

The Pigeon, Icarus¹

by Ann Goldring

1 Each night at six the man opens
 the small doors of cages for pigeons
 to flutter out into sun-painted skies. One
 by one they reel off their perch, strike their wings
5 into beating, collect in clouds sweeping together
 sculpting skyways
 banked for rising and falling, slicing light
 white to silver
 grey to silver

10 Each night I pedal my bike, watch
 the birds not the road. I want to be one of them
 rustling up eddies to cross and
 crisscross, until the sky is tangled in currents
 so next when we plunge through we stop sailing
15 together but, like coins skytossed in reckless abandon
 we jangle and muddle our pretty precision. I wonder

 why night after night they forfeit their freedom
 return to their cages, settle softly in darkness
 muffle longing in attics for what they gave up.

20 Would I?

 Or you, if given the chance (if the wax didn't melt)

 work waived, obligations cancelled — we've quite done
 enough — would we return to our cages each night
 coo each other to sleep dreaming

25 of flight?

¹ *Icarus*: In Greek mythology, Icarus created wings held together with wax. When he flew too close to the sun, the wax melted and he fell to the ground.

PART B: POETRY

Total Value: 19 marks

Suggested Time: 25 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the poem “The Pigeon, Icarus” on page 1 in the **Readings Booklet**. Select the **best** answer for each question and record your choice on the Response Form provided.

11. Lines 8 and 9, “white to silver / grey to silver” refer to the colour of the
- A. clouds.
 - B. pigeons.
 - C. sky scrapers.
 - D. sun-painted skies.
12. The line which contains an example of onomatopoeia is
- A. line 4.
 - B. line 6.
 - C. line 15.
 - D. line 16.
13. The speaker believes that each night the pigeons
- A. try to escape.
 - B. strike at each other.
 - C. return to their cages willingly.
 - D. leave their perches reluctantly.
14. In line 21, the word “you” addresses the
- A. owner.
 - B. reader.
 - C. speaker.
 - D. pigeons.
15. Line 22 means that the people would be
- A. lost in dreams.
 - B. free to go away.
 - C. trapped in a routine.
 - D. obligated to return to work.

16. In line 17, the word “forfeit” means

- A. enjoy.
- B. protect.
- C. demand.
- D. surrender.

17. The tone of the poem is

- A. bitter.
- B. joyous.
- C. nostalgic.
- D. reflective.

