INSTRUCTIONS

1. Students are requested, in their own interests, to write legibly.
2. This question paper consists of 6 pages. Please see that you have them all.
3. Answer THREE questions, ONE from each section.

SECTION A

1. Provide a close reading of William Blake’s ‘Holy Thursday’ (I) in which you relate the poem to the poet’s notion of innocence and experience.

‘Twas on a holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean,
The children walking two and two in red, and blue, and green:
Grey-headed beadles walked before with wands as white as snow
Till into the high dome of Paul’s they like Thames waters flow.

O what a multitude they seemed, these flowers of London town,
Seated in companies they sit, with radiance all their own;
The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes of lambs -
Thousands of little boys and girls raising their innocent hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven among;
Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of the poor -
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door.
2. Analyse the following passage from ‘Line Written a Few Miles above ‘Tintern Abbey’ and discuss the changes that have occurred in the speaker since his last visit to the Tintern Abbey area.

I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite, a feeling and a love
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur;
other gifts
Have followed - for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man -
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.
SECTION B

1. Analyse the following passage of William Wordsworth’s *The Two-Book Prelude* of 1799, and relate it to the ideas, themes and poetic techniques that characterise the poem as a whole.

And in the frosty season, when the sun was set, and visible for many a mile,
The cottage windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons; clear and loud
The village clock tolled six; I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for its home. All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures - the resounding horn,
The pack loud bellowing, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle. With the din,
Meanwhile, the precipices rang aloud,
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron, while the distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed - while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the shadow of a star
That gleamed upon the ice. And oftentimes
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion - then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me, even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round;
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.
SECTION C

5.

John Creaser notes that “the surface of unquestioning rapture at what the urn offers is always accompanied by a sceptical and questioning response, for the urn invites genuine enquiry.” Discuss this contention in the course of a close analysis of the first three stanzas of the ode.

1

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme —
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

2

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on —
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair!
Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
    For ever piping songs forever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love! 25
    For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
    For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
    That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
    A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

6.

Opposite notions combined in this poem include death and the sexual act, a pair of which I must produce further examples; pain and pleasure, perhaps as a milder version of this; the conception of the woman as at once mistress and mother, at once soothing and exciting, whom one must master, to whom one must yield; a desire at once for the eternity of fame and for the irresponsibility of oblivion; an apprehension of ideal beauty as sensual; and an apprehension of eternal beauty as fleeting. The perfection of form, the immediacy of statement, of the Ode, lie in the fact that these are all collected into the single antithesis which unites Melancholy to Joy.” (William Empson)

Critically discuss Empson’s reading of Keats’ ‘Ode on Melancholy’, using evidence from the poem itself to support your statements.

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
    Wolfsbane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed
    By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries, 5
    Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
    Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow’s mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
    And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.
But when the melancholy fit shall fall
    Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
    And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose, 15
    Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
    Imprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
    And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty - Beauty that must die;
    And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
    Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Aye, in the very temple of Delight 25
    Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
    Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
    His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
    And be among her cloudy trophies hung.