**ST JOSEPH’S UNIVERSITY, BENGALURU -27**

**OPEN ELECTIVE - 4th SEMESTER**

**SEMESTER EXAMINATION: April 2024**

**(Examination conducted in May / June 2024)**

**JNE OE-4 WRITING FOR WELLNESS**

**(For current batch students only)**

**Time: 2 Hours Max Marks: 60**

**This paper contains 3 printed pages and 3 parts**

**PART-A**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

**1.You will lose marks for exceeding word limit, and copying directly from the passage.**

**2. You are allowed to use a dictionary during the examination.**

1. **Read the following extracts from *Against Catharsis: Writing is Not Therapy* by T Kira Madden and respond to the questions that follow.**

I heard the boy scream before I saw him. Walking 125th Street, alone, I heard him cry out. *Mom*, he screamed. *Mommy, please*. The street was dark; the winter drafts wicked. I spun around to find the boy, no older than six, standing outside a Volvo station wagon, fists banging against the backseat window. *Mommy, please*. The boy kept pounding, slapping at the glass, his face a crumpled knot of agony, his knees giving out until he dropped to the pavement, begging. A man, or, a silhouette of a man, rushed toward the boy. I’m not sure where the man came from. He picked the boy up in his arms and the boy kicked, flailed, screaming with his little arms reached out for that car, for his mother.

I turned around and kept walking.

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*Throttled*, was the word I used when I described the boy’s screams to my therapist. I’d waited a full week to tell this story. I hadn’t even told my fiancée, Hannah, whom I met for dinner just after the incident, and to whom I confide everything. *I was throttled, sick*, I said. *Couldn’t breathe couldn’t think couldn’t help couldn’t do.*

That boy at the car, he’d throttled me back in time in a way nothing else had for years. As he pounded on the window, I pounded at a window. As he screamed, I did, too.

*Mother, Father, Let. Me. In.*

What was the boy’s mother doing in the car? With a man? Unconscious? Tying up? Too high to hear her son? Perhaps it was more innocuous than all that. Perhaps I am here, projecting. The details didn’t matter to me then, in that moment. They still don’t. A child on the other side of the glass will always be the child on the other side of the glass, no matter how many years we spend banging, wailing, waiting for a door to open.

*It must be so healing to write memoir* is something I hear no fewer than a few times a day. *It must be so therapeutic, so cathartic*. These are the most popular words. The people who use these words mean well (for the most part). The people who say these words to me are saying them because I wrote a memoir about being a child—and now, an adult—on the other side of the glass. I have written into the memories and the smells of all the locked bathroom doors, the scorched foils; I have written about my father trying to drink gasoline as he came down from a bender, and my mother’s overdose on opiates, her subsequent coma. I have written about the blood of that. The baseball bat in my father’s hands as he tried to kill me while drunk. I’ve written into the sound of my mother’s skull cracking on the tile floor, and I’ve written my father’s body as it lay in a hospital bed, his skin flickering with every color of a sunset like someone beautiful until he died and he went from someone to something and his hands went cold.

But none of that. No sentence, no chapter, no list or description of any of it, *throttled* me. None of it collapsed the years. Brought on a prickle of the scalp.

*It is very healing*, I’ve said. I think, before the boy at the car, I may have believed that. I may have believed that to write The Thing down is to take one more step away from The Thing itself, one more step removed, one more page and another and another until there is a thick stack of proof, of growth, of *Tada!*—the restorative salvation. I wanted my memoir to feel like The Story. Look at it. Feel it, even. I have wrangled it all into something beautiful. Of course I have healed, because I was able to write it. The Story itself is the proof.

But listen. When the little boy’s knees gave up and he sunk and hit concrete, when he screamed *Mommy, please*, one time, and then a second, and a third, I felt something in my chest first. A tingle that shot up, then down. Stomach-kicking pain. Did the boy want to be let in, or did he want his mother out? My hands stung against glass, my hands beat against bathroom door beat against locks against knobs against cars against the carpet of my childhood home against the trousered legs of men my mouth spun wet with *Mommy, please* with everything I said everything I never did say all the things I want to say, still. It was all corporeal; all body.

Nothing has healed. The glass, still, hasn’t a crack.

The Story is not The Life.

…

Writing, for me, is no catharsis.

**Respond to any THREE questions in about 5-8 sentences each: (3x5=15 marks)**

1. What are the different meanings you can see to the word ‘throttled’ in the passage?
2. “As he pounded on the window, I pounded at a window. As he screamed, I did, too.” What does this statement reveal about the narrator?
3. Why does the narrator say “Writing, for me, is no catharsis.”? What other things could writing possibly mean if it isn't for a cathartic relief?
4. Why do you think the narrator could not heal from her wounds despite having written about the experiences?

**PART-B**

**Respond to the following questions in about 150-200 words. (3×10=30 marks)**

1. Catalogue at least two experiences when you felt the need to write in times of crises. What process did you go through each time as you wrote?
2. Could writing poetically heal a diseased body? Can such writing achieve anything practical? Justify your answer.
3. How is personal writing different from academic writing or professional writing?

**PART-C**

**Respond to the following question in about 200- 250 words. (15 marks)**

1. How has your idea of wellness evolved through the course? Elaborate with specific instances.