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新加坡海星中学
MARIS STELLA HIGH SCHOOL
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
SECONDARY FOUR

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 1 Prose and Unseen Poetry

Additional Materials: Writing paper (5 sheets)

2065/01

26 August 2020
1 hour 40 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your class, index number, Centre number, O level index number and name in the spaces at the top of this page.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

Do not use staples, paper clips, glue or correction fluid.

Write your answers on the writing paper provided.

Answer **one** question from **Section A** and **one** question from **Section B**.

You are reminded of the need for **good English and clear presentation** in your answers.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

The total number of marks for this paper is 50.

For Examiner's Use

50

SECTION A

Answer **one** question from this section.

RAY BRADBURY: *Fahrenheit 451*

Remember to support your ideas with relevant details from the text.

- 1 **Either** (a) What, for you, are the most disturbing aspects of *Fahrenheit 451*?
- Or** (b) What does Bradbury make you feel about Faber and the part he plays in the novel?

Do not use the passage printed below in answering questions (a) or (b).

- Or** (c) Read this passage carefully, and then answer the questions that follow it:

Montag held his breath, like a doubled fist, in his chest.
 The Mechanical Hound turned and plunged away from Faber's house down the alley again.
 Montag snapped his gaze to the sky. The helicopters were closer, a great blowing of insects to a single light source. 5
 With an effort, Montag reminded himself again that this was no fictional episode to be watched on his run to the river; it was in actuality his own chess game he was witnessing, move by move.
 He shouted to give himself the necessary push away from this last house window, and the fascinating séance¹ going on in there! *Hell!* and he was away and gone! The alley, a street, the alley, a street, and the smell of the river. Leg out, leg down, leg out and down. Twenty million Montags running, soon, if the cameras caught him. Twenty million Montags running, running like an ancient flickery Keystone Comedy², cops, robbers, chasers and the chased, hunters and hunted, he had seen it a thousand times. Behind him now twenty million silently baying Hounds, ricocheted across parlors, three-cushion shooting from right wall to center wall to left wall, gone, right wall, center wall, left wall, gone! 10
 Montag jammed the Seashell in his ear:
 "Police suggest entire population in the Elm Terrace area do as follows: Everyone in every house in every street open a front or rear door or look from the windows. The fugitive cannot escape if everyone in the next minute looks from his house. Ready!" 20
 Of course! Why hadn't they done it before! Why, in all the years, hadn't this game been tried! Everyone up, everyone out! He couldn't be missed! The only man running alone in the night city, the only man proving his legs! 25
 "At the count of ten now! *One! Two!*"
 He felt the city rise.
 "Three!"
 He felt the city turn to its thousands of doors. 30
 "Four!"
 The people sleepwalking in their hallways.
 "Five!"
 He felt their hands on the doorknobs!
 The smell of the river was cool and like a solid rain. His throat was burnt rust and his eye were wept dry with running. He yelled as if this yell would jet him on, fling him the last hundred yards. 35
 "Six, seven, eight!"
 The doorknobs turned on five thousand doors.
 "Nine!" 40
 He ran out away from the last row of houses, on a slope leading down a

solid moving blackness.

"Ten!"

The doors opened.

He imagined thousands on thousands of faces peering into yards, into alleys, and into the sky, faces hid by curtains, pale, night-frightened faces, like gray animals peering from electric caves, faces with gray colorless eyes, gray tongues and gray thoughts looking out through the numb flesh of the face.

45

¹*séance: a meeting at which people attempt to make contact with the dead, especially through a medium.*

²*Keystone Comedy: a silent slapstick comedy film from the 1900s featuring incompetent policemen.*

- (i) In what ways does Bradbury's writing make **this passage** so striking?
- (ii) How does Bradbury strikingly portray the atmosphere of Montag's society in **the rest of the novel**?

SECTION B

Answer **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3.

Either 2 Read this poem carefully, and then answer the questions that follow it:

Remember to support your ideas with relevant details from the poem.

My Rival's House

is peopled with many surfaces.
Ormolu¹ and gilt², slipper satin,
lush velvet couches,
cushions so stiff you can't sink in.
Tables polished clear enough you can see distortions in. 5

We take our shoes off at her door,
shuffle stocking-soled, tip-toe – the parquet³ floor
is beautiful and its surface must
be protected. Dust-
cover, drawn shade, 10
won't let the surface colour fade.

Silver sugar-tongs and silver salver⁴,
My rival serves us tea.
She glosses over him and me. 15
I am all edges, a surface, a shell
and yet my rival thinks she means me well.
But what squirms beneath her surface I can tell.
Soon, my rival
capped tooth, polished nail 20
will fight, fight foul for her survival.
Deferential, daughterly, I sip
and thank her nicely for each bitter cup.

And I have much to thank her for.
This son she bore –
First blood to her – 25
Never, never can escape scot free
The sour potluck of family.
And oh how close
This family that furnishes my rival's house.

Lady of the house. 30
Queen Bee.
She is far more unconscious,
Far more dangerous than me.
Listen, I was always my worst enemy. 35
She has taken even this from me.

She dishes up her dreams for breakfast.
Dinner, and her salt tears pepper our soup.
She won't
give up.

(by Liz Lochhead)

¹Ormolu: a gold-coloured alloy of copper, zinc and tin used for ornamental decoration.

²gilt: gold leaf or gold paint applied in a thin layer to a surface.

³parquet: flooring composed of wooden blocks in a geometric pattern.

⁴salver: a tray made of silver that is used in formal occasions.

- (i) What vivid impressions do you form of the speaker's rival in lines 1-13 of this poem?
- (ii) How does the poet vividly convey a tense atmosphere in the rest of the poem?

Or 3 Read this poem carefully, and then answer the questions that follow it.

Remember to support your ideas with relevant details from the poem.

The Last Headman of Ubin

His mansion is a zinc roof *kampong* house barely
keeping the weather out.
The last headman of Ubin ponders over his
orchard of wilting orchids, remnants of a farm
of battered coops and last remaining chickens loyal
to the feed that keeps them clucking for a month more.

5

Amidst the birdlime¹ and excrement littered by
the brood of his amnesiac brotherhood,
The headman's house hovers like the spectre of
an old ghost refusing to believe
its death had done its glory in.
No harems of chicklings, no troops of fowl,
No sycophantic² pigs trail after
The mud leavings of the man who used to
Wield the power of the chop over their heads.

10

15

On his front porch, the headman sits static,
battling flies off with his eyelids – years of rule
imprinted on every crease of his craggy mien³.
A solitary bee buzzes around him.
A geriatric⁴ dog dawdles towards him.
A mango tree squeezes out a final,
premature stillborn fruit.

20

Natalie snorts in the backdrop.
The headman struggles a lazy eye at her;
they signal assent⁵.
These are the last days of a glorified past.
Age has crept up on beast and beauty.
The headman looks down. The first drops
of a fresh shower smashes the arid ground.

25

Natalie shuffles her rump away, looking for refuge.
The sow knows when to go into hiding.

30

(by Grace Chia)

¹*birdlime*: sticky substance spread on trees to catch birds.

²*sycophantic*: excessively eager to flatter someone more powerful to gain advantage

³*mien*: appearance or manner.

⁴*geriatric*: relating to old people, especially with regard to their health care

⁵*assent*: the expression of approval or agreement.

- (i) What vivid impressions does the poem convey to you about the headman's house and farm in lines 1-15?
- (ii) How does the poet convey a striking feeling of sadness in the rest of the poem?

END OF PAPER

Suggested Answers

1(a) What, for you, are the most disturbing aspects of *Fahrenheit 451*?

Candidates need to first understand and unpack key word in the question:

‘Disturbing’ – a phenomenon or an issue that is worrying, troubling, unsettling, causing great discomfort or uneasiness, indignation or outrage because there is some form of injustice, unethical behaviour, immorality or moral bankruptcy/corruption/a system that infringes on basic human rights/a situation in which basic human rights are denied or oppressed by a society.

There are several aspects of the novel that are disturbing:

1. **Totalitarian state censorship via burning of books** limits or denies people freedom of information and access to education, knowledge and truth. This causes people to deteriorate intellectually, and prevents them from seeking alternative views or ways of life.
 - a. Apart from being a sacrilege as it destroys precious intellectual property, wisdom, and knowledge accumulated over centuries, it also limits society’s access and right to information, knowledge, education and truth. This censorship is also disturbing because it creates a society that is linguistically stunted and intellectually impoverished and unable to think critically for themselves.
 - b. Quotes:
2. **Totalitarian regime’s use of tools such as indoctrination of children for propagandistic purposes as well as terror/violence via the use of firemen, police and burnings portrayed to be disturbingly oppressive and cruel.**
 - a. Quotes:
3. **Addiction to non-stop immersive parlor walls entertainment, radio and mass media**, which stunt intellectual growth due to the appetite for sensational and mindless entertainment. This addiction is disturbing because it has a detrimental impact on human interactions within the family or in marriages, where there is no longer true intimacy and closeness of human relationships as people are perpetually no longer converse meaningfully or listen actively to their friends or family, but are enclosed within their self-absorbed cocoons, listening to the music and news from Seashells or watching their programmes on parlor walls. This addiction to non-stop, fast-paced, mindless entertainment also causes them feel constantly in need of more entertainment on the hedonic treadmill, which show their deep dissatisfaction with the meaninglessness of their lives.

Quotes:
4. **Irresponsible use of technology or science for destructive purposes** is shown to be disturbing because people in Montag’s society place all their creativity and ingenuity in creating weapons of destruction that can only kill and destroy instead of giving life.

Quotes:
5. **The focus on hedonism and individualism—with its emphasis on the individual’s pursuit of pleasure—at the expense of others is portrayed to be disturbing because it breeds a cold, uncaring, individualistic and hostile society lacking in compassion and community values of service, love, support, care and community.**

Quotes:
6. **Hedonism and all its other accompanying philosophies of materialism and individualism are portrayed to be disturbing philosophies to base your life on** because Bradbury shows that it only brings about temporal happiness that would never fully satisfy or fill the void in people’s lives and do not bring them true joy.

Quotes:

1(b) What does Bradbury make you feel about Faber and the part he plays in the novel?

Students need to unpack two key parts of the question:

- (1) ‘make you feel about Faber’ (i.e, reader’s emotions towards Faber—admiration? Liking? Sympathy? Dislike?)
- (2) ‘the part he plays in the novel’—the role the character plays in the novel

Possible Feelings towards Faber:

- Sympathise with him as he was part of the diminishing minority who was marginalized for being intellectuals or readers, and the helplessness he felt as a professor as his classes shut down, and the world around him changed drastically for the worse
- Admire how he does not conform and give in completely to the new culture of parlor walls entertainment around him, and retains his secret love and reading of books/appreciation of the value of books. He even built an arsenal of electronics for a time in which he would find a like-minded accomplice with the bravery to carry out a large scale rebellion
- Sympathise with him for his fear of the totalitarian regime and being discovered by the authorities during his encounter with Montag, a fireman, at the park bench, or when Montag called him/showed up at his door
- Dislike him or can identify or relate to his original cowardice out of fear of persecution and arrest by the state, but admire his decision to enable, aid and be an accomplice to Montag in his journey of rebellion

The roles that Faber plays in the novel:

- Teacher/educator/mentor to Montag, playing a critical role in re-educating him on his journey to understand books and their significance
- Mentor who guided, chastised, coached and advised Montag through the green bullet in Montag's ear-- during critical moments in the novel (e.g., his poetry reading scene), and his confrontations/verbal spars with Beatty
- Accomplice and friend to Montag during his escape as a fugitive from the state – helped Montag plan his escape as a fugitive from the state. He was loyal to Montag, and Montag was likewise loyal as well—prevented him from being discovered by Beatty by killing Beatty and also by giving advice to Faber on how to throw off the scent of the Hound via Sprinklers
- Accomplice in being part of the rebellion plan of inciting a rebellion amongst remaining intellectuals and artists, planting books in the firemen's homes, and sending books for print in secret
- Bradbury's mouthpiece about the value/importance/significance of books, as well as a mouthpiece to criticize Montag's society

1c (i) In what ways does Bradbury's writing make **this passage** so striking?

Key Word: 'Striking' – Striking here refers to how the writer makes the passage vivid/powerful/attention-grabbing for the reader by creating specific effects, pictures or images of Montag's escape as a fugitive/ impressions about their society/ mass media/ Montag's imaginations of the behavior of their society in this passage.

- ➔ Bradbury used a variety of literary techniques (e.g., diction, vivid visual imagery, repetition, short and terse phrases, allusion) to convey the sensational manner in which Montag imagines his car-chase or pursuit and escape from the authorities would be featured/presented/played/screened as an exciting spectacle or entertainment on the millions of immense parlor walls in the homes of every citizen in their society.
- Repetition of the phrase "twenty million Montags", as well as the repetition of the word "running" creates this vivid visual imagery of the same fast-paced image of Montag's sprinting being replicated and broadcasted across the entire nation as a result of mass entertainment/media and its ability to capture and reproduce an image instantaneously
 - Allusion to flickery Keystone Comedy emphasized how the state presented the pursuit of a fugitive to be an entertaining and exciting spectacle or show that is edited and presented with great sensationalism
 - Imagery of the "hunters and the hunted" suggests that the audience enjoy the entertainment with the same exciting, adrenaline-pumping content of car-chase, predator-prey sequences commonly seen in blockbuster movies – they view the cop chasing fugitive sequence as a thrilling spectacle for them to enjoy
 - Diction: Choice of the word "thousand" here suggests that this same routine has been broadcasted by the state for countless times as audience enjoy and lap up the

same adrenaline-packed action-packed routine of a fugitive being pursued by the state

- Diction: Choice of the word “ricocheted” here also suggests that action-packed intensity of the way in which the Hound swiftly, athletically sprinted down the street in pursuit of Montag—in a great show of its agility, power and athleticism. This presents the Hound to the rest of the population as a super-machine or super-hero of sorts, calling on the audience to root for it to catch its running prey
- Use of short, repetitive terse phrases which mirror the fast-paced, hectic manner in which the Hound moved frenziedly across the screen, which again highlights its amazing agility and athleticism, power and might as a super machine. (right wall to center wall to left wall, gone, right wall, center wall, left wall, gone!) The use of the words “three-cushion shooting” also positions this pursuit like an entertaining game, trivializing the harsh reality that a real human being or man was being hunted by a machine of the state, to be efficiently executed or eradicated when found.

(ii) How does Bradbury strikingly portray the atmosphere of Montag’s society in **the rest of the novel**?

- ➔ Dark, deathly, cold and lifeless atmosphere of the homes which are described to be devoid of vibrancy, energy, movement or lively conversations (e.g., Montag’s home) as compared to the bright blazing lights of Clarisse’s home which was an anomaly
- ➔ Ominous threatening sinister menacing atmosphere of the streets at night—full of malicious and sociopathic teenagers racing on the boulevards and destroying property
- ➔ Oppressive atmosphere of the train—with its clanging jingles and loud blaring advertisements being blasted at the commuters, who have no power to resist the messaging from the state
- ➔ Cold, indifferent, apathetic society who treat other people as mere objects, and view the burning of homes as a spectacle/show
- ➔ Constant blaring of war aircraft flying past and announcements about impending wars—oppressive, ominous, threatening atmosphere

Unseen Poetry Suggested Answers

- (i) What vivid impressions do you form of the speaker’s rival in lines 1-13 of this poem?
- (ii) How does the poet vividly convey a tense atmosphere in the rest of the poem?

My Rival’s House

is peopled with many surfaces.
Ormolu¹ and gilt², slipper satin,
lush velvet couches,
cushions so stiff you can’t sink in.
Tables polished clear enough you can see distortions in.

We take our shoes off at her door,
shuffle stocking-soled, tip-toe – the parquet³ floor
is beautiful and its surface must
be protected. Dust-
cover, drawn shade,
won’t let the surface colour fade.

Silver sugar-tongs and silver salver⁴,
My rival serves us tea.

The speaker’s rival is extremely ostentatious, flamboyant, showy and posh in her choice of interior decoration. This can be seen in how many of the surfaces and materials used for interior decorations are very brilliant, bright and shiny in nature

- ➔ Bright and shiny: “Ormolu”, “gilt”
- ➔ Luxury and shiny cutlery and utensils which are ostentatious, fancy, intricate and used only for formal occasions: Silver sugar-tongs and silver salver

The speaker's rival also has very posh and expensive tastes in picking soft and comfortable plushy comfortable expensive luxury material that only the rich and wealthy can afford.

→ Soft, smooth and comfortable luxury materials: 'slipper satin', 'lush velvet couches'

The speaker's rival is also very meticulous and particular in making sure that her interior décor looks absolutely perfect, pristine and at its best at all times, and has zero tolerance for anything that is awry. She makes sure that nothing is out of order or out of place. However, there is a hint that her desire for her interior décor to look good outweighs her care/concern for whether her guests feel comfortable.

- "cushions so stiff you can't sink in" – the fact that the cushions are stiff suggests that she keeps the cushions upright and in a proper position at all times.
- "Tables polished clear enough you can see distortions in" – the fact that the tables are polished and wiped so regularly and rigorously to ensure that they shine very brilliantly and brightly, so much so that the speaker can even see her reflections like a mirror
- The fact that the guests are expected to "tip-toe" with "stocking" with great caution to ensure that there is no damage to her beautiful "parquet floor" suggests that she also prioritises the beauty of her home décor over the comfort of her guests. Not a very hospitable person since her guests would have to "shuffle" or walk uncomfortably
- Her meticulousness in ensuring perfection in her interior décor can also be seen in how she places a "dust-cover" over her cushion and draws the "shade" or curtains to ensure that the powerful sun rays would not damage the color of her sofa.

(iii) How does the poet vividly convey a tense atmosphere in the poem?

She glosses over him and me.
I am all edges, a surface, a shell
and yet my rival thinks she means me well.
But what squirms beneath her surface I can tell.
Soon, my rival
capped tooth, polished nail
will fight, fight foul for her survival.
Deferential, daughterly, I sip
and thank her nicely for each bitter cup.

And I have much to thank her for.
This son she bore –
First blood to her –
Never, never can escape scot free
The sour potluck of family.
And oh how close
This family that furnishes my rival's house.

Lady of the house.
Queen Bee.
She is far more unconscious,
Far more dangerous than me.
Listen, I was always my worst enemy.
She has taken even this from me.

She dishes up her dreams for breakfast.
Dinner, and her salt tears pepper our soup.
She won't
give up

Key word in the question=

- "tension" – causing anxiety/nervousness/stress/mental or emotional strain on the reader as they read the poem.
- Tension is usually created as a result of
 - conflict—either internal (inner dilemma) or external (between 2 characters);
 - setting (time, place, weather) and atmosphere (emotional quality)

The tense atmosphere is a result of the:

- Inner turmoil that the speaker feels—the wariness, anger and resentment that she feels boiling inside her towards her mother-in-law who is her enemy/foe, and the civilised, obedient façade that she puts on the surface
- Diction: “all edges” – the word “edge” suggests that she was felt like she on tenterhooks, all and “on edge”, jittery, jumpy, stressed, nervous and uneasy, as though she was guarding herself from an incoming attack from her mother in law whom she calls her rival or her enemy/foe
- The choice of the words “surface” and “shell” also points to how she puts on a false appearance of cooperation, niceties and pleasantries, but inwardly she is boiling within
- ‘Deferential’, ‘daughterly, I sip each bitter cup’: Again, this point to the inner conflict/turmoil within the speaker. She appears to be obedient and submissive outwardly to her mother-in-law’s requests and puts on her obliging front, but she does so with “bitter” feelings, hatred, anger or resentment—unwillingly so, and doing it just to gain an upper hand in this combative competition between her and mother-in-law
- External conflict between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law (speaker of the poem). There is a clear antagonism between the 2 characters,

- o The speaker points to the hypocritical, two-faced nature of her mother-in-law who also puts on a false façade when inwardly she is scheming or plotting to gain the upper hand in this competition:
 - ‘rival thinks she means me well’, but what ‘squirms’ under the surface I know well. The word “squirm” here points to something writhing under the surface of the mother-in-law’s skin—something unnatural, contorted and hidden—like an evil or malicious ploy
 - ‘will fight’, ‘fight foul for her survival’: the choice of the word ‘fight’ here suggests a battle or a confrontation, but it is not just any other fight or confrontation, but one that is for her ‘survival’—a matter of life and death—of great gravity and weight, a serious issue for the preservation of her life. However, the speaker uses the word ‘foul’ to describe the way her mother-in-law would conduct herself in this competition-- which also suggests ‘foul play’ or the use of dishonest, under-handed methods to get her way.

(Will include more evidence)

3(i) What vivid impressions does the poem convey to you about the headman’s house and farm in lines 1-15?

Key word in question: ‘impressions’ of the headman’s house/farm = impressions here requires students to use adjectives/describing words in their topic sentences to describe the state of the house/ its atmosphere or emotional quality (how it makes one feel)

His mansion is a zinc roof *kampong* house barely
 keeping the weather out.
 The last headman of Ubin ponders over his
 orchard of wilting orchids, remnants of a farm
 of battered coops and last remaining chickens loyal
 to the feed that keeps them clucking for a month more.

Amidst the birdlime¹ and excrement littered by
 the brood of his amnesiac brotherhood,
 The headman’s house hovers like the spectre of
 an old ghost refusing to believe
 its death had done its glory in.
 No harems of chicklings, no troops of fowl,
 No sycophantic² pigs trail after
 The mud leavings of the man who used to
 Wield the power of the chop over their heads.

The poet uses diction to convey that the house is in a dilapidated state of disrepair, feels rather vulnerable and fragile – almost about to collapse anytime.

- His mansion is a zinc roof *kampong* house barely keeping the weather out.
- ➔ The roof is made of 'zinc'—a weak, fragile, thin, vulnerable material that cannot withstand strong winds or battering from the elements of sun and rain. The line "barely keeping the weather out" emphasises how the house is quite weak as a defense from the elements, and is insufficient in keeping either the strong sun rays or the heavy rain or thunderstorms at bay.
- ➔ The fact that it is a kampong house also emphasizes how it is a simple house made of unsophisticated raw materials, and may not be as sturdily made.
- ➔ The orchard of orchids are also not in full bloom, but rather "wilting"—which suggests that they are dying and drying out—an image of death and lifelessness
- ➔ The word 'remnants' is also used to describe the farm—which is not whole, but fragmented or only left with some parts of its original whole due to disrepair, lack of maintenance or upkeep, or perhaps due to some demolition work that is in progress
- ➔ The coops are described to be "battered" or badly destroyed—perhaps with their wooden hinges coming loose, or being completely frayed
- ➔ There is only the "last remaining" chickens. Again, with so few poultry left, it is clear that it is no longer a thriving or prosperous farm, and it is an image of being on a decline, being deserted or even abandoned. This could be because the headman was doing poorly in his business. Also, it is stated that the only reasons why the chicken were "clucking at the feed" was because they were "loyal" to it—that they were doing it not because it was enjoyable or beneficial to them, but because of a sense of faithfulness and belonging or attachment they had to the farm despite its current state of disrepair, brokenness and dilapidation.
- ➔ The fact that the chickens would only be clucking at it for a "month" more also suggests that the farm would soon be closed down and that its lifespan is limited and finite, as the end is near and in sight

The poet also uses the imagery of death, waste as well as repetitive sentence structures to emphasise the lifelessness of the farm and its occupants, which is a far cry from its magnificent history in the past.

- ➔ First, the headman's house is compared to a 'spectre of an old ghost refusing to believe its death had done its glory in'.
- ➔ "No harems of chicklings, no troops of fowl, no sycophantic pigs trail after"
- ➔ "man who used to wield the power of the chop over their heads"
- ➔ "amnesiac brotherhood"

Amidst the birdlime¹ and excrement littered by
the brood of his amnesiac brotherhood,
The headman's house hovers like the spectre of
an old ghost refusing to believe
its death had done its glory in.
No harems of chicklings, no troops of fowl,
No sycophantic² pigs trail after
The mud leavings of the man who used to
Wield the power of the chop over their heads.

- (iii) How does the poet convey a striking feeling of sadness in the rest of the poem?

On his front porch, the headman sits static,
battling flies off with his eyelids – years of rule

imprinted on every crease of his craggy mien³.
 A solitary bee buzzes around him.
 A geriatric⁴ dog dawdles towards him.
 A mango tree squeezes out a final,
 premature stillborn fruit.

Natalie snorts in the backdrop.
 The headman struggles a lazy eye at her;
 they signal assent⁵.
 These are the last days of a glorified past.
 Age has crept up on beast and beauty.
 The headman looks down. The first drops
 of a fresh shower smashes the arid ground.

Natalie shuffles her rump away, looking for refuge.
 The sow knows when to go into hiding

There is a sense of sadness due to the headman's forlorn pain and passive lack of resistance to the deterioration of his farm and house—as though he had completely given up any hope of reviving his farm to its former days of thriving prosperous glory.

- ➔ He sits "static": which refers to how he is unmoving, almost like a statue, himself a emblem of lifelessness in the farm. This could point to his resignation and grief about the downtrodden state of his farm
- ➔ His passivity and resignation or despair can also be seen in how he was not actively battling pesky 'flies' around him with his hand, but with his "eyelids"—which basically are already moving as they have to blink regularly every few seconds as a reflexive action
- ➔ The lines on his face evokes a sense of sadness/anguish and pain since it is a reminder of all he had weathered with "years of rule imprinted in the creases of his face"—all the hardships and struggles he had put in, the devotion, dedication and hard work serving as a headman has come to an end or come to naught, since the home and farm is now in disrepair and no longer thriving as it once was.
- ➔ The imagery that the writer uses to describe the solitary or single animals around the headman also emphasizes the isolation and loneliness the headman feels—there is a repetition of the same sentence structure for three lines, each starting with the word 'a' that points to the existence of only one solo or single animal, instead of a litter or a brood of animals. There is only one buzzing bee, one elderly dog that seems to be on the brink of death due to its health issues. Similarly, even the mango tree is pronounced to be lifeless and barren, producing a 'premature stillborn fruit.' This image of barren-ness, death and lifelessness emphasizes the sadness of the headman and the loss of his importance/significance as the headman of ubin