Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level

Wednesday 16 January 2019

Afternoon (Time: 2 hours)   Paper Reference **WET03/01**

International Advanced Level
English Literature

Unit 3: Poetry and Prose

Source Booklet
Do not return this Source Booklet with the question paper.

Turn over ▶

Pearson

SECTION A: Post-1900 Unseen Poetry

Question 1

The Wiper

Through purblind* night the wiper
Reaps a swathe of water
On the screen; we shudder on
    And hardly hold the road,
All we can see a segment
Of blackly shining asphalt*
With the wiper moving across it
    Clearing, blurring, clearing.

But what to say of the road?
The monotony of its hardly
Visible camber*, the mystery
    Of its far invisible margins,
Will these be always with us,
The night being broken only
By lights that pass or meet us
    From others in moving boxes?

Boxes of glass and water,
Upholstered, equipped with dials
Professing to tell the distance
    We have gone, the speed we are going.
But never a gauge nor needle
To tell us where we are going
Or when day will come, supposing
    This road exists in daytime.

For now we cannot remember
Where we were when it was not
Night, when it was not raining,
    Before this car moved forward
And the wiper backward and forward
Lighting so little before us
Of a road that, crouching forward,
    We watch move always towards us,

Which through the tiny segment
Cleared and blurred by the wiper
Is sucked in under the axle
    To be spewed behind us and lost
While we, dazzled by darkness,
Haul the black future towards us
Peeling the skin from our hands;
    And yet we hold the road.

Louis MacNeice

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Glossary

purblind – having impaired or defective vision

asphalt – a modern road surface

camber – a slope on both sides of the road to enable drainage

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