

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 7

The evidence for this candidate has achieved the following marks for this course assessment component.

The candidate was awarded **18 marks**.

Section C – *H is for Hawk*

Question: Discuss the effectiveness of the ways in which Macdonald conveys the significance of this personal experience.

You may wish to consider:

- **structure**
- **contrast**
- **the exploration of what the writer terms “derealisation” (line 41)**

Note: The rubric offers some guidance candidates may take advantage of. This candidate deals with contrast and structure.

This candidate makes no attempt to offer an organising introduction which is acceptable in Textual Analysis. Neither is there any conclusion.

Understanding

The two statements offered in the first paragraph show that the candidate has a clear understanding of what is significant about this experience: a ‘struggle to deal with reality’ to some extent relieved by the training of the hawk.

There is a secure understanding of ‘something huge... which shifts in her head’ and the new realisation of the ‘depression and dullness of life’. Later there is an acknowledgment that she ‘feels cheated by the ‘reality’ she lives in and ‘the loss of her father clearly having a greater impact than she is able to admit’. She has been ‘thrown into the unknown’ but her relationship with the hawk training sees her ‘begin to reconnect’ and become less ‘passive and reflective’. The rabbit in the fridge, unlike the one in “Alice”, ‘kills off any chance of her being tempted back to her fictional universe’. The hawk restores some ‘purpose’ to her life, ‘pulling her away from depression’. This candidate understands how the writer sees her life and how she depends on the activity of the hawk training for meaning and purpose.

All of the above shows there is a secure understanding of the central concerns, a relevant exploration and secure consideration of the implications of the question and extensive textual evidence to support the demands of the question.

Analysis

There is a wide range of literary techniques considered. The candidate is aware of the literary style of the writing and can therefore justifiably refer to the 'narrative voice' and the 'narrator' and can state that it 'expertly aids in her exploration and portrayal of her personal experience'. There are useful references to 'repetition', 'pathetic fallacy', contrast and analogy, parallel of the Alice story to her own experience of being in the dark, dark humour and 'blunt tone', short sentences, symbolism. All of these are related to the strengthening of the idea of 'significance'. For example, the comparison at the end of her singing "Favourite things" is neatly compared to the sterile list of college paraphernalia earlier.

No doubt then that the range of analysis is relevant and clearly strengthening the approach of the candidate.

Evaluation

"The narrator appears honest ... even if she is unsure."; "the writer makes obvious the vulnerability"; "many can relate to her experience ... despite her refusal to accept this as a reason"; "makes clear the strong bond between her and hawk"; "Macdonald is still struggling to take control of her life."

All of the evaluation focuses on the significance of the change in her life and the significance of the hawk in providing a release. This is a clearly identifiable stance securely based on evidence.

Mark: this essay fits securely into the 18-16 range in all of its aspects, it is awarded the mark of 18.