


SIXTH FORM SUMMER TRANSITION TASK

	<u>ENGLISH LITERATURE</u>	
	Qualification Level	A-Level
	Exam Board/ Syllabus	Edexcel
	Contact(s)	Mr John and Miss Gadsden

Welcome to English Literature

We are delighted that you are considering joining us on this course. It is a really exciting opportunity to study a range of literature and develop your knowledge and skills, as well as your passion for literature. For more information about the Edexcel A Level English Literature course, use the link attached and open the specification.

Reading independently will prepare you well for the course and we encourage you to read as widely as possible over the summer, including novels, plays, short stories and poetry. [Year 12 Reading List](#)

1. Attached is a booklet full of activities ([Making the Leap](#)) that will be enjoyable as well as beneficial. Try to complete three tasks over the course of the summer. There are helpful suggestions on the first couple of pages of the booklet, so read these first.
2. Complete the task on the poem 'History' below and bring this with you to your lessons in September. This is based on a poem from the anthology you are going to study. Just read the poem, answer the questions and bring those answers with you when you return to school.

Please get in touch if you have questions or have any issues accessing the resources.

Some information to help you to prepare for September:

- You will need to buy copies of the following: 'Poems of the Decade' https://www.amazon.co.uk/Poems-Decade-Anthology-Forward-Poetry/dp/0571325408/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=poems+of+the+decade&qid=1591180906&sr=8-1
'A Streetcar Named Desire' https://www.amazon.co.uk/Streetcar-Desire-Modern-Classics-Penguin/dp/0141190272/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1O92XWSJK9S3C&dchild=1&keywords=a+streetcar+named+desire+book&qid=1591180463&sprefix=a+streetcar%2Caps%2C567&sr=8-1.
"Atonement": <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Atonement-Ian-McEwan/dp/0099429799>

We use the Penguin edition of 'A Streetcar Named Desire', so please choose that one. You should be able to get both cheaply online and may be able to find good quality second hand copies. Please let us know if there are any problems with buying these.

Please read 'A Streetcar Named Desire'. It is a great play and isn't very long. You will really enjoy it!

There will be another couple of books to buy in preparation for September. We will let you know the details of those in the next couple of weeks.

John Burnside
HISTORY

St Andrews, West Sands. September 2001

Today

as we flew the kites
- the sand spinning off in ribbons along the beach
and that gasoline smell from Leuchars gusting across
the golf links;

the tide far out
and quail-grey in the distance;

people
jogging, or stopping to watch
as the war planes cambered and turned
in the morning light –

today

- with the news in my mind, and the muffled dread
of what may come –

I knelt down in the sand
with Lucas

gathering shells
and pebbles
finding evidence of life in all this
driftwork:

snail shells; shreds of razorfish;
smudges of weed and flesh on tideworn stone.

At times I think what makes us who we are
is neither kinship nor our given states
but something lost between the world we own
and what we dream about behind the names
on days like this

our lines raised in the wind
our bodies fixed and anchored to the shore.

and though we are confined by property
what tethers us to gravity and light
has most to do with distance and the shapes
we find in water

reading from the book
of silt and tides
the rose or petrol blue
of jellyfish and sea anemone
combining with a child's
first nakedness.

Sometimes I am dizzy with the fear
of losing everything - the sea, the sky,
all living creatures, forests, estuaries:
we trade so much to know the virtual
we scarcely register the drift and tug
of other bodies,

scarcely apprehend
the moment as it happens: shifts of light
and weather

and the quiet, local forms
of history: the fish lodged in the tide

beyond the sands;
 the long insomnia
of ornamental carp in public parks
captive and bright
 and hung in their own
slow-burning
 transitive gold;
 jamjars of spawn
and sticklebacks
 or goldfish carried home
from fairgrounds
 to the hum of radio

but this is the problem: how to be alive
in all this gazed-upon and cherished world
and do no harm

 a toddler on a beach
sifting wood and dried weed from the sand
and puzzled by the pattern on a shell

his parents on the dune slacks with a kite
plugged into the sky
 all nerve and line

patient; afraid; but still, through everything,
attentive to the irredeemable.

History – John Burnside

Read the poem through and then answer the following questions in as much detail as possible.

1. What is significant about the title and date at the start of this poem? (*Hint: refer to a major event in your answer*)
2. What is the basic narrative of the poem?
3. In this poem the poet shapes meaning by **juxtaposing** images and concepts.
 - a) What is meant by “juxtaposing”?
 - b) Give two examples of juxtaposition from the poem.
4. What do you think is significant or notable about the speaker’s response to the events in the news?
 - a) What does the speaker identify as “the problem”?
 - b) How do you interpret this viewpoint?
6. What is the theme of the poem?
 - a) What do you notice about the structure of this poem?
 - b) Why might Burnside have chosen to structure it this way? How does the structure connect to the ideas being communicated?
8. Select three interesting words/phrases from the poem. Comment on the effects of these choices.
9. In what ways is a beach an appropriate setting for this poem? Explain your answer fully.
10. How do you interpret the final line of the poem?