



LITERATURE (ENGLISH)

0486/42

Paper 4 Unseen

February/March 2019

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. It is about a boy helping his grandmother with her knitting.

How does the poet vividly convey the experience of visiting his grandmother?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- his thoughts and feelings about his grandmother's room
- how he portrays his grandmother
- how he conveys ideas about time and memory.

At My Grandmother's

An afternoon late summer in a room
 shuttered against the bright envenomed leaves;
 an underwater world where time like water
 was held in the wide arms of a gilded clock,
 and my grandmother, turning in the still sargasso¹
 of memory, wound out her griefs and held
 a small boy prisoner to weeds and corals
 while summer leaked its daylight through his head.

I feared that room: the parrot screeching soundless
 in its dome of glass, the faded butterflies
 like jewels pinned against a sable² cloak;
 and my grandmother, winding out the skeins³ I held
 like trickling time between my outstretched arms.

Feared most of all the stiff, bejewelled fingers
 pinned at her throat or moving on grey wings
 from word to word; and feared her voice that called
 down from their gilded frames the ghosts of children
 who played at hoop and ball, whose spindrift⁴ faces
 (the drowned might wear such smiles) looked out across
 the wrack⁵ and debris of the years to where
 a small boy sat, as they once sat, and held
 in the wide ache of his arms all time like water,
 and watched the old grey hands wind out his blood.

¹ *sargasso*: a stagnant tropical sea

² *sable*: dark fur

³ *skeins*: threads of wool

⁴ *spindrift*: sea spray

⁵ *wrack*: seaweed

OR

- 2 Read carefully the following extract from the beginning of a novel. It describes a man who makes money from searching a river in London for whatever he might find. His boat is being rowed by his daughter, Lizzie.

How does the writer create such a disturbing atmosphere in this passage?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how he portrays the father
- how he portrays the daughter and her feelings
- how the description of the scene contributes to the dark and ominous atmosphere.

Allied to the bottom of the river rather than the surface, by reason of the slime and ooze with which it was covered, and its sodden state, this boat and the two figures in it obviously were doing something that they often did, and were seeking what they often sought. Half savage as the man showed, with no covering on his matted head, with his brown arms bare to between the elbow and the shoulder, with the loose knot of a looser kerchief¹ lying low on his bare breast in a wilderness of beard and whisker, with such dress as he wore seeming to be made out of the mud that begrimed his boat, still there was business-like usage in his steady gaze. So with every lithe action of the girl, with every turn of her wrist, perhaps most of all with her look of dread or horror; they were things of usage.

‘Keep her out, Lizzie. Tide runs strong here. Keep her well afore² the sweep of it.’

Trusting to the girl’s skill and making no use of the rudder, he eyed the coming tide with an absorbed attention. So the girl eyed him. But, it happened now, that a slant of light from the setting sun glanced into the bottom of the boat, and, touching a rotten stain there which bore some resemblance to the outline of a muffled human form, coloured it as though with diluted blood. This caught the girl’s eye, and she shivered.

‘What ails³ you?’ said the man, immediately aware of it, though so intent on the advancing waters; ‘I see nothing afloat.’

The red light was gone, the shudder was gone, and his gaze, which had come back to the boat for a moment, travelled away again. Wheresoever the strong tide met with an impediment⁴, his gaze paused for an instant. At every mooring-chain and rope, at every stationary boat or barge that split the current into a broad-arrowhead, at the offsets from the piers of Southwark Bridge, at the paddles of the river steamboats as they beat the filthy water, at the floating logs of timber lashed together lying off certain wharves, his shining eyes darted a hungry look. After a darkening hour or so, suddenly the rudder-lines tightened in his hold, and he steered hard towards the Surrey shore.

Always watching his face, the girl instantly answered to the action in her sculling⁵; presently the boat swung round, quivered as from a sudden jerk, and the upper half of the man was stretched out over the stern⁶.

The girl pulled the hood of a cloak she wore, over her head and over her face, and, looking backward so that the front folds of this hood were turned down the river, kept the boat in that direction going before the tide. Until now, the boat had barely held her own, and had hovered about one spot; but now, the banks changed swiftly, and the deepening shadows and the kindling lights of London Bridge were passed, and the tiers of shipping lay on either hand.

It was not until now that the upper half of the man came back into the boat. His arms were wet and dirty, and he washed them over the side. In his right hand he held something, and he washed that in the river too. It was money. He chinked it once, and he blew upon it once, and he spat upon it once, – ‘for luck,’ he hoarsely said – before he put it in his pocket.

‘Lizzie!’

The girl turned her face towards him with a start, and rowed in silence. Her face was very pale. He was a hook-nosed man, and with that and his bright eyes and his ruffled head, bore a certain likeness to a roused bird of prey.

¹ *kerchief*: neck scarf

² *Keep her well afore*: keep the boat ahead of

³ *ails*: disturbs

⁴ *impediment*: obstacle in the river

⁵ *sculling*: rowing

⁶ *stern*: the rear end of the boat

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