Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **0475/41**

Paper 4 Unseen **May/June 2022**

1 hour 15 minutes

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

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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 page 3. The poet recalls a time when she found her husband collapsed in the bathroom.

How does the poet vividly portray this event?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how she portrays the bathroom
- how she portrays her husband's experience
- how she conveys a feeling of mystery.

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The Fall

Last weekend I fell in love with the bathroom,
its clean white tiles, the towels hanging like flags
in a tiny hot country, this place that caught you,
that stopped you falling from the earth.

Blank-faced, it tells no tales, won't give up
the secret of how you went from standing
to stretched across the floor, your feet
at its northern border, your head to the south,

your eyes rolling, wild as a horse, your body
an empty house abandoned to the wind and rain.
When I lift your head, there's no resistance.
It moves like water at the bottom of a tilted bowl.

Was it my shouting that made you surface?
Slowly, slowly you returned, the bath (faithful
creature) in the same position as when you left,
the sounds you made so far from words.

You brought another language back with you,
the hotel quiet as a church, you didn't know
the body you were in was yours, blood leaked
from your mouth and gathered on your chin,

the sink and toilet impassive and standing guard.
You remembered nothing of your journey,
minutes of your life deleted and only this room
to witness your passing. I can only guess

which loving object tried to catch you, which voice
pulled me from my sleep. I kick the bath. It answers
in a low familiar tone. I stamp. The floor bellows
its reply. The room beneath echoes like a drum.

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OR

2 Read carefully the following extract from the opening of a novel. It describes breakfast-time with a housewife, Erica, and her children, Jeffrey and Matilda or 'Muffy'.

How does the writer memorably portray Erica's thoughts and feelings?
To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the writer portrays Erica's feelings about her children
- how she portrays Erica's response to the bulldozer
- how she conveys Erica's changes of mood during the passage.

March 20. A cold spring morning. It rained last night, perforating the crusted snow of the Tates' front lawn, and everything is wet and glitters: the fine gravel of the drive, the ice in the ditch beside it, the bare elm twigs outside the bathroom window. The sun shines sideways at the house, brilliantly, impartially. Seeing it through the kitchen window when she comes down to make breakfast, Erica Tate feels her emotional temperature, which has been unnaturally low of late, rise several degrees.

'Tomorrow's the beginning of spring,' she says to Jeffrey Tate, aged fifteen, as he stumbles into the room fastening his shirt.

'What's for breakfast?'

'Eggs, toast, jam –'

'Any sausages?'

'No, not today.' Erica tries to keep her voice cheerful.

'There's never anything to eat in this house,' Jeffrey complains, falling heavily into his chair.

Suppressing several possible answers to this remark, Erica sets a plate before her son and turns towards the stairs. 'Matilda! It's twenty minutes to eight.'

'All right! I heard you the first time.'

'Look at that sun,' Erica says to her daughter a few minutes later. 'Tomorrow's the first day of spring.'

No reply. Erica sets a plate in front of Matilda, who will be thirteen next month.

'I can't eat this stuff. It's fattening.'

'It's not fattening, it's just an ordinary breakfast, eggs, toast – Anyhow, you're not fat.'

'Everything has gobs of butter on it. It's all soaked in grease.'

'Aw, shut up, Muffy, you'll make me sick.'

Again Erica suppresses several rejoinders. 'Would you like me to make you a piece of toast without butter?' she asks rather thinly.

'Okay. If you can do it fast.'

The sun continues to shine into the kitchen. Standing by the toaster, Erica contemplates her children, whom she once thought the most beautiful beings on earth. Jeffrey's streaked blond hair hangs tangled and unwashed over his eyes in front and his collar in back; he hunches awkwardly above the table, cramming fried egg into his mouth and chewing noisily. Matilda, who is wearing a peevish expression and an orange tie-dyed jersey which looks as if it had been spat on, is stripping the crusts off her toast with her fingers. Chomp, crunch, scratch.

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The noises sound loud in Erica's head; louder still, as if amplified: CHOMP, CRUNCH, SCRATCH – No. That is coming from outside. She goes to the window. In the field beyond the orchard, something yellow is moving.

'Hey, the bulldozer's back,' Jeffrey exclaims.

'I guess they're going to put up another ranch-house[1],' his sister says.

The tone of both these remarks is neutral, even conversational; yet they strike Erica as more coarse and cold than anything that has yet been said this morning. 'You don't care what's happening to our road!' she cries. 'How can you be so selfish, so unfeeling? You don't really mind at all, either of you!'

Her children go on eating. It is evident that they do not.

Chomp; smash. The hands of the clock over the sink move towards eight. Jeffrey and Matilda rise, grumbling, grab their coats and books, and leave to catch the bus for junior high school. Alone in the kitchen, Erica clears the table. She pours herself a cup of coffee, puts the buttered toast Matilda refused on a clean plate, and sits down. She starts to reach for the sugar bowl, and stops. Then she puts her head down on the table beside a splash of milk and some blobs of cherry jam, and weeps painfully. Tears run sideways across her small, slightly worn, delicate features, and into her crisp dark hair.

[1]*ranch-house*: large, wide-fronted suburban house

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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 vivid is its strange, almost shocking opening: instead of describing her terror, the poet declares that she "fell in love with the bathroom". The event is portrayed indirectly, through a room that seems to know more than she does, so that fear, gratitude and bewilderment are folded together. The poem becomes less a report of a medical emergency than a meditation on how close her husband came to being lost, and on the mystery of what happened in the minutes she did not see.

The bathroom is first presented with an odd tenderness. Its "clean white tiles" and "towels hanging like flags / in a tiny hot country" transform an ordinary domestic space into a nation of its own, and the simile is both playful and a little unsettling, as if she has entered foreign territory. The room is personified as a rescuer, "this place that caught you, / that stopped you falling from the earth". The hyperbole of falling "from the earth" suggests that collapse felt like a fall out of life itself, and her love for the room is really relief that he is still here. The title quietly carries this double meaning: "The Fall" is both the physical collapse and the falling in love.

Yet the room is also withholding, and this is where the feeling of mystery begins. It is "Blank-faced, it tells no tales, won't give up / the secret". The enjambment across the line ending pushes us forward into the gap in knowledge, the missing moment "from standing / to stretched across the floor". The map imagery of his feet "at its northern border, your head to the south" continues the idea of the room as a country, but it also makes his body seem laid out like a landscape, strangely impersonal, observed rather than embraced.

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The husband's experience is conveyed through a series of powerful images of absence. His "eyes rolling, wild as a horse" suggests panic and loss of control, while his body is "an empty house abandoned to the wind and rain". This metaphor is perhaps the most frightening in the poem: the self has moved out, and what remains is shelter left exposed to the weather. When she lifts his head there is "no resistance", and the simile "like water at the bottom of a tilted bowl" captures with disturbing precision the loose, heavy, liquid quality of an unconscious body. The calm, matter-of-fact present tense makes the moment feel as if it is still happening in her memory.

His return is presented as a journey back from somewhere far away. The question "Was it my shouting that made you surface?" uses the image of rising from deep water, and the repetition of "Slowly, slowly" slows the rhythm to match his gradual recovery. Even then he is not quite himself: "the sounds you made so far from words" and "You brought another language back with you" suggest he has visited a different world and returned altered. The detail that he "didn't know / the body you were in was yours" is eerie, and the sudden physical realism of "blood leaked / from your mouth" jolts the reader out of metaphor into the frightening reality.

Throughout, the objects in the room act as silent witnesses. The bath is a "faithful / creature", the brackets giving it a fond, almost comic aside, while the "sink and toilet" are "impassive and standing guard" like sentries, and the hotel is "quiet as a church", a simile that brings a hushed, almost sacred stillness. Because he "remembered nothing", with "minutes of your life deleted", only the room can know the truth, and the modern verb "deleted" makes those lost minutes feel coldly erased.

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	The ending is especially memorable. Admitting "I can only guess / which loving object tried to catch you", the poet turns to the room for answers, and in frustration she kicks the bath and stamps. The responses, a "low familiar tone", the floor that "bellows / its reply", the room beneath that "echoes like a drum", are sounds without meaning, mirroring her husband's "sounds" that were "so far from words". The short, forceful sentences give the close a physical energy, perhaps anger, perhaps release. I find this a moving conclusion: the room answers, but tells her nothing, so the mystery remains, and the poet is left with gratitude, fear and an echo.
2	The writer memorably portrays Erica as a woman whose fragile hope is slowly worn down over the course of a single breakfast until it gives way entirely. What makes the passage so effective is its restraint: Erica's feelings are mostly held back and suppressed, and conveyed through what she notices rather than what she says, so that the final image of her weeping at the table lands with real force. The opening creates a mood of tentative optimism. The rain has been "perforating the crusted snow", an image of something hard and frozen beginning to break, and "everything is wet and glitters". The present tense and the date, "March 20", give the scene the feel of a diary entry, as if this morning matters. The sun shines "brilliantly, impartially", and the second adverb is quietly ominous: nature does not care about Erica, it simply shines on everything. Still, she feels her "emotional temperature, which has been unnaturally low of late, rise several degrees". The scientific metaphor is slightly ironic and detached, hinting that Erica measures her own moods carefully, and that she has been depressed for some time. Her repeated remark that "Tomorrow's the beginning of spring" shows her reaching for

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renewal and for connection with her children.

The children crush this hope immediately. Jeffrey's first words are not a reply but a demand, "What's for breakfast?", followed by the sweeping complaint "There's never anything to eat in this house". Matilda's "I heard you the first time" and her refusal, "It's fattening", show the same ungrateful self-absorption. The dialogue is brisk and sharp, and Erica's attempts to share the sunshine are met with "No reply." The writer's technique of telling us that Erica is "Suppressing several possible answers" and later "Again Erica suppresses several rejoinders" is subtle and rather comic: we sense the anger she swallows, and the repetition shows it building. Her offer of toast without butter is made "rather thinly", an adverb that suggests her patience and her cheerfulness are both wearing through.

The central paragraph shows Erica's feelings about her children most powerfully. She contemplates them as children "whom she once thought the most beautiful beings on earth", and the word "once" carries a whole history of lost love and disappointment. What follows is unflattering, close detail: Jeffrey's hair "tangled and unwashed", his "cramming fried egg into his mouth and chewing noisily", Matilda's "peevish expression" and a jersey that "looks as if it had been spat on". The simile is funny but also reveals something close to disgust. The onomatopoeic "Chomp, crunch, scratch" reduces her children to noises, almost animal, and suggests how oppressive and alien they have become to her.

The writer then cleverly turns these sounds outward. The noises become "louder still, as if amplified", printed in capitals, and Erica's realisation, "No. That is coming from outside", blurs the line between her mind and the world. The bulldozer is introduced only as "something yellow is moving", vague and menacing, and it seems to embody the same force as her children's chewing: something

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consuming and destroying what she values. Her outburst, "How can you be so selfish, so unfeeling?", is the first time her feelings break through, and though it is directed at their indifference to the road, it seems really to be about their indifference to her. The children's remarks were only "neutral, even conversational", which makes her reaction seem excessive and shows how much she has been holding in. The narrator's dry comment, "It is evident that they do not", is bleakly funny and confirms her isolation.

The ending charts the final collapse of her mood. The sound now is "Chomp; smash", more violent, as the bulldozer's destruction and the passing clock press on. Left "Alone in the kitchen", Erica performs small, dutiful actions, clearing the table and saving Matilda's refused toast, and the pause as she "starts to reach for the sugar bowl, and stops" is a tiny but telling moment, as if even a small comfort seems pointless. She lays her head "beside a splash of milk and some blobs of cherry jam", the mess of family life, and "weeps painfully". Her "small, slightly worn, delicate features" make her seem vulnerable and tired, while the tears running "sideways" echo the sun that shone "sideways" at the start. I find this a deeply sympathetic portrait: the promise of spring with which the morning began has been quietly bulldozed, and the writer leaves us feeling Erica's loneliness as keenly as she does.