Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

LITERATURE (ENGLISH) **0486/12**

Paper 1 Poetry and Prose **February/March 2017**

1 hour 30 minutes

No Additional Materials are required.

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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 **two** questions: **one** question from Section A and **one** question from Section B.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

This document consists of **24** printed pages, **4** blank pages and **1** Insert.

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SECTION A: POETRY

Answer **one** question from this section.

SONGS OF OURSELVES VOLUME 1: from Part 5

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **1** Read this poem, and then answer the question that follows it:

My Parents

My parents kept me from children who were rough
Who threw words like stones and wore torn clothes
Their thighs showed through rags. They ran in the street
And climbed cliffs and tripped by the country streams.

I feared more than tigers their muscles like iron
Their jerking hands and their knees tight on my arms
I feared the salt coarse pointing of those boys
Who copied my lisp behind me on the road.

They were lithe, they sprang out behind hedges
Like dogs to bark at my world. They threw mud
While I looked the other way, pretending to smile.
I longed to forgive them but they never smiled.

(*Stephen Spender*)

Explore how Spender conveys his feelings about his childhood in this poem.

Or **2** How does Browning vividly communicate a sense of excitement in *Meeting At Night*?

Meeting At Night

The grey sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

(*Robert Browning*)

SONGS OF OURSELVES VOLUME 2: from Part 1

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **3** Read this poem, and then answer the question that follows it:

For My Grandmother Knitting

There is no need they say
but the needles still move
their rhythms in the working of your hands
as easily
as if your hands
were once again those sure and skilful hands
of the fisher-girl.

You are old now
and your grasp of things is not so good
but master of your moments then
deft and swift
you slit the still-ticking quick silver fish.
Hard work it was too
of necessity.

But now they say there is no need
as the needles move
in the working of your hands
once the hands of the bride
with the hand-span waist
once the hands of the miner's wife
who scrubbed his back
in a tin bath by the coal fire
once the hands of the mother
of six who made do and mended
scraped and slaved slapped sometimes
when necessary.

But now they say there is no need
the kids they say grandma
have too much already
more than they can wear
too many scarves and cardigans –
gran you do too much
there's no necessity.

(*Liz Lochhead*)

How does Lochhead's writing vividly convey her feelings about her grandmother growing old in this poem?

Or **4** Explore the ways in which Chong uses vivid images in *lion heart*.

lion heart

You came out of the sea,
skin dappled scales of sunlight;
Riding crests, waves of fish in your fists.
Washed up, your gills snapped shut.
Water whipped the first breath of your lungs,
Your lips' bud teased by morning mists.

You conquered the shore, its ivory coast.
Your legs still rocked with the memory of waves.
Sinews of sand ran across your back–
Rising runes of your oceanic origins.
Your heart thumped– an animal skin drum
heralding the coming of a prince.

In the jungle, amid rasping branches,
trees loosened their shadows to shroud you.
The prince beheld you then, a golden sheen.
Your eyes, two flickers; emerald blaze
You settled back on fluent haunches;
The squall of a beast, your roar, your call.

In crackling boats, seeds arrived, wind-blown,
You summoned their colours to the palm
of your hand, folded them snugly into loam,
watched saplings swaddled in green,
as they sunk roots, spawned shade,
and embraced the land that embraced them.

Centuries, by the sea's pulmonary,
a vein throbbing humming bumboats–
your trees rise as skyscrapers.
Their ankles lost in swilling water,
as they heave themselves higher
above the mirrored surface.

Remember your self: your raw lion heart,
Each beat a stony echo that washes
through ribbed vaults of buildings.

Remember your keris, iron lightning
ripping through tentacles of waves,
double-edged, curved to a point–

flung high and caught unsheathed, scattering
five stars in the red tapestry of your sky.

(*Amanda Chong*)

[Turn over

GILLIAN CLARKE: from *Collected Poems*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **5** Read this poem, and then answer the question that follows it:

Baby-sitting

I am sitting in a strange room listening
For the wrong baby. I don't love
This baby. She is sleeping a snuffly
Roseate, bubbling sleep; she is fair;
She is a perfectly acceptable child.
I am afraid of her. If she wakes
She will hate me. She will shout
Her hot midnight rage, her nose
Will stream disgustingly and the perfume
Of her breath will fail to enchant me.

To her I will represent absolute
Abandonment. For her it will be worse
Than for the lover cold in lonely
Sheets; worse than for the woman who waits
A moment to collect her dignity
Beside the bleached bone in the terminal ward.
As she rises sobbing from the monstrous land
Stretching for milk-familiar comforting,
She will find me and between us two
It will not come. It will not come.

How does Clarke vividly convey the feelings of the baby-sitter towards the child in this poem?

Or **6** Explore the ways in which Clarke strikingly conveys her thoughts about the woman's skeleton in *Lunchtime Lecture*.

Lunchtime Lecture

And this from the second or third millennium
B.C., a female, aged about twenty-two.
A white, fine skull, full up with darkness
As a shell with sea, drowned in the centuries.
Small, perfect. The cranium would fit the palm
Of a man's hand. Some plague or violence
Destroyed her, and her whiteness lay safe in a shroud
Of silence, undisturbed, unrained on, dark
For four thousand years. Till a tractor in summer
Biting its way through the longcairn for supplies
Of stone, broke open the grave and let a crowd of light
Stare in at her, and she stared quietly back.

As I look at her I feel none of the shock
The farmer felt as, unprepared, he found her.
Here in the Museum, like death in hospital,
Reasons are given, labels, causes, catalogues.
The smell of death is done. Left, only her bone
Purity, the light and shade beauty that her man
Was denied sight of, the perfect edge of the place
Where the pieces join, with no mistakes, like boundaries.

She's a tree in winter, stripped white on a black sky,
Leafless formality, brow, bough in fine relief.
I, at some other season, illustrate the tree
Fleshed, with woman's hair and colours and the rustling
Blood, the troubled mind that she has overthrown.
We stare at each other, dark into sightless
Dark, seeing only ourselves in the black pools,
Gulping the risen sea that booms in the shell.

[Turn over

SECTION B: PROSE

Answer **one** question from this section.

CHINUA ACHEBE: *No Longer at Ease*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **7** Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

Joseph was not very happy when Obi told him the story of the interview.

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'You are not serious,' said Joseph. 'Unless you are going to be a Reverend Father.'

[from Chapter 5]

How does Achebe make this a revealing and significant conversation?

Or **8** Does Achebe's depiction of Lagos persuade you that it is an attractive city – or a dangerous one?

JANE AUSTEN: *Mansfield Park*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 9 Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

It required a longer time, however, than Mrs. Norris was inclined to allow, to reconcile Fanny to the novelty of Mansfield Park, and the separation from everybody she had been used to. Her feelings were very acute, and too little understood to be properly attended to. Nobody meant to be unkind, but nobody put themselves out of their way to secure her comfort.

The holiday allowed to the Miss Bertrams the next day on purpose to afford leisure for getting acquainted with, and entertaining their young cousin, produced little union. They could not but hold her cheap on finding that she had but two sashes, and had never learnt French; and when they perceived her to be little struck with the duet they were so good as to play, they could do no more than make her a generous present of some of their least valued toys, and leave her to herself, while they adjourned to whatever might be the favourite holiday-sport of the moment, making artificial flowers or wasting gold paper.

Fanny, whether near or from her cousins, whether in the school-room, the drawing-room, or the shrubbery, was equally forlorn, finding something to fear in every person and place. She was disheartened by Lady Bertram's silence, awed by Sir Thomas's grave looks, and quite overcome by Mrs. Norris's admonitions. Her elder cousins mortified her by reflections on her size, and abashed her by noticing her shyness; Miss Lee wondered at her ignorance, and the maid-servants sneered at her clothes; and when to these sorrows was added the idea of the brothers and sisters among whom she had always been important as play-fellow, instructress, and nurse, the despondence that sunk her little heart was severe.

The grandeur of the house astonished but could not console her. The rooms were too large for her to move in with ease; whatever she touched she expected to injure, and she crept about in constant terror of something or other; often retreating towards her own chamber to cry; and the little girl who was spoken of in the drawing-room when she left it at night, as seeming so desirably sensible of her peculiar good fortune, ended every day's sorrows by sobbing herself to sleep. A week had passed in this way, and no suspicion of it conveyed by her quiet passive manner, when she was found one morning by her cousin Edmund, the youngest of the sons, sitting crying on the attic stairs.

"My dear little cousin," said he with all the gentleness of an excellent nature, "what can be the matter?" And sitting down by her, was at great pains to overcome her shame in being so surprised, and persuade her to speak openly. "Was she ill? or was any body angry with her? or had she quarrelled with Maria and Julia? or was she puzzled about any thing in her lesson that he could explain? Did she, in short, want any thing he could possibly get her, or do for her?" For a long while no answer could be obtained beyond a "no, no—not at all—no, thank you;" but he still persevered, and no sooner had he begun to revert to her own home, than her increased sobs explained to him where the grievance lay. He tried to console her.

[from Chapter 2]

How does Austen vividly convey Fanny's feelings about her surroundings at Mansfield Park at this moment in the novel?

Or **10** To what extent does Austen make you pity Mr Rushworth?

[Turn over

WILLA CATHER: *My Ántonia*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 11 Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

We were examining a big hole with two entrances. The burrow sloped into the ground at a gentle angle, so that we could see where the two corridors united, and the floor was dusty from use, like a little highway over which much travel went. I was walking backward, in a crouching position, when I heard Ántonia scream. She was standing opposite me, pointing behind me and shouting something in Bohemian. I whirled round, and there, on one of those dry gravel beds, was the biggest snake I had ever seen. He was sunning himself, after the cold night, and he must have been asleep when Ántonia screamed. When I turned, he was lying in long loose waves, like a letter 'W.' He twitched and began to coil slowly. He was not merely a big snake, I thought — he was a circus monstrosity. His abominable muscularity, his loathsome, fluid motion, somehow made me sick. He was as thick as my leg, and looked as if millstones couldn't crush the disgusting vitality out of him. He lifted his hideous little head, and rattled. I didn't run because I didn't think of it — if my back had been against a stone wall I couldn't have felt more cornered. I saw his coils tighten — now he would spring, spring his length, I remembered. I ran up and drove at his head with my spade, struck him fairly across the neck, and in a minute he was all about my feet in wavy loops. I struck now from hate. Ántonia, barefooted as she was, ran up behind me. Even after I had pounded his ugly head flat, his body kept on coiling and winding, doubling and falling back on itself. I walked away and turned my back. I felt seasick.

Ántonia came after me, crying, 'O Jimmy, he not bite you? You sure? Why you not run when I say?'

'What did you jabber Bohunk for? You might have told me there was a snake behind me!' I said petulantly.

'I know I am just awful, Jim, I was so scared.' She took my handkerchief from my pocket and tried to wipe my face with it, but I snatched it away from her. I suppose I looked as sick as I felt.

'I never know you was so brave, Jim,' she went on comfortingly. 'You is just like big mans; you wait for him lift his head and then you go for him. Ain't you feel scared a bit? Now we take that snake home and show everybody. Nobody ain't seen in this kawn-tree so big snake like you kill.'

She went on in this strain until I began to think that I had longed for this opportunity, and had hailed it with joy. Cautiously we went back to the snake; he was still groping with his tail, turning up his ugly belly in the light. A faint, fetid smell came from him, and a thread of green liquid oozed from his crushed head.

'Look, Tony, that's his poison,' I said.

I took a long piece of string from my pocket, and she lifted his head with the spade while I tied a noose around it. We pulled him out straight and measured him by my riding-quirt; he was about five and a half feet long. He had twelve rattles, but they were broken off before they began to taper, so I insisted that he must once have had twenty-four. I explained to Ántonia how this meant that he was twenty-four years old, that he must have been there when white men first came, left on from buffalo and Indian times. As I turned him over, I began to feel proud of him, to have a kind of respect for his age and size. He seemed like the ancient, eldest Evil.

Certainly his kind have left horrible unconscious memories in all warm-blooded life. When we dragged him down into the draw, Dude sprang off to the end of his tether and shivered all over — wouldn't let us come near him. *50*

[from Book 1 Chapter 7]

How does Cather make this such a vivid and dramatic moment in the novel?

Or **12** To what extent do you think Cather makes Jim's visit to Ántonia a satisfying way of ending the novel?

GEORGE ELIOT: *Silas Marner*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 13 Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

In another moment Molly had flung something away, but it was not the black remnant – it was an empty phial. And she walked on again under the breaking cloud, from which there came now and then the light of a quickly veiled star, for a freezing wind had sprung up since the snowing had ceased. But she walked always more and more drowsily, and clutched more and more automatically the sleeping child at her bosom.

Slowly the demon was working his will, and cold and weariness were his helpers. Soon she felt nothing but a supreme immediate longing that curtained off all futurity – the longing to lie down and sleep. She had arrived at a spot where her footsteps were no longer checked by a hedgerow, and she had wandered vaguely, unable to distinguish any objects, notwithstanding the wide whiteness around her, and the growing starlight. She sank down against a straggling furze bush, an easy pillow enough; and the bed of snow, too, was soft. She did not feel that the bed was cold, and did not heed whether the child would wake and cry for her. But her arms had not yet relaxed their instinctive clutch; and the little one slumbered on as gently as if it had been rocked in a lace-trimmed cradle.

But the complete torpor came at last: the fingers lost their tension, the arms unbent; then the little head fell away from the bosom, and the blue eyes opened wide on the cold starlight. At first there was a little peevish cry of 'mammy,' and an effort to regain the pillowing arm and bosom; but mammy's ear was deaf, and the pillow seemed to be slipping away backward. Suddenly, as the child rolled downward on its mother's knees, all wet with snow, its eyes were caught by a bright glancing light on the white ground, and, with the ready transition of infancy, it was immediately absorbed in watching the bright living thing running towards it, yet never arriving. That bright living thing must be caught; and in an instant the child had slipped on all fours, and held out one little hand to catch the gleam. But the gleam would not be caught in that way, and now the head was held up to see where the cunning gleam came from. It came from a very bright place; and the little one, rising on its legs, toddled through the snow, the old grimy shawl in which it was wrapped trailing behind it, and the queer little bonnet dangling at its back – toddled on to the open door of Silas Marner's cottage, and right up to the warm hearth, where there was a bright fire of logs and sticks, which had thoroughly warmed the old sack (Silas's greatcoat) spread out on the bricks to dry. The little one, accustomed to be left to itself for long hours without notice from its mother, squatted down on the sack, and spread its tiny hands towards the blaze, in perfect contentment, gurgling and making many inarticulate communications to the cheerful fire, like a new-hatched gosling beginning to find itself comfortable. But presently the warmth had a lulling effect, and the little golden head sank down on the old sack, and the blue eyes were veiled by their delicate half-transparent lids.

But where was Silas Marner while this strange visitor had come to his hearth? He was in the cottage, but he did not see the child. During the last few weeks, since he had lost his money, he had contracted the habit of opening his door and looking out from time to time, as if he thought that his money might be somehow coming back to him, or that some trace,

some news of it, might be mysteriously on the road, and be caught by the listening ear or the straining eye. It was chiefly at night, when he was not occupied in his loom, that he fell into this repetition of an act for which he could have assigned no definite purpose, and which can hardly be understood except by those who have undergone a bewildering separation from a supremely loved object. In the evening twilight, and later whenever the night was not dark, Silas looked out on that narrow prospect round the Stone-pits, listening and gazing, not with hope, but with mere yearning and unrest.

[from Part 1 Chapter 12]

How does Eliot make this such a moving moment in the novel?

Or **14** In what ways does Eliot make the theft of his money such a turning point for Silas?

MICHAEL FRAYN: *Spies*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **15** Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

I say nothing. I'm no more prepared to talk to Barbara Berrill about Keith than I am about bosoms and privets.

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I've been ambushed once again. I'm in the middle of another minefield.

[from Chapter 5]

How does Frayn make this such an entertaining moment in the novel?

Or **16** Explore the ways in which Frayn creates tension in **one** moment in the novel.

Do not use the passage printed for Question 15 in answering this question.

KATE GRENVILLE: *The Secret River*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **17** Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

It was dark when he came home, silent and white in the face. The mixture was safe in his pocket and he did not even take his coat off before going upstairs to try his wife with a mouthful of it. She smiled her strained smile, lifted her head to take a taste off the spoon, then lay back exhausted and would take no more.

Sal got him down to the kitchen, got him out of his coat and muffler at last. He sat passively under her hands, staring into the fire. When she knelt to take off his boots she exclaimed—they were wet through, his feet mottled with the chill of them. He had fallen in a drift of snow, he said, and while he had waited for the apothecary, the snow in them had melted, and stayed melted all the way home.

He started to sneeze after supper and next day woke up flushed and sweating, shivering under four blankets, tossing his head on the pillow. The surgeon came again, for the husband this time. He cupped him and gave him something thick and brown in a small square bottle that made him drift into a kind of sleep from which he called out hoarsely and struggled to escape the bedclothes. In spite of the medicine, the flame of the fever consumed him. His cheeks were scarlet, the skin dry and hot to the touch, his tongue furred and grey, his eyes sunk back into their sockets.

Within a week he was dead.

When they told Mrs Middleton she cried out once, a terrible hoarse sound. Then she turned her face to the wall and did not speak again. Sal sat with her all day and slept at the foot of her bed. The surgeon was called again and again, until the table by the bed bristled with bottles of potions and pills. But Mrs Middleton's slide towards death would not be stopped by anything the surgeon could do. With each day that passed she shrank further into the bedclothes, her eyes closed as if she could not bear to see the world any longer, slipping away behind her skin.

At last a grey dawn came when she was stiff under the blanket. They laid her in her box at Gilling's, beside Mr Middleton's, waiting for the ground to thaw so they could bury them.

It was only after the ice on the river broke up, the hole dug and the prayers said over the two coffins as they swayed down on the undertaker's ropes, that the Thornhills realised everything was gone.

Mr Middleton had done all that any man could do. He had lived thriftily and put cash aside. He had put money into well-made boats and kept them in repair, had made sure his apprentice was honest and worked hard. His business had been good, his life cautiously prosperous.

But as soon as he was gone it fell into pieces with amazing speed. In that frozen month his savings were devoured. The surgeon had come every day, and hardly a visit passed when he did not prescribe some new cure that cost a pound the bottle. The uneaten jars of brandied cherries and figs in honey sat on the pantry shelf. Even though there was no work for him to do, the apprentice had still to be fed, and with the river frozen, all that coal he had carried up the stairs had cost five pounds the sack.

Worst of all, the landlord's man had still come by for the rent every Monday. Whether the river was frozen or not, whether a man could work or not, did not matter to the landlord's man.

To Thornhill, the house on Swan Lane had always seemed a fortress against want. Surely no harm could come to a man who owned such a thing as a piece of ground with a dwelling on it. If a man had a roof over his head he could batten down, no matter how hard times were, and wait for them to get better.

He had taken a long time to understand that the house had not been owned, only leased. When he did, it was as if some vital part of himself had dropped away, leaving a void. The house on Swan Lane, always so warm, so safe, was now as cheerless as any of the tenements of his childhood.

The rent was in arrears, and the furniture had to be sold to pay it. Sal and Thornhill watched even the bed Mrs Middleton had died in, which seemed scarcely cold, being carted off. When that was not enough, the bailiffs came after the wherries, first the *Hope* that the apprentice worked, so he had to go and find another master to serve out his time, and then the second-best one too, that Thornhill could not prove was a wedding gift. The river had barely melted, Thornhill had done just a week's work, when he watched them take his wherry in tow. His livelihood disappeared away under Blackfriars Bridge. From now on he would be a journeyman, rowing other men's boats and never knowing when he would be told there was no work for him.

He sat for a long time on the pier at Bull Wharf watching the red sails of the sailor-men bellying out as they tacked from reach to reach. The tide was pushing in from the sea. Across the surface of the river, pocked, pitted, rough, ran another kind of roughness, a buckle in the water crossing from one bank to the other. Behind it pushed water of a different character, barred and furrowed: the sea. He watched the tide, and thought of how the river would go on doing this dance of advance and fall back, long after William Thornhill and the griefs he carried in his heart were dead and forgotten.

What point could there be to hoping, when everything could be broken so easily?

[from Part One]

How does Grenville make this moment in the novel so sad?

Or **18** How does Grenville vividly depict the Thornhill family's experiences when they first settle at Thornhill Point?

R K NARAYAN: *The English Teacher*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **19** Read this extract, and then answer the question that follows it:

After dinner my friends in the neighbouring rooms in the hostel dropped in as usual for light talk. They were my colleagues. One was Rangappa who taught the boys philosophy, and the other Gopal of the mathematics section. Gopal was sharp as a knife-edge where mathematical matters were concerned, but, poor fellow, he was very dumb and stupid in other matters. As a matter of fact he paid little attention to anything else. We liked him because he was a genius, and in a vague manner we understood that he was doing brilliant things in mathematics. Some day he hoped to contribute a paper on his subject which was going to revolutionize human thought and conceptions. But God knew what it was all about. All that I cared for in him was that he was an agreeable friend, who never contradicted and who patiently listened for hours, though without showing any sign of understanding.

To-night the talk was all about English spelling and the conference we had with Brown. I was incensed as usual, much to the amazement of Rangappa. "But my dear fellow, what do you think they pay you for unless it is for dotting the i's and crossing the t's?" Gopal, who had been listening without putting in a word of his own, suddenly became active.

"I don't follow you," he said.

"I said the English department existed solely for dotting the i's and crossing the t's."

"Oh!" he said, opening wide his eyes. "I never thought so. Why should you do it?" His precise literal brain refused to move where it had no concrete facts or figures to grip. Symbols, if they entered his brain at all, entered only as mathematical symbols.

Rangappa answered: "Look here. Gopal. You have come across the expression "Raining cats and dogs?"

"Yes."

"Have you actually seen cats and dogs falling down from the sky?"

"No, no. Why?"

Rangappa would have worried him a little longer, but the college clock struck ten and I said: "Friends, I must bid you good night." "Good night," Gopal repeated mechanically and rose to go. Not so the ever-questioning philosopher. "What has come over you?" he asked, without moving.

"I want to cultivate new habits… ."

"What's wrong with the present ones?" he asked and I blinked for an answer. It was a long story and could not stand narration. Rangappa did not even stir from his seat; the other stood ready to depart and waited patiently. "Answer me," Rangappa persisted.

"I want to be up very early to-morrow," I said.

"What time?"

"Some time before five."

"What for?"

"I want to see the sunrise, and get some exercise before I start work."

"Very good; wake me up too, I shall also go with you—" said Rangappa rising. I saw them off at the door. I had an alarm clock on which I could sometimes depend for giving the alarm at the set time. I had bought it years before at a junk store in Madras. It had a reddening face, and had

been oiled and repaired a score of times. It showed the correct time but was eccentric with regard to its alarm arrangement. It let out a shattering amount of noise, and it sometimes went off by itself and butted into a conversation, or sometimes when I had locked the room and gone out, it started off and went on ringing till exhaustion overcame it. There was no way of stopping it, by pressing a button or a lever. I don't know if it had ever had such an arrangement. At first I did not know about its trouble, so that I suffered a great shock and did not know how to silence it, short of dashing it down. But one day I learnt by some sort of instinctive experiment that if I placed a heavy book like Taine's *History of English Literature* on its crest, it stopped shrieking.

[from Chapter 1]

How does Narayan effectively convey Krishna's state of mind at this early moment in the novel?

Or **20** What impressions does Narayan's writing give you of Susila before her illness?

from *Stories of Ourselves*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **21** Read this extract from *The Phoenix* (by Sylvia Townsend Warner), and then answer the question that follows it:

For quite a while Mr Poldero considered his phoenix a bargain. It was a civil and obliging bird, and adapted itself readily to its new surroundings. It did not cost much to feed, it did not mind children; and though it had no tricks, Mr Poldero supposed it would soon pick up some. The publicity of the Strawberry Phoenix Fund was now most helpful. Almost every contributor now saved up another half-crown in order to see the phoenix. Others, who had not contributed to the fund, even paid double to look at it on the five-shilling days.

But then business slackened. The phoenix was as handsome as ever, and as amiable; but, as Mr Poldero said, it hadn't got Allure. Even at popular prices the phoenix was not really popular. It was too quiet, too classical. So people went instead to watch the antics of the baboons, or to admire the crocodile who had eaten the woman.

One day Mr Poldero said to his manager, Mr Ramkin:

'How long since any fool paid to look at the phoenix?'

'Matter of three weeks,' replied Mr Ramkin.

'Eating his head off,' said Mr Poldero. 'Let alone the insurance. Seven shillings a week it costs me to insure that bird, and I might as well insure the Archbishop of Canterbury.'

'The public don't like him. He's too quiet for them, that's the trouble. Won't mate nor nothing. And I've tried him with no end of pretty pollies, ospreys, and Cochin-Chinas, and the Lord knows what. But he won't look at them.'

'Wonder if we could swap him for a livelier one,' said Mr Poldero.

'Impossible. There's only one of him at a time.'

'Go on!'

'I mean it. Haven't you ever read what it says on the label?'

They went to the phoenix' cage. It flapped its wings politely, but they paid no attention. They read:

'PANSY. *Phoenix phoenixissima formosissima arabiana.* This rare and fabulous bird is UNIQUE. The World's Old Bachelor. Has no mate and doesn't want one. When old, sets fire to itself and emerges miraculously reborn. Specially imported from the East.'

'I've got an idea.' said Mr Poldero. 'How old do you suppose that bird is?'

'Looks in its prime to me,' said Mr Ramkin.

'Suppose,' continued Mr Poldero, 'we could somehow get him alight? We'd advertise it beforehand, of course, work up interest. Then we'd have a new bird, and a bird with some romance about it, a bird with a life-story. We could sell a bird like that.'

Mr Ramkin nodded.

'I've read about it in a book,' he said. 'You've got to give them scented woods and whatnot, and they build a nest and sit down on it and catch fire spontaneous. But they won't do it till they're old. That's the snag.'

'Leave that to me,' said Mr Poldero. 'You get those scented woods, and I'll do the ageing.'

It was not easy to age the phoenix. Its allowance of food was halved, and halved again, but though it grew thinner its eyes were undimmed and its plumage glossy as ever. The heating was turned off; but it puffed out its feathers against the cold, and seemed none the worse. Other birds were put into its cage, birds of a peevish and quarrelsome nature. They pecked and chivvied it; but the phoenix was so civil and amiable that after a day or two they lost their animosity. Then Mr Poldero tried alley cats. These could not be won by good manners, but the phoenix darted above their heads and flapped its golden wings in their faces, and daunted them.

Mr Poldero turned to a book on Arabia, and read that the climate was dry. 'Aha! said he. The phoenix was moved to a small cage that had a sprinkler in the ceiling. Every night the sprinkler was turned on. The phoenix began to cough. Mr Poldero had another good idea. Daily he stationed himself in front of the cage to jeer at the bird and abuse it.

When spring was come, Mr Poldero felt justified in beginning a publicity campaign about the ageing phoenix. The old public favourite, he said, was nearing its end. Meanwhile he tested the bird's reactions every few days by putting a little dirty straw into the cage, to see if it were interested in nesting yet. One day the phoenix began turning over the straw. Mr Poldero signed a contract for the film rights.

How does Townsend Warner amusingly portray human nature here?

Or **22** How does Marshall movingly convey what a life-changing experience the visit to Da-duh is for the narrator in *To Da-duh, in Memoriam* (by Paule Marshall)?

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