Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **0475/41**

Paper 4 Unseen **May/June 2020**

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. Blank pages are indicated.

DC (RCL (GO)) 185044/2
© UCLES 2020

[Turn over

stemup.co.uk

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. The poet and his wife are watching their daughter Julia's swimming lesson.

How does the poet memorably convey this experience to you?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the poet portrays the role of the swimming instructor
- how he conveys the reactions of his daughter Julia and his wife to this experience
- what he suggests Julia will learn from this experience.

© UCLES 2020

stemup.co.uk

For Julia, in the Deep Water

The instructor we hire
because she does not love you
Leads you into the deep water,
The deep end
Where the water is darker –
Her open, encouraging arms
That never get nearer
Are merciless for your sake.

You will dream this water always
Where nothing draws nearer,
Wasting your valuable breath
You will scream for your mother –
Only your mother is drowning
Forever in the thin air
Down at the deep end.
She is doing nothing,
She never did anything harder.
And I am beside her.

I am beside her in this imagination.
We are waiting
Where the water is darker.
You are over your head,
Screaming, you are learning
Your way toward us,
You are learning how
In the helpless water
It is with our skill
We live in what kills us.

© UCLES 2020

[Turn over

stemup.co.uk

Or

2 Read carefully the following extract from the beginning of a novel. Richard, the narrator, is a young man from Plano, a small town. He is going to study at Hampden College on the opposite coast of the USA.

How does the writer vividly convey Richard's powerful impressions of the college?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the writer portrays Richard's arrival at the college
- how she portrays his first night there
- how she suggests his growing fascination with his new surroundings.

© UCLES 2020

stemup.co.uk

Even today I do not fully understand the chain of events that brought me to Hampden. Sympathetic professors wrote letters; exceptions of various sorts were made in my case. And less than a year after I'd sat down on the gold shag carpet of my little room in Plano and impulsively filled out the questionnaire, I was getting off the bus in Hampden with two suitcases and fifty dollars in my pocket.

I had never been east of Santa Fe, never north of Portland, and – when I stepped off the bus after a long anxious night that had begun somewhere in Illinois – it was six o'clock in the morning, and the sun was rising over mountains, and birches, and impossibly green meadows; and to me, dazed with night and no sleep and three days on the highway, it was like a country from a dream.

The dormitories weren't even dorms – or at any rate not like the dorms I knew, with cinderblock walls and depressing, yellowish light – but white clapboard houses with green shutters, set back from the Commons[1] in groves of maple and ash. All the same it never occurred to me that my particular room, wherever it might be, would be anything but ugly and disappointing and it was with something of a shock that I saw it for the first time – a white room with big north-facing windows, monkish and bare, with scarred oak floors and a ceiling slanted like a garret's[2]. On my first night there, I sat on the bed during the twilight while the walls went slowly from gray to gold to black, listening to a soprano's voice climb dizzily up and down somewhere at the other end of the hall until at last the light was completely gone, and the faraway soprano spiraled on and on in the darkness like some angel of death, and I can't remember the air ever seeming as high and cold and rarefied as it was that night, or ever feeling farther away from the low-slung lines of dusty Plano.

Those first days before classes started I spent alone in my whitewashed room, in the bright meadows of Hampden. And I was happy in those first days as really I'd never been before, roaming like a sleepwalker, stunned and drunk with beauty. A group of red-cheeked girls playing soccer, ponytails flying, their shouts and laughter carrying faintly over the velvety, twilit field. Trees creaking with apples, fallen apples red on the grass beneath, the heavy sweet smell of apples rotting on the ground and the steady thrumming of wasps around them. Commons clock tower: ivied brick, white spire, spellbound in the hazy distance. The shock of first seeing a birch tree at night, rising up in the dark as cool and slim as a ghost. And the nights, bigger than imagining: black and gusty and enormous, disordered and wild with stars.

[1] *the Commons*: the main building of the college
[2] *garret's*: attic room

© UCLES 2020

stemup.co.uk

BLANK PAGE

© UCLES 2020

stemup.co.uk

BLANK PAGE

© UCLES 2020

stemup.co.uk

BLANK PAGE

Permission to reproduce items where third-party owned material protected by copyright is included has been sought and cleared where possible. Every reasonable effort has been made by the publisher (UCLES) to trace copyright holders, but if any items requiring clearance have unwittingly been included, the publisher will be pleased to make amends at the earliest possible opportunity.

To avoid the issue of disclosure of answer-related information to candidates, all copyright acknowledgements are reproduced online in the Cambridge Assessment International Education Copyright Acknowledgements Booklet. This is produced for each series of examinations and is freely available to download at www.cambridgeinternational.org after the live examination series.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which itself is a department of the University of Cambridge.

© UCLES 2020

stemup.co.uk

Surname	StemUp Model Solution
Answer booklet	Write the question number in the left-hand margin at the start of each answer.

Question number

1

What makes this poem so memorable is that an ordinary swimming lesson becomes, in the poet's hands, a small rehearsal for growing up and for the fear that comes with it. Watching from the side, he turns the pool into a place of nightmare and initiation, and by the final line the lesson has become a lesson about life itself. I find it moving because the parents' helplessness is felt as strongly as the child's terror.

The instructor is portrayed with an unsettling coldness that is, paradoxically, a kind of care. The opening lines are blunt: she is someone "we hire / because she does not love you". The line break after "hire" makes the arrangement sound like a transaction, and then the reason lands like a shock. Yet the poet implies that love is exactly what would stop the parents from doing what the instructor does: they would rescue Julia too soon. Her "open, encouraging arms / That never get nearer" are a haunting image. Arms that are open ought to promise an embrace, but here they keep retreating, so the gesture of welcome becomes a test. The oxymoron "merciless for your sake" sums her up perfectly: cruelty in the service of kindness. I think the poet both resents and respects her.

The water itself is made frightening through repetition. "The deep water" becomes "The deep end", and then "Where the water is darker", a phrase that returns later almost word for word. This echoing gives the poem the quality of a recurring dream, and the poet says so directly: "You will dream this water always". The shift into the future tense is striking, because it suggests that this one afternoon will lodge in Julia's mind for life. "Where nothing draws nearer" repeats the idea of the instructor's arms, so that the whole world seems to withhold rescue.

Question number

Julia's reaction is conveyed with painful immediacy. "Wasting your valuable breath / You will scream for your mother" has a wry, almost adult tone in "valuable", as though the father knows how pointless and how natural the panic is. Then the poem makes a startling reversal: "Only your mother is drowning / Forever in the thin air". The mother is the one on dry land, yet it is she who cannot breathe. The paradox of drowning in "thin air" captures the suffocating anxiety of watching your child struggle and being forbidden to help. "She is doing nothing, / She never did anything harder" is, for me, the emotional centre of the poem: the simplest words express how inaction can be the greatest effort a parent makes.

The father's own position is more uncertain and, I think, more self-critical. "And I am beside her" seems reassuring, until he qualifies it: "I am beside her in this imagination." The repetition and the correction suggest that he may not be as fully present as his wife, or that the whole scene is partly something he is imagining and shaping as a poet. He seems aware that his role is to watch and to write, which adds a note of guilt or detachment. "We are waiting / Where the water is darker" then reverses the geography: the parents themselves are now placed in the deep end, as if they are the ones out of their depth.

The final stanza changes the mood from terror to understanding. "You are over your head" is both literal and idiomatic, and "Screaming, you are learning / Your way toward us" holds the panic and the progress together in one sentence. The repetition of "learning" stresses that fear is part of the process, not a failure. Most memorably, the poem ends on an aphorism: "It is with our skill / We live in what kills us." The water that could drown Julia is also the element she will learn to master, and I read this as the poet's wider suggestion that life itself is full of dangers we cannot escape, only learn to survive. The short, unrhymed lines and

Question number

plain diction, which earlier conveyed breathless fear, now give this ending the weight of hard-won wisdom.

Ultimately the poet conveys the experience memorably because he lets a child's swimming lesson carry adult truths: that love sometimes means letting go, that parents suffer too, and that growing up means learning to stay afloat in what threatens us.

2 The writer conveys Richard's impressions of Hampden as something close to enchantment. Arriving exhausted from the flat, dusty world of Plano, he experiences the college less as a place than as a dream, and the prose itself grows more lyrical and intoxicated as the extract goes on, so that we feel his fascination deepening. Yet there are hints of something stranger and darker beneath the beauty, which make the opening intriguing as well as vivid.

The writer frames the arrival with a sense of mystery and chance. Richard begins by admitting that "Even today I do not fully understand the chain of events" that brought him there, which immediately gives the story a retrospective, almost fateful tone: the older narrator knows that something significant followed. The details of his poverty, "two suitcases and fifty dollars in my pocket", and the "gold shag carpet" of his room in Plano, make him seem small and unworldly, so the college looms all the larger. His inexperience is stressed through the repeated negatives, "never been east of Santa Fe, never north of Portland", and then the long sentence describing his arrival piles up detail with "and... and" until it reaches its climax: "it was like a country from a dream." The adjective "impossibly green" captures his disbelief, while "dazed with night and no sleep" suggests he sees everything through a haze of exhaustion that heightens its strangeness.

Question number

Contrast is central to how the writer conveys his impressions. The dorms he knew had "cinderblock walls and depressing, yellowish light", harsh and institutional, whereas Hampden offers "white clapboard houses with green shutters" among "maple and ash". Richard expects his own room to be "ugly and disappointing", and the shock of finding it beautiful is all the more powerful for that low expectation. The room is "monkish and bare", with "scarred oak floors" and a ceiling "slanted like a garret's". The word "monkish" is interesting: it suggests austerity, scholarship and perhaps a withdrawal from the ordinary world, as if Richard is entering a kind of secluded order.

The first night is the most atmospheric part of the extract. The walls change "from gray to gold to black", and the slow, three-step sequence makes us sit with him through the twilight. The unseen soprano, whose voice seems to "climb dizzily up and down", introduces sound into the scene, but it is unsettling rather than comforting: it "spiraled on and on in the darkness like some angel of death". This simile is startling in a passage otherwise full of wonder, and I think it hints that Hampden's beauty may carry danger, perhaps foreshadowing later events. The air is "high and cold and rarefied", the triple adjectives suggesting a purer, thinner atmosphere, both literally mountainous and figuratively elite, and the passage closes by measuring this against "the low-slung lines of dusty Plano". The contrast between height and lowness shows how far he feels he has risen.

Finally, the writer conveys Richard's growing fascination through a change in style. He describes himself "roaming like a sleepwalker, stunned and drunk with beauty", images of intoxication and trance that suggest he is no longer quite in control. The prose then breaks into a series of fragments without main verbs: "A group of red-cheeked girls playing soccer, ponytails flying". These read like snapshots or

Question number

memories, each one a vivid, sensory impression. The apples are especially rich: "fallen apples red on the grass", "the heavy sweet smell of apples rotting", and the "steady thrumming of wasps". The sweetness tipping into rot and the menace of the wasps again suggest a beauty that is ripe to the point of decay. The clock tower is "spellbound in the hazy distance", as if the whole college is under a spell, and the birch at night rises "as cool and slim as a ghost", another image of the supernatural.

The extract ends with the nights, "bigger than imagining", and the climactic list "black and gusty and enormous, disordered and wild with stars." This final rush of adjectives conveys Richard's sense of being overwhelmed, and "disordered and wild" quietly suggests that this beautiful new world may not be as safe or orderly as it seems. Overall, the writer makes Richard's impressions vivid by letting the language itself become dreamlike and excessive, so that we share both his rapture and an uneasy sense of what might lie ahead.