OXFORD

INTERNATIONAL
AQA EXAMINATIONS

INTERNATIONAL GCSE
ENGLISH LITERATURE

Paper 2A Poetry and unseen texts

Monday 2 November 2020 07:00 GMT Time allowed: 2 hours 15 minutes

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an Oxford International AQA Examinations 16-page answer book
- a clean copy of the Oxford International AQA Poetry Anthology *People and Places*.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Do **not** use pencil.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book.
- Answer **one** question from **Section A**.
- Answer the question in **Section B and** the question in **Section C**.
- For **Section A**, you must have a clean copy of the Oxford International AQA Poetry Anthology *People and Places* in the examination room.
- The text must **not** be annotated and must **not** contain additional notes or materials.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- There are 30 marks available for each section.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 90.

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Section A: Poetry Anthology: People and Places

Answer **one** question from **Section A**.

Either

0 1 Read the poem below.

Answer the question that follows.

Wind

This house has been far out at sea all night,
The woods crashing through darkness, the booming hills,
Winds stampeding the fields under the window
Floundering black astride and blinding wet

Till day rose; then under an orange sky
The hills had new places, and wind wielded
Blade-light, luminous black and emerald,
Flexing like the lens of a mad eye.

At noon I scaled along the house-side as far as
The coal-house door. Once I looked up –
Through the brunt wind that dented the balls of my eyes
The tent of the hills drummed and strained its guyrope,

The fields quivering, the skyline a grimace,
At any second to bang and vanish with a flap;
The wind flung a magpie away and a black-
Back gull bent like an iron bar slowly. The house

Rang like some fine green goblet in the note
That any second would shatter it. Now deep
In chairs, in front of the great fire, we grip
Our hearts and cannot entertain book, thought,

Or each other. We watch the fire blazing,
And feel the roots of the house move, but sit on,
Seeing the window tremble to come in,
Hearing the stones cry out under the horizons.

Ted Hughes

Write about the ways that poets present danger in *Wind* and **one** other poem from *People and Places.*

[30 marks]

or

0 2 Write about **one or more** poems from *People and Places* in which people enjoy particular places. Show how the poet(s) create a sense of enjoyment.

[30 marks]

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Section B: Unseen poetry

Answer **Question 3**.

0 3 Read the poem below and answer the question that follows.

Young Woman

Young Woman, fragile shoot
I am afraid for you
You are so vulnerable.

Young Woman, Tender vine
I am afraid for you
You are denied guidance.

Young Woman, slender leafy plant
I am afraid for you
You are so innocent
Glorying the discovery
Of your beauty.

Young Woman, blossoming palm-tree
You are on the threshold
Of life in all its fullness
I am afraid for you
You are exposed to the elements

Of violence, disillusionment
And discrimination,
Fruits of an unjust social and
Economic arrangement.

Young Woman
Be a sealed fountain
In an enclosed garden
Whose walls are to be scaled
When you are Woman, Conscious, Positive,
Goal setting, Confident Woman.

Young Woman, be wise
Guard your dignity
Acknowledge your potential.

Father, Mother, Older Man, Older Woman,
Uncle, Aunt, Brother, Sister, Young Woman,
Be a hedge around her
Bruise not the flower.

Nelcia Robinson

How does the poet present her ideas about the young woman by the ways she writes?

[30 marks]

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Section C: Unseen prose

Answer **Question 4**.

0 4 Read the passage below and then answer the question that follows.

In *Cider with Rosie* by Laurie Lee the writer describes his early childhood. In this passage he has strayed into a field and doesn't know where he is.

I was lost and didn't know where to move. A tropic heat oozed up from the ground, rank with sharp odours of roots and nettles. Snow-clouds of elder-blossom banked in the sky, showering upon me the fumes and flakes of their sweet and giddy suffocation. High overhead ran frenzied larks, screaming, as though the sky were tearing apart.

For the first time in my life I was out of the sight of humans. For the first time in my life I was alone in a world whose behaviour I could neither predict nor fathom: a world of birds that squealed, of plants that stank, of insects that sprang about without warning. I was lost and I did not expect to be found again. I put back my head and howled, and the sun hit me smartly on the face, like a bully.

From this daylight nightmare I was awakened, as from many another, by the appearance of my sisters. They came scrambling and calling up the steep rough bank, and parting the long grass found me. Faces of rose, familiar, living; huge, shining faces hung up like shields between me and the sky; faces with grins and white teeth (some broken) to be conjured up like genii with a howl, brushing off terror with their broad scoldings and affection. They leaned over me – one, two, three – their mouths smeared with red currants and their hands dripping with juice.

'There, there, it's all right, don't you wail any more. Come down 'ome and we'll stuff you with currants.'

How does the writer present the boy's feelings through the ways that he writes?

[30 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

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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.

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01

In both "Wind" and Seamus Heaney's "Storm on the Island", danger comes from the weather, but what makes it frightening is less the damage it does than the way it exposes how fragile human shelter really is. Hughes presents a storm so violent that the house itself seems to be at sea and close to shattering, while Heaney's islanders begin by boasting that they are ready for anything and end by admitting that they fear "a huge nothing". In each poem, I think, the real danger is the discovery that people are powerless before a force they cannot see or control.

Hughes establishes danger in his very first line with the startling metaphor "This house has been far out at sea all night". A house should be fixed and solid, yet here it is cut adrift, which suggests that the land itself has become as unstable and threatening as the ocean. The opening sentence then piles up violent images, "The woods crashing through darkness, the booming hills, / Winds stampeding the fields". The verb "stampeding" makes the wind a herd of panicking animals, uncontrollable and capable of trampling anything in its path, and the onomatopoeic "crashing" and "booming" fill the night with noise. Crucially, Hughes uses enjambment so that this first sentence runs on for four lines without a pause, the syntax itself rushing forward like the gale.

Even daylight brings no relief. The phrase "The hills had new places" is quietly unsettling: the storm seems to have rearranged the landscape, as if nothing is where it should be. The wind becomes a weapon as it "wielded / Blade-light", and the simile "Flexing like the lens of a mad eye" gives nature a disturbed, almost insane consciousness. Danger here is not random but seems to watch the speaker.

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When he ventures out, he can only creep, "scaled along the house-side", like a climber on a cliff face, and the wind "dented the balls of my eyes", a physical, bodily image that makes the reader wince.

Hughes then presents the whole world on the edge of collapse. The hills become a "tent" that "drummed and strained its guyrope", an image which reduces vast, ancient hills to something flimsy that could be torn away "At any second". The repetition of "any second" later, when the house "Rang like some fine green goblet in the note / That any second would shatter it", builds suspense, because catastrophe is always imminent but never quite arrives. The goblet simile is especially effective: a stone house is transformed into delicate glass, suggesting that human security is far more breakable than we believe. Even the "black- / Back gull" is broken across a line, the enjambment mimicking the bird being bent "like an iron bar".

Heaney's poem presents danger differently, because it begins from a position of confidence. The opening "We are prepared: we build our houses squat" sounds defiant, and the practical details of how the islanders "Sink walls in rock and roof them with good slate" suggest a community that has learned to survive. Yet this confidence is undermined almost at once. The land offers no protection, since there are no trees "Which might prove company when it blows full / Blast", and the enjambment forces the reader to hit "Blast" with explosive force at the start of a line. Like Hughes, Heaney uses form to make the storm felt rather than just described.

Heaney's most striking method is the language of war. The wind "dives / And strafes invisibly", and "Space is a salvo", so the islanders feel like civilians under aerial bombardment. The sea, which should be familiar, "spits like a tame cat /

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Turned savage", a simile which captures how something domestic can suddenly become hostile. This links closely to Hughes's house turning into a ship or a goblet: in both poems, the familiar becomes threatening.

The endings of the poems are where the danger becomes most psychological. Heaney concludes, "We are bombarded by the empty air", and the paradox of being attacked by emptiness leads to the final confession that it is "a huge nothing that we fear". The casual "Strange," sounds almost conversational, but it reveals that the confident "We are prepared" was a kind of bravado. Hughes's speakers are similarly reduced to helplessness. Sitting "deep / In chairs" by the fire, they "grip / Our hearts and cannot entertain book, thought, / Or each other". The storm has destroyed not just their sense of safety but their capacity for normal human connection. His final image, "Hearing the stones cry out under the horizons", personifies even the rocks as suffering.

Overall, Hughes presents danger as an overwhelming, almost living force that threatens to shatter the house at any moment, while Heaney presents it as something invisible that slowly erodes human confidence. Both poets suggest that danger lies as much in fear itself as in the storm, and that the walls we build give us far less protection than we like to think.

02 Imtiaz Dharker's "Blessing" and Grace Nichols's "Hurricane Hits England" both show people taking unexpected joy in a place, and what interests me is that in neither poem is the enjoyment of a pretty or comfortable setting. In "Blessing" a crowded, parched slum becomes, for a few moments, a place of celebration, and in "Hurricane Hits England" a woman who has felt like a stranger in England finally connects with its landscape during a destructive storm. Both poets suggest that

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enjoying a place depends less on what the place is than on a moment that transforms how people feel about it.

Dharker creates enjoyment partly through contrast, because she first makes us feel the place's hardship. The poem opens with the simile "The skin cracks like a pod", which presents the land, and perhaps the people's own skin, as dried out and split. The blunt, short statement "There never is enough water" sounds like a fact of life that the people have long accepted. Because the starting point is so bleak, the later joy feels earned. Even a single drop is imagined lovingly: the listing of "the drip of it, / the small splash, echo / in a tin mug" slows the reader down to savour tiny sounds, and it culminates in "the voice of a kindly god". Water is already sacred before it even arrives.

The structure then shifts with the "sudden rush / of fortune" as the "municipal pipe bursts". The word "fortune" suggests both luck and wealth, and this is developed through the metaphor "silver crashes to the ground". Water becomes treasure, and the onomatopoeic "crashes" and the "roar of tongues" make the place suddenly loud and alive. The lines grow longer and more crowded as the whole community pours out: "every man woman / child for streets around / butts in". The absence of commas between "man woman / child" makes the people seem to rush together into one excited mass, and the list of containers, "brass, copper, aluminium, / plastic buckets", shows everyone grabbing whatever they own. The religious word "congregation" turns the street into a place of worship, so that their enjoyment feels almost spiritual.

The final image is the most joyful. The "naked children / screaming in the liquid sun" are delighting in the place, and "liquid sun" blends water and light so that the whole scene seems to glitter. Their wet skin catches the light, "polished to

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perfection", and the poem ends as "the blessing sings / over their small bones". The verb "sings" makes the water itself celebrate with them. However, I think "small bones" also reminds us of the children's thinness and poverty, so the enjoyment is precious precisely because it is fleeting. Dharker seems to want her reader to see how much joy can come from something we take for granted.

Nichols presents enjoyment of a place more gradually, through a woman's changing relationship with England. The opening, "It took a hurricane, to bring her closer / To the landscape", is surprising, because a hurricane is usually associated with destruction rather than closeness. Nichols, who moved to Britain from Guyana, seems to suggest that it took something from the Caribbean to make the English landscape feel like home. The storm is described in the third person at first as "Fearful and reassuring", an oxymoron that captures the mixture of terror and comfort the woman feels.

The poem then shifts into the first person and direct address. The repeated "Talk to me Huracan" and "Talk to me Oya" call on Caribbean and African gods of the weather, and this anaphora works almost like a prayer or chant. The woman is not frightened of the storm but wants to communicate with it, as if a familiar relative has come to visit. As she begins to take pleasure in the storm, the repeated "I am" in lines like "I am following the movement of your winds" shows her aligning herself with it; the present continuous tense makes this feel like an ongoing awakening.

Her enjoyment is finally expressed through metaphor. The storm has come "to break the frozen lake in me", which suggests that she had been emotionally cold and numb in England, and the hurricane thaws her. She is also shaken in "the foundations of the very trees within me", an image that turns the uprooted

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English trees into her own roots. The final line, "That the earth is the earth is the earth", uses repetition to reach a calm, almost joyful certainty: land is land wherever you are, and she can belong here too.

Both poets, then, show people enjoying a place at a moment when it is transformed by water or wind. Dharker presents a shared, physical joy that is all the more intense for being short-lived, while Nichols presents a private, emotional enjoyment that changes the woman's whole sense of where she belongs. In both, the place itself does not change permanently, but the people's feelings about it do.

03 Nelcia Robinson's "Young Woman" is written as a protective address from an older speaker to a young woman, and it moves from fear, through advice, to a final appeal to the whole community. The poet presents the young woman as precious, growing and full of promise, but also as dangerously exposed to a world that may harm her. What I find most powerful is that the poem does not blame the young woman for this danger: it places responsibility on society and, in the end, on everyone around her.

The most striking method is the extended metaphor of plant growth. Each stanza renames the young woman, beginning with "fragile shoot", then "Tender vine", "slender leafy plant" and finally "blossoming palm-tree". This sequence works like a timeline: she grows from a tiny shoot into a tall, flowering tree, so the poem shows her maturing before our eyes. The adjectives "fragile", "Tender" and "slender" stress delicacy, and even the palm-tree, the strongest image, is "blossoming", which suggests beauty that is just opening and could still be damaged. The imagery presents her as natural and full of life, but also as something that needs care to survive.

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Alongside this growth, Robinson uses insistent repetition. The refrain "I am afraid for you" appears in each of the first four stanzas, and each time it is followed by a new reason: she is "so vulnerable", "denied guidance", "so innocent". The repetition gives the poem the feel of a worried parent's chant, and it suggests that as the young woman grows, the fears do not lessen but multiply. The phrase "denied guidance" is significant because it implies that others have failed her, rather than that she is foolish. Similarly, "Glorying the discovery / Of your beauty" is gently presented: her joy in herself is natural, yet the speaker fears it makes her a target.

The fourth stanza marks a turning point. She stands "on the threshold / Of life in all its fullness", a hopeful image of a doorway into adulthood, but this is immediately undercut as she is "exposed to the elements". The enjambment across the stanza break then reveals what these "elements" really are: "violence, disillusionment / And discrimination". The plant imagery is cleverly extended here, because a young tree exposed to harsh weather may be damaged, and the alliterative "d" sounds of "disillusionment" and "discrimination" sound heavy and harsh. Robinson then calls these dangers "Fruits of an unjust social and / Economic arrangement". The irony of "Fruits", normally the reward of a healthy plant, suggests that society itself has grown something poisonous. This is the clearest statement of the poet's view that the young woman's danger is political, caused by inequality rather than by nature.

The poem then shifts from fear to instruction, and the imperatives change the tone. "Be a sealed fountain / In an enclosed garden" draws on biblical imagery, perhaps echoing the Song of Songs, presenting the young woman as pure and self-contained. This could be read as advice to protect herself from those who

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would exploit her. Yet the speaker adds that these walls "are to be scaled / When you are Woman". I think this is important: the poet is not asking her to stay shut away forever, but to wait until she is ready. The list of capitalised qualities, "Conscious, Positive, / Goal setting, Confident", builds up an inspiring picture of the strong woman she can become, and the capital letters give these qualities the status of titles. Her potential is as important to the poem as her fragility.

The short seventh stanza condenses this advice into three crisp commands: "be wise", "Guard your dignity", "Acknowledge your potential". These short lines feel firm and empowering, and they move the responsibility from fear to self-belief.

The final stanza widens the address dramatically. The long list of family and community members, from "Father, Mother" to "Sister", even including "Young Woman" herself, suggests that protecting her is everyone's duty, including other young women. The metaphor "Be a hedge around her" returns to the garden imagery, imagining the community as a living, natural barrier rather than a cold wall. The last line, "Bruise not the flower", is especially memorable. Its old-fashioned inverted syntax gives it the weight of a commandment, and "flower" completes the growth from "shoot" to full bloom. "Bruise" is a gentle but troubling word, suggesting that even small harm can damage someone so tender.

Overall, Robinson presents the young woman as both vulnerable and full of promise. Through repetition, the developing plant metaphor and the move from fear to commands, she argues that the young woman should protect herself, but that the real duty lies with the people and society around her.

04 In this passage Laurie Lee recreates, with an adult's skill but a child's intensity,

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the overwhelming terror of being lost and the flood of relief at being found. The boy's feelings move from confusion, to panic, to comfort, and Lee makes the reader experience each stage through the senses, so that an ordinary summer field becomes, in the boy's mind, a frightening alien world. What makes the passage so effective, I think, is that Lee never tells us the field is harmless: he lets us see it entirely through the eyes of a small child who does not yet understand it.

The opening sentence, "I was lost and didn't know where to move", is simple and direct, almost childlike in its plainness, which immediately places us inside the boy's helplessness. Lee then makes the natural world feel hostile. The "tropic heat oozed up from the ground", and the verb "oozed" suggests something thick, slow and unpleasant, as if the earth itself is leaking. The heat is "tropic", an exotic word for an English field, which suggests how strange and foreign the place feels to him. The smells are "rank" and "sharp", so even the air seems to attack him.

Lee's most interesting method here is to turn beautiful things into threats. The elder-blossom is described with the metaphor "Snow-clouds", which is pretty, yet these clouds are "showering upon me the fumes and flakes of their sweet and giddy suffocation". The alliteration of "fumes and flakes" creates a soft, smothering sound, and the oxymoronic pairing of "sweet" with "suffocation" captures the boy's confused feelings: the scent is lovely but so strong it seems to choke him. "Giddy" suggests he is dizzy and disorientated. Even the larks, usually symbols of joy, become "frenzied" and are "screaming, as though the sky were tearing apart". The hyperbole conveys how, to a small child, the whole world seems to be collapsing, and "screaming" perhaps mirrors his own panic.

The second paragraph explains these feelings more directly. The anaphora of "For the first time in my life" stresses that this is a new and shocking experience:

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being "out of the sight of humans" and "alone". He describes "a world whose behaviour I could neither predict nor fathom", and the formal, adult vocabulary of "predict" and "fathom" reminds us that this is an older writer looking back and trying to name a feeling the child could not express. The list that follows, "birds that squealed, of plants that stank, of insects that sprang about without warning", builds the sense of being surrounded. The verbs are harsh and unpleasant, appealing to hearing, smell and sight, and the final phrase "without warning" captures the child's fear of the unpredictable.

The climax of his terror comes with the bleak statement "I did not expect to be found again". The boy's sense of time and proportion has collapsed: for him, being lost feels permanent. His response is an animal "howled", and then the sun "hit me smartly on the face, like a bully". This simile is particularly effective because it uses an image from a child's own experience: the natural world becomes a playground tormentor, deliberately cruel. There may be some gentle humour here too, as the adult narrator recognises how a child turns everything into a personal attack.

The third paragraph changes the mood completely. The phrase "daylight nightmare" neatly sums up the experience as a bad dream in broad sunlight, and the aside "as from many another" hints that the sisters often rescued him, which adds warmth and affection. The sisters arrive with energy, "scrambling and calling", and the long, flowing sentences now feel joyful rather than frantic. Their "Faces of rose, familiar, living" contrast sharply with the alien field: after a world of strange creatures, he sees human faces he knows. They are "huge, shining faces hung up like shields between me and the sky". The simile of "shields" shows that he feels protected, and the size of the faces reminds us how small he is. Lee then compares them to "genii", summoned "with a howl", so his cry of despair becomes

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a magic spell that brings rescuers. The bracketed detail "(some broken)" about their teeth is affectionate and realistic, making the sisters seem real children rather than idealised angels.

The ending is warm and comic. The counting "one, two, three" sounds like a child's own way of noticing them, and the vivid image of their "mouths smeared with red currants" and "hands dripping with juice" replaces the threatening "stank" and "rank" with sweet, homely images of summer. The sisters' dialect speech, "Come down 'ome", brings him back to family and safety, and the promise to "stuff you with currants" closes the passage with comfort and love.

Overall, Lee presents the boy's feelings through a vivid sensory contrast between the hostile, overwhelming field and the safe, familiar faces of his sisters, showing how quickly a child's world can shift from terror to joy.