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Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **9695/31**

Paper 3 Poetry and Prose **October/November 2020**

2 hours

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **two** questions in total:
  - Section A: answer **one** question.
  - Section B: answer **one** question.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

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Section A: Poetry

ROBERT FROST: *Selected Poems*

1 **Either** **(a)** With reference to **two** poems, discuss ways in which Frost presents the relationships which human beings have with the natural world.

Or **(b)** Comment closely on the presentation of the relationship between the husband and wife in the following extract from 'Home Burial'.

'My words are nearly always an offense.

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Outside there in the entry, for I saw it.’

from *Home Burial*

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OWEN SHEERS: *Skirrid Hill*

2 **Either** **(a)** Compare ways in which Sheers presents death in **two** poems.

Or **(b)** Comment closely on ways in which the following poem presents links between time and place.

History
Lleder Valley, North Wales

Don't try to learn this place
in the pages of a history
but go instead up to the
disused quarry

where the water lies still
and black as oil
and the only chiselling
is that of the blackbird's song

drilling its notes
into the hillside's soil.

And there, beside the falls of moss,
pick yourself a blade of slate,
long as your arm, rusted,
metallic in sound.

Tap it with your heel,
then with your fingertips
at its leaves, gently
prise it apart.

And see how it becomes
a book of slate

in which you can read
a story of stone –
one that's written
throughout this valley,

in every head, across every heart
and down the marrow of every bone.

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Songs of Ourselves, Volume 2

3 **Either** **(a)** Referring to **two** poems, compare ways in which poets present change and its effects.

Or **(b)** Comment closely on the presentation of the voice of Sleep in the following poem.

Sleep

Do you give yourself to me utterly,
  Body and no-body, flesh and no-flesh,
Not as a fugitive, blindly or bitterly,
  But as a child might, with no other wish?
Yes, utterly.

Then I shall bear you down my estuary,
Carry you and ferry you to burial mysteriously,
Take you and receive you,
Consume you, engulf you,
In the huge cave, my belly, lave you
With huger waves continually.

And you shall cling and clamber there
And slumber there, in that dumb chamber,
Beat with my blood's beat, hear my heart move
Blindly in bones that ride above you,
Delve in my flesh, dissolved and bedded,
Through viewless valves embodied so –

Till daylight, the expulsion and awakening,
  The riving and the driving forth,
Life with remorseless forceps beckoning –
  Pangs and betrayal of harsh birth.

Kenneth Slessor

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Section B: Prose

E M FORSTER: *Howards End*

4 **Either** **(a)** Discuss the presentation and role of Charles Wilcox in the novel.

Or **(b)** Comment closely on the following passage, considering the presentation of the attitudes of Henry Wilcox and Helen.

"Oh. Mr. Wilcox, about the Porphyrion—" she began and went scarlet all over her face.

"It's all right," called Margaret, catching them up. "Dempster's Bank's better."

"But I think you told us the Porphyrion was bad, and would smash before Christmas."

"Did I? It was still outside the Tariff Ring, and had to take rotten policies. Lately it came in—safe as houses now."

"In other words, Mr. Bast need never have left it."

"No, the fellow needn't."

"—and needn't have started life elsewhere at a greatly reduced salary."

"He only says 'reduced,'" corrected Margaret, seeing trouble ahead.

"With a man so poor, every reduction must be great. I consider it a deplorable misfortune."

Mr. Wilcox, intent on his business with Mrs. Munt, was going steadily on, but the last remark made him say: "What? What's that? Do you mean that I'm responsible?"

"You're ridiculous, Helen."

"You seem to think—" He looked at his watch. "Let me explain the point to you. It is like this. You seem to assume, when a business concern is conducting a delicate negotiation, it ought to keep the public informed stage by stage. The Porphyrion, according to you, was bound to say, 'I am trying all I can to get into the Tariff Ring. I am not sure that I shall succeed, but it is the only thing that will save me from insolvency, and I am trying.' My dear Helen—"

"Is that your point? A man who had little money has less—that's mine."

"I am grieved for your clerk. But it is all in the day's work. It's part of the battle of life."

"A man who had little money—," she repeated, "has less, owing to us. Under these circumstances I do not consider 'the battle of life' a happy expression."

"Oh come, come!" he protested pleasantly, "you're not to blame. No one's to blame."

"Is no one to blame for anything?"

"I wouldn't say that, but you're taking it far too seriously. Who is this fellow?"

"We have told you about the fellow twice already," said Helen. "You have even met the fellow. He is very poor and his wife is an extravagant imbecile. He is capable of better things. We—we, the upper classes—thought we would help him from the height of our superior knowledge—and here's the result!"

He raised his finger. "Now, a word of advice."

"I require no more advice."

"A word of advice. Don't take up that sentimental attitude over the poor. See that she doesn't, Margaret. The poor are poor, and one's sorry for them, but there it is. As civilisation moves forward, the shoe is bound to pinch in places, and it's absurd to pretend that any one is responsible personally. Neither you, nor I, nor my informant, nor the man who informed him, nor the directors of the Porphyrion, are to blame for this clerk's loss of salary. It's just the shoe pinching—no one can help it; and it might easily have been worse."

Helen quivered with indignation.

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"By all means subscribe to charities—subscribe to them largely—but don't get carried away by absurd schemes of Social Reform. I see a good deal behind the scenes, and you can take it from me that there is no Social Question—except for a few journalists who try to get a living out of the phrase. There are just rich and poor, as there always have been and always will be. Point me out a time when men have been equal—"

"I didn't say—"

"Point me out a time when desire for equality has made them happier. No, no. You can't. There always have been rich and poor. I'm no fatalist. Heaven forbid! But our civilisation is moulded by great impersonal forces" (his voice grew complacent; it always did when he eliminated the personal), "and there always will be rich and poor. You can't deny it" (and now it was a respectful voice)—"and you can't deny that, in spite of all, the tendency of civilisation has on the whole been upward."

Chapter 22

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ANDREA LEVY: *Small Island*

5 Either (a) Discuss the presentation of Bernard, considering his importance in the novel.

Or (b) Comment closely on the presentation of Hortense's job interview in the following passage.

'I trained at the teacher-training college in Constant Spring, under the tutelage of Miss Morgan.'

'Is that in Jamaica?'

'Yes.'

It was relief that tipped her head to one side while she let out a long breath. I eased myself believing everything was now cleared between us. Until, leaning all her ample charm forward, she told me, 'Well, I'm afraid you can't teach here,' and passed the unopened letters back to me.

I was sure there had been some misunderstanding, although I was not clear as to where it had occurred. Perhaps I had not made myself as understood as I could. 'If you would read the letters,' I said, 'one will tell you about the three years of training as a teacher I received in Jamaica while the other letter is concerned with the position I held as a teacher at—'

She did not let me finish. 'The letters don't matter,' she told me. 'You can't teach in this country. You're not qualified to teach here in England.'

'But …' was the only sound that came from me.

'It doesn't matter that you were a teacher in Jamaica,' she went on, 'you will not be allowed to teach here.' She shook the letters at me. 'Take these back. They're of no use.' When I did not take them from her hand she rattled them harder at me. 'Take them,' she said, so loud she almost shouted. Her smile was stale as a gargoyle. My hand shook as it reached out for the letters.

And all I could utter was 'But—'

'Miss, I'm afraid there really is no point your sitting there arguing with me.' And she giggled. The untimely chortle made my mouth gape. 'It's not up to me. It's the decision of the education authority. I can do nothing to change that. And, I'm afraid, neither can you. Now, I don't mean to hurry you but I have an awful lot to do. So thank you for coming.'

Every organ I possessed was screaming on this woman, 'What are you saying to me?'

She went back about her business. Her face now in its normal repose looked as severe as that of the principal at my college. She picked up a piece of paper, wrote something at the top. She looked to another piece of paper then stopped, aware that I was still there.

'How long is the training in England?' I asked her.

'Goodbye,' she said, pointing a finger at the door.

'Must I go back to a college?'

'Really, miss, I have just explained everything to you. You do speak English? Have you not understood me? It's quite simple. There is no point you asking me anything else. Now, please, I have a lot to do. Thank you.'

And she smiled on me – again! What fancy feigning. I could not stand up. My legs were too weak under me. I sat for a little to redeem my composure. At last finding strength to pull myself up, I told this woman, 'I will come back again when I am qualified to teach in this country.'

'Yes,' she said, 'you do that. Goodbye.'

As I stood she rolled her eyes with the other women in the room. But I paid them no mind. I fixed my hat straight on my head and adjusted my gloves. 'Thank you and good day,' I called to them all, as I opened the door to leave. Each woman returned that pantomime greeting as if I had meant it. I opened the door and

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walked through. Suddenly everything was dark. I was staring on a ladder, a mop and a broom. I put out my hand and touched shelves stacked with bundles of paper. For one moment I wondered how I would find my way out through this confusion. Only when my foot kicked against a bucket did I realise I had walked into a cupboard. I had stepped in with all the confidence I could grasp, while the women watched me.

All three were giggling when I emerged from the dark of the closet. One behind a hand, another with a sheet of paper lifted up so I might not see. The older woman was, of course, smiling but pity encircled the look. 'It's that door,' she said, pointing her spiky finger at the other wooden opening. I thanked her, bade them all good day once more and passed through the correct exit, untroubled by the sound of their rising laughter.

Chapter 50

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Stories of Ourselves

6 Either (a) Discuss ways in which **two** stories from your selection present frightening events.

Or (b) Comment closely on the presentation of Lord Emsworth in the following passage from 'The Custody of the Pumpkin'.

The importance of this pumpkin in the Earl of Emsworth's life requires, perhaps, a word of explanation. Every ancient family in England has some little gap in its scroll of honour, and that of Lord Emsworth was no exception. For generations back his ancestors had been doing notable deeds; they had sent out from Blandings Castle statesmen and warriors, governors and leaders of the people: but they had not – in the opinion of the present holder of the title – achieved a full hand. However splendid the family record might appear at first sight, the fact remained that no Earl of Emsworth had ever won a first prize for pumpkins at the Shrewsbury Show. For roses, yes. For tulips, true. For spring onions, granted. But not for pumpkins; and Lord Emsworth felt it deeply.

For many a summer past he had been striving indefatigably to remove this blot on the family escutcheon, only to see his hopes go tumbling down. But this year at last victory had seemed in sight, for there had been vouchsafed to Blandings a competitor of such amazing parts that his lordship, who had watched it grow practically from a pip, could not envisage failure. Surely, he told himself as he gazed on its golden roundness, even Sir Gregory Parsloe-Parsloe, of Matchingham Hall, winner for three successive years, would never be able to produce anything to challenge this superb vegetable.

And it was this supreme pumpkin whose welfare he feared he had jeopardised by dismissing Angus McAllister. For Angus was its official trainer. He understood the pumpkin. Indeed, in his reserved Scottish way, he even seemed to love it. With Angus gone, what would the harvest be?

Such were the meditations of Lord Emsworth as he reviewed the position of affairs. And though, as the days went by, he tried to tell himself that Angus McAllister was not the only man in the world who understood pumpkins, and that he had every confidence, the most complete and unswerving confidence, in Robert Barker, recently Angus's second-in-command, now promoted to the post of head-gardener and custodian of the Blandings Hope, he knew that this was but shallow bravado. When you are a pumpkin owner with a big winner in your stable, you judge men by hard standards, and every day it became plainer that Robert Barker was only a makeshift. Within a week Lord Emsworth was pining for Angus McAllister.

It might be purely imagination, but to his excited fancy the pumpkin seemed to be pining for Angus too. It appeared to be drooping and losing weight. Lord Emsworth could not rid himself of the horrible idea that it was shrinking. And on the tenth night after McAllister's departure he dreamed a strange dream. He had gone with King George to show his Gracious Majesty the pumpkin, promising him the treat of a lifetime; and, when they arrived, there in the corner of the frame was a shrivelled thing the size of a pea. He woke, sweating, with his Sovereign's disappointed screams ringing in his ears; and Pride gave its last quiver and collapsed. To reinstate Angus would be a surrender, but it must be done.

'Beach,' he said that morning at breakfast, 'do you happen to – er – to have McAllister's address?'

'Yes, your lordship,' replied the butler. 'He is in London, residing at number eleven Buxton Crescent.'

'Buxton Crescent? Never heard of it.'

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'It is, I fancy, your lordship, a boarding-house or some such establishment off the Cromwell Road. McAllister was accustomed to make it his headquarters whenever he visited the Metropolis on account of its handiness for Kensington Gardens. He liked,' said Beach with respectful reproach, for Angus had been a friend of his for nine years, 'to be near the flowers, your lordship.'

The Custody of the Pumpkin

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