



Cambridge IGCSE™

WORLD LITERATURE

0408/23

Paper 2 Unseen

October/November 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 powerfully conveys attitudes to growing old.

To help you answer, you might consider:

- the words and images used to describe old age
- how the poet creates a powerful voice for the speaker
- how the poet shows that old people are often misunderstood.

On Aging

When you see me sitting quietly,
Like a sack left on the shelf,
Don't think I need your chattering.
I'm listening to myself.
Hold! Stop! Don't pity me!
Hold! Stop your sympathy!
Understanding if you got it,
Otherwise I'll do without it!
When my bones are stiff and aching,
And my feet won't climb the stair,
I will only ask one favor:
Don't bring me no rocking chair.
When you see me walking, stumbling,
Don't study and get it wrong.
'Cause tired don't mean lazy
And every goodbye ain't gone.
I'm the same person I was back then,
A little less hair, a little less chin,
A lot less lungs and much less wind.
But ain't I lucky I can still breathe in.

OR

- 2 Read carefully the following extract about a woman who visits a government office in London to help her friend, Ben.

How does the writer strikingly build tension in this passage?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- the impression the writer creates of Vicki, the Processing Officer
- how the writer portrays the narrator's growing frustration
- the impact of the final paragraph (from 'I glanced at the advice pack ...').

The board above me flickered. The number on the board was fifty-two. I was next.

The woman who waited for me in the cubicle was young. She was protected by a sheet of toughened glass. I sat on a plastic chair but could not move nearer. It was screwed to the ground. There was a minimum of privacy. The woman raised her head slightly, then went back to staring at her computer screen.

'Could I have your reference number first.'

The notice on the desk told me her name was Vicki and she was a 'Processing Officer'. Like meat, I thought. Her face had the blankness of a certain kind of youth, unlined and expressionless. I suspected she would remain this way, no matter how much she aged. Life would not mark her; she would not let it. She was frowning.

'Sorry,' I said and I handed her the copy of Ben's letter.

'This isn't enough,' she said flatly. 'And it's a photocopy.'

'I know. I didn't want to take the original away from the person. He is in some distress at his precarious state. I didn't want to add to it. I've got proof of postage too, if that's any help.'

I could hear my voice. It had become slightly pleading.

'We don't take account of photocopies.'

'Yes, I understand, but I was wondering if you could look up the serial number and check you received his letter?'

'We don't acknowledge photocopies. You'll have to bring the actual document and he has to actually fill in the form.'

I was silent.

'Have you looked at our website?' she asked. 'It says quite clearly *actual* documents only.'

'The website is down,' I began.

The girl shrugged.

'You should have phoned the helpdesk.'

'No one answers the telephone,' I said.

A helpless rage was creeping over me. The girl's pink and white face, her expressionless eyes (had she been trained to keep them this way?), her small clean hands, everything about her gave me offence.

'You'll have to come back,' she said. 'Bring the right documents next time.'

All around were notices warning against hitting an officer. Abuse, it was called. I swallowed. The woman's face was as high and as impenetrable as a blank wall.

'So, this is a wasted journey?' I asked. 'I've come all the way from Ipswich, wasted the entire day, queued, for nothing?'

She looked at me as though I were insane.

'You could have rung.'

'I just told you the lines were always engaged. I couldn't get through.'

'Yes, we are experiencing a high volume of calls,' she agreed, changing tack.

I took a deep breath.

'Look, I've travelled up from East Anglia, I've tried to phone, I need some advice. I want to make an appointment for someone to talk to my friend. We can't access the forms, he's sent a letter, that's obviously got lost ... can you not understand?'

I had caught her on some raw spot for she turned on me, stung.

'I understand, perfectly. It is you who do not understand. I'm doing my job ...'

'Obeying orders?' I said.

'Don't speak to me like that,' she rejoined.

For a moment there was a brightness in her small eyes, a flash of some emotion. Then it was gone and she clicked the computer screen blank.

'Let me give you an advice pack,' she said smoothly, reaching out across her desk.

I glanced at the advice pack. Written in large print, the questions in it had no bearing on real life. We would have to start the whole process again, just as I had feared. As I left, a woman was ranting at one of the officials. Her voice went on and on, getting increasingly out of control. Two security guards came towards her but she would not stop. I saw her small frame heaving with the effort of her rage. They got hold of her arms and hustled her out of the door. I could hear her voice growing faint until it disappeared altogether. Turning my face away, I walked out of the building.

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