



Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

LITERATURE (ENGLISH)

0486/42

Paper 4 Unseen

May/June 2018

1 hour 15 minutes

No Additional Materials are required.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

An answer booklet is provided inside this question paper. You should follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

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

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

Both questions in this paper carry equal marks.



This document consists of **5** printed pages, **3** blank pages and **1** Insert.

2

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

EITHER

1 Read carefully the poem opposite, in which the poet shares wartime memories of his mother.

How does the poet strikingly convey his impressions of his mother?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- the words and images the poet uses in the first stanza
- how he describes her reaction to an air raid
- how his thoughts and feelings develop towards the end of the poem.

3

To My Mother

Most near, most dear, most loved and most far,
Under the window where I often found her
Sitting as huge as Asia, seismic¹ with laughter,
Gin and chicken helpless in her Irish hand,
Irresistible as Rabelais², but most tender for
The lame dogs and hurt birds that surround her –
She is a procession no one can follow after
But be like a little dog following a brass band.

She will not glance up at the bomber³, or condescend
To drop her gin and scuttle to a cellar,
But lean on the mahogany table like a mountain
Whom only faith can move, and so I send
O all my faith, and all my love to tell her
That she will move from mourning into morning.

¹ *seismic*: like an earthquake

² *Rabelais*: French writer famous for his outrageous humour

³ *bomber*: an aircraft carrying bombs

OR

- 2 Read carefully the following extract from a short story. Hilary Culvert is travelling to visit her older sister Sheila, who is a university student. They are from the large family of a Church of England minister.

How does the writer vividly convey Hilary's dislike of her life at home?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the writer portrays Hilary's family life
- how she describes Hilary's mother
- how she conveys Hilary's desire to escape.

It should have been a relief to leave the flatlands of East Anglia behind and cross into the hills and valleys of the west, but everywhere today seemed equally colourless. Hilary didn't care. Her anticipation burned up brightly enough by itself. Little flames of it licked up inside her. This was the first time she had been away from home alone. Sheila was ahead of her in their joint project: to get as far away from home as possible, and not to become anything like their mother.

At about the same time that Sheila and Hilary had confided to each other that they didn't any longer believe in God, they had also given up believing that the pattern of domestic life they had been brought up inside was the only one, or was even remotely desirable. Somewhere else people lived differently; didn't have to poke their feet into clammy hand-me-down wellingtons and sandals marked by size inside with felt-tip pen; didn't have to do their homework in bed with hot-water bottles because the storage heaters in the draughty vicarage gave out such paltry warmth. Other people didn't have to have locked money boxes for keeping safe anything precious, or have to sleep with the keys on string around their necks; sometimes anyway they came home from school to find those locks picked or smashed. (The children didn't tell on one another; that was their morality. But they hurt one another pretty badly, physically, in pursuit of justice. It was an honour code rather than anything resembling Christian empathy or charity.) Other people's mothers didn't stoop their heads down in the broken way that theirs did, hadn't given up on completed sentences or consecutive dialogue, didn't address elliptical ironical asides to their soup spoons as they ate.

Their mother sometimes looked less like a vicar's wife than a wild woman. She was as tall as their father but if the two of them were ever accidentally seen standing side by side it looked as if she had been in some terrible momentous fight for her life and he hadn't. Her grey-black hair stood out in a stiff ruff around her head; Sheila said she must cut it with the kitchen scissors in the dark. She had some kind of palsy¹ so that her left eye drooped; there were bruise-coloured wrinkled shadows under her eyes and beside her hooked nose. Her huge deflated stomach and bosom were slapped like insults on to a girl's bony frame. She was fearless in the mornings about stalking round the house in her ancient baggy underwear, big pants and maternity bra, chasing the little ones to get them dressed: her older children fled the sight of her. They must have all counted, without confessing it to one another: she was forty-nine, Patricia was four. At least there couldn't be any more pregnancies, so humiliating to their suffering adolescence.

As girls, Sheila and Hilary had to be especially careful to make their escape from home. Their older brother Andrew had got away, to do social policy at York and join the Young Socialists², which he told them was a Trotskyite entrust group³. He was never coming back, they were sure of it. He hadn't come back this Christmas. But their sister Sylvia had married an RE⁴ teacher at the local secondary modern school who was active in their father's church and in the local youth clubs. Sylvia

already had two babies, and Sheila and Hilary had heard her muttering things to herself. They remembered that she used to be a jolly sprightly girl even if they hadn't liked her much: competitive at beach rounders when they went on day trips to the coast, sentimentally devoted to the doomed stray dogs she tried to smuggle into their bedroom. Now, when they visited her rented flat in Haverhill, her twin-tub washing machine was always pulled out from the wall, filling the kitchen with urine-pungent steam. Sylvia would be standing uncommunicatively, heaving masses of boiling nappies with wooden tongs out of the washer into the spin tub, while the babies bawled in the battered wooden playpen that had been handed on from the vicarage.

¹ *Palsy*: loss of muscle control

² *Young Socialists*: a political organisation

³ *Trotskyite entrust group*: a radical political group

⁴ *RE*: Religious Education

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