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**Truro School 13+ Entrance Exam**

**ENGLISH**

**This paper is in two sections**

**You should answer ALL questions in Section A and ONE question only from Section B.**

**You should spend about 40 minutes on each Section.**

**You should take care with handwriting, spelling and punctuation and leave time to check your work.**

**SECTION A (25 marks)**

**Time allowed – 10 minutes reading plus 30 minutes writing**

***This extract is taken from an autobiography, ‘Sea Room’ by Adam Nicolson. He is setting out in his newly made boat (called Freyja) for his own islands, The Shiants. To get there, he has to cross the Minch, a stretch of rough sea in the Outer Hebrides - a chain of islands in the far North West of Scotland.***

**1.**

**The air has closed in and the north is now a featureless absence. Between me and the mist-wall, a gannet cruises across the Minch. It must be in from St Kilda, sixty miles away to the west, low over the water, quartering it, looking for the flash of silver there, cutting sickle\* curves across the grain of the swell. It is a frightening sea. I see a big tanker coming south down the Minch. The spray bursts around its bow as it slaps into each of the swells. No contact with its crew or master, but I feel them looking at me from the bridge and wondering what that tiny boat must be about. Not that the swells are particularly big; they lift *Freyja* five or six feet in a long, rolling motion. It is just that the boat seems small, the sea wide and the land in all directions a long way off. Like a climber on his ledge, I have to suppress the awareness of all that room beneath me. Concentrate on the boat. Look to the sail. Check you are on course. Do not consider the hugeness of the sea.**

**2.**

**The muscles across my chest have tightened and my whole body is tensed, waiting for some relief. I am not at home here. I don’t have the sailor’s ease. I look at each coming sea as a possible enemy. The sea surface is streaked white as if the fat in meat has been dragged downwind. Why did I think this would be a thing to do, to push myself out here on a slightly difficult day, with the wind rising and the passage untried? It was not wise, but I am committed now. It would be just as bad turning back as going on. The sea extends like a hostile crowd around me. I want to arrive. I want to be out of uncertainty. At least on the island, however much the sea might batter it, there is no fear of the ground below your feet breaking or of it somehow abandoning you. An island is loyal in the way a boat can never be. A boat can go wrong, the gear can fail. The sheer solid stillness of islands is not like that. An island is a presence, not a motion, and there is faithfulness in rocks.**

**3.**

**I was steering west. The water had turned, as it does sometimes with the tide, into strange, long slicks, each slab of water as smooth as a hank of brushed hair. It is a horrible sensation in the mist, a strangeness at sea, when all you want is normality and predictability. The long slicks of water were giving way to a broken, pitted surface like the skin of an orange. At certain stages of high wind against spring tide, the sea here can turn into a white and broken mass of water, a frothing muddle of energies stretching across the whole width of the Minch, a chaos in which there are not only steep-sided seas coming at you from all directions, but, terrifyingly, holes, pits in the surfaces of the sea, into which the boat can plunge nose-first and find it difficult to return.**

**4.**

**Coming out of the mist, draped with cloud ribbons like feather boas across their shoulders, were the islands, my islands, my destination. Here, I knew where the tide rips and bubbles, exactly where the rocks are, and the known, however harsh, is the safe and the good. Even though the sea now was more uncomfortable than anywhere on the journey, I started to feel easy. A small wave slopped aboard and I pumped it out. Birds were hanging around the rocks like bees. But the relief, as ever, was ambivalent. This is the longed-for place, but it is so indifferent to my presence, so careless of my existence, that I might as well not have been here.**

**\*a sickle is a curved knife used to cut down plants**

**SECTION A (25 marks)**

**Answer ALL questions**

1. **What is the effect of writing this piece in the First Person (‘I’)?**

**………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….…………………………………………………..**

 **(2 marks)**

1. **Nicolson uses many short, simple sentences in the first two paragraphs. Write out two examples and explain their effect:**

**…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………**

1. **marks)**
2. **What atmosphere is built up by the imagery in the first paragraph? In your own words, explain how a reader might respond to the following:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The north is now a featureless absence** |  |
| **…cutting sickle curves across the grain of the swell** |  |
| **Like a climber on his ledge, I have to suppress the awareness of all that room beneath me** |  |

1. **marks)**
2. **Find and write out three examples of the personification of the sea and land in Paragraph 2:**

**i……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..…………………………………………………….**

**ii……………………………………………………………………..…………………………………………………………………………………………….……………………………………………..**

**iii…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….…………………………………..**

 **(3 marks)**

**What is the effect of this personification? ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….**

1. **marks)**
2. **Write out the similes used to describe the texture of the sea in Paragraph 3:**
	1. **……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..**
	2. **……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..**

 **(2 marks)**

 **What impression of the sea do these similes give?**

**………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………**

**(2 marks)**

1. **In the final paragraph, find two images which suggest how comforting is the sight of the islands and explain your choices:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Image** | **Explanation** |
| **1** |  |  |
| **2** |  |  |

1. **marks)**

**Total /25**

**TURN OVER FOR SECTION B**

**SECTION B (25 marks)**

**Time allowed – 10 minutes planning plus 30 minutes writing**

**Write about ONE of the following:**

*(You should use your own* ***ideas*** *and* ***imagination*** *here; you do* ***not*** *need to refer to the passage you have just read)*

**Either (a)**  Write your own description of being alone at sea

**Or (b)** Write a story that either begins or ends with the words,

**‘the islands, my islands’**

**(25 marks)**