

ENGLISH LITERATURE A (7712/2B)

Paper 2B: Texts in shared contexts: Modern Times: Literature from 1945 to the present day

Insert

Instructions to candidates

The material in this insert is for use with Section B of the question paper.

Section B: Answer both Question 1 and Question 2.

Recommended time for Section B: approximately 100 minutes.

Total marks for Section B: 50 marks (25 marks per question).

Small Hours

Josephine Okeke-Ward

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Extract context: *This extract is taken from the opening section of the novel. The narrator, Anna, is a mother of three children. The novel is set over a single night and follows her thoughts as the household sleeps.*

He was asleep before she reached the top of the stairs. She could tell by the quality of the silence -- a particular heaviness, a held breath released -- and she stood in the doorway for a moment before going in.

He slept badly as a baby, which everyone said they would forget but which she had not forgotten, not quite. She remembered the long corridors of the night, the particular loneliness of three in the morning, the feeling of being the only person awake in the entire world with this small, furious, incomprehensible thing that needed her. She had read somewhere that the sleep deprivation of early parenthood was equivalent to a form of torture, and had thought at the time, yes, exactly, and also, it does not matter at all.

He was nine now. He still slept in the same position: on his back, one arm flung above his head, as though he had just agreed to something extravagant. She stood in the dark and looked at him for a moment the way you look at something you are frightened of losing, not because it is fragile, but because you understand, in your bones, that it is on loan.

She had read an article once that described parental love as a form of grief: that to love a child was to be in continuous mourning for the version of them that was always, already, disappearing. She had read it and found it morbid and then, much later, understood exactly what it meant. He had been a baby and she had grieved the baby. He had been a toddler and she had grieved the toddler, even while he was still there, even while she was laughing at something he had said.

She straightened his duvet without waking him. She was very good at this. She had had years of practice at performing love quietly, at doing things that would not be noticed and were not intended

to be noticed, that were simply what the night required of her, and she of it.

Section B

Answer both Question 1 and Question 2.

0 1

How does Okeke-Ward present parental love in this extract?

In your response you should:

- analyse the methods the writer uses to shape meanings
- include relevant subject terminology
- consider the contexts in which the text was written and received.

[25 marks]

Recommended time: 40 minutes

0 2

In this extract, Okeke-Ward presents parental love as something inseparable from the experience of loss. Compare how parental love or the love between family members is presented in this extract and in one or two other texts you have studied.

In your response you should:

- make connections across the texts you have studied
- include relevant subject terminology
- consider the contexts in which texts were written and received.

[25 marks]

Recommended time: 35-40 minutes