

**C****THE FISH (EXTRACT: LINES 45 – 76)**

I admired his sullen face,  
the mechanism of his jaw,  
and then I saw  
that from his lower lip  
– if you could call it a lip –  
grim, wet, and weaponlike,  
hung five old pieces of fish-line,  
or four and a wire leader  
with the swivel still attached,  
with all their five big hooks  
grown firmly in his mouth.  
A green line frayed at the end  
where he broke it, two heavier lines,  
and a fine black thread  
still crimped from the strain and snap  
when it broke and he got away.

Like medals with their ribbons  
frayed and wavering,  
a five-haired beard of wisdom  
trailing from his aching jaw.  
I stared and stared  
and victory filled up  
the little rented boat,  
from the pool of bilge  
where oil had spread a rainbow  
around the rusted engine  
to the bailer rusted orange,  
the sun-cracked thwarts,  
the oarlocks on their strings,  
the gunnels – and until everything  
was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow!  
And I let the fish go.

*Elizabeth Bishop*

1. (a) Identify three images used by the poet in this extract. Which one of your chosen images do you find the most appealing? Explain your answer. (15)
- (b) Do you find this extract from Bishop's poem "The Fish" joyful? Explain your answer with reference to the poem. (15)
2. Answer **ONE** of the following: [Each part carries 20 marks]
  - (i) Imagine you are the poet, Elizabeth Bishop. You have been invited to talk to a Leaving Certificate class about the above extract from your poem, "The Fish". In your talk you should explain what takes place in the extract, and help the class to understand the meaning of the extract. Write the text of the talk you would give, demonstrating your understanding of the extract.

**OR**
  - (ii) Do you find the above extract from "The Fish" easy or difficult to understand? Explain your response, supporting your answer with reference to both the language and the content of the extract.

**OR**
  - (iii) Do you think the poet makes effective use of the natural world to teach readers a valuable lesson or lessons in the above extract? Give reasons for your response. Support your answer with reference to the extract from "The Fish".

You must answer on **ONE** of the following poems: (**A - D**)

**A FILLING STATION**

Oh, but it is dirty!  
 - this little filling station,  
 oil-soaked, oil-permeated  
 to a disturbing, over-all  
 black translucency.  
 Be careful with that match!  
 Father wears a dirty,  
 oil-soaked monkey suit  
 that cuts him under the arms,  
 and several quick and saucy  
 and greasy sons assist him  
 (it's a family filling station),  
 all quite thoroughly dirty.  
 Do they live in the station?  
 It has a cement porch  
 behind the pumps, and on it  
 a set of crushed and grease-  
 impregnated wickerwork;  
 on the wicker sofa  
 a dirty dog, quite comfy.

Some comic books provide  
 the only note of color –  
 of certain color. They lie  
 upon a big dim doily  
 draping a taboret  
 (part of the set), beside  
 a big hirsute begonia.  
 Why the extraneous plant?  
 Why the taboret?  
 Why, oh why, the doily?  
 (Embroidered in daisy stitch  
 with marguerites, I think,  
 and heavy with gray crochet.)  
 Somebody embroidered the doily.  
 Somebody waters the plant,  
 or oils it, maybe. Somebody  
 arranges the rows of cans  
 so that they softly say:  
 ESSO – SO – SO – SO  
 to high-strung automobiles.  
 Somebody loves us all.

*Elizabeth Bishop*

1. (a) Describe, in your own words, the scene at the filling station created by the poet in this poem. (10)
  - (b) Identify a line or phrase from this poem that you enjoy and explain why you enjoy it. (10)
  - (c) In your opinion, is Bishop mainly positive or mainly negative about what she sees at the filling station? Support your answer with reference to the poem. (10)
2. Answer **ONE** of the following: [Each part carries 20 marks]
    - (i) Do you like or dislike this poem? In your response identify at least two aspects of the poem that influence your view. Support your answer with reference to the poem.

**OR**

(ii) Imagine that you are one of the sons in the poem. Write a letter to Elizabeth Bishop in which you respond to what she wrote about your home and your family in the poem, "Filling Station". Refer to the poem in your answer.

**OR**

(iii) Write a piece about the language in this poem, beginning with one of the following phrases:

- I find the language in this poem interesting and easy to understand ...
- I find the language in this poem challenging and unusual ...

**C Lines 1– 33 from THE FISH**

I caught a tremendous fish  
and held him beside the boat  
half out of water, with my hook  
fast in a corner of his mouth.  
He didn't fight.  
He hadn't fought at all.  
He hung a grunting weight,  
battered and venerable  
and homely. Here and there  
his brown skin hung in strips  
like ancient wallpaper,  
and its pattern of darker brown  
was like wallpaper:  
shapes like full-blown roses  
stained and lost through age.  
He was speckled with barnacles,  
fine rosettes of lime,  
and infested  
with tiny white sea-lice,  
and underneath two or three  
rags of green weed hung down.  
While his gills were breathing in  
the terrible oxygen  
– the frightening gills,  
fresh and crisp with blood,  
that can cut so badly –  
I thought of the coarse white flesh  
packed in like feathers,  
the big bones and the little bones,  
the dramatic reds and blacks  
of his shiny entrails,  
and the pink swim-bladder  
like a big peony.

*Elizabeth Bishop*

1. (a) Based on your reading of this extract, which of the following statements do you think best describes the poet's response to the fish?
- The poet admires the fish.
  - The poet is disgusted by the fish.
  - The poet is fascinated by the fish.

Support your answer with reference to the poem. (10)

- (b) Based on what you have read in the above extract, what is your own response to the fish? Explain your answer with reference to the poem. (10)

- (c) Identify one comparison in the poem that you found to be unusual or surprising and explain why you found it to be so. (10)

2. Answer **ONE** of the following: [Each part carries 20 marks]

- (i) Do you admire Elizabeth Bishop's use of language in this poem? Explain your answer with reference to the poem, "The Fish". In your answer you may choose to refer to the extract provided or to the poem as a whole.

**OR**

- (ii) At the end of this poem, Bishop releases the fish, *And I let the fish go*. Based on your knowledge of the poem, explain why you think she did this. Support your answer with reference to the poem. In your answer you may choose to refer to the extract provided or to the poem as a whole.

**OR**

- (iii) You have been asked to make a short video to accompany a reading of this poem on YouTube. Describe the images, colours, music, sound effects, etc. that you would use as a background to the reading and explain your choices based on your knowledge of the poem. In your answer you may choose to refer to the extract provided or to the poem as a whole.

## C FILLING STATION

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 – this little filling station,  
 oil soaked, oil-permeated  
 to a disturbing, over-all  
 black translucency.  
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 oil-soaked monkey suit  
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 upon a big dim doily  
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 (part of the set), beside  
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Why the extraneous plant?  
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Somebody embroidered the doily.  
 Somebody waters the plant,  
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 ESSO—SO—SO—SO  
 to high-strung automobiles.  
 Somebody loves us all.

*Elizabeth Bishop*

1. (a) What impression of the filling station and its inhabitants do you get from reading the first two stanzas of the poem? Refer to the text in support of your answer. (10)
- (b) “*Somebody loves us all.*” In your opinion, does this line provide a good ending to the poem? Explain your answer. (10)
- (c) What impression of the poet, Elizabeth Bishop, do you get from reading this poem? (10)

2. Answer **ONE** of the following: [Each part carries 20 marks]

- (i) “Good poetry creates vivid pictures in our minds.” In your opinion, is this true of *Filling Station*? Support your view by reference to the text of the poem.

**OR**

- (ii) Imagine you are Elizabeth Bishop. Write a diary entry, based on your reading of the poem, in which you describe your experience of stopping at this filling station.

**OR**

- (iii) Which of the following statements is closest to your own view of the poem:
- *Life is full of surprises*
  - *Everyone needs love*
  - *We shouldn't judge by appearances*

Explain your choice, supporting your answer by reference to the text.

