



Cambridge IGCSE™

WORLD LITERATURE

0408/23

Paper 2 Unseen

May/June 2021

1 hour 15 minutes

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **one** question: **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 25.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

This document has **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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Answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.

EITHER

1 Read carefully the poem below.

How does the poet vividly convey to you ideas about the relationship between humans and nature?

To help you answer, you might consider:

- what the poet feels about owning a home or land
- the words and images the poet uses to describe nature
- the impact the final stanza has on you (from 'No, they whisper...').

The Moment

The moment when, after many years
of hard work and a long voyage
you stand in the centre of your room,
house, half-acre, square mile, island, country,
knowing at last how you got there,
and say, I own this,

is the same moment when the trees unloose
their soft arms from around you,
the birds take back their language,
the cliffs fissure¹ and collapse,
the air moves back from you like a wave
and you can't breathe.

No, they whisper. You own nothing.
You were a visitor, time after time
climbing the hill, planting the flag, proclaiming.
We never belonged to you.
You never found us.
It was always the other way round.

¹*fissure* : crack

OR

- 2 Read carefully the following passage. Dorotea and her family are moving to be near the sea in the hope of a better life.

How does the writer vividly convey Dorotea's thoughts and feelings?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- Dorotea's reaction to the news that they are moving
- the descriptions of her parents
- the contrast between her life before the move and the way she sees her future.

Dorotea San Juan, a fourteen-year-old in a brown cardigan. The janitor's¹ daughter. Walks with her head down, wears cheap sneakers, never lipstick. Picks at salads during lunch. Tacks maps to her bedroom walls. Holds her breath when she gets nervous. Years of being the janitor's daughter teach her to blend in, look down, be nobody. Who's that? Nobody.

Dorotea's dad is fond of saying this: A man only gets so many chances. He says it now, after dark, in Youngstown, Ohio, as he sits on Dorotea's bed. And says this also: This is a real opportunity for us. His hands open and close. He grabs at air. Dorotea wonders about "us."

Shipbuilding, he says. A man only gets so many chances, he says. We're moving. To the sea. To Maine. Place called Harpswell. Soon as school's out.

Shipbuilding? Dorotea asks.

Mama's all for it, he says. Least I think she is. Who wouldn't be all for it?

Dorotea watches the door shut behind him and thinks that her mother's never been all for anything. That her father has never once owned, rented or mentioned any kind of boat.

She snatches up her world atlas. Studies the markless blue that means Atlantic Ocean. Her eye traces ragged coastlines. Harpswell: a tiny green finger pointing at blue. She tries to imagine ocean and conjures petal-blue water packed with fish gill-to-gill. Imagines herself transformed into Maine Dorotea, barefoot girl with a coconut necklace. New house, new town, new life. Nueva Dorotea. New Dorothy. She holds her breath, counts to twenty.

Dorotea tells nobody and nobody asks. They leave on the last day of school. That afternoon. Like sneaking out of town. The wood panelled Wagoneer splashes across wet asphalt: Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts, into New Hampshire. Her father drives empty-eyed, knuckles white on the wheel. Her mother sits stern and sleepless behind tracking wipers, lips curled above her chin like two rain-drowned earthworms, her small frame tensed as if bound in a hundred iron bands. As if crushing rocks in her bony fists. Slicing a pepper on her lap. Passing back dry tortillas painfully bound in plastic.

They see Portland at sunrise, after miles of pine bending over blacktop. The sun leers up behind slabs of cloud the colour of salmon fillets.

Dorotea trembles at the idea of ocean nearing. Fidgets in her seat. The energy of a caged fourteen-year-old piling up like marbles on a dinner plate. Finally the highway bends and Casco Bay shines before them. From across the bay the sun flings a trail of spangles to her. She lowers her nose to the window frame, feels certain there will be porpoises². Watches the glitter carefully for fins, flukes.

She glances at the back of her mother's neck to see if she notices, if she feels it too, to see if her mother can be touched by a shimmering expanse of sea. Her mother who had hid under onions for four days in a train car to Ohio. Who met her husband in a city built over a swamp, cracked sidewalks, train whistles, slushy winter. Her mother who made a home, who never left it. Who must be boiling at the sight of unbounded water. Dorotea sees no sign that it is so.

¹ *janitor*: person who cleans and maintains the school

² *porpoise*: a marine mammal similar to a dolphin

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