

SESSION 2025

ÉPREUVE À OPTION

COMMENTAIRE COMPOSÉ DE LITTÉRATURE ÉTRANGÈRE
ET COURT THÈME

L'usage de la calculatrice n'est pas autorisé

L'usage d'un dictionnaire unilingue est autorisé. Pour le japonais, l'usage de deux dictionnaires unilingues, dont un dictionnaire en langue japonaise de caractères chinois, est autorisé.

*La liste limitative des dictionnaires prévus pour l'épreuve de tronc commun de la BEL ne s'applique pas à cette épreuve. Les candidates et les candidats sont libres d'utiliser le dictionnaire **unilingue** de leur choix.*

Les candidats doivent **obligatoirement** traiter le sujet correspondant à la langue qu'ils ont choisie au moment de l'inscription.

DURÉE : 6 heures

ALLEMAND

ANGLAIS

ESPAGNOL

ITALIEN

Tournez la page S.V.P.

COMMENTAIRE COMPOSÉ DE LITTÉRATURE ANGLAISE ET COURT THÈME

I : COMMENTAIRE

Bermondsey

It aint like your regular sort of day.

Bernie pulls me a pint and puts it in front of me. He looks at me, puzzled, with his loose, doggy face but he can tell I don't want no chit-chat. That's why I'm here, five minutes after opening, for a little silent pow-wow with a pint glass. He can see the black tie, though it's four days since
5 the funeral. I hand him a fiver and he takes it to the till and brings back my change. He puts the coins, extra gently, eyeing me, on the bar beside my pint.

"Won't be the same, will it?" he says, shaking his head and looking a little way along the bar, like at unoccupied space. "Won't be the same."

I say, "You ain't seen the last of him yet."

10 He says, "You what?"

I sip the froth off my beer. "I said you aint seen the last of him yet."

He frowns, scratching his cheek, looking at me. "Course, Ray," he says and moves off down the bar.

I never meant to make no joke of it.

15 I suck an inch off my pint and light up a snout. There's maybe three or four other early-birds apart from me, and the place don't look its best. Chilly, a whiff of disinfectant, too much empty space. There's a shaft of sunlight coming through the window, full of specks. Makes you think of a church.

I sit there, watching the old clock, up behind the bar. *Thos. Slattery, Clockmaker, Southwark.*

20 The bottles racked up like organ pipes.

Lenny's next to arrive. He's not wearing a black tie, he's not wearing a tie at all. He takes a quick shifty at what I'm wearing and we both feel we gauged it wrong.

"Let me, Lenny," I say. "Pint?"

He says, "This is a turn-up."

25 Bernie comes over. He says, "New timetable, is it?"

"Morning," Lenny says.

"Pint for Lenny," I say.

"Retired now, have we, Lenny?" Bernie says.

30 "Past the age for it, aint I, Bern? I aint like Raysy here, man of leisure. Fruit and veg trade needs me."

"But not today, eh?" Bernie says.

Bernie draws the pint and moves off to the till.

"You haven't told him?" Lenny says, looking at Bernie.

"No," I say, looking at my beer, then at Lenny.

35 Lenny lifts his eyebrows. His face looks raw and flushed. It always does, like it's going to come out in a bruise. He tugs at his collar where his tie isn't.

"It's a turn-up," he says. "And Amy aint coming? I mean, she aint changed her mind?"

"No," I say. "Down to us, I reckon. The inner circle."

"Her own husband," he says.

40 He takes hold of his pint but he's slow to start drinking, as if there's different rules today even for drinking a pint of beer.

"We going to Vic's?" he says.

"No, Vic's coming here," I say.

He nods, lifts his glass, then checks it, sudden, half-way to his mouth. His eyebrows go even
45 higher.

I say, "Vic's coming here. With Jack. Drink up, Lenny."

Vic arrives about five minutes later. He's wearing a black tie but you'd expect that, seeing as
he's an undertaker, seeing as he's just come from his premises. But he's not wearing his full
rig. He's wearing a fawn raincoat, with a flat cap poking out of one of the pockets, as if he's
50 aimed to pitch it right: he's just one of us, it aint official business, it's different.

"Morning," he says.

I've been wondering what he'll have with him. So's Lenny, I dare say. Like I've had this
picture of Vic opening the pub door and marching in, all solemn, with a little oak casket with
brass fittings. But all he's carrying, under one arm, is a plain brown cardboard box, about a foot
55 high and six inches square. He looks like a man who's been down the shops and bought a set
of bathroom tiles.

He parks himself on the stool next to Lenny, putting the box on the bar, unbuttoning his
raincoat.

"Fresh out," he says.

60 "Is that it then?" Lenny says, looking. "Is that him?"

"Yes," Vic says. "What are we drinking?"

"What's inside?" Lenny says.

"What do you think?" Vic says.

He twists the box round so we can see there's a white card sellotaped to one side. There's a
65 date and a number and a name: JACK ARTHUR DODDS.

Lenny says, "I mean, he aint just in a box, is he?"

By way of answering, Vic picks up the box and flips open the flaps at the top with his thumb.
"Mine's a whisky," he says, "I think it's a whisky day."

He feels inside the box and slowly pulls out a plastic container. It looks like a large instant-
70 coffee jar, it's got the same kind of screw-on cap. But it's not glass, it's a bronzy-coloured,
faintly shiny plastic. There's another label on the cap.

"Here," Vic says and hands the jar to Lenny.

Lenny takes it, uncertain, as if he's not ready to take it but he can't not take it, as if he ought
to have washed his hands first. He don't seem prepared for the weight. He sits on his bar-stool,
75 holding it, not knowing what to say, but I reckon he's thinking the same things I'm thinking.
Whether it's all Jack in there or Jack mixed up with bits of others, the ones who were done
before and the ones who were done after. So Lenny could be holding some of Jack and some
of some other feller's wife, for example. And if it *is* Jack, whether it's really all of him or only
what they could fit in the jar, him being a big bloke.

80 He says, "Don't seem possible, does it?" Then he hands me the jar, all sort of getting-in-the-
mood, like it's a party game. Guess the weight.

"Heavy," I say.

"Packed solid," Vic says.

I reckon I wouldn't fill it, being on the small side. I suppose it wouldn't do to unscrew the cap.

85 I pass it back to Lenny. Lenny passes it back to Vic.

Vic says, "Where's Bern got to?"

Vic's a square-set, ready-and-steady sort of a bloke, the sort of bloke who rubs his hands
together at the start of something. His hands are always clean. He looks at me holding the jar
like he's just given me a present. It's a comfort to know your undertaker's your mate. It must
90 have been a comfort to Jack. It's a comfort to know your own mate will lay you out and box
you up and do the necessary. So Vic better last out.

It must have been a comfort to Jack that there was his shop, *Dodds & Sons, Family Butcher*,
and there was Vic's just across the street, with the wax flowers and the marble slabs and the

angel with its head bowed in the window: *Tucker & Sons, Funeral Services*. A comfort and an incentive, and a sort of fittingness too, seeing as there was dead animals in the one and stiff in the other.

Maybe that's why Jack never wanted to budge.

Graham Swift, *Last Orders* (1996)

II : COURT THÈME

La nuit remplit les creux, s'infiltré entre les champs, une marée d'ombre qui recouvre tout peu à peu. Au même instant, l'île se vide d'hommes. Chaque matin les touristes arrivent par le ferry de huit heures, ils emplissent les espaces vides, ils peuplent les plages, ils coulent comme une eau sale le long des routes et des chemins de terre. Puis quand vient la nuit, à nouveau ils vident les mares, ils s'éloignent à reculons, ils disparaissent. Les bateaux les emportent. Et vient la nuit.

Je suis arrivé sur l'île la première fois il y a trente ans. Le temps a tout changé. C'est à peine si je reconnais les lieux, les collines, les plages, et la forme du cratère effondré à l'est.

Pourquoi suis-je revenu ? Est-ce qu'il n'y avait pas d'autres lieux pour un écrivain en quête d'écriture ? Un autre abri, loin de la rumeur du monde, moins criard, moins insolent, un autre endroit pour s'asseoir à sa table de travail et écrire ses lignes à la machine, face au mur ? J'ai voulu revoir cette île, ce bout du monde, ce lieu sans histoire, sans mémoire, un rocher battu par l'océan, et harassé par les touristes.

Trente ans, la durée de vie d'une vache.

J.M.G. Le Clézio. *Tempête*, 2014.