



Cambridge IGCSE™

WORLD LITERATURE

0408/23

Paper 2 Unseen

May/June 2020

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 **8** pages. Blank pages are indicated.



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

EITHER

- 1 Read carefully the poem on the opposite page.

Explore how the poet vividly conveys her thoughts and feelings about happiness and sadness.

To help you answer, you might consider:

- the words and images used to describe sadness
- the ways in which the poet contrasts how it feels to be happy and how it feels to be sad
- the impact the final lines have on you (from 'Since there is ...').

So Much Happiness

It is difficult to know what to do with so much happiness.
With sadness there is something to rub against,
a wound to tend with lotion and cloth.
When the world falls in around you, you have pieces to pick up,
something to hold in your hands, like ticket stubs or change.
But happiness floats.
It doesn't need you to hold it down.
It doesn't need anything.
Happiness lands on the roof of the next house, singing,
and disappears when it wants to.
You are happy either way.
Even the fact that you once lived in a peaceful tree house
and now live over a quarry¹ of noise and dust
cannot make you unhappy.
Everything has a life of its own,
it too could wake up filled with possibilities
of coffee cake and ripe peaches,
and love even the floor which needs to be swept,
the soiled linens and scratched records².....
Since there is no place large enough
to contain so much happiness,
you shrug, you raise your hands, and it flows out of you
into everything you touch. You are not responsible.
You take no credit, as the night sky takes no credit
for the moon, but continues to hold it, and share it,
and in that way, be known.

¹*quarry*: a place where stone or sand is dug

²*records*: vinyl records

OR

- 2 Read carefully the following passage. Hans has won a scholarship to study at a well-known boarding school.

How does the writer create striking impressions of starting at a new school?

To help you answer, you might consider:

- the writer's descriptions of the dormitory on the first night
- the portrayal of the parents and sons on the first day
- the ways in which changing emotions are explored.

A strange feeling came over Hans as with the other nine he entered the chilly and bare-looking dormitory in the evening for the first time and lay down in his narrow school bed. From the ceiling hung a large oil lamp whose red light served them to undress by and which was extinguished by the student teacher at a quarter past ten. The beds were ranged side by side and between each pair stood a small chair on which the boys piled their clothes; by the pillar hung the rope which rang the morning bell. Two or three of the boys had already become acquainted and exchanged a few timid whispers that very soon ceased altogether; the rest of them were strangers to each other and lay in their beds quiet and depressed. The ones already asleep breathed deeply and as they moved an arm in their sleep, the counterpane¹ gave a faint rustling sound. Those who were still awake kept quite still. Hans was unable to get off to sleep for a long time. He listened to the breathing of his neighbour and after a while caught an oddly frightened noise from the next bed but one; a boy was lying there, weeping with his sheet pulled over his head. This muffled sobbing affected Hans strangely. He himself was not suffering from home-sickness and yet he was missing the quiet little room which he had at home; in addition there was a nervous apprehension of his situation and all the new faces. It was not yet midnight but no one else in the dormitory was awake. Young sleepers lay side by side, their cheeks pressed into the striped pillows, the sad and defiant, the faithful and timid, all overcome by the same sweet, untroubled repose and oblivion. A pale half-moon climbed above the steep old roofs, towers, bow windows, turrets, battlements and gothic arcades²; its light lay across cornices³, and window-ledges, poured over gothic windows and gateways and shimmered golden in the large, handsome bowl of the cloister fountain. A few yellow beams and flecks of light also fell into the dormitory through the three windows and formed as neighbourly an accompaniment to the dreams of slumbering boys as it had to the monks in the old days.

The following day the solemn initiation day took place in the Oratory⁴. Teachers stood in their frock coats, the Principal gave the address; the students sat in the pews, bowed in thought and stole an occasional glance at their parents who were sitting a long way behind them. The mothers smiled wistfully at their sons, the fathers sat very erect and followed the discourse with grim seriousness. Proud and praiseworthy feelings and high hopes filled their breasts, and it did not occur to any one of them that he was exchanging his child for a financial advantage. At length one after the other each pupil was summoned by name and stood up before the rest, was given the ceremonial handshake by the Principal as a pledge on the part of the establishment that, provided he comported himself properly, he would be cared for and sheltered by the State for the remainder of his life. None of them seemed to realise – the fathers least of all – that they could not quite expect all that for nothing.

When the time came round for the boys to say goodbye to their mothers and fathers, it was a much sadder business. Some on foot, some by coach, some in any kind of transport they had been able to find in their haste were now disappearing from the view of their abandoned offspring and continued

to wave their handkerchiefs for a long time in the mild September air until the forest finally swallowed up the travellers and their sons returned quiet and thoughtful to the monastery.

'Well, your parents have gone off now,' remarked the student teacher. They began to size each other up and to try to become better acquainted, beginning with the boys in their own study. They filled the inkwells, lamps, put their texts and exercise books in order and tried to make themselves at home in their new common-room. They inspected each other eagerly in the process, started up conversations, asked each other what place and school they came from, reminded each other of the torture they had all been through in the Landexamen⁵. Knots of chatting boys grouped themselves round isolated desks and now and again there rose the clear, ringing sound of boyish laughter, and by evening the members of each Study knew each other far better than travellers at the end of a long sea voyage.

¹*counterpane*: blanket / bed covering

²*gothic arcades*: a series of archways with high stone pillars

³*cornices*: ornamental decorations around the edge of the ceiling

⁴*Oratory*: chapel

⁵*Landexamen*: the scholarship examination

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