

EAE 0422 A	Sujet Jury	Sujet Candidat	Code Sujet	CLG 05
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Your main commentary should be focused on *-ING forms*. Other topics may also be addressed.

Then, always, there are the objects, the forgotten possessions, *the abandoned things*. By now, his photographs number in the thousands, and among his burgeoning archive can be found pictures of books, shoes, and oil paintings, pianos and toasters, dolls, tea sets, and dirty socks, televisions and board games, party dresses and tennis racquets, sofas, silk lingerie, caulking guns, thumbtacks, plastic action figures, tubes of lipstick, rifles, discolored mattresses, knives and forks, poker chips, a stamp collection, and a dead canary lying at the bottom of its cage. He has no idea why he feels compelled to take these pictures. He understands that it is an empty pursuit, of no possible benefit to anyone, and yet each time he walks into a house, he senses that the things are calling out to him, speaking to him in the voices of the people who are no longer there, asking him to be looked at one last time before they are carted away. The other members of the crew make fun of him for this obsessive picture taking, but he pays them no heed. They are of little account in his opinion, and he despises them all. Brain-dead Victor, the crew boss; stuttering, chatterbox Paco; and fat, wheezing Freddy – the three musketeers of doom. The law says that all salvageable objects above a certain value must be handed over to the bank, which is obliged to return them to their owners, but his co-workers grab whatever they please and never give it a second thought. They consider him a fool for turning his back on these spoils – the bottles of whiskey, the radios, the CD players, the archery equipment, the dirty magazines – but all he wants are his pictures – not things, but the pictures of things. For some time now, he has made it his business to say as little as possible when he is on the job. Paco and Freddy have taken to calling him El Mudo.

He is twenty-eight years old, and to the best of his knowledge he has no ambitions. No burning ambitions, in any case, no clear idea of what building a plausible future might entail for him. He knows that he will not stay in Florida much longer, that the moment is coming when he will feel the need to move on again, but until that need ripens into a necessity to act, he is content to

remain in the present and not look ahead. If he has accomplished anything in the seven and a half years since he quit college and struck out on his own, it is this ability to live in the present, to confine himself to the here and now, and although it might not be the most laudable accomplishment one can think of, it has required considerable discipline and self-control for him to achieve it. To have no plans, which is to say, to have no longings or hopes, to be satisfied with your lot, to accept what the world doles out to you from one sunrise to the next – in order to live like that you must want very little, as little as humanly possible.

Bit by bit, he has pared down his desires to what is now approaching a bare minimum. He has cut out smoking and drinking, he no longer eats in restaurants, he does not own a television, a radio, or a computer. He would like to trade in his car for a bicycle, but he can't get rid of the car, since the distances he must travel for work are too great. The same applies to the cell phone he carries around in his pocket, which he would dearly love to toss in the garbage, but he needs it for work as well and therefore can't do without it. The digital camera was an indulgence, perhaps, but given the drear and slog of the endless trash-out rut, he feels it is saving his life. His rent is low, since he lives in a small apartment in a poor neighborhood, and beyond spending money on bedrock necessities, the only luxury he allows himself is buying books, paperback books, mostly novels, American novels, British novels, foreign novels in translation, but in the end books are not luxuries so much as necessities, and reading is an addiction he has no wish to be cured of.

If not for the girl, he would probably leave before the month was out.