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**ENGLISH A1 – HIGHER LEVEL – PAPER 1**  
**ANGLAIS A1 – NIVEAU SUPÉRIEUR – ÉPREUVE 1**  
**INGLÉS A1 – NIVEL SUPERIOR – PRUEBA 1**

Wednesday 2 May 2012 (morning)  
Mercredi 2 mai 2012 (matin)  
Miércoles 2 de mayo de 2012 (mañana)

2 hours / 2 heures / 2 horas

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INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Write a commentary on one passage only.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is *[25 marks]*.

INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATS

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Rédigez un commentaire sur un seul des passages.
- Le nombre maximum de points pour cette épreuve d'examen est *[25 points]*.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ALUMNOS

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un comentario sobre un solo fragmento.
- La puntuación máxima para esta prueba de examen es *[25 puntos]*.

Write a commentary on **one** of the following:

1.

### Birth of the Owl Butterflies

They hung in our kitchen for days:  
a row of brown lanterns that threw no light,  
merely darkened with their growing load.  
Pinned to a shelf among the knick-knacks  
5 and the cookery books;  
ripening in the radiator's heat:  
six Central American *Caligo* chrysalids,  
five thousand miles from their mountain home.

My father had brought them here,  
10 carefully packed in cotton wool,  
to hatch, set, identify, and display:  
these unpromising dingy shells plumped up  
like curled leaves, on each a silver spur,  
a tiny gleam or drop of dew,  
15 Nature had added as a finishing touch  
to perfect mimicry.

For weeks the wizened fruit had been maturing.  
Now, one by one, the pods exploded,  
crackling in the quiet kitchen,  
20 and a furry missile emerged – quickly,  
as if desperate to break free –  
unhinged its awkward legs,  
hauling behind it, like a frilly party dress,  
the rumpled mass of its soft wings.

25 It clung unsteadily to the cloven<sup>1</sup> pod,  
while slow wings billowed with the blood  
that pumped them full.  
The dark velvet began to glow  
with a thousand tiny striations<sup>2</sup>,  
30 and there, in each corner,  
boldly ringed in black and gold,  
two fierce owl-eyes widened.

Uneasy minutes, these, before *Caligo*  
can flex its nine-inch wings and fly.  
35 They drooped still, gathering strength,  
limp flags loosely flowing.  
When two butterflies hatched too close,  
and clashed, each scrabbling for a footing,  
one fell and its wings flopped  
40 fatly on the kitchen floor.

I pictured them shattering later  
on taps and cupboard corners;  
but my father gauged his moment well,  
allowed a first few timid forays,  
45 then swooped down gentle-fingered  
with his glass jar for the kill.  
The monstrous wings all but filled it,  
beat vigorously, fluttered, and were still.

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<sup>1</sup> cloven: split in two

<sup>2</sup> striations: an academic term for stripes

2.

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