****

Registered Number:

DATE: **20** **-04-2018 (9AM)**

**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BENGALURU-27**

**IV SEMESTER BA/BSC/BSW/BCom Final Examinations April 2018**

**General English - GE 412 (Regular)**

**Time: 2 ½ hours Max marks: 70**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1 .This paper contains FOUR printed sheets.

2. Please indicate your streamclearly on the front page of your answer booklet.

3. You will lose marks for exceeding word limits.

4. You are allowed to use a dictionary, during the examination

1. **Read this extract from *The Namesake* by JhumpaLahiri:**

American seconds tick on top of her pulse point. For half a minute, a band of pain wraps around her stomach, radiating toward her back and shooting down her legs. And then, again, relief. She calculates the Indian time on her hands. The tip of her thumb strikes each rung of the brown ladders etched onto the back of her fingers, then stops at the middle of the third: it is nine and a half hours ahead in Calcutta, already evening. Half past eight. In the kitchen of her parents’ flat on Amherst Street, at this very moment, a servant is pouring after-dinner tea into steaming glasses, arranging Marie biscuits on a tray. Her mother, very soon to be grandmother, is standing at the mirror of her dressing table, untangling waist length hair, still more black than gray, with her fingers. Her father hunches over his slanted ink-stained table by the window, sketching, smoking, listening to Voice of America. Her younger brother, Rana, studies for a physics exam on the bed. She pictures clearly the gray cement floor of her parents’ sitting room, feels its solid chill underfoot even on the hottest days. An enormous black-and-white photograph of her deceased paternal grandfather looms at one end against the pink plaster wall; opposite, an alcove shielded by clouded panes of glass is stuffed with books and papers and her father’s waterproof tins. For an instant the weight of the baby vanishes, replaced by the scene that passes before her eyes, only to be replaced once more by a blue strip of the Charles River, thick green treetops, cars gliding up and down Memorial Drive.

In Cambridge it’s eleven in the morning, already lunchtime in the hospital’s accelerated day. A tray holding warm apple juice, Jell-O, ice cream, and cold baked chicken is brought to her side. Patty, the friendly nurse with the diamond engagement ring and a fringe of reddish hair beneath her cap, tells Ashima to consume only the Jell-O and the apple juice. It’s just as well. Ashima would not have touched the chicken, even if permitted; Americans eat their chicken in its skin, though Ashima has recently found a kind butcher on Prospect Street willing to pull it off for her. Patty comes to fluff the pillows, tidy the bed. Dr. Ashley pokes in his head from time to time. “No need to worry,” he chirps, putting a stethoscope to Ashima’s belly, patting her hand, admiring her various bracelets. “Everything is looking perfectly normal. We are expecting a perfect normal delivery, Mrs. Ganguli.”

But nothing feels normal to Ashima. For eighteen months, ever since she’s arrived in Cambridge, nothing has felt normal at all. It’s not so much the pain, which she knows, somehow, she will survive. It’s the consequence: motherhood in a foreign land. For it was one thing to be pregnant, to suffer the queasy mornings in bed, the sleepless nights, the dull throbbing her back, the countless visits to the bathroom. Throughout the experience, in spite of her growing discomfort, she’d been astonished by her body’s ability to make life, exactly as her mother and grandmother and all her great-grandmothers had done. That it was happening so far from home, unmonitored and unobserved by those she loved, had made it more miraculous still. But she is terrified to raise a child in a country where she is related to no one, where she knows so little, where life seems so tentative and spare.

“How about a little walk? It might do you good,” Patty asks when she comes to clear the lunch tray.

Ashima looks up from a tattered copy of *Desh* magazine that she’d brought to read on her plane ride to Boston and still cannot bring herself to throw away. The printed pages of Bengali type, slightly rough to the touch, are a perpetual comfort to her. She’s read each of the short stories and poems and articles a dozen times. There is a pen-and-ink drawing on page eleven by her father, an illustrator for the magazine: a view of the North Calcutta skyline sketched from the roof of their flat one foggy January morning. She had stood behind her father as he’d drawn it, watching as he crouched over his easel, a cigarette dangling from his lips, his shoulders wrapped in a black Kashmiri shawl.

\*\*\*

Eight thousand miles away in Cambridge, she has come to know him. In the evenings she cooks for him, hoping to please, with the unrationed, remarkably unblemished sugar, flour, rice and salt she had written about to her mother in her very first letter home. By now she had learned that her husband likes his food on the salty side, that his favourite thing about lamb curry is the potatoes, and that he likes to finish his dinner with a small helping of rice and dal. At night, lying beside her in bed, he listens to her describe the events of her day: her walks along Massachusetts Avenue, the shops she visits, the Hare Krishnas who pester her with their leaflets, the pistachio ice cream cones she treats herself to in Harvard Square. In spite of his meagre graduate student wages he sets aside money to send every few months to his father to help put an extension on his parents’ house. He is fastidious about his clothing; their first argument had been over a sweater she’d shrunk in the washing machine. As soon as he comes home from the University the first thing he does is hang up his shirt and trousers, donning a pair of drawstring pajamas and a pullover if it’s cold. On Sundays he spends an hour occupied with his tins of shoe polishes and his three pairs of shoes, two black and one brown. Three brown ones are the ones he’d been wearing when he’d first come to see her. The sight of him cross-legged on newspapers spread on the floor, intently whisking a brush over the leather, always reminds her of her indiscretion in her parents’ corridor. It is a moment that shocks her still, and that she prefers, in spite of all she tells him at night about the life they now share, to keep to herself.

\*\*\*

He now desperately needs a cup of tea for himself, not having managed to make one before leaving the house. But the machine in the corridor dispenses only coffee, tepid at best, in paper cups. He takes off his thick-rimmed glasses, fitted by a Calcutta optometrist, polishes the lenses with cotton handkerchief he always keeps in his pocket, *A* for *Ashoke* embroidered by his mother in light blue thread. His black hair, normally combed back neatly from his forehead, is dishevelled, sections of it on end. He stands and begins pacing as the other expectant fathers do. So far, the door to the waiting room has opened twice, and a nurse has announced that one of them has a boy or a girl. There are handshakes all around, pats on the back, before the father is escorted away. The men wait with cigars, flowers, address books, bottles of champagne. They smoke cigarettes. Ashing onto the floor. Ashoke is indifferent to such indulgences. He neither smokes nor drinks alcohol of any kind. Ashima is the one who keeps all their addresses, in a small notebook she carries in her purse. It has never occurred to him to buy his wife flowers.

**I.A. Answer ANY TWO of the following in about 250 words each: (2x15= 30)**

1. Ashima and Ashoke have crossed borders and cultures. From your reading of the above extract would you label them as global citizens?
2. What kind of a relationship do Ashima and Ashoke have with India, the country they were born and brought up in and America, the country they made their life in?
3. Ashima’s character is almost melancholic in the above extract suggesting the loss of something. Do you agree? If yes, what is this something? Would you consider moving to another country a loss or a gain?
4. Why is Ashima scared of motherhood in a foreign land? Why is she terrified to raise a child in a country where she is related to no one?

**I.B. Read this quote before attempting ANY TWO of the questions that follow in 150 words: (2X10= 20)**

A quote by Mohsin Hamid, a well-known Pakistani author.  
  
“Maybe we are all prospective migrants. The lines of national borders on maps are artificial constructs, as unnatural to us as they are to birds flying overhead. Our first impulse is to ignore them.”

1. What functions do borders perform? What would be the repercussions of erasing borders?
2. The author defines borders as artificial and unnatural. Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer.
3. How would your life change if a border appeared in Central India separating South India and North India into two different countries?

**II.A. Answer the following in about 270-300 words each: (1x20= 20)**

1. If you have a Saravana Bhavan that sells Dosas and Idlis in Hong Kong, you also have a Café Noir that serves authentic French food in India. If Onam is celebrated in China then you have Halloween in India. We live in a time when recreating hometowns in foreign lands has have become easier. In a situation like this, would you agree that the concept of the homeland (country) is slowly weakening?

GE-412-B-17