



WORLD LITERATURE

0408/23

Paper 2 Unseen

October/November 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 and **3** blank pages.

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

EITHER

- 1 Read carefully the poem on the opposite page in which a teacher reflects on a lesson.

How does the poet strikingly convey his thoughts and feelings about this lesson?

To help you answer, you might consider:

- the descriptions of the classroom and the students
- how the poet uses words and images to portray the impact of this lesson
- the significance of the final two stanzas.

The Best of School

The blinds are drawn because of the sun,
 And the boys and the room in a colourless gloom
 Of underwater float: bright ripples run
 Across the walls as the blinds are blown
 To let the sunlight in; and I,
 As I sit on the shores of the class, alone,
 Watch the boys in their summer blouses¹
 As they write, their round heads busily bowed:
 And one after another rouses
 His face to look at me;
 To ponder very quietly,
 As seeing, he does not see.

And then he turns again, with a little, glad
 Thrill of his work he turns again from me,
 Having found what he wanted, having got what was to be had.

And very sweet it is, while the sunlight waves
 In the ripening morning, to sit alone with the class
 And feel the stream of awakening ripple and pass
 From me to the boys, whose brightening souls it laves²
 For this little hour.

This morning, sweet it is
 To feel the lads' looks light on me,
 Then back in a swift, bright flutter to work;
 Each one darting away with his
 Discovery, like birds that steal and flee.
 Touch after touch I feel on me
 As their eyes glance at me for the grain
 Of rigour they taste delightedly.

As tendrils reach out yearningly,
 Slowly rotate till they touch the tree
 That they cleave unto³, and up which they climb
 Up to their lives—so they to me.

I feel them cling and cleave to me
 As vines going eagerly up; they twine
 My life with other leaves, my time
 Is hidden in theirs, their thrills are mine.

¹*blouses*: shirts
²*laves*: bathes
³*cleave unto*: stick to

OR

- 2 Read carefully the following extract. Achak, a boy of seven, has been forced to leave his home in Sudan and walk hundreds of miles to reach a refugee camp in Ethiopia. He is in a group of children led by two young men, Dut and Kur.

How does the writer vividly convey to you Achak's experience?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- the challenges of crossing the river
- the portrayal of Achak's interactions with others
- the way the writer conveys Achak's thoughts and feelings after arriving in Ethiopia.

It was two days more before we reached Ethiopia. Before Ethiopia we had to cross a tributary of¹ the Nile, the Gilo River, wide and deep. The people who lived by the water owned boats but would not allow us to use them. Swimming was our only choice.

— Who'll be first? Dut asked.

On the riverbank there were three crocodiles drying themselves. When the first boys stepped into the river, those crocodiles chose to enter the water too. The boys leapt from the water, crying.

— Come, look, Dut said. — Those crocodiles won't attack. They're not hungry today.

He waded into the river and then began to swim, gliding easily, his head above water, his glasses never getting wet. Dut seemed capable of anything. Some boys cried anew, watching him in the middle of the river. We expected him to disappear in an instant. But he swam back to us untouched.

— Now we must go. Anyone who wants to stay here can do so. But we are crossing this river today, and once we do, we will be very close to our destination.

We squinted to see what lay ahead on the opposite bank of the river. From our perspective, it looked very much like the side of the river we were on, but we had faith that once across the water, all would be new.

Few among us could swim, so Kur and Dut, and the boys who could swim, pulled across those who could not. Two swimmers would take one boy at a time, and this took quite some time. Each boy was courageous and quiet as they were brought to the opposite shore, keeping their legs from dangling too deep. No one was attacked in that river that day. But these same crocodiles would grow accustomed to eating people at a later time.

As I waited for my turn, hunger came to me like I had not experienced in weeks. Perhaps it was because I knew that in that riverside village there was real food, and that there must exist some way to get it. Alone, I walked from house to house, trying to conceive of a plan to trade for or steal food. I had never stolen in my life but the temptation was becoming too great.

A boy's voice spoke to my back. — You, boy, where are you from?

He was my age, a boy who looked not too dissimilar to us Dinka². He spoke a kind of Arabic. I was surprised to find that I could understand the boy. I told him that I had walked from Bahr al-Ghazal, though this meant nothing to him. Bahr al-Ghazal did not exist here.

— I want your shirt, the boy said. Soon another boy, looking like the older brother to the first boy, approached and commented that he, too, wanted my shirt. In a moment a deal was struck: I told them I would sell them my shirt in exchange for a cup of maize³ and a cup of green beans.

The older boy ran into their hut and returned with the food. I gave them the only shirt that I had. Soon I rejoined the walking boys at the water; others had traded with the villagers and were cooking and eating. Naked, but for my shorts, I boiled my maize and ate quickly. As we waited to be brought over the water, those boys who had not eaten went about bartering what they had. Some sold extra clothes, or whatever else they had found or carried: a mango, dried fish, a mosquito net. None of us knew that only an hour away would be the refugee camp where we would settle for three years. When we arrived there I would curse my decision to trade my shirt for a cup of maize. One boy

traded all of his clothes, leaving him naked completely, and he would remain naked for six months, until the camp received its first shipment of used clothes from other parts of the world.

In the late afternoon, it was finally my turn to cross the river. I had eaten and felt sated⁴. Dut and Kur, however, seemed very tired. They spent much of my crossing on their backs, mistakenly kicking me, splashing slowly backward. When we reached the far bank, I sat with the other boys, resting and waiting for our hearts to settle. Finally, as night fell, Dut and Kur finished crossing the river with boys. We thanked them for pulling us over and I kept close to Kur as they led us up from the river through a thicket of trees, and upon a clearing.

— This is it, Kur said. We are now in Ethiopia.

— No, I said, knowing he was making a joke. — When will we reach it, Kur?

— We've reached it. We're here.

I looked at the land. It looked exactly like the other side of the river, the side that was Sudan, the side we left. There were no homes. There were no medical facilities. No food. No water for drinking.

— This is not that place, I said.

— It is that place, Achak. Now we can rest.

Already there were Sudanese adults spread out across the fields, refugees who had arrived before us, lying on the ground, sick and dying. This was not the Ethiopia we had walked for. I was sure we had further to go.

We are not in Ethiopia, I thought. This is not that place.

¹ *tributary of*: a river that feeds into

² *Dinka*: Achak's community

³ *maize*: corn

⁴ *sated*: satisfied

BLANK PAGE

BLANK PAGE

BLANK PAGE

Permission to reproduce items where third-party owned material protected by copyright is included has been sought and cleared where possible. Every reasonable effort has been made by the publisher (UCLES) to trace copyright holders, but if any items requiring clearance have unwittingly been included, the publisher will be pleased to make amends at the earliest possible opportunity.

To avoid the issue of disclosure of answer-related information to candidates, all copyright acknowledgements are reproduced online in the Cambridge Assessment International Education Copyright Acknowledgements Booklet. This is produced for each series of examinations and is freely available to download at www.cambridgeinternational.org after the live examination series.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which itself is a department of the University of Cambridge.