War Photographer

In his darkroom he is finally alone

with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.

The only light is red and softly glows,

as though this were a church and he

5 a priest preparing to intone a Mass.

Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays

beneath his hands which did not tremble then

though seem to now. Rural England. Home again

10 to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel,

to fields which don't explode beneath the feet

of running children in a nightmare heat.

Something is happening. A stranger's features

faintly start to twist before his eyes

15 a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries

of this man's wife, how he sought approval

without words to do what someone must

and how blood stained into foreign dust.

A hundred agonies in black-and-white

20 from which his editor will pick out five or six

for Sunday's supplement. The reader's eyeballs prick

with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.

From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where

he earns his living and they do not care.

Questions

36. By referring to at least one example from lines 1-6 analyse how imagery is used to create a serious atmosphere. (2 marks)

37. By referring to at least two examples, analyse how the poet’s use of language conveys the torment of the photographer in lines 7-12. (4 marks)

38. By referring to at least one poetic technique show how the central concerns of the poem are conveyed in lines 13-18. (2 marks)

39. Evaluate the effectiveness of lines 21-24 as a conclusion to the poem. (2 marks)

40. By referring to this poem and to at least one other poem by Carol Ann Duffy, discuss her use of a persona to create memorable characters. (10 marks)

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| Question | Expected Answer(s) | Mark | Additional Guidance |
| 36. | Candidates should analyse how  imagery is used to create a serious atmosphere.  A detailed/insightful comment on  one example may be awarded  2 marks.  More basic comments can be  awarded 1 mark each.  (Marks may be awarded 2 or 1+1)  Identification of image alone = 0 | 2 | Possible answers include:  • The metaphor “spools of  suffering” links the content of  the photographic images in the  spools to the subjects of the  photographs to highlight the  awareness of the (on-going,  cyclical) misery endured by the  subjects.  • The image “spools …ordered  rows” compares the meticulous  arrangement of the spools to  the graves in a (war) cemetery  to highlight the scale of deaths  witnessed/the violent nature of  the deaths.  • The image of the “dark room”  with its red light as a “church”  compares the interior lighting  within the darkroom to that of a  church to highlight the gloomy,  funereal atmosphere of the  darkroom.  • Word choice of “red” suggests  danger (of war zone/pictures) or  blood (represents the horror of  the war zone).  • The image of the photographer  as “a priest … intone a Mass”  suggests a similarity between  the role of the photographer  and the priest in terms of the  seriousness of the processes  they are involved in/the  importance of their roles in  spreading the word.  • The image “All flesh is grass”  compares human life to short  lived “grass” to highlight the  transient nature of human life  (especially in times of conflict). |
| 37. | Candidates should analyse how the speaker’s torment is  conveyed.  At least two techniques should be included for full marks.  2 marks awarded for detailed/insightful  comment plus quotation/reference.  1 mark for more basic comment plus quotation/reference.  0 marks for quotation/reference alone.  (Marks may be awarded 2+2, 2+1+1 or 1+1+1+1.) | 4 | * Word choice of “tremble” suggests the photographer is fearful/emotional about the subject matter of the photographs * Word choice “nightmare” - negative connotations, suggesting fear/horror. These feeling are subconscious for the photographer * Word choice “pain” suggests agony, suffering both felt by the photographer and the subjects of his photographs * Contrast of Rural England and exploding fields (Home vs Work place) |
| 38. | Candidates should explain how lines 13-18 establish the central concern of the poem.  2 marks awarded for detailed/insightful  comment  1 mark for more basic comment  0 marks for quotation/reference alone.  (Marks may be awarded 2 or 1 + 1.) | 2 | * War * Pain/ suffering “the cries of this man’s wife” * Responsibility “How he sought approval…” |
| 39. | Candidates should evaluate the  effectiveness of lines 21-24 as a conclusion to the poem.  2 marks awarded for detailed/insightful  comment.  1 mark for more basic comment.  0 marks for quotation/reference alone.  (Marks may be awarded 2 or 1+1.) | 2 | Possible answers include:   * The serious nature and responsibility of his job vs the reality of the effect of these photographs * The feelings of the photographer are revealed * Angry tone |
| 40. | Candidates should discuss Duffy’s use of a first person narrator or persona to create memorable characters. | 10 | Reference could be made to the following:  • The Way My Mother Speaks: speaker is on a journey literally (on a train) and metaphorically (growing up) She is reflecting on how her mother’s words make her feel and the uncertainty of her new life.  • Originally: speaker is a young  person forced to assimilate to  new surroundings; Duffy creates a character who at first feels out of place but by the end has all but lost her original background  • In Mrs Tilscher’s class: speaker is Duffy reflecting on how her primary school teacher made her feel. Mrs Tilscher’s character is loving and provides fun and security for her pupils.  • Mrs Midas: speaker is wife of  Midas, who has to cope with the  transformation in him, becomes  empowered by the role reversal  • Valentine: speaker challenges  conventional, over-sentimentalised view of love and portrays it as violent, destructive.  Many other references are possible. |