
LITERATURE (ENGLISH)

0486/31

Paper 3 Unseen

May/June 2014

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 poem opposite in which the poet expresses his views on elite athletes, such as those who compete in the Olympic Games.

How does the poet make his thoughts and feelings about the athletes so memorable for you?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the poet contrasts the athletes and ordinary people
- how he conveys our fascination with the athletes
- how his thoughts develop in the final stanza.

Dignified

On grim estates¹ at dawn, on college tracks,
 In rings, in wheelchairs, velodromes² and pools,
 While we snore on towards our heart attacks,
 They will outstrip the bullet and the fax,³
 They will rewrite the body and its rules.

Athletes who amazed Zeus and Apollo,⁴
 Rivalling their supernatural ease,
 Must make do nowadays with us, who follow,
 Breathless, on a billion TVs.
 Should we believe it's us they aim to please?

The purpose stays essentially the same:
 To do what's difficult because they can,
 To sign in gold an ordinary name
 Across the air from Georgia to Japan,⁵
 To change the world by mastering a game.

The rest of us, left waiting at the start,
 Still celebrate, as those the gods adore
 Today stake everybody's claims for more
 By showing life itself becoming art,
 Applauded by a planetary roar —

The gun, the clock, the lens, all testify
 That those who win take liberties with time:
 The sprinter's bow, the vaulter's farewell climb,
 The swimmer who escapes her wake, deny
 What all the gods insist on, that we die.

¹ *estates*: housing developments

² *velodromes*: arenas with tracks for bicycle racing

³ *fax*: electronic message

⁴ *Zeus and Apollo*: Greek Gods

⁵ *Georgia ... Japan*: places where the Olympic Games have been held

OR

- 2 Read carefully the following extract from a short story about a man, Julian, meeting a woman called Julia.

How does the writing vividly convey to you the impact of the meeting on Julian?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- the way the writer describes the setting and Julia
- the way the writer describes the hawk and Julian's reactions to it
- the ways in which she conveys to you the intensity of Julian's feelings.

There wasn't a part of him that didn't leap the instant his eyes first alighted on Julia.

It was as though she had sprung fully formed from his forehead: Julia standing on the crest of the Downs with three counties¹ falling away behind her and her long hair flying. Just moments before he had been dreaming her up, this very woman, as he climbed the chalk path, a little breathless from the gin-soaked night before. He'd summoned her from the depths of his hangover. Ta-da! Wished her into being. She was everything he desired: her stance, her attitude, everything, right down to the muscular brown calves that emerged from her cut-off blue jeans.

The wind came in chaotic gusts that bowled him along the grassy ridge. She was walking backwards into the wind, staring towards the trees, and she didn't notice him coming until he was close enough to make her jump.

"Hi," he called out and as she turned with startled brows he saw that her face was just as he'd dreamed it, neatly featured and out of a tan skin and dark lashes her eyes an astonishing Siamese cat blue.

"Whoa, it's blowy," he said, amazed he could speak. She nodded and gestured: "Look out," and as she raised her left arm he noticed her leather gauntlet and he followed her eyes skyward to the bird that was falling, turning and turning, like a heart that had leapt free. It fell, this falcon, and he was transfixed, his was the raptor's² gaze; he was hurling himself straight at her from the heavens. The beat of its wings was the beat of his blood as it landed on her outstretched arm, claiming her, snatching her wrist with its yellow and black feet, jealously shielding the meat that she gave it beneath a mantle of wing and tail feathers. Julian realised that he was out of breath.

She laughed at his astonishment. "Manners, Lucifer," she said as it tore the meat from her. "He's a Harris hawk," she said when he asked. The hawk regarded her with psychopathic eyes.

"Don't be so greedy you rude thing," she scolded, and Julian noticed her shirt billowing, the sheen of her skin. "And if you don't hurry up I'll be late for work." She held a second morsel, pink and stringy, in the gauntlet.

A leather tassel hung from her wrist: the way the hawk stripped the meat made it jerk about and swing.

"What's that you're feeding him?"

"Don't ask," she wrinkled her nose in a way that made his heart tender. Perhaps he was dreaming? Another mischievous gust revealed a leather belt and above it the momentary distraction of a long narrow stomach, smooth as new brown paper.

"All the way up here to fly him, and it's perfect this wind, but he hasn't caught a thing to eat for himself this morning."

He listened for clues to her exotic looks in her accent but found none. She pulled a face at the hawk and it took the cue to fly from her, imperious³ feathers rustled, reeling away to the trees.

"Off we go again," she said and Julian watched the swing of her walk as she

headed for the copse, the loose folds of white shirt gathering at her waist and the hawk circling overhead. From her belt hung a pouch from which she'd taken the bits of meat. The bag bounced against her hip, the gauntlet was comically large at the end of her slender arm.

The hawk landed in a tree and Julian found he was holding his breath, arms stretched out at his sides, waiting for it to fly to her, his every muscle tensed. But Julia marched on, and started to lollop⁴ and then to jog. As she reached the corner it hit him as suddenly as waking to the click of fingers.

He panicked, unable to think of a thing to shout. He patted his pockets impotently. All he had on him was the key to his bike lock and a wrap of tobacco. Was there nothing he could pretend she'd lost? He watched her disappear around the edge of the trees, hands helplessly hanging at his sides. He ran to the copse, across mounds of grass that left him stumbling, but there was no sign of her. Time seemed to slow until he felt like a sleepwalker wending through the undergrowth, brambles snatching, unable to find his way through the trees. The wind dropped and the branches stilled. He stopped, leaned against a tree trunk; through the leaves he could see only crows circling, their callous⁵ shouts echoing around the Downs.

¹ *Downs with three counties*: open, high land with a wide view of the countryside

² *raptor's*: of a bird of prey

³ *imperious*: arrogant

⁴ *lollop*: to walk or run with a clumsy bouncing movement

⁵ *callous*: cruel or insensitive

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Copyright Acknowledgements:

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Question 2 © Polly Sampson; *The Man Who Fell*, from *The Guardian Review Book of Short Stories*; Guardian News & Media Ltd; 2011.

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