

## Critical Reading Practice - Scottish Set Text (45 minutes)

### War Photographer

In his darkroom he is finally alone  
with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.  
The only light is red and softly glows,  
as though this were a church and he  
a priest preparing to intone a Mass. 5  
Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays  
beneath his hands, which did not tremble then  
though seem to now. Rural England. Home again  
to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel, 10  
to fields which don't explode beneath the feet  
of running children in a nightmare heat.

Something is happening. A stranger's features  
faintly start to twist before his eyes,  
a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries 15  
of this man's wife, how he sought approval  
without words to do what someone must  
and how the blood stained into foreign dust.

A hundred agonies in black and white  
from which his editor will pick out five or six 20  
for Sunday's supplement. The reader's eyeballs prick  
with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.  
From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where  
he earns his living and they do not care.

### Questions

1. Summarise Duffy's purpose in each stanza. (4 marks)
2. Analyse how Duffy's use of language gives us a clear impression of the speaker in stanza 1. (4 marks)
3. Explain how Duffy's word choice adds an element of chaos or uncertainty to the second stanza. (2 marks)
4. Using close textual reference, show how the presentation of the main character in 'War Photographer' is similar or different to the presentation of the main character in another poem or poems by Duffy which you have read. (10 marks)