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School

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**EXAMINATION PAPER**  
**Non-Common Entrance 2023**  
**Third Form entry**

**English**

**Time allowed: 1 hour**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions**

- Dictionaries are not allowed.
- Answer on lined paper. Write your name clearly at the top of each sheet of paper that you use.
- Answer ALL the questions in Section A. Choose ONE question from Section B. You should divide your time equally between both sections.
- You are expected to write clearly and accurately throughout each of your answers. You should leave some time towards the end of the examination to check your work carefully.
- The maximum number of marks for this paper is 50.

## SECTION A: COMPREHENSION

**You should spend 30 minutes on this section**

In the passage below, the writer shares her childhood memories of moving to a remote house beside a river near the town of Laugharne, in Wales, with her mother and father. Her father is Dylan Thomas, a famous poet. Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow. Leave yourself enough time to answer the last question in full detail.

We were met at the station by Billy Williams. My father, Dylan, my mother, Caitlin, and I piled in to his family taxi with our suitcases and belongings. The taxi took us to the path that led to the Boat House. At the top of the path, by an old iron gate, a clump of daisies radiated their whiteness and, although we were driving past, time seemed to stop. The pathway was too narrow for a car so we carried our bags over the uneven surface while we looked over the low cliff wall at the sand and the water beyond. The overhanging bushes and hanging plants clung to the cliff-face like flags waving a greeting. We walked, laden with bags and books, along the last stretch of the path to our new home, called the Boat House.

It looked heavenly: a place to explore, to run around, where we would be living forever. It had balconies, stepped gardens, a large boat shed and a wall protecting us from the wilds of the friendly estuary beyond. We had fallen upon paradise. As we were settling in, my father wrote to Margaret Taylor, who had arranged for the place, that, 'this is it: the place, the house, the workroom, the time,' and that he could never thank her enough. 'I shall write in this water and tree room on the cliff, every word will be my thanks to you ...'.

In my memory it hardly ever rained that season. From the balcony that ran around the cottage like a midriff\*, on two sides of the house, I looked at the river and beyond the view of Laugharne. There was sun on the water.

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My mother and I often went on walks starting along the cliffwalk, the trees a dark arch overhead with light flickering in long, thin tongues through the branches. Through the trees you could see the sands below whipped into narrow ridges and imagine water serpents wandering across them. The foxgloves and ferns grew down the cliff and I longed to run down headlong to the shore but couldn't because my mother was always striding ahead, with our dog Mably biting at our heels. I could only just keep up with her, an Olympic-level walker who only just avoided being classed as a runner. Emerging from the untidy trees we climbed over walls and barbed wire fences, to fields of green never seen since. In my memory, the fields are full of primroses and a few rogue daffodils.

As we neared the farm, ducks and geese wandered free across the sloping farmyard. But as we approached Mably, to tie a piece of string on his leather collar, he would jump up. 'That annoying dog,' mother said without passion. She never called him by his name; sometimes he was 'disgusting' or 'vile'. He was a dog who never kept still. I loved him and his brown, white and black patches; he looked the way a dog should look.

We passed the factory and walked briskly towards the town. We could see the high walls of the castle coming towards us as we walked besides the grey expanse of mud and sand, towards the humming pubs and shops. Ignoring the sweet shop, Mother headed for the Cross House Inn, a whitewashed building standing on its own. 'Just saying a word to Mr Crossmouse, see you in a minute.'

I waited outside, looking around for someone to play with. Mably sat down, turning his head from side to side. I looked towards the bus stop, but only boring people waited there. Mr Crossmouse, the landlord, was more a rat than a mouse, with his sharp, small features and darting eyes. After her call, Mother would report, 'Your father's in Brown's, unsurprisingly.' I wondered how Crossmouse knew. News went round so fast in Laugharne I sometimes felt it was a danger to think. 'Come on,' my mother said as we climbed the steps to Brown's Hotel.

Once Mum and I had collected Dad, we set out along King Street. My mother had to slow down as usual to walk with my father, me trailing at the rear. It was a five-minute walk home. 'Come on,' urged my parents, half-way along the cliff walk.

As I caught up, my father said that he was busy today and not to make a noise, then disappeared into his study. 'What about dad's lunch?' I asked. Meanwhile he stuck his head out to say, 'Cat, will you tell her to be quiet today?' I was indignant at his distrust, which was brought about because I sometimes encouraged my friends to press their bicycle bells, sing, and bark with Mably as we passed outside the study. If it was a lucky day, Father would push his battered kitchen chair back from his table and open the door to shout at us, waving a weak finger. His response was all I wanted and we would go yelling away down the hill.

*\*midriff* the middle part of the body

1. Look again at lines 1-14. The writer feels positive about arriving at the Boat House. Explain how she expresses these feelings. Use quotations to support your answer. [4 marks]
2. Using your own words, what do we learn about the writer's mother? [3 marks]
3. Look again at lines 37-48. What impressions does the writer create of the town of Laugharne and how are these expressed? [5 marks]
4. The writer greatly admires her father but is also frustrated by him. Looking at the passage as a whole, give examples of the way the writer explains her feelings about her father. Looking at the passage as a whole, what do we learn about the character of the writer? [5 marks]
5. How does the writer try to create interest in her childhood experiences? Refer closely to the text to support your answer. [8 marks]

[Total: 25 marks]

**TURN OVER**

## SECTION B: COMPREHENSION

**You should spend 30 minutes on this section**

Answer ONE of the following questions. You are reminded of the importance of clear and accurate written English and of careful presentation in your answer. All questions carry equal marks.

1. Describe a place that you know well and enjoy visiting or a place that you greatly enjoyed when you went there for the first time. Write in a way that creates a clear picture in the reader's mind of what happened and how you felt. [25 marks]

OR

2. "“That annoying dog,” mother said without passion.’ Write a story that begins with these words. [25 marks]

OR

3. 'Living with your family is always a mix of the good and the bad.' Use this title as the basis for EITHER:

(a) an article in a teenage magazine aimed at giving advice to teenagers about living with family

OR

(b) an article in a magazine aimed at parents/guardians, giving advice about living with teenagers.

[25 marks]