

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 2

The evidence for this candidate has achieved the following marks for each section of this course assessment component. The candidate was awarded **15 marks**.

Genre: Creative – poetry

Title: Celestial

The title prepares the reader for the main concerns of this poem. The first stanza creates a vivid evocation of the winter sky and the profusion of stars that may be seen - the possessive pronoun *our* presents a sense of intimacy and oneness with the speaker.

The assertion of stanza one is then developed further in the following stanza with reference to asterisms (sub or supersets of constellations- groups of stars which can be related or not) and nebulae - (interstellar clouds / diffuse astronomical objects) and it is here that the candidate's exploration begins - a sense of our relationships with the stars and the galaxy.

The voice then refers in the following three stanzas to the mythic connotation of stars. Firstly, Cygnus and her fate for dallying with Zeus: the image of the constellation as a great bird "neck outstretched and wings beating", "frozen splayed across the cosmos". Thereafter the Pleiades – where, again, the candidate explores the imagery of women being transformed into birds then stars.

The sense of relationships is clearly evident between the earth and the heavens and the poetic voice assures the reader that in reality there are "more than seven stars in the cluster" - using the terminology of cosmology – "optical binaries" - with the image of such "hot blue stars". This contrast - almost oxymoronic - is highly effective as an end to the stanza.

Stanza five follows the pattern of commencing with the constellation's name which harnesses the mythic to the reality of the scientific: Orion's misdemeanor is stated and "His asterism is clear" is placed as a contrast to the error noted by the speaker in the former stanza - where there are "more than seven stars in the cluster".

The speaker muses about their own relationship with the celestial in stanza six, again using a highly distinctive personal voice "And I wonder if, when my time is up, I too will be cast into the sky; if I'll be scattered across the heavens". In stanza seven there is a sense of disruption in the phrases "torn apart"; "ripped from myself" but again this reference is applied to the connections and

relationships which have been established earlier in the poem yet the voice is confident and assured, stating: “and when future generations look at the sky/they’ll see me”.

In the following stanza, there is a sense of regeneration and optimism for the speaker “a new- born star” in a celestial relationship with other constellations – and the rhetorical “an asterism perhaps?” draws the reader, again, to the speaker’s fascination with the galaxy and his/her place within it.

Stanza nine begins with “until I reach the end of my star life”; this imparts a sense of inevitability tempered with an authorial voice which is confident and controlled. The image of being flung across the “empyrean azure” again reminds the reader of the resonant voice in the poem and the wonder that the celestial holds for them. The candidate creates a sense of finality but with no sense of fear to finish the piece “and then that will be the end”.

Content

The treatment of the central thematic concerns reveals sustained thoughtfulness and imagination throughout.

Structure

There is skilful shaping which contributes significantly to the impact of this poem. The candidate has created a piece which displays a satisfyingly confident and controlled use of a variety of literary techniques.

Tone/mood

There is a tone which is skilfully created and rigorously sustained revealing a committed and clearly distinctive authorial voice.

Expression

A very skilful use of style, technique and language and a high degree of originality.

The highest available mark from the band range 15-13 has been awarded because the poem fully meets the standard described.

Mark: 15