



LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

0992/42

Paper 4 Unseen

May/June 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, **3** blank pages and **1** Insert.

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

EITHER

- 1 Read carefully the poem on the opposite page. The poet is writing about an empty house which is being sold. The woman who owned it has recently died.

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

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how he creates impressions of the woman who lived there
- how he describes the presence of wildlife in the house
- how he conveys his response to the house being sold.

*A Cottage in the Lane, Dittisham*¹

Whatever tragedies occurred in that house
 Where finally she lived out her life alone,
 No one knew or cared, least of all
 Those who thought the place was theirs:
 The squirrels nesting in the roof,
 The mice in the cellar, and in the eaves²
 The birds that came each spring
 And nested there, and sang
 A song as pure as the rain-washed air.
 How full her mind was, or how blank,
 How rich she was or how poor
 Was to them of no concern.
 For all they knew the house was theirs,
 So quietly had she lived in one small room.
 An electric fire, a lamp,
 And no desire to be elsewhere.
 Now that the ghost-in-waiting she became
 Has finally evaporated into the air,
 The *For Sale* board's gone up,
 A flag of surrender nailed against the cottage wall.
 And the squirrels, the mice, the birds,
 And all the rest who thought the place was theirs
 Will soon move on. It's either that or else
 Be caught in a pest-controller's snare.
 Change is in the air.
 Rich, green-wellied weekenders³
 Prowl through the undergrowth where once
 A dynasty of toads held court.
 The place will soon be bought.

¹ *A Cottage in the Lane, Dittisham*: a small house in Dittisham, a country village

² *eaves*: roof space

³ *weekenders*: people who buy holiday homes in the country

OR

- 2 Read carefully the extract opposite. Katsumi Hosokawa, a Japanese businessman, is remembering his first visit to an opera.

How does the writer vividly convey the impact that opera has made on Mr Hosokawa?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the writer describes going to the opera for the first time
- how the writer conveys the effect the music had on Mr Hosokawa as a child
- how the writer conveys the impact of music on his adult life.

But first remember another birthday, his eleventh, the birthday on which Katsumi Hosokawa first heard opera, Verdi's *Rigoletto*. His father had taken him to Tokyo by train and together they walked to the theatre in a steady downpour. It was October 22 and so it was a cold autumn rain and the streets were waxed in a paper-thin layer of wet red leaves. When they arrived at the Tokyo Metropolitan Festival Hall, their undershirts were wet beneath coats and sweaters. The tickets waiting inside Katsumi Hosokawa's father's billfold¹ were wet and discoloured. They did not have especially good seats, but their view was unobstructed. In 1954, money was precious; train tickets and operas were unimaginable things. In a different time, such a production would have seemed too complicated for a child, but this was only a handful of years after the war and children then were much more likely to understand a whole host of things that might seem impossible for children now. They climbed the long set of stairs to their row, careful not to look down into the dizzying void beneath them. They bowed and begged to be excused by every person who stood to let them pass into their seats, and then they unfolded their seats and slipped inside. They were early, but other people were earlier, as part of the luxury that came with the ticket price was the right to sit quietly in this beautiful place and wait. They waited, father and son, without speaking, until finally the darkness fell and the first breath of music stirred from someplace far below them. Tiny people, insects, really, slipped out from behind the curtains, opened their mouths, and with their voices gilded the walls with their yearning, their grief, their boundless, reckless love that would lead each one to separate ruin.

It was during that performance of *Rigoletto* that opera imprinted itself on Katsumi Hosokawa, a message written on the pink undersides of his eyelids that he read to himself while he slept. Many years later, when everything was business, when he worked harder than anyone in a country whose values are structured on hard work, he believed that life, true life, was something that was stored in music. True life was kept safe in the lines of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*² while you went out into the world and met the obligations required of you. Certainly he knew (though did not completely understand) that opera wasn't for everyone, but for everyone he hoped there was something. The records he cherished, the rare opportunities to see a live performance, those were the marks by which he gauged his ability to love. Not his wife, his daughters, or his work. He never thought that he had somehow transferred what should have filled his daily life into opera. Instead he knew that without opera, this part of himself would have vanished altogether. It was early in the second act, when *Rigoletto* and Gilda sang together, their voices twining, leaping, that he reached out for his father's hand. He had no idea what they were saying, nor did he know that they played the parts of father and daughter, he only knew that he needed to hold to something. The pull they had on him was so strong he could feel himself falling forward out of the high and distant seats.

¹ *billfold*: wallet

² *Eugene Onegin*: an opera by Tchaikovsky

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