

**BITS Pilani – K.K. Birla Goa Campus**  
**Second Semester 2022-2023**  
**Comprehensive Examination (Open Book)**  
**GS F241: Creative Writing**

**Date: 08/05/2023**

**Time: 2 PM - 5 PM**

**Total Marks: 40**

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*All questions are compulsory and carry equal marks, i.e. 4 X 10 = 40. The answer to **each** question should ideally be restricted to 750 words. Your answer must directly tackle the question. DO NOT SUMMARIZE THE TEXTS.*

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**Q1. Offer your thoughts on the creative process and on the motivations of a writer in the light of the following statements:**

I suffer a book as one suffers an illness. I now respect only the books that all but killed their authors. — André Gide (1869 - 1951), French author

Writing a book is a horrible, exhausting struggle, like a long bout of some painful illness. — George Orwell (1903 - 1950), English author

Writing is not suffering. It's living faster, or with a greater intensity. — Dany Laferrière (b. 1953), Haitian-Canadian author

**Q2. To what purpose and effect does the poet employ ambiguity in the following untitled poem:**

All night the two of them  
exchanged  
intimate words —  
now dawn  
the household parrot  
chatters it out to the in-laws.  
She slips a ruby  
from her ear, mortified,  
into the parrot's beak —  
it could be a pomegranate seed —  
and stifles the  
unguarded cries.

— from the *Amarushataka*, circa 8th century CE;  
translated from the Sanskrit by Andrew Schelling

**Q3. Read the following short story and comment on the story's (i) theme, (ii) characterization, (iii) use of dialogue, (iv) employment of literary devices, and (v) significance of title.**

### A Day's Wait

He came into the room to shut the windows while we were still in bed and I saw he looked ill. He was shivering, his face was white, and he walked slowly as though it ached to move.

"What's the matter, Schatz?"

"I've got a headache."

"You better go back to bed."

"No. I'm all right."

"You go to bed. I'll see you when I'm dressed."

But when I came downstairs he was dressed, sitting by the fire, looking a very sick and miserable boy of nine years. When I put my hand on his forehead I knew he had a fever.

"You go up to bed," I said, "you're sick."

"I'm all right," he said.

When the doctor came he took the boy's temperature.

"What is it?" I asked him.

"One hundred and two."

Downstairs, the doctor left three different medicines in different coloured capsules with instructions for giving them. One was to bring down the fever, another a purgative, the third to overcome an acid condition. The germs of influenza can only exist in an acid condition, he explained. He seemed to know all about influenza and said there was nothing to worry about if the fever did not go above one hundred and four degrees. This was a light epidemic of flu and there was no danger if you avoided pneumonia.

Back in the room I wrote the boy's temperature down and made a note of the time to give the various capsules.

"Do you want me to read to you?"

"All right. If you want to," said the boy. His face was very white and there were dark areas under his eyes. He lay still in the bed and seemed very detached from what was going on.

I read aloud from Howard Pyle's *Book of Pirates*; but I could see he was not following what I was reading.

"How do you feel, Schatz?" I asked him.

"Just the same, so far," he said.

I sat at the foot of the bed and read to myself while I waited for it to be time to give another capsule. It would have been natural for him to go to sleep, but when I looked up he was looking at the foot of the bed, looking very strangely.

"Why don't you try to go to sleep? I'll wake you up for the medicine."

"I'd rather stay awake."

After a while he said to me, "You don't have to stay in here with me, Papa, if it bothers you."

"It doesn't bother me."

"No, I mean you don't have to stay if it's going to bother you."

I thought perhaps he was a little lightheaded and after giving him the prescribed capsules at eleven o'clock I went out for a while.

It was a bright, cold day, the ground covered with a sleet that had frozen so that it seemed as if all the bare trees, the bushes, the cut brush and all the grass and the bare ground had been varnished with ice. I took the young Irish setter for a little walk up the road and along a frozen creek, but it was difficult to stand or walk on the glassy surface and the red dog slipped and slithered and I fell twice, hard, once dropping my gun and having it slide away over the ice.

We flushed a covey of quail under a high clay bank with overhanging brush and I killed two as they went out of sight over the top of the bank. Some of the covey lit in trees, but most of them scattered into brush piles and it was necessary to jump on the ice-coated mounds of brush several times before they would flush. Coming out while you were poised unsteadily on the icy, springy brush they made difficult shooting and I killed two, missed five, and started back pleased to have found a covey close to the house and happy there were so many left to find on another day.

At the house they said the boy had refused to let any one come into the room.

"You can't come in," he said. "You mustn't get what I have."

I went up to him and found him in exactly the position I had left him, white-faced, but with the tops of his cheeks flushed by the fever, staring still, as he had stared, at the foot of the bed.

I took his temperature.

"What is it?"

"Something like a hundred," I said. It was one hundred and two and four tenths.

"It was a hundred and two," he said.

"Who said so?"

"The doctor."

"Your temperature is all right," I said. "It's nothing to worry about."

"I don't worry," he said, "but I can't keep from thinking."

"Don't think," I said. "Just take it easy."

"I'm taking it easy," he said and looked straight ahead. He was evidently holding tight onto himself about something.

"Take this with water."

"Do you think it will do any good?"

"Of course it will."

I sat down and opened the *Pirate* book and commenced to read, but I could see he was not following, so I stopped.

"About what time do you think I'm going to die?" he asked.

"What?"

"About how long will it be before I die?"

"You aren't going to die. What's the matter with you?"

"Oh, yes, I am. I heard him say a hundred and two."

"People don't die with a fever of one hundred and two. That's a silly way to talk."

"I know they do. At school in France the boys told me you can't live with forty-four degrees. I've got a hundred and two."

He had been waiting to die all day, ever since nine o'clock in the morning.

"You poor Schatz," I said. "Poor old Schatz. It's like miles and kilometres. You aren't going to die. That's a different thermometer. On that thermometer thirty-seven is normal. On this kind it's ninety-eight."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely," I said. "It's like miles and kilometres. You know, like how many kilometres we make when we do seventy miles in the car?"

"Oh," he said.

But his gaze at the foot of the bed relaxed slowly. The hold over himself relaxed too, finally, and the next day it was very slack and he cried very easily at little things that were of no importance.

— Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), American fiction writer

**Q4. Identify the type of creative nonfiction the following piece can be categorized into. Justify your choice by citing evidences from the text.**

### Satellite

Sometime during the years I was entangled in a transpacific love, I was sitting at an oak desk in a library. The light was waning and the big leafy tree that stretched up and shadowed half of the window was taking on the darker green of dusk. I was worn out, slumped and looking mute at the bit of sky beyond those leaves. Just then I saw a bright, orangey chunk of light make its way across the air: a satellite catching the last rays of sunlight, racing around the world.

I thought of my boyfriend on the near shore of a far land. I considered the geometry of the arcs between us—surface of earth, of water, the path drawn by the globe's spin, that drawn by the satellite. If he were looking up, could he have seen that satellite soon after me? Could it pass through the night that lay between us and emerge into his morning, once again angling fiery light into tired eyes?

I took out a pen. I drew diagrams on my notebook, trying to find the shape of time between us, a complex thing made of motion and mass, dependent on the attraction of bodies. I held my breath to make perfect circles, to keep my hand from shaking as I carved deep arcs in the thin cardboard cover. One dot for him. One dot for me. Square of satellite bigger than each of us, riding an imaginary hoop.

It's easy to forget that orbits are ellipses, that distances are more variable than they seem. Again and again, I scribbled out one attempt and tried once more, laying down clean lines against the void, until I ran out of space. The size of the darkness between us remained the largest unknown. Because I couldn't figure out the proof, I decided to trust the fantasy, and because I trusted, I never tested it. I never called him and asked him to look at the horizon, for a message from me.

— Sarah Perry, American memoirist & essayist

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