

## Epreuve écrite

Examen de fin d'études secondaires 2011

Section: A

Branche: ANGLAIS (texte inconnu)

Numéro d'ordre du candidat

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### On The Train

Cradled through England between flooded fields  
rocking, rocking the rails, my head-phones on,  
the black box of my Walkman on the table.  
Hot tea trembles in its plastic cup.  
I'm thinking of you waking in our bed  
thinking of me on the train. Too soon to phone.

The radio speaks in the suburbs, in commuter towns,  
in cars unloading children at school gates,  
is silenced in dark parkways down the line  
before locks click and footprints track the frost  
and trains slide out of stations in the dawn  
dreaming their way towards the blazing bone-ship.

The vodaphone you are calling  
may have been switched off.  
Please call later. And calling later,  
calling later their phones ring in the rubble  
and in the rubble of suburban kitchens  
the wolves howl into silent telephones.

I phone. No answer. Where are you now?  
The train moves homeward through the morning  
Tonight I'll be home safe, but talk to me, please.  
Pick up the phone. Today I'm tolerant  
of mobiles. Let them say it. I'll say it too.  
Darling, I'm on the train.

*Gillian Clarke*

Note: It is essential to note that this poem was written the day after the Paddington rail crash in October 1999 with 31 people killed and many more injured.

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**Answer the following questions. Use your own words as far possible.**

1. The first two stanzas of the poem seem to tell an ordinary enough story, but with a sense of apprehension. Discuss with close reference to the poem. (12m)
2. Behind the poet's thoughts we glimpse another story suggested by powerful images. Analyse them. (12m)
3. Analyse the significance of the telephone and its use in detail. (6m)
4. What can you say about the structure of the poem if you consider contents and time scheme? (5m)
5. Gillian Clarke called the poem her "11th September poem". How does she manage to widen the sense of concern for the victims of disasters? Especially focus on the language used. (10m)
6. Some may see it as part of the duty of any poet to write about loss and disaster in order to help his or her readers come to terms with similar experiences. Discuss. (15m)