

<b>EAE 0422 A</b>	<b>Sujet Jury</b>	<b>Sujet Candidat</b>		<b>Code Sujet</b>	<b>CLG 2</b>
-------------------	-------------------	-----------------------	--	-------------------	--------------

**Your main commentary should be focused on *past participles*. Other topics may also be addressed.**

At the house, there was nothing for Sylvia to do except to open the windows. And to think – with an eagerness that dismayed without really surprising her – of how soon she could see Carla.

5 All the paraphernalia of illness had been removed. The room that had been Sylvia and her husband's bedroom and then his death chamber had been cleaned out and tidied up to look as if nothing had ever happened in it. Carla had helped with all that during the few frenzied days between the crematorium and the departure for Greece. Every piece of clothing Leon had ever worn and some things he hadn't, including gifts from his sisters that had never been taken out of their packages, had been piled in the backseat of the car and delivered to the Thrift Shop. His pills, his shaving things, unopened cans of the fortified drink that had sustained him as long as anything could, cartons of the sesame seed snaps that at one time he had eaten by the dozens, the plastic bottles full of the lotion that had eased his back, the sheepskins on which he had lain – all of that was dumped into the plastic bags to be hauled away as garbage and Carla didn't question a thing. She never said, "Maybe somebody could use that," or pointed out that whole cartons of cans were unopened. When Sylvia said, "I wish I hadn't taken the clothes to town. I wish I'd burned them all up in the incinerator," Carla had shown no surprise.

25 They cleaned the oven, scrubbed out the cupboards, wiped down the walls and the windows. One day Sylvia sat in the living room going through all the condolence letters she had received. (There was no accumulation of papers and notebooks to be attended to, as you might have expected with a writer, no unfinished work or scribbled drafts. He had told her, months before, that he had pitched everything. *And no regrets.*)

30 The south-sloping wall of the house was made up of big windows. Sylvia looked up, surprised by the watery sunlight that had come out – or possibly surprised by the shadow of Carla, bare-legged, bare-armed, on top of a ladder, her resolute face crowned with a frizz of dandelion hair that was too short for the braid. She was

35 vigorously spraying and scrubbing the glass. When she saw Sylvia looking at her she stopped and flung out her arms as if she was played there, making a silly gargoyle-like face. They both began to laugh, Sylvia felt this laughter running all through her like a playful stream. She went back to her letters as Carla resumed her cleaning. She decided that all of these kind words – genuine or perfunctory, the tributes and regrets – could go the way of the sheepskins and the crackers.

40 When she heard Carla taking the ladder down, heard boots on the deck, she was suddenly shy. She sat where she was with her head bowed as Carla came into the room and passed behind her on her way to the kitchen to put the pail and the cloths back under the sink. Carla hardly halted, she was as quick as a bird, but she managed to drop a kiss upon Sylvia's bent head. Then she went on whistling something to herself.

45 50 That kiss had been in Sylvia's mind ever since. It meant nothing in particular. It meant *Cheer up. Or Almost done.* It meant that they were good friends who had got through a lot of depressing work together. Or maybe just that the sun had come out.