
LITERATURE (ENGLISH)

0486/43

Paper 4 Unseen

October/November 2017

1 hour 15 minutes

No Additional Materials are required.

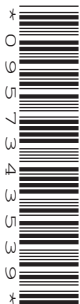
READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

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 poem opposite, in which the poet journeys across an island.

How does the poet's writing strikingly convey his thoughts and feelings during his journey?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the poet describes the mountainous part of the island
- how he conveys his feelings on reaching the other side
- what he believes he has learnt from the journey as a whole.

The Far Side of the Island

Driving over the mountain to the far side of the island
 I am brooding neither on what lies ahead of me
 Nor on what lies behind me. Up here
 On top of the mountain, in the palm of its plateau,
 I am being contained by its wrist and its fingertips.

The middle of the journey is what is at stake –
 Those twenty-five miles or so of in-betweenness
 In which marrow of mortality hardens
 In the bones of the nomad. From finite end
 To finite end, the orthopaedics¹ of mortality.

Up here on the plateau above the clouds,
 Peering down on the clouds in the valleys,
 There are no fences, only moorlands
 With wildflowers as far as the eye can see;
 The earth's unconscious in its own pathology².

Yet when I arrive at the far side of the island
 And peer down at the outport³ on the rocks below,
 The Atlantic Ocean rearing raw white knuckles,
 Although I am globally sad I am locally glad
 To be about to drive down that corkscrew road.

Climbing down the tree-line, past the first cottage,
 Past the second cottage, behind every door
 A neighbour. It is the company of his kind
 Man was born for. Could I have known,
 Had I not chanced the far side of the island?

¹ *orthopaedics*: medical specialism concentrating on the bones and muscles

² *pathology*: medical specialism concentrating on organs and diagnosis

³ *outport*: a small remote fishing village

OR

- 2 Read carefully the extract opposite, from a memoir. Here the writer re-creates her experiences of going to secondary school and needing to wear dental braces.

How does the writing in this passage convey the importance of this experience for the young girl?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the writer brings out the embarrassment of her pre-teen years
- the ways in which she writes about her teeth
- how the writing presents the encounter with the dentist as a positive experience.

In my first high school year I had no friends, I was mostly invisible as well as inaudible: small, grubby, uncouth, a swot and no good at sports. Then there were the bugs¹. We finally bought the lethal shampoo from Boots² and applied it, and they died, but not all at once, and for a while afterwards I went on scratching out of habit.

And – worse, much worse – during that first winter I had braces fitted to my teeth, top and bottom, a mouthful of complicated shiny wires. Now that it's almost a stigma *not* to visit an orthodontist and a metal grin is sexy, like having multiple earrings or a stud in your eyebrow, a licensed young ugliness, it's hard to believe how grotesque my braces seemed back in Whitchurch in 1953. No one else I knew had them. It was an outlandish deformity, like having a very, very bad squint, a squint so awful you had to wear an eyepatch; or having a purple birthmark; or a leg-iron³. Even wearing glasses made you vaguely repulsive and absurd. Sometimes I'd comfort myself that at least I didn't have glasses *as well*, but it was no good, my shyness had taken on this terrible, visible life of its own. I was truly tongue-tied, locked in my scold's bit⁴, and most people tried not to look at me nearly as hard as I tried not to look at them.

The braces were the most agonising part of my rite of passage into the land of Latin⁵ and they hurt physically as well – each time they were tightened my jaws were racked. But my actual visits to the dentist became an adventure. Teeth had to be very crooked for the National Health Service⁶ to pay for 'cosmetic' work then and mine were. I had been referred to a scholarly consultant on Liverpool's Harley Street, who showed me 'before' and 'after' plaster casts of other patients to encourage me, and said that people were very often assigned the wrong teeth. You inherited them from some ancestor who'd had a quite differently shaped jaw and they simply didn't fit, but stuck out and were squeezed sideways like mine. Mouth-breathing hadn't helped either, but that interested him less than the vision of genetic mayhem in mouths through the ages.

He was fascinated by teeth in an impersonal way and finding me teachable, he talked to me about his work in flattering detail. According to him my teeth weren't really mine, so I needn't feel embarrassed and I didn't in his surgery. This was also partly because – although we never, never mentioned it – he himself was very small, almost a midget. I was taller than he by the time the treatment was over and I'd reached the height of five foot one. His littleness lent a magic to our appointments. His 'before' and 'after' casts in their glass cases, and his lyrical descriptions of the perversity of teeth and the heroic project of righting them, all fitted together with the stages of human evolution we were doing at school – millennia of prehistory in one dental chart. The Liverpool dentist made my miserable mouth into an emblem of progress. Each appointment meant a visit to the big city, too.

¹ *bugs*: head lice

² *Boots*: the name of a pharmacy or drugstore

³ *leg-iron*: corrective leg-brace

⁴ *scold's bit*: an iron muzzle used long ago to silence outspoken women

⁵ *Latin*: ancient language taught in secondary schools

⁶ *National Health Service*: state health service in the UK offering free treatment

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