold rolled  
Cigarette-holder pipped. Caught I was foully.  
‘HOW DARK?’ ... I had not misheard ...