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Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **0475/42**

Paper 4 Unseen **May/June 2021**

1 hour 15 minutes

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **one** question: **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 25.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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You are advised to spend about 20 minutes reading the question paper and planning your answer.

Answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.

EITHER

1 Read carefully the poem on the opposite page. It describes a poet who is struggling to express his emotions in his writing.

How does the writer vividly portray the poet's thoughts and feelings about his work?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the writer presents the room and the poet's actions at the start of the poem
- how the choice of images conveys the poet's struggle
- how the final stanza conveys his isolation.

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Poet in Winter

A small room with one table and one chair,
This man who writes, then cancels what he writes
Tears up the sheet, runs fingers through his hair;
His violent longing makes a fiercer chill
Than the sensed tilting of his hemisphere[1]
Toward the frozen solstice[2], and he fights
A strange, oncoming ice-age of the will.

For him love does not burn, but chains him so:
The unspoken words lie heavy on his tongue,
Thoughts are like granite hurled into soft snow;
He holds a winter landscape in his mind;
All tracks, familiar roads are covered now
By a blank sameness; he is caught and wrung
In the mailed gauntlet[3] of a polar wind.

And yet that wind blows only for the man
Thus damned to strive[4]; one opening the door
Would see him there, and casually would scan
His bent head and the slowly scribbled page
That's hidden at the sound; the draught would fan
Fragments of verses to the littered floor
As a false snowstorm falls upon the stage.

1 *hemisphere*: half of the earth
2 *solstice*: midwinter's day
3 *mailed gauntlet*: armoured glove
4 *strive*: struggle or fight to survive

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OR

2 Read carefully the following extract from a memoir. The writer is thinking back to when he was a boy. He and his family have just moved to a new town.

How does the writer memorably convey his family's life and relationships?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how he portrays life in their new home
- how he conveys the mother's restlessness and her buying of the bicycle
- how he portrays his father's and his own response to her riding the bicycle.

The nearest shops are a mile away along a bleak eucalyptus[1]-lined road. Trapped in this box of a house on the housing estate, there is nothing for his mother to do all day but sweep and tidy. Every time the wind blows, a fine ochre clay-dust whirls in under the doors, seeps through the cracks in the window-frames, under the eaves, through the joints of the ceiling. After a day-long storm the dust lies piled inches high against the front wall.

They buy a vacuum cleaner. Every morning his mother trails the vacuum cleaner from room to room, sucking up the dust into the roaring belly on which a smiling red goblin leaps as if over a hurdle. A goblin: why?

He plays with the vacuum cleaner, tearing up paper and watching the strips fly up the pipe like leaves in the wind. He holds the pipe over a trail of ants, sucking them up to their death.

There are ants in Worcester, flies, plagues of fleas. Worcester is only ninety miles from Cape Town, yet everything is worse here. He has a ring of fleabites above his socks, and scabs where he has scratched. Some nights he cannot sleep for the itching. He does not see why they ever had to leave Cape Town.

His mother is restless too. I wish I had a horse, she says. Then at least I could go riding in the veld[2]. A horse! says his father. Do you want to be Lady Godiva[3]?

She does not buy a horse. Instead, without warning, she buys a bicycle, a woman's model, second-hand, painted black. It is so huge and heavy that, when he experiments with it in the yard, he cannot turn the pedals.

She does not know how to ride a bicycle; perhaps she does not know how to ride a horse either. She bought the bicycle thinking that riding it would be a simple matter. Now she can find no one to teach her.

His father cannot hide his glee. Women do not ride bicycles, he says. His mother remains defiant. I will not be a prisoner in this house, she says. I will be free.

At first he had thought it splendid that his mother should have her own bicycle. He had even pictured the three of them riding together down Poplar Avenue, she and he and his brother. But now, as he listens to his father's jokes, which his mother can meet only with dogged silence, he begins to waver. Women don't ride bicycles: what if his father is right? If his mother can find no one willing to teach her, if no other housewife in Reunion Park has a bicycle, then perhaps women are indeed not supposed to ride bicycles.

Alone in the back yard, his mother tries to teach herself. Holding her legs out straight on either side, she rolls down the incline toward the chicken-run. The bicycle tips over and comes to a stop. Because it does not have a crossbar, she does not fall, merely staggers about in a silly way, clutching the handlebars.

His heart turns against her. That evening he joins in with his father's jeering. He is well aware what a betrayal this is. Now his mother is all alone.

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Nevertheless she does learn to ride, though in an uncertain, wobbling way, straining to turn the heavy cranks.

She makes her expeditions to Worcester in the mornings, when he is at school. Only once does he catch a glimpse of her on her bicycle. She is wearing a white blouse and a dark skirt. She is coming down Poplar Avenue toward the house. Her hair streams in the wind. She looks young, like a girl, young and fresh and mysterious.

Every time his father sees the heavy black bicycle leaning against the wall he makes jokes about it. In his jokes the citizens of Worcester interrupt their business to stand and gape as the woman on the bicycle labours past. *Trap! Trap!* they call out, mocking her: Push! There is nothing funny about the jokes, though he and his father always laugh together afterwards. As for his mother, she never has any repartee[4], she is not gifted in that way. 'Laugh if you like,' she says.

Then one day, without explanation, she stops riding the bicycle. Soon afterwards the bicycle disappears. No one says a word, but he knows she has been defeated, put in her place, and knows that he must bear part of the blame. I will make it up to her one day, he promises himself.

The memory of his mother on her bicycle does not leave him. She pedals away up Poplar Avenue, escaping from him, escaping towards her own desire. He does not want her to go. He does not want her to have a desire of her own. He wants her always to be in the house, waiting for him when he comes home. He does not often gang up with his father against her: his whole inclination is to gang up with her against his father. But in this case he belongs with the men.

1 *eucalyptus*: tree
2 *veld*: countryside
3 *Lady Godiva*: a figure from medieval legend who rode naked on a horse through the streets
4 *repartee*: skill in witty conversation

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