**Poppies**

1 Three days before Armistice Sunday

and poppies had already been placed

on individual war graves. Before you left,

I pinned one onto your lapel, crimped petals,

5 spasms of paper red, disrupting a blockade

of yellow bias binding around your blazer.

**TASK ONE**

Read the poem Poppies by Jane Weir and then match each of the images (on page 2) to words or phrases in the poem.

Sellotape bandaged around my hand,

I rounded up as many white cat hairs

as I could, smoothed down your shirt’s

10 upturned collar, steeled the softening

of my face. I wanted to graze my nose

across the tip of your nose, play at

**TASK TWO**

Choose **six** of the images and brainstorm all of the associations that come to you from each image: where it can be found, links to particular occasions, who would own the object, what it’s used for, any links to folklore or superstitions, etc.

eg. The **blackthorns** might make you think of pain, barbed wire, the beauty of nature etc.

being Eskimos like we did when

you were little. I resisted the impulse

15 to run my fingers through the gelled

blackthorns of your hair. All my words

flattened, rolled, turned into felt,

slowly melting. I was brave, as I walked

with you, to the front door, threw

20 it open, the world overflowing

like a treasure chest. A split second

and you were away, intoxicated.

**TASK THREE**

Write a narrative (story) that includes each of the **six objects** that you chose.

You can decide what your story is about, but it should feature the objects chosen in a significant way, rather than just mentioning them in passing, eg avoid:

‘I walked to the end of my road and saw a pear tree’

and try something more meaningful like:

‘*We used to play under the pear tree and fight for the juiciest fruit. Even now the taste of a ripe pear brings that summer to mind.’*

After you’d gone I went into your bedroom,

released a song bird from its cage.

25 Later a single dove flew from the pear tree,

and this is where it has led me,

skirting the church yard walls, my stomach busy

making tucks, darts, pleats, hat-less, without

a winter coat or reinforcements of scarf, gloves.

30 On reaching the top of the hill I traced

the inscriptions on the war memorial,

leaned against it like a wishbone.

The dove pulled freely against the sky,

an ornamental stitch. I listened, hoping to hear

35 your playground voice catching on the wind.

**JANE WEIR** (b. 1963)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Answer Sheet**