



# TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Scholarship Examination 2018

ENGLISH I

Monday, 30th April 2018  
9.30 am

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

*Answer ALL of the questions in both Section A and Section B.*

*Total marks: 50*

## SECTION A – Poetry Comprehension

Read the following poem carefully and answer the questions that follow. You are advised to pay close attention to the marks available for each section. The poem was written by Jonathan Edwards (1979-).

### The Hippo

is solo, hobo, incognito,<sup>1</sup>  
two boulders curving out of Dettol-murk,<sup>2</sup>  
in a zoo his photo advertises,  
doing a sponsored sitting-still all day.  
Stop being a cliché, hippo, or I won't

write a poem about you. Then you'll be sorry.  
What is your body but the verb *To wallow*?  
What is the water but a part of self?  
Google says you can crush a Ford Sierra<sup>3</sup>  
between your jaws. They don't say how they test this.

Candyfloss-high boys crowd your glass, betting  
they could hold their breath underwater longer,  
they could leap from one boulder to the other.  
I abandon you  
for the giraffes, stupid as window cleaners,

the lions, sunshine with teeth,  
but keep coming back:  
if you were to rise, show your eyes, your mouth,  
would you have Martin Sheen's mud-crazy face,  
breaking smoke water in *Apocalypse Now*?<sup>4</sup>

Closing time. One last go. O please, hippo,  
don't be so self-effacing, so tight-fisted.  
Come on, don't you know  
we love you? Wait. Is that a flash of flesh,  
a hippo peepshow, or are you still snoozing?

A little girl says, *Dad, that island's moving.*

<sup>1</sup> hobo: someone sleeping rough, a homeless person  
incognito: in disguise, or unrecognised

<sup>2</sup> Dettol: a powerful disinfectant which turns water cloudy when added to it

<sup>3</sup> Ford Sierra: a popular car from the 1990s

<sup>4</sup> In a famous scene from the Vietnam War film *Apocalypse Now*, the actor Martin Sheen emerges slowly and mysteriously from underwater.

1. Re-read the four underlined phrases in the poem (also listed below). What is the effect of the diction (choice of words), language and imagery (metaphors, similes etc) in each line or phrase?
- a) is solo, hobo, incognito [3]
  - b) two boulders curving out of Dettol-murk [3]
  - c) the lions, sunshine with teeth, [3]
  - d) Wait. Is that a flash of flesh, a hippo peepshow ... [3]

2. How does the writer effectively portray the 'hippo' in the poem, as well as his feelings about the animal?

You should make close reference to the language, imagery and title of the poem in your answer.

You may refer to quotations you have already analysed in Question 1 if you would like to. [8]

3. How do you feel the final line, 'A little girls says, *Dad, that island's moving*', change the end of the poem?

Again, you may refer to quotations you have already analysed in your answer. [5]

**[Total for this section: 25]**

### **SECTION B – Prose Comprehension**

*Read the following prose extract carefully and answer the questions that follow. You are advised to pay close attention to the marks available for each question.*

*When he was 21 years old the author, Adam Nicolson, inherited the Shiantis, three lonely islands five miles off the coast of Scotland. In the passage below he describes sailing to the islands across the stretch of water known as the 'Minch' in his small boat which is called 'Freyja'.*

The air has closed in and the north is now a featureless absence. Between me and the mist wall, a gannet cruises above the Minch. It must be in from St Kilda, sixty miles away to the west low over the water, quartering it, looking for the flash of silver there, cutting sickle curves across the grain of the swell. It is a frightening sea. I see a big tanker coming south down the Minch. The spray bursts around its bow as it slaps into each of the swells. No contact with its crew or master, but I feel them looking at me from the bridge and wondering what that tiny boat must be about. Not that the swells are particularly big: they lift *Freyja* five or six feet in a long, rolling motion. It is just that the

boat seems small, the sea wide and the land in all directions a long way off. Like a climber on his ledge I have to suppress the awareness of all that room beneath me. Concentrate on the boat. Look to the sail. Check you are on course. Do not consider the hugeness of the sea.

The muscles across my chest have tightened and my whole body is tensed, waiting for some relief. I am not at home here. I don't have the sailor's ease. I look at each coming sea as a possible enemy. The sea surface is streaked white as if the fat in meat has been dragged downwind. Why did I think this would be a thing to do, to push myself out here on a slightly difficult day, with the wind rising and the passage untried? The sea extends a hostile crowd around me. I want to arrive. I want to be out of uncertainty. At least on the island, however much the sea might batter it, there is no fear of the ground beneath your feet breaking or of it somehow abandoning you. An island is loyal in the way a boat can never be. A boat can go wrong, the gear can fail. The sheer solid stillness of the islands is not like that. An island is a presence, not a motion, and there is faithfulness in rocks.

A gannet suddenly slaps into the sea beside. No warning. I start at it and remember this, the story of one of the stewards of St Kilda. At some time in the seventeenth century the steward found his boat passing through a shoal of herring so thick that the bodies of the fish lay like a pavement on the surface of the water. There was a silver skin to the sea and any man could have walked across it. A south wind was blowing and the boat was skimming through the bodies of the herring as if skating across them. All around them the gannets were diving, again and again, no accuracy needed.

It was the atmosphere of a tobogganing party. If the gannets had been children they would have been shrieking with pleasure. The steward and his crew were gliding to St Kilda as if to heaven.

from *Sea Room* by Adam Nicolson

## Questions

1. Re-read the first paragraph. How does the writer create a powerful sense of place and setting?  
Refer to the effects of individual words and phrases in your answer. [8]
2. Re-read the second paragraph. How does the writer effectively portray his thoughts, feelings and perceptions?  
Refer to the effects of individual words and phrases in your answer, as well as the form in which the extract is written. [8]
3. Re-read the third paragraph. What details in the language used help to vividly capture the experience described? [6]
4. Re-read the last paragraph. Explain how the imagery and language used convey the actions and appearance of the gannets (sea birds). [3]

**[Total for this section: 25]**