Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **0475/42**

Paper 4 Unseen **February/March 2020**

1 hour 15 minutes

6480586039

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.

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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 following poem.

How does the poet memorably convey her experience of swimming in the sea?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the poet describes the sea
- how she portrays herself whilst swimming
- how she describes her thoughts and feelings in the final stanza.

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Bathing Off Roseland

The sea, that turns old bottles into gems,
Has made of me a bird.
Now with all four wings outspread
I dip and hover, vacillate[1], recover,
Lulled and directionless,
Who on the cliff with conscious tread
Moved to some purpose.

It is a firmament[2] that curves below,
A clear capsicum[3] green
And purple bloom of aubergine[4];
Wayward and flippant I am in my element,
Feeling the speed
Of the wheeling world and the sails careening[5]
Above my head.

I am sustained by powers not my own,
As on the tide of prayer
Another's love can sway me toward
Some good that of myself I would not:
Powerful, hidden to me,
As the purpose which drives these great ships forward
Parting the sea.

[1] *vacillate*: hesitate
[2] *firmament*: dome of the sky
[3] *capsicum*: bell pepper
[4] *aubergine*: brinjal or eggplant
[5] *careening*: tilting

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Or

2 Read carefully the following extract from a memoir. The writer recalls when she was a young girl growing up abroad. Marta is a family servant.

How does the writer vividly portray her memories of early childhood?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the writer portrays being a small child surrounded by grown-ups
- how she describes riding with her father and swimming in the baths
- how the writer's memories differ from her mother's.

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A tiny thing among trampling, knocking careless giants who smell, who lean down towards you with great ugly hairy faces, showing big dirty teeth. A foot you keep an eye on, while trying to watch all the other dangers as well, is almost as big as you are. The hands they use to grip you can squeeze the breath half out of you. The rooms you run about in, the furniture you move among, windows, doors, are vast, nothing is your size, but one day you will grow tall enough to reach the handle of the door, or the knob on a cupboard. These are the real childhood memories and any that have you level with grown-ups are later inventions. An intense physicality, that is the truth of childhood.

My first memory is before I was two, and it is of an enormous dangerous horse towering up, up, and on it my father still higher, his head and shoulders somewhere in the sky. There he sits with his wooden leg[1] always there under his trousers, a big hard slippery hidden thing. I am trying not to cry, while being lifted up in tight squeezing hands, and put in front of my father's body, told to grip the front of the saddle, a hard jutting edge I must stretch my fingers to hold. I am inside the heat of horse, the smell of horse, the smell of my father, all hot pungent smells. When the horse moves it is a jerking jolting motion and I lean back my head and shoulders into my father's stomach and feel there the hard straps of the wooden-leg harness. My stomach is reeling because of the swoop up from the ground now so far below me. Now, that is a real memory, violent, smelly – physical.

'Daddy used to put you in front of him on the horse when he rode to the Bank, and Marta waited at the gate to bring you back. You absolutely loved it.' And perhaps I did, perhaps it was only the first ride, which I did not love, that has stayed in my memory. The gate is in a photograph, a graceful arch, and I have added it to the real memory. Of being lifted down into the hands of Marta, whom I disliked, there is nothing in my mind. Those rides had to be in Kermanshah, and I was two and a half when we left.

Sharp steep stone steps, like boulders on a mountainside; they are in a photograph, too, but the memory is of dangerous descent, threatened by sharp edges.

Another memory, a real one, not what was told me, or what is in the photograph album. A swimming bath, a large tank, full of great naked pallid people shouting and laughing and splashing me with hard slaps of cold water. The naked bodies were my mother, rowdy and noisy, enjoying herself, my father holding on to the edge of the tank, because that pitiful shrunken stump of a leg with its shrapnel scars, waving or jerking about in the water, made it hard for him to swim. And others, for the tank seems crowded with people. They are not naked, for they wear the serious swimming costumes of the time, but if adults are always dressed in the daytime, and then wear long-sleeved clothes in bed, when in bathing costumes they seem all pale flesh and unpleasant revelation. Loose bulging breasts. Whiskers of hair under arms, matting or streaming water like sweat. Sometimes snot[2] on a face that is grinning and shouting with pleasure. Snot running into the water that already has dying or rotting leaves in it, as well as the broken reflections of clouds, down here, not up there in the sky. Small children are always trying to keep things in their proper places, their world is always coming apart, things in it move about, deceive, lie. 'We used to swim every afternoon in the summer. And we had swimming parties at the weekend. Oh they were such fun. You always loved it when we had parties.' Thus spoke my mother, mourning the best years of her life, in Persia[3].

[1] *wooden leg*: her father has a wooden leg after being wounded in a war
[2] *snot*: nasal mucus
[3] *Persia*: modern-day Iran

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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

The poet memorably presents swimming in the sea as a kind of transformation: on land she is a purposeful, careful person, but in the water she becomes something freer, lighter and less in control of herself. What makes the poem so striking is that this physical surrender becomes, by the final stanza, a spiritual one, as the sensation of being held up by the sea opens out into a quiet meditation on love, prayer and forces greater than the self.

The opening line immediately makes the sea magical. A sea "that turns old bottles into gems" is an alchemist, taking rubbish and polishing it into treasure, and the poet places herself in the same process: it "Has made of me a bird." I find the image of "all four wings outspread" particularly memorable because it is both playful and precise: a bird has two wings, but a swimmer floating with arms and legs spread wide has four, so the comic exaggeration captures exactly the look and feeling of floating.

The movement of the first stanza imitates the motion of the swimmer. The list of verbs "dip and hover, vacillate, recover" rises and falls, and the internal rhyme of "hover" and "recover" creates a gentle rocking rhythm, like being lifted and lowered by waves. "Lulled and directionless" suggests the drowsy contentment of a child being soothed, and it is set in pointed contrast with the self on "the cliff with conscious tread" who "Moved to some purpose." The word "conscious" implies the effort and watchfulness of ordinary life on land, where every step is deliberate. In the water, the poet seems to welcome the loss of purpose rather than fear it.

In the second stanza the poet reverses the world. Calling the sea "a firmament

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that curves below" turns it into an upside down sky, so that the bird image is extended: she is not swimming but flying through a dome of colour. The colours themselves are unexpected and almost humorous, "A clear capsicum green / And purple bloom of aubergine". Comparing the sea to vegetables is homely rather than grand, yet the words are sensuous and rich, and "bloom" suggests the soft sheen on the skin of a fruit, so the water feels ripe and alive. She describes herself as "Wayward and flippant", adjectives that would usually be criticisms, but here they convey delight in being irresponsible for once. The pun in "in my element" is neat: she is literally in the element of water, and also completely at ease. The long, flowing line about "the wheeling world and the sails careening" gives a dizzy sense of speed and tilting, as if the whole planet is turning around her while she lies still.

The final stanza changes tone and becomes reflective. "I am sustained by powers not my own" is a plain, weighty statement, and the word "sustained" works on two levels: the sea physically holds her up, but the word also suggests spiritual nourishment. The poet then makes the comparison explicit through the simile of prayer: just as the buoyancy lifts her, "Another's love can sway me toward / Some good that of myself I would not". This is a humble and moving admission that she cannot always be good by her own effort, and that the love and prayers of another person can carry her, as the tide does, without her quite knowing how. The word "sway" links back to the gentle movement of the water, so the physical and the moral are fused.

The poem ends on the image of "these great ships" driven forward "Parting the sea." The ships are moved by a purpose "hidden to me", and so, she implies, is she. "Parting the sea" may carry a faint echo of the Biblical miracle, which would deepen the sense of a divine power at work. Structurally, the poem has travelled

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from the cliff's "conscious" purpose to a larger, invisible one, and the final short line closes it with calm confidence. Ultimately the poet makes her swim memorable not only through its vivid colour and motion, but because it becomes a way of understanding trust: the joy of floating is the joy of letting oneself be held.

2

The writer vividly portrays early childhood as a world of overwhelming physical sensation and danger, in which a small child is constantly threatened, squeezed and overpowered by adults. What gives the extract its power is that she insists on this uncomfortable version as "the truth of childhood", setting her own raw memories against the softer, nostalgic stories told by her mother, and in doing so she questions how far any memory can be trusted.

The opening paragraph places the reader directly at a child's height. It begins with a verbless phrase, "A tiny thing among trampling, knocking careless giants", which mimics the fragmented way a young child perceives the world. The adults are "giants" from a fairy tale, and the harsh list of "great ugly hairy faces, showing big dirty teeth" makes them monstrous rather than loving. The writer's use of the second person, "A foot you keep an eye on", draws the reader into the experience so that we too feel tiny and watchful. Even affection is a threat: hands that "grip you can squeeze the breath half out of you." The hopeful promise that "one day you will grow tall enough to reach the handle of the door" is touching, because it shows how a child measures progress in terms of size. The paragraph ends with a confident statement of her argument, "An intense physicality".

The memory of riding with her father is vivid because it is built entirely from the senses. The repetition in "towering up, up" stretches the horse to impossible

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height, and her father's "head and shoulders somewhere in the sky" makes him seem distant and godlike rather than comforting. His wooden leg is described as "a big hard slippery hidden thing", a string of adjectives that conveys the child's unease at something she cannot see or understand. The present tense, "I am trying not to cry", makes the memory feel as if it is still happening. The writer piles up smells, "the heat of horse, the smell of horse, the smell of my father", and the repetition is almost suffocating, while the harsh sounds of "jerking jolting motion" recreate the uncomfortable rhythm of the ride. She sums up the experience in short, blunt adjectives, "violent, smelly", which deliberately refuse any sentimental gloss.

The swimming baths are portrayed even more grotesquely. The adults become "great naked pallid people" who are "shouting and laughing", and the water arrives in "hard slaps", so even play feels like an attack. I find it striking that her mother is presented without tenderness as "rowdy and noisy, enjoying herself", as if the child sees her as a stranger. The description of her father's "pitiful shrunken stump" is painfully honest and suggests that the child is disturbed by seeing his vulnerability exposed. The writer then uses short, fragmented sentences, "Loose bulging breasts. Whiskers of hair under arms", which read like startled glimpses, and the detail of "Snot running into the water" is deliberately disgusting. Yet there is also something beautiful: the "broken reflections of clouds, down here, not up there in the sky." This image captures the child's deeper fear, that her world is "always coming apart", and the personification of things that "move about, deceive, lie" shows how unsettling it is when nothing stays in its "proper places".

The contrast with her mother's memories structures the whole extract. Her mother's voice appears in direct speech, light and cheerful: "You absolutely loved it" and "Oh they were such fun." These stories are placed directly after the writer's

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own unpleasant memories, so their cosiness seems almost comic. The writer is fair, however, conceding "perhaps I did", and she admits that a photograph of the gate has been "added" to her real memory. This honesty makes her more convincing. The final sentence, "Thus spoke my mother, mourning the best years of her life", is gently ironic: the formal "Thus spoke" makes her mother sound like an oracle, while "mourning" reveals that the mother's memories are shaped by her own loss and nostalgia. In the end the writer vividly shows that childhood is remembered very differently by those who lived it at knee height, and that the truest memories may be the least comfortable ones.