

### An Absolutely Ordinary Rainbow

The word goes round Repins,  
the murmur goes round Lorenzini,  
at Tattersalls, men look up from sheets of numbers,  
the Stock Exchange scribblers forget the chalk in their hands  
and men with bread in their pockets leave the Greek Club:  
There's a fellow crying in Martin Place. They can't stop him.  
The traffic in George Street is banked up for half a mile  
and drained of motion. The crowds are edgy with talk  
and more crowds come hurrying. Many run in the back streets  
which minutes ago were busy main streets, pointing:  
There's a fellow weeping down there. No one can stop him.  
The man we surround, the man no one approaches  
simply weeps, and does not cover it, weeps  
not like a child, not like the wind, like a man  
and does not declaim it, nor beat his breast, nor even  
sob very loudly - yet the dignity of his weeping  
holds us back from his space, the hollow he makes about him  
in the midday light, in his pentagram of sorrow,  
and uniforms back in the crowd who tried to seize him  
stare out at him, and feel, with amazement, their minds  
longing for tears as children for a rainbow.  
Some will say, in the years to come, a halo  
or force stood around him. There is no such thing.  
Some will say they were shocked and would have stopped him  
but they will not have been there. The fiercest manhood,  
the toughest reserve, the slickest wit amongst us  
trembles with silence, and burns with unexpected  
judgements of peace. Some in the concourse scream  
who thought themselves happy. Only the smallest children  
and such as look out of Paradise come near him  
and sit at his feet, with dogs and dusty pigeons.  
Ridiculous, says a man near me, and stops  
his mouth with his hands, as if it uttered vomit —  
and I see a woman, shining, stretch her hand  
and shake as she receives the gift of weeping;  
as many as follow her also receive it  
and many weep for sheer acceptance, and more  
refuse to weep for fear of all acceptance,  
but the weeping man, like the earth, requires nothing,  
the man who weeps ignores us, and cries out  
of his writhen face and ordinary body  
not words, but grief, not messages, but sorrow,  
hard as the earth, sheer, present as the sea —  
and when he stops, he simply walks between us  
mopping his face with the dignity of one  
man who has wept, and now has finished weeping.  
Evading believers, he hurries off down Pitt Street.

Les Murray

From *The Weatherboard Cathedral*, 1969

M O D E A

# Indicative response — Standard A

The annotations show the match to the instrument-specific standards.

Comments	She Wept	Comments
<p>Exploitation of genre patterns and conventions of a short story to <u>achieve specific purposes</u></p>	<p>"There's the Bridge, oh, and the Opera House too! Look, Sara, the harbour is just like a postcard," Jane simply breathed her amazement. With nose pressed against the window of the Ferris wheel carriage, she continued her awed narration as we began our final, rounded descent.</p>	<p>Use of aesthetic features to <u>achieve purposes</u> in a short story</p>
<p>Discerning combination of a range of grammatically accurate language structures for <u>specific effects</u>, including clauses and sentences</p>	<p>Lollipop roofs on canvas tents. Sun glinting off the polished brass poles of the carousel. People darting about, miniature, with all the frenzy of a colony of ants. The huge, manic mouth of Luna Park was ever hungry, greedily swallowing the frantic flow of families. It was then, as we drew closer to the ground, that I noticed a flaw, a great blemish in the rich tapestry of carnival colour.</p>	<p>Discerning use of a wide range of apt vocabulary for <u>specific purposes</u></p>
<p>Discerning use of punctuation to <u>achieve specific effects</u></p>	<p>A woman. She sat on a bench beside the duck-shooting gallery. A woman in black. A young woman but with an age of history written on her face. The brash Sydney sun, while it tap danced on the bench beside her, was unable to penetrate the dark folds of her dress. As we rounded to her level, her eyes met mine. I was struck by the sheer nakedness, the vulnerability, of her bare face framed by dark curls. On that face, tears glistened like diamonds.</p>	<p>Discerning use of cohesive devices to <u>develop and emphasise ideas and connect</u> parts of the short story, including paragraphing</p>
<p>Exploitation of genre patterns and conventions of a short story to <u>achieve specific purposes</u></p>	<p>She was crying – no, this was deeper, more regal somehow. Not a snivelling cry for help, a wet, sniffing, slurry of tears. It was different. The woman was weeping. Shoulders hunched, body shuddering, lips parted slightly, emitting a deep, keening note. There was something darkly compelling about this woman and her display of emotion, incongruous in such a grossly bright, bustling place.</p>	<p>Discerning combination of a range of grammatically accurate language structures for <u>specific effects</u>, including clauses and sentences</p>
<p>Discerning use of aesthetic features to <u>achieve specific purposes</u> in a short story</p>	<p>"So where to now?" Jane's excitement was, for once, not so infectious. "Shooting gallery," I mumbled absent-mindedly.</p>	<p>Subtle and complex creation of <u>perspectives and representations</u> of identities and places</p>
<p>Discerning manipulation of the ways ideas, attitudes and values underpin the short story and <u>influence magazine audiences</u></p>	<p>We fell into line behind a wailing little boy who, with nose dribbling into his fairy floss, clawed at his mother's leg with sticky insistence. She paid him scant attention, yet when his screeches reached an alarming decibel, irritably slapped his hand away. I noticed a quick flash of guilty embarrassment slide across her face as she looked up, drawn by the sight of the weeping woman's shuddering shoulders. By now, the woman had begun to attract interest. It was as though a message had rippled through Luna Park; perhaps the clowns whispered it to the children, the carousel horses whinnied to their riders, and the giant mouth shouted for all to hear: "There's a woman down at the shooting gallery, weeping. No one can stop her." "Look at her," Jane mused in a low voice. "What has she got to cry about? Did you see the size of the rock on her finger?" she added, with little empathy. The line inched forward. An old woman joined the queue behind us, a sneer pinching its way across her parchment-like face as she eyed the woman warily. "What's her problem?" she said to no one in particular. "I tell you, young women today, they think life should be a fun park." Some nodded in agreement, while others looked into the distance, feigning nonchalance. Though the public jostled, wriggled and pushed</p>	<p></p>

Discerning use of punctuation to achieve specific effects

their way around the park, a wide berth was left around the woman. Still, I noticed that she had gained the attention of everyone near. I heard self-righteous whispers:

Discerning use of a wide range of apt vocabulary for specific purposes

"Why on earth would she come here, of all places, to sit and mope?"

"Boyfriend troubles?" sneered another.

"Jason, darling, take the children away. I don't want them near her; she probably stole that ring; who knows what she's capable of."

Discerning selection, organisation and synthesis of relevant and substantive subject matter to support perspectives

Exploitation of genre patterns and conventions of a short story to achieve specific purposes

Yet as I watched the sound welling up and cascading from this poor woman's body, I realised that she was not merely crying about an argument with a boyfriend; she was weeping from the core of her being. Through her tears, she maintained an infinite gravitas; I sensed that she wept for neither sorrow nor joy. Her tears told an ancient, universal story, and we who watched began to hear the story for ourselves; the story of our deepest pain, long buried, uncovered by her river of tears. She was giving us permission to remember.

*I was a child of seven, visiting my grandmother in the nursing home. I kissed her wrinkled cheek; in return, she asked who I was.*

Discerning manipulation of the ways ideas, attitudes and values underpin the short story and influence magazine audiences

Discerning combination of a range of grammatically accurate language structures for specific effects, including clauses and sentences

As the woman wept on, disapproving features softened, faces crumpled. The gift of her weeping spread like a yawn through the crowd, giving all of us a moment to grieve, to pause, to remember.

The weeping woman's shoulders rose and fell as she took a steadying, shuddering breath. The carousel horses rose and fell, and shuddered to a stop. The ride attendant stood by the control panel, confusion in her eyes. Then she wept. A security guard positioned outside the theatre shuffled his feet. Looking away from the crowd, he surreptitiously raised a meaty fist to his eye. But I saw. He wept.

Manipulation and control of roles of the short story writer and relationship with magazine audiences

Manipulation and control of roles of the short story writer and relationship with magazine audiences

The snivelling little boy ahead of us stepped out. He walked over to the woman, stood at her feet and stared, silent now, mouth still slightly agape. His mother moved toward him and knelt down to meet her son eye-to-eye. Gently, she wiped his tear-streaked face, and taking his hand, led him away. There was a glistening in her eyes, a softening to her mouth.

A sharp jab from Jane brought me back to reality. She pointed at the weeping woman, who was now standing. No one spoke. Luna Park froze.

Discerning use of aesthetic features to achieve specific purposes in a short story

The woman straightened her dress, patted down her hair, delicately wiped the moisture from beneath her eyes, and stood tall. She took a deep, steadying breath. Then, with queenly grace, she walked away from the crowd.

Almost immediately, Luna Park erupted into life. Carnival music roared, children shrieked, lights flashed. Hands were brushed hurriedly across wet eyes as memories receded and faces composed themselves once again. As if after a rainstorm, colours appeared brighter, more intense. I felt cleansed, somehow lighter in spirit.

The woman walked purposefully toward the exit, her dress ballooning gently behind her, carving a silent, yacht-like progress through the crowd. On she went, through the great gaping mouth of the fun park.

Short story written in response to "An Absolutely Ordinary Rainbow" by Les Murray. This sample has been selected because it demonstrates a discerning selection of relevant and substantive subject matter and a subtle and complex recreation of the perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places in the stimulus poem. The full text of the poem is reproduced below.