



ATAR course examination, 2017

LITERATURE

TEXT BOOKLET

Text A Drama extract
Text B Prose extract
Text C Poem

Text A

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Text B

The following is an extract from the novel *Tropo*, by Australian author Madelaine Dickie in 2016. The main character Penny, an Australian, is familiar with the Indonesian language and people, having lived in Kuta, Bali, as a teenager with her father.

Tropo

It's just after 4am and the gas lamps of the morning market wink warm as fireflies. Here in Indo, I never get that feeling I'm the only person alive. If you want to head out for a snack and a chat at 11pm, at 2am, at 4am, there's always somewhere open, there are always people around.

As a teenager in Kuta I often woke up before dawn, when the nightclubs locked the tills and drunk Aussies swung their legs over rental bikes and went screaming and careening through the alleys. If I couldn't get back to sleep I strapped my surfboard to my bike, hit a morning market for a hot bowl of bakso, stuffed fat parcels of sticky rice into my pockets and then headed north to Canggu, or east to Serangan, or south to the Bukit Peninsula: reckless, restless, suntanned and scab-kneed.

Up ahead there's a kaki lima selling deep-fried banana.

'Pagi Bu,' I greet the kaki lima owner, 'boleh minta pisang goreng?'

'How much do you want?' she replies.

'Dua ribu.'

The woman looks at me and firms her mouth. 'We only sell five thousand rupiah worth of pisang goreng.'

'You don't sell two thousand worth?'

Ibu Ayu paid two thousand rupiah only a few days earlier.

The woman shakes her head and goes back to flipping the bananas.

A moment later, a man approaches with his son and orders two thousand rupiah worth of pisang goreng. The woman spoons it into a white paper bag.

I turn away.

Batu Batur's market is a typical honeycomb of alleys, wooden display racks and plastic awning. Not big enough to get lost in but big enough to explore. This morning it seems to be crawling with beggars, touts and thieves. I move my bag around to my chest and clutch it, edging my way between the narrow stalls. Women argue over the price of spice, tongues like the tails of stingrays, hands deftly guarding a cornucopia of old cloves, vanilla beans, saffron and nutmeg. Slabs of raw beef, chicken and fish are lined up on the concrete floor and seasoned with cigarette ash and flies.

Among the stalls of clothing there's a group of women selling textiles, including the woman whose weavings I looked at a few days ago. When they see me their chat becomes frenzied and one woman sings out, 'Hello Mister, hello Mister! You looking, looking, okay?' The others quickly join her, singing, 'Duduk, duduk!' and so I sit with them, cross-legged. Someone brings me a steaming cup of black coffee. Someone else asks if I'd like a chair. As I look through the pieces I talk to the women about their families, their children, their husbands, their goats. They tell me they caught a bus to Batu Batur from the mountains this morning.

'What time?'

'Pagi pagi benar!'

'How early is very early?'

'Three thirty this morning. We left at three thirty,' they tell me.

'No way!'

I pretend to faint with tiredness and they slap my arms and laugh. It's so different to shopping in Australia; I love the pace of it, love the laughter, love how when I offer a price, the women roll their eyes and wail too low! too low! we'll go broke! and then they change the subject. We go back to talking about men or goats. Then after a while one of the women offers another price, a little lower than the last, and I shriek, too expensive! kok mahal? and the whole thing starts again.

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I think about grocery shopping in Australia. The plethora of choice. The sterility. The waxy, tasteless fruit. The indifferent or surly or bored staff on the checkouts, blowing their noses, checking their watches. Sitting with these women yarning, arguing and bartering, I feel so much more comfortable, so much more alive!

After another half-hour of riotous laughter and lascivious yarns – through which I assemble a romantic history of their village – I buy two pieces. As money changes hands, they invite me to the mountains to meet their children and their husbands and their goats. I thank them, but Matt's swinging past this afternoon and I don't want to miss him.

God I'm a disgrace!

'Maybe in a couple of days.'

'Of course! Anytime! You are welcome, Mister, you are welcome.'

While I felt safe and shielded by the warm gossip of the women, on my way out I have an unnerving feeling that I'm being followed. It's not uncommon for bules¹ to be shadowed through markets by thieves – the Pasar Badung² in Denpasar is notorious for its hard-eyed 'guides' – but although I look over my shoulder a few times, there doesn't seem to be anyone lurking behind the scaly mounds of snake fruit.

¹ Bules: foreigners

² A popular market in Denpasar, Bali

Text C

This poem by the Australian, Paul Hetherington, was published in *Six Different Windows* in 2013.

Blackberries

Childhood, the red-black explosion
on the palate; the stained, tell-tale fingers
rubbed with handkerchief and spittle –
this coalesced, you said,
into an image of twelve-year-old girls
straddling a fence and laughing at your shyness.
At that time you were growing tomatoes
and clusters of vines in the grey dirt of your backyard,
enlivening the soil with large, blood-brown worms.
And a mulberry tree that grew in a mixture
of manure and old hay, a pond and croaking frogs
you had gathered from a creek in the wild.
Years later the garden extended over acres,
a creek running through it, next to nine mulberry trees.
But no blackberries, you said, 'which would choke
and need poison.' You mentioned the two girls again:
the one you married; her friend whom you loved,
'persistently, like a stain.' Now I find you
digging the first blackberry plant into the old soil
of the creek bank, pressing its roots gently,
firmly, with thick fingers. A diminishing crescendo of frogs
is painted on cool and eddying air.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Question 1

Text A

Excerpt from: Logan, J. (2009). *Red*. London: Oberon Books, pp. 9–12.

Text B

Excerpt from: Dickie, M. (2016). *Troppo*. Fremantle, WA: Fremantle Press, pp. 91–94.

Text C

Hetherington, P. (2013). Blackberries [Poem]. In *Six different windows*. Crawley, WA: UWA Publishing, p. 84.

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