

**Examination** 20 min

次の文章を読んで、問1～4に答えなさい。

If they found on Mars a single blade of grass there would be ecstasy at mission control center, releasing visions of humanity spreading out across the cosmos. But does the obsession with finding life on other, potentially inhabitable planets somehow  
5 excuse and blind us to the trashing of this one?

(1) News of the discovery of yet another Earth-like planet fuels the fantasy that if we damage our own, we can always relocate.  
There is a strong fascination with the possibility of escape which somehow relieves the pressure to look after our own, extraordinary  
10 planetary home.

As we tremble with anticipation at the prospect of finding a single microorganism on another planet, under our feet we're wilfully executing a mass extinction event. Once a fashionable cause, threats to our forests, which are cradles to the diversity of  
15 life, have been largely forgotten. But this century we've been losing them at the astonishing rate of 50 football pitches per minute. That's an area (2) the size of Greenland since the turn of the millennium.

All attempts to reconcile the industrial-scale exploitation of  
20 the biosphere by staying the right side of key environmental thresholds are failing. Forest-certification schemes\*, for example, have done nothing to slow their degradation. Why do we treat the abundance of life on our doorstep with such disrespect, when it

throws up glories like the Namibian fog-basking beetle, which  
25 taught us how to build green houses in the desert? Or the bark  
beetle, which can detect a forest fire 10 km away and is showing  
how to make better fire extinguishers? Even worse, the very people  
who put their lives on the line to protect land and the environment  
are being killed at an accelerating pace.

30 I was an infant when the Apollo program was happening and  
understand the obsession with exploring outer space. But sending  
a single person to the hostile, dry environment of a planet just next  
door like Mars would require years of training for a fabulously  
expensive trip. The question of whether or not there is life “out  
35 there” is often asked. But, from a different view of the cosmos,  
aren’t we ourselves also and already “out there?”

Perhaps the greatest gift of space exploration is that it  
enabled us to see ourselves as an island planet, where the greatest  
wonder is to be found in the world around us — the relationships  
40 between living things — and even within ourselves. A single  
tablespoon of soil contains more micro-organisms than there are  
people on the planet.

We sense we’re living through hard times, and that makes the  
idea of fleeing to other worlds attractive. But times have been  
45 harder. On a cold dark night in prison during the upheaval of  
Europe of 1917, the revolutionary socialist Rosa Luxemburg\*  
found her spirits lifted, despite her perilous situation, by an  
awareness of the strangeness and beauty of the force of life. Her  
heart “beats with an inconceivable, unknown inner joy.” The secret,

50 she decides, is “nothing but life itself,” and even in the sound of  
guards’ heels grinding in gravel outside, “there is the small, lovely  
song of life — if one knows how to hear it.”

A couple of years ago I saw for the first time at dusk a field of  
fireflies. They were all around me, pulsing, drifting, lighting-up  
55 the darkening landscape. (3)I thought of Luxemburg’s song of life,  
and of the millions of people around the world who, rather than  
dreaming of escape, don’t accept the world as it is, but use their  
life’s energy to protect and improve it.

注

forest-certification schemes 森林認証制度。環境に負荷の少ない方法で管理された森林から産出する木材を認証する国際的プログラム。

Rosa Luxemburg ローザ・ルクセンブルク(1871–1919)。ドイツの革命家，政治理論家。

問 1 下線部(1)を日本語に訳しなさい。

問 2 筆者は何が下線部(2)と等しいと言っているか，20字以内の日本語で説明しなさい。

問 3 下線部(3)を日本語に訳しなさい。

問4 本文の内容と合致するものを下から三つ選び, 記号で答えなさい。

- (a) The idea of escaping from the earth makes us more conscious of our responsibility to it.
- (b) Even the lives of the people who have dedicated themselves to forest protection are being lost.
- (c) The Namibian fog-basking beetle tells us how to find a fire from a great distance.
- (d) The author was fully grown-up when the Apollo program began.
- (e) Thanks to space exploration, we could see ourselves as an island planet.
- (f) Rosa Luxemburg came to be aware of the strangeness and beauty of the force of life while in prison.