



ATAR course examination, 2019

LITERATURE

TEXT BOOKLET

Text A Drama
Text B Prose fiction
Text C Poetry

Text A

Yanagai! Yanagai! by Andrea James was first produced by the Playbox Theatre in collaboration with the Melbourne Workers Theatre in Melbourne in 2003. Andrea James is a Yorta Yorta/Kurnai playwright from Victoria.

CHARACTERS

MUNARRA: A Yorta Yorta¹ superhero thrown from the dreaming to save her land. She wields a large digging stick.

LYALL: A young Yorta Yorta man entrusted with the land justice dreams of an entire nation.

UNCLE: A 70-plus Yorta Yorta elder. He has come back to his river to die.

SCENE TWO: A RIVER IS MADE

Darkness. Distant thunder.

We hear a woman sobbing. It is MUNARRA. She eventually appears in a dim and barren landscape. Covered in white ochre, her face streaked with tears, she drags a large, heavy, digging stick behind her which makes a piercing and snake-like trail. At its completion MUNARRA bows her head and cries a river.

Thunder and the sound of rain is heard. Heavy and then light. Sounds of sobbing and mourning wreek out of the landscape. The rain stops and the trickle of a river is heard. Faint images of water, river and reflected light surround the space. The river is made.

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SCENE THREE: GONE FISHIN'

Uncle's camp on the edge of the Murray River [Dhungala].

He is wearing three jumpers, trousers and a hat. The Yorta Yorta word 'maniga' [to fish] is projected in neon in the sky. He is quietly fishing and at one with the land. LYALL enters. He hesitates and finally approaches UNCLE.

LYALL: Uncle?

Silence.

You probably don't know me.

Silence.

I've been living in the city. *[Pause.]* Uncle?

Silence.

They told me at the mish where to find you. *[Pause.]* Uncle, I've been —

¹ Yorta Yorta – Indigenous Australian people who have traditionally inhabited the area surrounding the junction of the Goulburn and Murray Rivers in present-day north-eastern Victoria and southern New South Wales.

UNCLE: Go away! I don't want to talk. I'm tired of talking. Talking all the time. I'm living here in this old whatsoname till I find my young time again. My whatsoname? Dreaming. A man's come here for some peace and quiet. Nup, no good. Talking. Never done anyone any good. Never did me any bloody good. Don't you fullas know how to be quiet? Talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk. Bloody talking all the time.

UNCLE *fishes in silence.*

LYALL: Uncle, I was just ...

UNCLE: You still here?!

Silence.

LYALL: I'm Lyall. Lyall Jackson.

Silence.

My grandfather was Garfield Jackson.

Silence.

Did you know Garfield?

Silence.

They told me at the mish where to find you.

Silence.

My mum and dad are Lance and Prissy.

Silence.

My grandmother was a Campbell.

Silence.

You know that mob?

UNCLE: Yep.

LYALL: They're from Cummeragunja².

Silence, LYALL approaches.

Uncle, I'm working on that land claim with those fullas in the city.

UNCLE *fishes in silence.* LYALL *waits uncomfortably.*

² Cummeragunja – an Australian Aboriginal reserve or station established in 1881 on the New South Wales side of the Murray River and inhabited by Yorta Yorta people.

These fullas, they —

UNCLE: Yeah, I heard ya! [*Pause.*] They white?

LYALL: They're gonna help us get our land back.

UNCLE: This *is* our land. This is my tree, that's my river and there's a one-hundred-year-old Murray Cod down there that's got my name on him. I don't need no whitefullas helping me out.

I've been helped enough!

Silence.

LYALL: Aunty Betty asked me to give these to you.

He puts a blanket and plastic Coles bag of food next to UNCLE.

UNCLE: I don't want no supermarket food.

LYALL: I'll be coming around tomorrow, hey? I'm staying at the mish.

UNCLE: I won't be here. I'm going to the Bend. Fishin'.

LYALL: Okay, Uncle.

UNCLE: Sssssh! You're scaring the fish!

LYALL: Okay. It's been good talking to ya.

UNCLE: Sssssssshhhhhh!

LYALL *exits*. UNCLE *fishes*.

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Text B

This passage is from *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*, which was published in 2012 and is the first work by British writer Rachel Joyce.

Built on a hill above Kingsbridge, the houses of Fossebridge Road enjoyed what estate agents called an elevated position, with far-reaching views over the town and countryside. Their front gardens, however, sloped at a precarious angle toward the pavement below, and plants wrapped themselves round bamboo stakes as if hanging on for dear life. Harold strode down the steep concrete path a little faster than he might have wished and noticed five new dandelions. Maybe this afternoon he would get out the Roundup¹. It would be something.

Spotting Harold, the next-door neighbour waved and steered his way towards the adjoining fence. Rex was a short man with tidy feet at the bottom, a small head at the top and a very round body in the middle, causing Harold to fear sometimes that if he fell there would be no stopping him. He would roll down the hill like a barrel. Rex had been widowed six months ago, at about the time of Harold's retirement. Since Elizabeth's death, he liked to talk about how hard life was. He liked to talk about it at great length. 'The least you can do is listen,' Maureen said, although Harold wasn't sure if she meant 'you' in the general sense or the particular.

'Off for a walk?' said Rex.

Harold attempted a jocular tone that would act, he hoped, as an intimation that now was not the time to stop. 'Need anything posting, old chap?'

'Nobody writes to me. Since Elizabeth passed away, I only get circulars.'

Rex gazed into the middle distance and Harold recognised at once the direction the conversation was heading. He threw a look upwards; puffs of cloud sat on a tissue-paper sky.

'Jolly nice day.'

'Jolly nice,' said Rex. There was a pause and Rex poured a sigh into it. 'Elizabeth liked the sun.' Another pause.

'Good day for mowing, Rex.'

'Very good, Harold. Do you compost your grass cuttings? Or do you mulch?'

'I find mulching leaves a mess that sticks to my feet. Maureen doesn't like it when I tread things into the house.' Harold glanced at his yachting shoes and wondered why people wore them when they had no intention of sailing. 'Well. Must get on. Catch the midday collection.' Wagging his envelope, Harold turned towards the pavement.

For the first time in his life, it was a disappointment to find that the post box cropped up sooner than expected. Harold tried to cross the road to avoid it, but there it was, waiting for him on the corner of Fossebridge Road. He lifted his letter for Queenie to the slot, and stopped. He looked back at the short distance his feet had travelled.

The detached houses were stuccoed and washed in shades of yellow, salmon and blue. Some still had their pointed fifties roofs with decorative beams in the shape of a half-sun; others had slate-clad loft extensions; one had been completely rebuilt in the style of a Swiss chalet. Harold and Maureen had moved here forty-five years ago, just after they were married. It took all his savings to pay the deposit; there had been nothing left for curtains or furniture. They had kept themselves apart from others, and over time neighbours had come and gone, while only Harold and Maureen remained. There had once been vegetable beds, and an ornamental pond. She made chutneys every summer, and David kept goldfish. Behind the house there had been a potting shed that smelt of fertiliser, with high hooks for hanging tools, and coils of twine and rope. But these things too were long since gone. Even their son's school, which had stood a stone's throw from his bedroom window, had been bulldozed now and replaced with fifty affordable homes in bright primary colours and street lighting in the style of Georgian gas lamps.

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¹ Roundup – weed killer

Text C

“Recipe for Risotto” by Josephine Clarke was published in *between white* in 2016. Clarke is a contemporary Fremantle writer. She grew up in the south west of Western Australia. Her poems and short stories have been published in several Australian journals.

Recipe for Risotto¹

Call the family in. Tell them to be ready
at the right time. Remind them
of where they come from —
butter from the Alps, rice
from the sodden Lombardy plains,
their *nonni*² from lines of brothers,
the Goldfields, the woodline,
to abandoned shacks in the karri.

Let white butter sing over the base of the pan.
Add onion thinly sliced,
garlic finely chopped,
saffron from the autumn crocus³.
When you arrive at a yellowing chorus
drop the rice in:
three handfuls for each one at the table
two extra for the dead in the room.
Recall those times you could not afford such extravagance.
Let the wooden spoon keep the rice moving in quavers.
At the high translucent C,
add a glass of wine,
carefully chosen for the voice it will bring.

When you draw from the simmering stock
remember where eggs come from,
how much of a hen we use in our lives.
Keep the rice covered in her relinquishing.
It is the hen’s gift to the rice,
make certain it is received.

As soon as the rice has gorged itself — *sostenuto*⁴,
hold on to that note,
the journeys,
the sacrifices.
Add cheese, more butter
— light a candle.
Put the lid on.
Don’t let in
any forgetting.

¹ Risotto – an Italian dish of rice cooked in stock with ingredients such as vegetables and meat or seafood

² nonni – grandmothers

³ crocus – a flowering plant of the iris family

⁴ *sostenuto* – music to be played in a sustained or prolonged manner

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Text A** Excerpt from: James, A. (2003). *Yanagai! Yanagai!* Sydney: Currency Press, pp. 4–7.
- Text B** Excerpt from: Joyce, R. (2012). *The unlikely pilgrimage of Harold Fry*. London: Transword Publishers Ltd, pp. 13–15.
- Text C** Poem from: Clarke, J. (2016). Recipe for risotto. In *Between white*. Western Australia: Mulla Mulla Press, pp. 8–9.

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