Register Number:

DATE: 15-01-2021

ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE-27
SEMESTER EXAMINATION: JANUARY 2021
BA VISUAL COMMUNICATION – I SEMESTER
VC 1418: WRITING SKILLS

Time – 2 ½ hrs **Max Marks-70**

This paper contains THREE printed pages and THREE parts

I. Identify mistakes if any in the following sentences and correct them. (2X10=20)

1. They carried the luggages on to the tarmac
2. Everybody have to write the exam.
3. She wore the hat on her head, which she bought yesterday.
4. Please revert to this email ASAP.
5. All but one student were present yesterday?
6. Please reply back to the letter, will you!
7. Dont worry. You'll find the clips at that stationary shop around the corner.
8. Please combine the three departments into one?
9. A fleet of Rafael aircrafts have landed.
10. The boy was riding the elephant who broke his leg.

II. Read the following passage and answer any SIX of the following questions in about 150 words each (6x5 = 30 marks)

Finding Moments of Calm During a Pandemic

Rereading Natalia Ginzburg's "Winter in the Abruzzi" for its stern and tender fellowship.

By Maggie Nelson

I don't feel much like reading these days; who does? Who has the time, with all the kids at home? Or who can concentrate? Yesterday, my reading consisted of "Go, Dog. Go!," a feat achieved while trying to fathom, or simply to bear, the feeling of delighting in phonetic discovery as I sit on a warm couch next to a person I adore, while so much fear, sorrow, uncertainty, and panic surges outside. An outside that looks like nothing but an empty street, flat—if not radiant—with the new calm.

The feeling led me to pull Natalia Ginzburg down from the shelf; I felt a sudden need to reread "Winter in the Abruzzi," an essay I consider one of the most perfect and devastating ever written. It's only five and a half pages; I managed to read it while shepherding my son through another utterly chaotic, thoroughly well-intentioned Zoom class for second graders.

Ginzburg's essay begins as a descriptive tale of a small Italian town in winter: cavernous kitchens lit by oak fires, prosciutto hanging from the ceilings, women who've lost their teeth

by age thirty, deepening snow. Then, on the second page, Ginzburg tells us simply, "Our lot was exile." She doesn't say why, but it's the early nineteen-forties in Italy, so we can imagine. She then tells us about her new life in the village with her young children and her husband, an anti-Fascist professor who writes at an oval table in their kitchen. We hear about their routines, their bitterness, their delights, and their trepidation, suspended, as they are, in a rich and eerie lull. The essay wears an epigraph from Virgil: *Deus nobis haec otia fecit.* God has granted us this respite.

And a respite it turns out to be, as the appalling, crystalline last paragraph of the essay makes clear: "My husband died in Regina Coeli prison in Rome a few months after we left the village. When I confront the horror of his solitary death, of the anguished choices that preceded his death, I have to wonder if this really happened to us, we who bought oranges at Girò's and went walking in the snow. I had faith then in a simple, happy future, rich with fulfilled desires, with shared experiences and ventures. But that was the best time of my life, and only now, that it's gone forever, do I know it." The essay closes with a date, 1944.

As the wise wisely instruct us to count our blessings—which I do—I also can't help but wonder how to sustain this sense of gratitude through the undulations of daily domestic life when so many of our homes balloon not only with love and recognition but also with stress, turbulence, even violence, from forces within and without. If this question is rhetorical, it's because I don't want anyone—including myself—to feel that they're doing kinship wrong if and when it hurts. Today, for me, it hurts. It is sweet, and it hurts. I think it hurt sometimes for Ginzburg, too, and it's not clear to me that it could have been different, even if she knew all that was to come.

The murder of Ginzburg's faith in "a simple, happy future, rich with fulfilled desires" is cruel. It is also the sound of human lives cresting against material and mortal limits, of flesh grinding into history. Earlier in the essay, she drives the point home: "There is a certain dull uniformity in human destiny. The course of our lives follows ancient and immutable laws, with an ancient, changeless rhythm. Dreams never come true, and the instant they are shattered, we realize how the greatest joys of our life lie beyond the realm of reality." I differ from Ginzburg in that I have never been able to look for (or find) any joys, great or small, beyond the realm of reality, whatever that means (I am reading her, after all, in translation). Or, at least, I haven't yet. But her sense of ancient and immutable law seems to me spot on, and, in certain circumstances, a great relief.

I don't mean to imply that there aren't ten thousand reasons that we shouldn't be where we are today, or that no one is responsible for the suffering at hand and to come. People are responsible, and we know their names. People were also responsible for the murder of Ginzburg's husband, who went from writing at that oval table surrounded by his children's toys to dying of cardiac arrest and acute cholecystitis in prison (the latter being a gallbladder infection likely brought on by torture). I only mean to say that, for those steeped in the belief that great calamity should not, cannot, be our lot—or that, if we work hard enough or try hard enough or hope hard enough or are good or inventive enough, we might be able to outfox it—it can be a relief to admit our folly and rejoin the species, which is defined, as are all forms of life, by a terrible and precious precarity to which some bodies need no reintroduction.

I think I reached for "Winter in the Abruzzi" because I needed this reminder, I needed its stern and tender fellowship, which it delivered to me today across seventy-six years and 6,331 miles (much farther than six feet away). That the essay brought me to tears was not new. But this time, rather than weep for Ginzburg alone, I wept for us all, as we, too, bought oranges at Girò's, and went walking in the snow.

11. What 'ancient and immutable laws' do our lives follow?
12. *Deus nobis haec otia fecit* – What significance does this epigraph have in Ginzburg's essay?
13. Do you think it is important to count your blessings? Why?
14. How do you think has the pandemic changed your life?
15. Write a précis based on the essay.
16. How was Ginzburg's faith murdered?
17. What is the "new calm" that the author is talking about?

III. Answer any TWO of the following in not less than 300 words (2x10 = 20 marks)

18. Write a news story in the inverted pyramid style about the ongoing pandemic situation.
19. Write a review of any recent story that you read.
20. Write an essay on the importance of critical thinking in education.