

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

LITERATURE

0486/03

Paper 3 Alternative to Coursework

May/June 2005

1 hour

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the Booklet.
Write in dark blue or black pen in the spaces provided on the Question Paper.
Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer the question.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

Read the poem below by Sharon Olds, in which she writes of her daughter in the first week after her birth.

Explore the different feelings that the poet has towards her very young baby and how the words and structure of the poem help you to share in her experience of being a mother.

To help you answer this question, you might like to consider:

- the way the poet describes the baby
- the way she describes her handling of the baby
- the mother's developing thoughts and feelings.

Her First Week

She was so small I would scan the crib a half-second to find her, face-down in a corner, limp as something gently flung down, or fallen from some sky an inch above the mattress. I would tuck her arm along her side and slowly turn her over. She would tumble over part by part, like a load of damp laundry in the dryer, I'd slip a hand in, under her neck, slide the other under her back and evenly lift her up. Her little bottom sat in my palm, her chest contained the puckered¹, moire² sacs, and her neck – I was afraid of her neck, once I almost thought I heard it quietly snap, I looked at her and she swivelled her slate eyes and looked at me. It was in my care, the creature of her spine, like the first chordate³, as if history of the vertebrate⁴ had been placed in my hands. Every time I checked, she was still with us – someday there would be a human race. I could not see it in her eyes, but when I fed her, gathered her like a loose bouquet to my side and offered the breast, greyish-white, and struck with minuscule scars like creeks in sunlight, I felt she was serious, I believed she was willing to stay.

¹ wrinkled

² a shiny, silky material

³ creature with a backbone or spine

⁴ creature with a backbone or spine

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