

# Candidate evidence

## Candidate A

### How successfully do Murdo Macfarlane and John Macleod explore the loss of the Iolaire through their poetry?

I am going to be writing about how the Iolaire disaster is portrayed in the poems of Murdo MacFarlane and John MacLeod. This is a relevant topic because at the end of this year it will be the centenary of the disaster. I grew up less than five minutes away from the sight of the disaster and had gone to the memorial with my school every year. It was interesting to research these poems as I was always told the story of how it happened but not how it had affected people.

Both poems are from the viewpoint of islanders. In 'Raoid Reubadh an Iolaire' by Murdo Macfarlane, the poem is seen from the point of view of a young woman who is awaiting and preparing for the return of a loved one. In 'Bantrach Cogaidh' by Rev. John Macleod, it is seen from the point of view of him as a young boy and how the loss of his father had affected his mother and family in the years following.

Murdo Macfarlane was born on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1901 and lived in Melbost, which is a small village just outside of Stornoway, almost all his life.<sup>1</sup> He would have been seventeen at the time of the disaster. He was working in the smokehouse at the time and when he heard the news he dropped everything and went to see what happened. In a documentary where he re-visits the scene of the disaster many years on, he described it as:

"The breakers were racing ashore and you could see drowned sailors on the crest of the waves, they were like war horses racing, galloping from the field of battle, with their riders dead in their saddles."<sup>2</sup>

Even in a language that wasn't his first, he was able to talk about it so poetically.

The identity of the woman is unknown but the poem clearly speaks for everyone awaiting someone that night, just like the soldier in 'A dol dhachaigh' by Iain Crichton Smith. He wrote it based on how he imagined how everyone felt but initially from a young woman's point of view and when he writes his poetry he feels that he has a compulsion to put his thoughts into verse.

The poem starts with a hopeful and happy tone and the poet's effective use of imagery conveys the scene to the reader:

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/larachnambard/poets/murchadh\\_macpharlain/am\\_bard/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/larachnambard/poets/murchadh_macpharlain/am_bard/)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBuZ5rHAyGo>

"S binn sheinn i, a chailin,<sup>3</sup>  
An raoir ann an Leòdhas  
I fuineadh an arain  
Le cridhe làn sòlais"

Here we see her joy and excitement as she prepares to see her loved one coming home after being at war for years. Her sweet singing shows her happiness as she is preparing for her loved one to return and it shows a positive and happy start to the poem.

The Iolaire is mentioned a number of times metaphorically:

"Tha 'n Iolaire gan giùlain."<sup>4</sup>

And

"Sgaoil, Iolaire, do sgiathaibh  
'S greas le m' ghràdh."

The irony in this first line is that the boat was supposed to carry them home to safety, like an eagle, which is what the boat is named after with connotations of being powerful and strong. The soldiers were expecting to be carried home safely now that the war was over but most of them never made it home.

In the fourth stanza of the poem the tone changes and the woman becomes anxious:

"Cluinn osnaich na gaoithe!<sup>5</sup>  
O, cluinn oirre sèideadh!"

The weather is starting to deteriorate and those waiting at home are concerned.

In stanza five the woman is starting to lose hope:

<sup>3</sup> Bbc. Larach nam bard.  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/larachnambard/poets/murchadh\\_macpharlain/bardachd/index2.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/larachnambard/poets/murchadh_macpharlain/bardachd/index2.shtml)

<sup>4</sup> Bbc. Larach nam bard.  
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<sup>5</sup> Bbc. Larach nam bard.  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/larachnambard/poets/murchadh\\_macpharlain/bardachd/index2.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/larachnambard/poets/murchadh_macpharlain/bardachd/index2.shtml)

"Sguir i dhol chun an dorais<sup>6</sup>  
's air an teine chuir mòine"

She has realised that her beloved will not be coming home as he would have been here already. This sad and hopeless imagery conveys the depths of her despair to the reader.

When she goes to the shore the next morning Macfarlane uses strong imagery effectively to convey to the reader the sight that the loved ones saw:

"nuair fhuair i 'san fheamainn<sup>7</sup>  
A leannan 's e bàite"

When she finds him she sees him as:

"Gun bhrògan mu chasan<sup>8</sup>  
Mar chaidh air an t-snàmh e"

This imagery is very emotive and has a strong impact on the reader leaving the reader to consider the tragedy of the young men.

In the final stanza how the loss of the Iolaire affected the people of the island is made clear to the reader:

"O na Hearadh tha tuireadh<sup>9</sup>  
gu ruig Nis nam fear bàna"

This shows the widespread affect it had throughout the whole island from the top of Ness to the south of Harris. Even on a small island it had a massive effect and no village in-between had not been affected by the disaster and had suffered a loss.

<sup>6</sup> Bbc. Larach nam bard.  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/larachnambard/poets/murchadh\\_macpharlain/bardachd/index2.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/larachnambard/poets/murchadh_macpharlain/bardachd/index2.shtml)

<sup>7</sup> Bbc. Larach nam bard.  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/larachnambard/poets/murchadh\\_macpharlain/bardachd/index2.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/larachnambard/poets/murchadh_macpharlain/bardachd/index2.shtml)

<sup>8</sup> Bbc. Larach nam bard.  
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<sup>9</sup> Bbc. Larach nam bard.  
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"O nach tug thu dhuinn beò iad,  
A chuain, thoir dhuinn bàit' iad,  
'N sin ri do bheul cìocrach  
Cha bhì ar sùil"

By the end of the poem, the woman has realised that she has lost her beloved to the sea, and is pleading with the sea to return the bodies, even if they aren't alive, so that they would not have to bear the pain of constantly watching over the sea not knowing where they are.

The poet John MacLeod was born on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 1918 and he was brought up in the <sup>10</sup>village of Arnol on the west side of Lewis. When he was just a year old he lost his father in the Iolaire disaster and he has written this poem based on his own experiences. He would not have known what had happened on that night as he was just as year old but his poem shows that it had a great effect for so many years.

MacLeod starts off the poem by setting the scene as being very innocent in the first half of the verse but then it contrasts and gets very dark in the second half and the tone suddenly changes:

"Bha mi air clach ri taobh,  
bonaid cruinn air mo cheann;<sup>11</sup>  
bonaid m'athair "

This shows him dressing up in his father's clothes, which is a normal thing most children do, but there is a dark twist to it in the second half of the stanza:

"Deise ghorm 'na stiallan  
mar reub iad bho chorp i  
nuair fhuair iad e  
fuar bàthte air an tràigh,"

Here we find out that his father had drowned and MacLeod was wearing his bonnet.

In the second verse it also shows the innocence and unknowing of a child in a situation that a mother cannot explain:

<sup>10</sup> When I heard the bell: the loss of the iolaire, 2009

<sup>11</sup> An Tuil, 1999, pp. 410.

"Car son a thog thu mi 'nad uhd <sup>12</sup>  
 's do cheann crom,  
 is fhuich thu m' aodann le do dheoir  
 nuair thuir mi,  
 "Mhathair, ca'il m'athair?""

It upsets his mother and he doesn't understand. The old were trying to protect the young but by not explaining to them what had happened it still affected them as they didn't understand, so even though they thought they were doing good by not telling them, they were actually causing themselves more pain.

In the third stanza there is some irony as he is certain that there is not going to be any more war but ends up serving in the next one:

"is ruith mi dhachaigh ' na mu dheann  
 a dh'innse dhi<sup>13</sup>  
 "Cha bhi cogadh tuilleadh ann."

This shows how excited he was to tell his mother that they would finally be at peace.

In the sixth stanza there is also irony as his mother's grave is in the place overlooking the sea that took her beloved and now she is at peace with it:

"Rinn iad d'uaigh ri taobh nan tonn<sup>14</sup>  
 Cha chlisg thu chaoidh aig gaoith no stoirm  
 Sibh sin cho reidh, thu fhein ' s an cuan -  
 Cha torr e tuilleadh uat do ghradh"

In a way, he is happy that his mother died young because she would have had to see him leave for battle like she did his father:

<sup>12</sup> An Tuil, 1999, pp. 410.

<sup>13</sup> An Tuil, 1999, pp. 410.

<sup>14</sup> An Tuil, 1999, pp. 410.

"Nach math gun tug am bàs thu tràth  
's nach fhac' thu cogadh ùr 'nad là<sup>15</sup>  
's nach fhac' thu mise falbh don bhlàr  
Le deise ghorm is bonaid cruinn  
Mar bh' air m' athair  
Nuair fhuair iad marbh e  
Aig a' Bhràigh"

The final lines echo the first stanza and the irony of the young boy wearing his dead father's bonnet now setting off to war himself is clear to the reader.

In conclusion, MacFarlane and MacLeod have both explored the loss of the Iolaire successfully as they showed the short term and the long term effects that it had on both the women and families and it has given me a greater understanding of the disaster and the impact it had on the island both at the time of the disaster and afterwards. Before I had only known that the 'Iolaire' had sunk, but now I understand how much of an impact it had on the people of the island and how it affected them. Both 'Raoir Reubadh an Iolaire' and 'Bantrach Cogaidh' effectively deal with the loss of the Iolaire by using a variety of different poetic techniques to the loss.

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<sup>15</sup> An Tuil, 1999, pp. 410.

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## Candidate B

### Introduction

Often, in order to understand the people in stories, we need to be mindful of the shorthand clues given by the author to the life stories which lie behind the characters in a tale. This is especially true of short stories and, with just a phrase or sentence, an author can paint in a vivid cultural or historical background and make clear their characters' situation and even motivation.

I have chosen three stories and an article wherein the authors have used a kind of shorthand to give their stories a rich subtext, which once one is aware of, make the stories more meaningful. Each of the characters in the stories are archetypes of the sort of people who would have existed in and been important to the island communities the authors came from.

### A little about the authors

By coincidence all three authors are contemporaries from the 20th century and all are from small communities in the north of Lewis.

Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn (1928--1998) is the most well known of the three. Born in Glasgow, he grew up in Bayble near Stornoway. He taught in Oban before becoming a full time writer in 1977. A prolific writer in both English and Gaelic, elderly women are a common archetype used in his stories.

Iain Moireach (b1938) was born and brought up in Barvas. He also attended Edinburgh University and went on to be a teacher in Musselburgh while writing in Gaelic. His stories tend to have a dark edge to them and this is evident in *Briseadh na Cloiche*.

Alasdair Caimbeul (b1941) is from the well-known writing family in Ness, where he was born and raised. An award-winning author and onetime writer in residence at *Sabhal Mòr Ostaig*, he has produced many works in Gaelic and English.

### An Duine Dubh

One afternoon a packman, a travelling salesman carrying his goods with him, visits an old lady in her home, trying to sell her clothing. The story is centered around the theme of loneliness, "cha robh ann ach an aonaranachd, a h-aonaranachd-se 's an aonaranachd an duine dubh".

"Sia bliadhna - 's math dh'fhaodte - 's bhiodh e air ais na rìoghachd fhèin." This is the clue to his loneliness - this is not his country. A foreigner living a peripatetic lifestyle, never staying long enough to make a connection with anyone, he hardly speaks except for his sales pitch, "'Jumpers,' ars an duine dubh.... 'Gowns,' ars and duine dubh... 'Eighteen shilling,' ars esan." As soon as business is done, he repacks, closes his bag, and moves on. "Cha robh e furasd' a bhith slaodadh màileid throm tro na sràidean." Though it is hard he persists because he has a goal. He is also a signpost for the time setting of the story as packmen had disappeared by the late 1960s.

While the man in the tale is sketched in lightly, a more definite picture is painted of the lady of the story. "Shuidh a' chailleach air a' chathair, 's si aosd," there is just one chair in her living room, indicating that not only is she alone now in her old age, she has been as long as she has lived here. "Am Bìoball air oir na h-uinneig," this is a religious lady, which explains why she looks away in embarrassment at first from the silk drawers, "mar gum biodh e rudeigin uabhasach a ràdh." Although she lives in the city it is not her home either, "bha ise na coigreach cuideachd."

The most poignant clue to her life is on the wall though, "dealbh balaich ann an deise seoladair." It was common practice to have a picture taken before setting off to war in case the men didn't return. Then their picture would be put on parlour wall in their honour. Usually only the dead were on the parlour wall, so we know this young man died in the war, leaving the lady alone. Like many other single women she would then have had to seek work, leaving home and ending up in service or in the hotels and shops of the big cities. Though there would have been other Gaels, the single chair strongly implies this lady never found love again.

The colours of the clothes lain before her are reminders of her youth, "feadhainn dearg mar fhìon, feadhainn glàs mar mhuir, feadhainn uaine mar thalamh, feadhainn buidhe mar ghealaich," and contrast strongly with her own white hair, "mar chlogaid sneachd." However, in spite of her initial coyness, it is the silk drawers which keep her attention and memory of her love which leads to their purchase.

### An t-Ubhal

In the dewy predawn of a misty morning a woman takes a ferry across a river to the afterlife. She and the ferryman talk as he observes and judges her, then they reach the other side and she leaves as the sun rises. Though the eponymous apple of the title is the central motif around which the story revolves, the characters and their interaction reveal a thematically rich exposée of two contrasting personae that would have loomed large in the author's childhood in Lewis.

"Bha fea a' bhàta air pìob a thoirt a-mach 's bha e ga smocadh. Bha a làmhnan fèitheach is bonaid air a cheann... chuir e mach smugaid a thuit anns a' bhùrn." Sinewy, this is a man who has worked hard though he has a motor now - placing the story around the 1950s when motors were a common feature on working boats. He is somewhat coarse, smoking without asking, spitting too, and casually attired, "bonaid" not "ad". He uses a colloquial register, "Dè cleachd sibh a bhith dèanamh?" Rough, working class and garrulous, he asks all the questions. Nosy too, he is constantly trying to see what is in her hand.

In contrast, the woman, a teacher, is quiet, self-contained and refined, using an upper register when she speaks, "Carson a dhèanainn sin?". "Cho tana ri pinseal, ann an deise ghlas, gun fhàinne air a h-òrdaig... Bha i coimhead uamhasach aonaranach, mar gum biodh a spiorad fillte innte fhèin, mar gun robh i air sàmhach ionnsachadh mar leasan." Her thin greyness hints at a life spent hard at work in her school and her silence and the ringless finger point to a life of privation.

After the losses of WWI and the exodus of young people on ships like the *Metagama*, there were not enough men for every woman to be married. Women who had enough education could become school mistresses and often had to move to another community for work. In their new communities they lived a nunlike, rather lonely existence set apart from the community itself.

"Chaith me mo bheatha anns an aon sgoil. Cha robh fhios a'm an e mearachd a bha sin no nach e. Ach char robh me riann airson a fàgail. Agus, rud àraid, cha robh a' chlann a' fàs aosd' idir. Cha robh daoine fàs aosd' ach me-fhì'n agus na tidsearan eile. Nach eil sin àraid?" With the untouched apple in her hand and a life spent in one place without sampling the world, the teacher could be seen as an Eve who never left the garden of Eden or a Snow White who lived out her life with the dwarves, never having bitten the apple or found her prince. As a teacher himself, I think Mac a' Ghobhainn found the self-sacrifice of the spinster school mistress rather noble.

### Briseadh na Cloiche

A man attacks a boulder with a hammer to please his wife by removing it from the middle of the garden path of their newly finished house - twelve years in the making. Overcome with anger during his task, he suffers a fatal heart attack or stroke. Although sympathy may initially lie with him, delving into the underside of the tale reveals a more sympathetic picture of the wife, Catrìona.

"Taigh ùr... cidsin le uinneag mhòr a' cumail sùil air a' Chuan Siar... Bha esan air ùr thàrsainn às Chogadh, ... le sgeadachadh de fhasanan suirghe a dh'ionnsaich e anns a' Nèibhi... Cha robh Catrìona air còmhraidh gaoil de a shamhail a chluinntinn, agus gheall i a phòsadh." The house being finished twelve years after demobbing sets this story in the 1950s when people were moving out of the old blackhouses and into new whitehouses. The need for a window overlooking the ocean further suggests that he is a fisherman which would explain some of his difficulty in building a house. However, this is a man who won his wife with fair words rather than deeds.

"Gabh e dhan ulbhaig leis an òrd-mhòr, an t-òrd a' buiceil agus pian a' ruith na ghaideanan." Right away we know this is not a wise or clever man for Dwelly defines an ulbhaig as a stone taking three men to handle. Instead he deals with it on his own, trying to break it rather than tow it away and persisting even though he is clearly having little effect, "Cha do shaoil an t-seana chlach dad dheth.... Suas, s'òs, 's an t-òrd a deann-bhualash, sgall ar muin sgall". Indeed, his stubbornness is what kills him in the end as he obsesses over breaking the stone.

"E, 'si bha bòidheach na latha, le aodach glan soilleir (mas do bhàsaich a màthair)... Ach dh'fhalb am blàths, dh'fhalb na fiacalan, thèirig an òige, is sheac na bilean. Le dhith taighe,,dè as coireach gun thog Teàrlach is Aonghas is Tormod taighean, ma tha e cho doirbh's sin? H-uile tè de m'aois ann an taigh ceart, is mise fhathast gun bhùrn, gun sholas a seo?... Cha togadh tu do thòin far a' bheing." After her mother died, Catrìona would have had to leave that house as it would pass to a brother or back to the estate, and go live in the unfinished house her husband was building. She would have been taking a step backward to be without the modern comforts her contemporaries were enjoying.

In small communities, everyone is watches everyone else and passes judgement on what they see. It would be quite obvious, in the row of new whitehouses along the road that one was not finished. As the person living on the croft fulltime and doing much of the work, as women did, it would be Catrìona who would have to bear the brunt of criticism. To add insult to injury, other men, men she could have married, have completed their houses far quicker than her lazy husband. Even so she is not uncaring as she does try to save him in the end.

### Dealbhan

This is an essay on the pictures the author has seen in people's houses and the stories behind them. Here the people are all real and the stories are true.

"S a' bruidhinn air earrainnean,... ann an taigh mo sheanmhair, te os cionn an teine air truinnsear a thug Anna Bheag Thaididh dha mo mhathair, Prepare to meet thy God. Aon bliadhn' ur, as deidh na diathad dh'fhalbh lain Mor brathair mo mhathair le poc lan lof gu caora bochd... 's cha do thill lain gu na chops is buntata praidhpan, a bh'air a dhol dubh anns an amhainn a' feitheamh air, gu aon uair deuga dh'oichdhe." In the first story, set in a religious household complete with biblical texts on the walls, the author's uncle comes home drunk and very late after meeting some friends .

"S laigh e air a ruga aig beulaibh an teine, a cheann ri casan mo sheanmhair a bha coimhead sios ris le uamhas... Thug e 'n uairsin suil os a chionn air truinnsear Anna Bheag Thaididh. 'Prepare to meet thy dog,' thuirt e." Though it looks like it's just a funny mistake, exchanging 'dog' for 'God', the texts on the wall clue us in. To the religious grandmother it would be shocking too, as bad language in Gaelic is based on religion and not on crudeness as in English.

"S a' bruidhinn air dealbhan, co mheud taigh anns a' faca sinn na h-aodainn ann an deisichean an airm, trugain an neibhidh, air nach do laigh aois? ... 'Sin an aois a bha iad,' ars' Aonghas lain rium aig cruach mo sheanmhair an-uiridh - Aonghas Ban Dholaidh Dhodubh, balach og le boilarsuit dearg, a' tighinn anns an tractar leis an ath lod - agus 's ann an uairsin, son a' chiad uair, a bhuail e steach ceart thugam cho og's a bha iad, na gillean a dh'fhalbh 's nach do thill."

The author is struck by how many households contain pictures of young men who went to war and never returned. As a friend of his grandmother's points out a youth driving a tractor with the next load of peat, it hits him how young all those lost young men were. After two World Wars, Lewis lost so many young men and without the men to marry many young women left the island for better prospects. The communities are still recovering from that loss of young people today.

### Summary

War and its effects are a recurring theme in all throughout and this is because the Western Isles lost the highest percentage population in the UK in both World Wars. Sitting alongside this is emigration in the early 20th century, where again the islands lost the greatest part of population. The effects of these events are still felt in the islands today and are a common underlying theme in modern Gaelic writing.

In so few words it is impossible to explore each of the chosen pieces fully but hopefully I have managed to illustrate the techniques used by the authors to enrich their writing with a supporting substrata full of fact and symbology.

**Bibliography**Gaelic Source

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An t-Ubhal	Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn
Briseadh na Cloiche	Iain Moireach
Dealbhan	Alasdair Caimbeul

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Go Listen to the Crofters	A.D. Cameron
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A School in South Uist	F.G. Rae

# An t-ubhal

Wend Scotsman  
13/10 1927

le IAIN MAC a' GHOBHAINN

THAINIG i sios chun an abhainn far an robh fear a' bhàta a' feitheamh. "Se madainn dheallach a bh' ann 's bha am bùrn sàmhach gun ghlunsad sam bith air fheadh.

"A bheil sinn deiseil airson fàgail?" arsa fear a' bhàta.

"Tha," ars ise. Cha robh i idir còmhraicheach. An dràsda 's a-rithist shealladh fear a' bhàta rithe far an robh i 'na suidhe anns a' bhàta cho tana ri pinseal, ann an deise ghlas, gun fhàinne air a h-òrdaig.

"Dé chleachd sibh a bhith dèanamh?" arsa fear a' bhàta.

"Bha mi teagasg ann an sgoil," fhreagair i.

"O. An do chòrd sin ribh?"

"Chòrd. Cha robh e dona." Bha i coimhead uamhasach aonaranach, mar gum biodh a spiorad fillte linte fhèin, mar gum robh i air sàmhachd lonn-sachadh, mar leasan.

Bha rudeigin aice 'na làimh ach cha robh e dèanamh a-mach dé bh' ann, 's nuair a bha e toirt sùil an dràsda 's a-rithist bha i dùnadh a dùirn mar gum robh i airson fhalach.

"Se clann òg a bhithinn a' teagasg," ars ise, a' toirt sùil air thoiseach oirre far an robh a' ché a' falach bruach eile na h-aibhne.

"An robh sin na b' fheàrr?" arsa fear a' bhàta.

"Tha mi smaoinichadh gu robh," ars ise. Bha fear a' bhàta air plob a thoirt a-mach 's bha e ga smocadh. Bha a làmhnan fèitheach is bonaid air a cheann.

Cha robh fear a' bhàta 'ga tuigsinn idir. Bha a' chuid bu mhòtha de na daoine a bhiodh

e 'g aisig a' bruidhinn gun sgar, a' faighneachd cheistean dheth, càit' an robh iad a' dol, de bu chòirreach gun tàinig iad chun na h-aibhne cho tràth, 's cuideachd ag ràdh nach robh iad deiseil, gun robh tòrr aca fhathast ri dhèanamh, ach cha robh ise mar sin idir. Bha e cur iongnadh air cho ciùin 's a bha i. Ach dé bh' aice 'na làimh?

"Chaith mi mo bheatha anns an aon sgoil," ars ise. "Chan eil fhios a'm an e mearachd a bha sin neo nach e. Ach cha robh mi riann airson a fàgail. Agus, rud àraid, cha robh a' chlann a' fàs aosd' idir. Cha robh duine fàs aosd' ach mi-fhin agus na tidsearan eile. Nach eil sin àraid?"

"Ann an dòigh," ars esan. "Ach tha mi tuigsinn bhur faeail."

"Tha," ars ise. "Tha mi cinnteach."

"Ann an ceann ùine thubhairt i. "Sann an dé fhèin a' thachair e. Bha mi 'nam shuidhe aig mo dhase nuair a thuit mi. Bha chaille fhathast 'nam làimh. 'S cha robh fhios aig a' chlann dé dhèanamh iad. Cha robh càil a dhùil agam ris an dealachadh ud, bha e cho obann."

"Tha mi creidsinn," ars esan.

Bha a' ché a-nise a' togail bhò'n abhainn 's bha a' bhruach eile a' nochdadh. Na daoine a bha e coimneachadh, gach fear is té cho atharrachite bho chèile, feadhainn dhiubh a' feadalach mar nach robh a' chùis a' cur dragh orra, feadhainn a' gal, feadhainn feargach. Ach cha robh ise coltach ri gin dhiubh.

"Bha e cheart cho math," ars ise. "Tha mi tuigsinn sin. Oir dé bha mi dol a dhèanamh an dèidh dhomh an sgoil fhà-gail?"

Cha robh freagairt aige. Dé bha i air a dhèanamh? Ann an saoghal air nach do thadhail i ach ann am brúadar? Air taobh a-muigh na sgoile bha sràidean is taighean, bha eucoir is trioblaid, bha daoine a' fàs aosd'. Dé ceart gu leòr, bha i air a dhèanamh?

Chuir e mach smugaid a thuit anns a' bhùrn is dh'éis e ri eimhsan a' bhàta. Anns na làithean a thréig 'se raimh a bhiodh aca ach a-nis 'se beart a bha gluasad a' bhàta. Bha i 'na suidhe anns a' bhàta coltach ri nighean òg a bha dol air sheirbheis airson a' cheud uair, 's i coimhead cho falcilleach. Ach cha robh treallaich r'a taobh, cha tug i càil leatha do'n bhàta, sgàthan neo pùdar neo airgead. 'S cha robh eagal sam bith oirre. Bha e coimhead bruach na h-aibhne a-nis cho soilleir ri càil, agus cha d'fhuir e mach fhathast dé bha 'na làimh. Ann an còig mìionaidean eile bhiodh i air tìr còrnha ri càch, ris an fheadhainn eile a dh'aisig e null.

"Bith feadhainn dhiubh ag ràdh cho aonaranach 's a tha an t-àite," ars esan. " 'S feadhainn a' cur an làmhnan anns a' bhùrn. Cha do rinn sibhse sin idir."

"Cha do rinn," fhreagair i. "Carson a dhèanainn sin?"

"Chan eil fhios dé 's coireach ach bith feadhainn a' dèanamh sin," ars esan. Bha ceò ag éirigh as a phlob mar nathair do'n adhar, 's beagan blàths air aodann 's air a làmhnan. 'Se

latha brèagha a bhiodh ann.

Bha am bùrn a' ruith 'gu ciùin ri clathalach a' bhàta, dubh ann am pàirtean is geal ann an àitichean eile, fèithean uisge. Làidir, treun. Bha ise sàmhach a-rithist a' sealltainn air thoiseach oirre. Bha uaireadair tana air a gairdean is bràist aig a' broilleach, 's i coimhead cho fionnar ris an latha fhèin is a cheart cho airgeadach.

"An robh càirdean idir agaibh?" ars esan le iongnadh.

"Cha robh," ars ise. "Cha robh agam ach a' chlann."

'S bha fhios aige nach robh i riann pòda, bha sin soilleir dha. Bhiodh i leughadh leabhraichean 's a' sgrùdadh ainmeanan a bha sgrìobhte air na dascan. Cho fionnar 's cho sàmhach 's a bha an lios ud.

"Tha mi cinnteach gur e tidsear math a bh' annaibh," thubhairt e.

"Tha mi 'n dòchas," ars ise. Bha am bàta a-nis air bruach na h-aibhne a ruighinn agus cheangail e an ròpa. Dìreach nuair a rinn i airson seasamh thuit i 'na ghàirdeanan is thuit cuideachd an nì a bha i giùlan 'na làimh. 'Se ubhat a bh' ann, cho dearg is cho deàrrsach anns a' mhadalann.

"Thug a' chlann sin dhomh," ars ise. Agus thog i an t-ubhal.

"O?" ars esan.

Cho dìreach ri pinseal, ann an glas, choisich i air falbh bhualthe 's an t-ubhal 'na làimh, 's cha do thionndaidh i idir. Mu dheireadh cha robh e 'ga faicinn idir anns an dorchedas far an robh a' ghrian ag éirigh.

# Leabhraichean, Ealadhain,

## Dealbhan

### ALASDAIR CAIMBEUL

... 's a' bruidhinn air earrainnean, bha te ann an taigh a' Phuilein, air a' staidhre. Hitherto **Hath the Lord Helped Us**; agus a-mach bho thaigh Thaididh, ann an taigh mo sheanmhair, te os cionn an teine air truinnsear a thug Anna Bheag Thaididh dha mo mhathair, **Prepare To Meet Thy God**. Aon fheasgar bliadhna ur, as deidh na diathad, dh'fhalbh Iain Mor brathair mo mhathair le poca lan lof gu caora bhochd a bha leis air laibheanan na traghaid, 's cha do thill e gu aon uair deug a dh'oidheche. Chaidh eigheachd air a-steach a thaigh Iain Chailaid air a shlighe air ais, 's bha duine na dhithis a-staigh an-sin roimhe, comhla ri John, balaich a' bhaile, 's nochd feadhainn eile, 's cha do thill Iain gu na chops 's am bunata praidhpan, a bh'air a dhol dubh anns an amhainn a' feitheamh air, gu aon uair deug a dh'oidheche. Cha mho a dh'ith e na chops no 'm bunata praidhpan, chum e air suas chun an teine na bhotannan 's na chota mor dubh a' Mhailis' a fhuair e bho Thormod Mhurchaidh, 's laigh e air a' ruga aig beulaibh an teine, a cheann ri casan mo sheanmhair, a bha coimhead sios ris le uarnhas. "Forty four horse power an am Mairi Chraisgean," thuir e. Bha mise air an t-sofa. "Sandy MacNab," thuir e. Sheinn e bloigh de dh'amhran Beurla, "Dark dark in the morning, On the face of the foe, Before they awakened, In the vale of Glencoe." Thug e 'n uairsin suil os a chionn air truinnsear Anna Bheag Thaididh. "Prepare to meet thy Dog," thuir e.

Bha dealbh na rum shuas a' staidhre dheth fhein ann an sgiobadh tug-of-war Cheann Luich mhoir. Og, tapaidh, le mhunichillean trusaichte, leine gheal gun choilear air, galarsan is belt. Dealbh eile dheth fhein leis a' lair dhubh, Deen. A' Bhoiteag a' farainn a bh'air na bhalach, bha e cho caol 's cho fada. Thog e sabhal nuair a bha e 80. Bha bardachd Dhomhnaill Ruaidh Chorunna aige air a theanga. 'S e dh'ionnsaich buain-mhonach dhomh, agus spealadh; cha b'ann gun trodan. Ma tha daoine beulach nan ealain a' sireadh cuspair a chumas comhradh riutha, thigeadh iad a thoirt suil air a' chlachaireachd aige. Ma tha iad ag iarraidh dealbhan a thogail. Bhasaich e aig toiseach na bliadhna, aois 91.

... 's a' bruidhinn air dealbhan, co mheud taigh anns a' faca sinn na h-aodainn ann an deisichean an airm, trusgan an neibhidh, air nach do laigh aois? A dh'fhalbh dhan a' Cliad Chogadh Mor 's nach do thill, 's a tha fhathast, balbh, bho chul ghlainne, tro faileas cairt, a' coimhead rinn, sios uaigneas nam bliadhnaichean? Uaireanan tha

dhithis anns an dealbh, fear na shuidhe 's fear na sheasamh le lamb air a' ghualainn. Uaireanan tha triuir. Chailleadh triuir an taigh Thormoid Bhain, Fionnlagh, Alasdair agus Aonghas. Nuair a chuala Iain mar a thachair dha bhraidhreach, dhuilt e dhol air bord na Sheila anns a' Chaol, 's thill e air ais dhan a' Fhraing, dhan na trainnsichean. 'S e bhiodh air an rathad romhainn, a' coiseachd sios is suas, a' bruidhinn ris fhein. Cha d'fhuair e riamh seachad air. Chailleadh dhithis an taigh Aonghas 'An Duinn, Ruairidh is Iain. "Sin an aois a bha iad," ars' Aonghas Uilleam rium aig cruach mo sheanmhair an-uiridh — Aonghas Ban Dholaidh Dhodubh, balach og le boilarsuit dearg, a' tighinn anns an tractor leis an ath lod — agus 's ann an uairsin, son a' chiad uair, a bhuail e steach ceart thugam cho og 's a bha iad, na gillean a dh'fhalbh 's nach do thill.

Bha dealbh mor aig Domhnall Ban Rob air a' bhalla: **The Return From Inkerman**. Saighdearan Gaidhealach a' tilleadh bho batail, an tuiteam na h-oidheche, air rathad salach, leigeach, lan dhocan. Tha feadhainn dhiobh a' basachadh an dig a' rathaid. Each air a' chliarhaich anns a' pholl, gunna mor slaodte ris. Saighdear le bann ma mhaol, 's companach ga chuideachadh. Aon fhear mor le feusag a' coimhead dìreach roimhe, fhathast air a' mhairde, a' ghunna ri ghualainn. An cud an deilbh, a-meas an t-sluaigh, chit thu oifigearan air eich. Anns a' Chrimea a tha Inkerman, agus chaidh an latha leatha, an fheadhainn tha tilleadh anns an dealbh.

Cogadh gun chiall gun aobhar a bh'ann an cogadh a' Chrimea. Chaidh leth millean a mharbhadh ann. Chunnac mi da dhealbh eile de shaighdearan Gaidhealach anns a' Chrimea — **Bruthaichean Alma**, anns a' Khelvingrove an Glaschu (cha bhi e nis ann, mas urrainn dha Spalding), agus **The Thin Red Line** ann an taigh-tasgaidh reiseamaid Earraghaidheal 's Chataibh, an caisteal Shruighlea.

Bha oifigear og Ruiseanach anns a' Chrimea, a thug beachd, na leabhar-latha, air na Gaidheal, cho mor 's cho eireachdail 's a bha iad, nan eiddidhean dearg agus scarlaid, 's cho math 's bha 'n t-airm Breatannach a' coimhead as deidh an cuid shaighdearan, a bharrachd air an airm acasan. Bha e aig Sebastopol, an oifigear og seo, agus sgrìobh e mu dheidhinn ann an leabhar **The Sebastopol Sketches**. Sgrìobh e leabhraichean eile an deidh sin. 'S e an t-ainm a bh'air Leo Tolstoy.

# Commentary on candidate evidence

The candidate evidence contained in this pack has achieved the following marks for the coursework assessment task.

## Candidate A

The candidate was awarded **18 marks**.

### Content

The candidate has chosen a title which outlines the focus of the analysis and the sources chosen support that analysis. There are some features of an analytical approach and some attempt at argument but there are also some elements of a personal response which detract somewhat from the overall impression, particularly in the first and last paragraphs. There is also too much background information, with the analysis only starting at the beginning of paragraph 5. The candidate does demonstrate understanding of the focus of the study.

### Style

The candidate presents evidence from the sources to support the conclusions made and has quoted extensively from both poems. For the most part she maintains an appropriate register but, as mentioned above, does make too much use of the first person. She does make effective use of critical terminology, referring to imagery, metaphor, tone and irony.

### Organisation

The work does have some sense of structure and there is a balance between how much consideration is given to each of the poems. The writing is largely coherent and is presented in a clear manner. The candidate does present arguments and does attempt to draw conclusions which refer back to the title. The conclusion is perhaps too personal but the final sentence does provide an effective summary of the writing.

## Candidate B

The candidate was awarded **24 marks**.

### Content

The candidate has chosen a title which outlines the focus of the analysis but is perhaps a little *too* concise. It would have benefited from including a reference to, perhaps, the success or otherwise of techniques or the use to which Gaelic writers put these techniques. He has chosen sources which support analysis and takes an analytical approach with reasoned arguments. He demonstrates an understanding of the focus of the study but not everything in this piece, while eminently readable, is entirely relevant to the notion of 'short-hand'.

### Style

The candidate presents evidence from sources to support the conclusions made, quoting extensively from all three short stories and the article analysed. He maintains an appropriate register with minimal use of the first person. He makes good use of critical terminology – *While the man in the tale is sketched in lightly, a more definite picture is painted of the lady of the story; the most poignant clue to her life; the single chair strongly implies; the central motif; a thematically rich exposée; a colloquial register; further suggests* – which makes the phrase 'clue us in' (Dealbhan paragraph 3) all the more incongruous.

### Organisation

The candidate writes in a structured way and the essay is coherent throughout. He presents and evaluates arguments and attempts to draw conclusions but the final summary, while well-written, does not relate directly to the stated focus of the analysis (short-hand).