
LITERATURE (ENGLISH)

0486/42

Paper 4 Unseen

May/June 2017

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.

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

EITHER

- 1 Read carefully the following poem. The poet imagines the life of a boy she calls Tiresias, after a mythical figure who was able to see into the future.

How does the poet memorably portray the boy and his life?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how she describes the boy in the present
- how she imagines his future
- how the writing invites you to feel about the boy's life.

The Boy Tiresias

Watch him, kicking a tennis ball,
keeping it up,
the boy on the street in his sister's old jumper.
Watch him,
absorbed in the things that he does.
Crouched down,
observing the worms and the slugs.

He's shaping their journeys
placing his leaves in their paths,
playing with fate.
Godcub.
Sucking on sherbet.
Riding his bike in the sunlight.
Filmic.¹
Perfect.

But one day
he'll be hunch-backed, riddled with pain.
Desperate for love but too weak to enjoy it.
Mumbling at strangers on trains, *how strange*
that when we have youth we're so keen to destroy it.

We do not choose
but follow blindly.
We do not own
just sometimes carry.
We do not make.
We undertake
to be more alive
each day we wake.

And this is a must.
And the days are all dust
and the only thing worse
than losing the trust
of a lover is finding the rust
in their kiss.

He will live longer than all of his passions.
But for now, he is young still, and everything's his.

Because the boy will grow up
makes him no less innocent.

Watch him,
staring at what doesn't bore him.
Sun of himself. All things are his moons.

He can even now
feel his destiny calling.
He holds it to his chest,
like a dressing to a wound.

¹ *Filmic*: as if in a movie

OR

- 2 Read carefully the following extract from a novel. Kolla, the narrator, is an eleven-year-old boy who has recently gone to work as a servant in Mister Salgado's house. Joseph is an adult servant who has been working there for some time.

How does the writer vividly convey Kolla's thoughts and feelings about Joseph?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the writer describes Joseph's appearance
- how Kolla's behaviour reveals his feelings about Joseph
- how the writing creates an atmosphere of menace.

What I disliked most about Joseph was the power he had over me, the power to make me feel powerless. He was not a big man but he had a long rectangular head shaped like a devil-mask. His face was heavy and his lower jaw jutted out, making his head look detached from his body. A sullen heart compressed the muscles beneath the skin of his face in a permanent grimace. He had big hands that would appear out of nowhere. And as I was always trying to avoid him and never looked up at him, the sight of his hands suddenly on a doorknob or reaching for a cloth was terrifying. The hands, like the head, always seemed disembodied. I expected to find them around my throat one day. The nails were in good shape though; he took good care of his nails. I don't know where he learned to look after them, but maybe he too learned something from our Mister Salgado.

When the clouds came and I smelled rain loosening in the air, I headed back up to the house. I didn't know what else to do: he would be there somewhere, waiting, gloating.

The kitchen was in darkness. The small windows by the sink did not let in much light, and because the place was empty the other doors were closed. I didn't want to turn on the lights and attract attention to myself; instead I groped along the edge of the side-table until I got to the counter where *Lucy-amma*¹ did her cutting. Underneath I found a small basket of red onions. I quickly bit one open and rubbed it all over my hands. Then I put it inside my shirt for my protection. If he was to come anywhere near me I would fling it in his face, or smear it all over him. It was not chilli powder, but it would keep him away. I had to be prepared for anything. I hid in the back. Our part of the house—the kitchen, the storeroom, Lucy's room, Joseph's room, the spaces between the servants' warren and the back veranda—was always full of junk: old battle-worn chairs, empty cargo boxes, a buckled cupboard jammed against the wall where I hid my few belongings, a blistered chrome refrigerator, bald brushes and rust-eaten dustpans, a mangled electric blender, a wireless² with its face punched in and a big, blackened iron. All the leftovers of city living washed up like driftwood. But it was comfortable.

The rain fell in small pellets ripping the petals off the flowers in the garden. I imagined Joseph outside, pierced by the drops, drenched to the bone, catching a chill, pneumonia, something deadly: an illness of the mind. In each needle line of rain, I saw a message for him from the gods, my gods. I could see them in the sky crowded on a bamboo raft on a blue lake surrounded by rolling hills, holding silver spears and peering through peep-holes in the clouds, searching for Joseph, determined to destroy him.

'Here, eat this.' Joseph threw a ready-made packet of rice and curry on to the chair next to me. 'I will be out tonight.' I had not heard him come up behind me because of the noise of the rain. 'I'm going when the rain stops. You close the doors and keep guard. Sleep inside.'

Where he had to go I could not imagine, but I was overjoyed. I wished the rain would stop immediately: instead it poured down even harder. The sound rose to a crescendo. Water drilling into the ground. The gutters were spilling over and waves seemed to wash down the sides of the veranda; the drain had turned into a river. Joseph disappeared into his room, and I reversed my prayers; I tried to will the rain to stop. 'Give us a break: let him go, leave the house, then come down as hard as hard can so he will never ever return. Let him drown as he walks slurping in the rain with that spoony jaw of his.'

¹ *Lucy-amma*: the household cook

² *wireless*: a radio set

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