

## PART B: POETRY

Total Value: 20 marks

Suggested Time: 25 minutes

Read the poem "Request to a Year." Select the best answer for each question and record your choice.

## Request to a Year

by Judith Wright

- 1 If the year is meditating a suitable gift,  
I should like it to be the attitude  
of my great-great-grandmother,  
legendary devotee of the arts,
- 5 who having had eight children  
and little opportunity for painting pictures,  
sat one day on a high rock  
beside a river in Switzerland
- 10 and from a difficult distance viewed  
her second son, balanced on a small ice-floe,  
drift down the current towards a waterfall  
that struck rock-bottom eighty feet<sup>1</sup> below,
- 15 while her second daughter, impeded,  
no doubt, by the petticoats of the day,  
stretched out a last-hope alpenstock<sup>2</sup>  
(which luckily later caught him on his way).
- 20 Nothing, it was evident, could be done;  
and with the artist's isolating eye  
my great-great-grandmother hastily sketched the scene.  
The sketch survives to prove the story by.
- Year, if you have no Mother's Day present planned,  
reach back and bring me the firmness of her hand.

---

<sup>1</sup> *eighty feet*: approximately 25 metres

<sup>2</sup> *alpenstock*: hiking stick

11. In the poem, what happens to the second son?
- A. He is saved by his sister.
  - B. He is saved by his mother.
  - C. He strikes the rocks below.
  - D. He drowns in the waterfall.
12. What does “and with the artist’s isolating eye” (line 18) suggest about the great-great-grandmother?
- A. She felt lonely.
  - B. She had poor eyesight.
  - C. She felt no love for her son.
  - D. She focused on the specific scene.
13. Which poetic device is found in lines 21 and 22?
- A. paradox
  - B. metaphor
  - C. hyperbole
  - D. apostrophe
14. The speaker would be most pleased to inherit which of her great-great-grandmother’s characteristics?
- A. her generosity
  - B. her artistic talent
  - C. her steadfastness
  - D. her maternal instinct
15. What is the attitude of the speaker towards the great-great-grandmother?
- A. angry
  - B. critical
  - C. admiring
  - D. indifferent
16. According to the poem, what did having eight children mean for the great-great-grandmother?
- A. She had a life of anxiety.
  - B. She had little time for her art.
  - C. She had too many people to look after.
  - D. She had few talents other than child-rearing.
17. To what does the title of the poem refer?
- A. a fond memory
  - B. the speaker’s wish
  - C. an imagined fantasy
  - D. the speaker’s birthday