

J.B.COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
ENGLISH CORE SELECTION TEST (ECSET), 2022

Full Marks: 60

Time: 2 hours

1. Read the following passage carefully and then *answer, as far as possible in your own words*, the questions that follow:

...I had also heard a lot about one *Gilmil Sahib*, who had come to the neighbourhood when he was appointed as manager of the Bardoa tea estate situated near our '*satra*'. He had married a girl from the Rabha tribe, one of the tribes of lower Assam. One of his sons had been killed in the war. *Gilmil Sahib*, it appeared, had been granted the right to hear criminal cases. There was one particular story about him which was very popular among the villagers. Once, when he had gone out hunting, he had shot a wild pig. At exactly the same moment, another shot had hit the animal. The second shot had been fired by Purna Choudhury and curiously enough, both bullets had lodged at exactly the same spot in the pig's stomach! *Gilmil Sahib* came and stood by the dead animal. Almost immediately, Purna Choudhury appeared at the spot with his double rifle on his shoulder and claimed that he had shot the wild pig. *Gilmil Sahib*, in the accepted '*shikar*' dress of khaki half pants and felt hat, yelled, "No! I fired the shot that killed it." The people who had gathered around could only watch with surprised curiosity while the hunters shouted and argued. As both bullets had lodged exactly at the same spot, no one could judge whose bullet had actually killed the pig! It was a very curious case indeed!

A terrible argument ensued between the *Sahib* and Purna Choudhury, who was a wealthy and arrogant man. Unable to tolerate the vile language of the equally arrogant *Sahib*, Choudhury lost all sense of balance and came near him and gave him a mighty kick in the bottom!

In great anger the white *Sahib* strode to his elephant that was tied at the Mirza road crossing and went straight to the magistrate of Kamrup district. But the story goes that the '*hakim*' (magistrate) said, "*Sahib*, you are the one that hears and judges all the criminal cases here. So why don't you judge this one too? But remember one thing, if you consider a duel, you will be allowed to shoot only one bullet at Sri Choudhury!"

The villagers of Barihaat trapped the *Sahib* in a very intelligent way. They said to him, "*Sahib*, Choudhury always comes to the '*haat*' (the weekly bazaar) in Barihaat in a white horse drawn buggy. It will be easy for you to get him with one shot as he crosses over to the bazaar."

Gilmil *Sahib* aimed and shot at the turbaned figure, clad in a white outfit with a '*chador*' around his neck, just as the buggy disappeared from view. But it was not Purna Choudhury on the buggy; it was only his image! When the *Sahib* came to know the truth, he did not get angry—instead, he laughed heartily!

(Excerpted from *Relive Indira Goswami: The Rich Legacy of her Stories*. Gayatri Bhattacharyya (translator). Virasta Publishing Pvt. Ltd., 2014)

i) What traditional cultural institution of Assam can we associate with the narrator's childhood? 1

ii) What was the occupation of Gilmil *Sahib*? 1

iii) State which of the following statements are

true:

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- a) Gilmil *Sahib* married an Anglo-Indian.
- b) Gilmil *Sahib*'s son was an Anglo-Indian.
- c) Gilmil *Sahib* was left issueless by the war.
- d) Gilmil *Sahib* had judicial powers in his area.

iv) Describe in your own words the "curious case". 3

v) Express in your own words what you know about the man named Purna Choudhury. 3

- vi) Explain the meaning of the word 'duel'. 1
- vi) Explain the role of the villagers of Barihaat in the story. 3
- vii) What can you understand about the "white *Sahib*" from the passage? 3
- viii) By what other, more famous name was the writer of this story known? 1

2. Read the poem given below and answer the questions that follow:

I, Too

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.

They send me to eat in the kitchen

When company comes,

But I laugh,

And eat well,

And grow strong.

Tomorrow,

I'll sit at the table

When company comes.

Nobody'll dare

Say to me

'Eat in the kitchen,'

Then.

Besides,

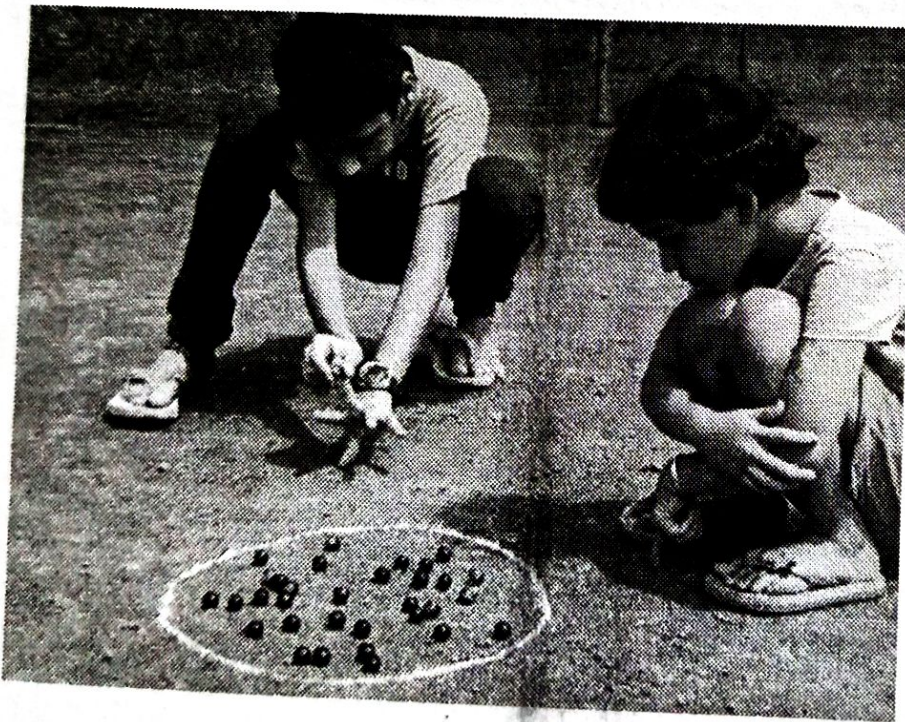
They'll see how beautiful I am

And be ashamed —

I, too, am America.

- a) How do you interpret the phrase “darker brother”? 2
- b) Bring out the metaphor of ‘kitchen’ repeatedly used in the poem. 2
- c) Comment on the tone of the poem as both mocking and affirmative. 3
- d) Bring out the significance of the first and the last line of the poem. 3
- e) Offer your critical reading of the poem as a narrative about racism and exploitation. 4
- f) Comment on the language and structure of the poem. 4
- g) What is the significance of the title “I, Too”? 2

3. Study the picture given below and write an essay in about 250 words, based on the situation depicted therein: 20



Or

Write an original story that begins with the words, “In the background I could hear an awful commotion, men’s voices raised and women screaming...”

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