

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
General Certificate of Education
Advanced Subsidiary Level and Advanced Level

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9695/07

Paper 7 Comment and Appreciation

October/November 2005

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

2 hours

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the Booklet.
Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.
Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **two** questions.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

This document consists of 7 printed pages and 1 blank page.



- 1 Write a critical commentary on the following extract from the novel *City of the Mind* by Penelope Lively (published in 1991). The two characters in the extract – Matthew and Susan – are clearing their house of their furniture and other belongings because their marriage has failed and they are going to live separate lives.

There is mine and thine, and there is ours. And then, eventually, mine again. Objects tend a marriage. They are its toys, its talismans. They chart its progress. Once, Matthew and Susan bought a chair together. They were not married, but soon would be. The chair was in the window of an antique shop: a Victorian nursing chair, high-backed with neatly curving arms. A simple, agreeable, useful object. Susan said, 'That's pretty', and Matthew said, 'I'll buy it for you.' And she said, 'No. We'll buy it for us.' 5

Thus, the chair. Which sits today in his flat, pushed into a corner, homeless, adrift. From time to time he notices it; sometimes it is merely a familiar chair and at others it is so invested with meaning that he has to turn away. 10

When things had reached a point of no redemption, when both of them knew that there was nothing further to be tried, or done, Susan said, 'What are we going to do about the house?' Not, I am leaving you, or, You must go. And he looked at her, bleakly, understanding and accepting, and replied, 'I've no idea.'

The house has passed into other hands. It is a party now to other people's intimacies. Matthew wishes it well. Occasionally he finds himself in the street, and notices that the front door has changed colour, or that it has sprouted window boxes; there is something vaguely reassuring about that. The house has distanced itself, and so it should. 15

In the parcelling out of objects the Victorian nursing chair fell to him, almost by default, it seemed. Neither of them, in any case, much cared. Like auctioneers, dispassionate and brusque, they surveyed the clutter of their lives, their life; they catalogued and apportioned. You have that, they said, and I'll have this. There were no arguments; all was scrupulously fair, remorselessly polite. Are you sure? They enquired of each other... No, no, they assured each other, you have it, I don't mind. Who cares? They did not say. What does it matter, now? What's the point? All this is just glass, wood, metal, cloth, paper, paint. So much lumber. They dismantled the place, shovelling books, cushions, pots, pictures into boxes and bags. They did it with deliberation and without comment. They ignored, or pretended to ignore, the shimmering haze of reference that hung over each object, intelligible only to themselves, shared and yet profoundly private. Matthew, shoving the Provençal plates into a plastic carrier bag, hardly bothering to shroud them in newspaper, sees Susan in a blue cotton sun dress, with a pink tinge of sunburn across her shoulders, turning to him in a shady street in Avignon, pointing at a stall. He smells garlic, dust and flowers. He feels the ghostly pluck of desire, and cringes. 20
25
30
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And what did Susan see, or hear? Their eyes did not often meet, during those days. They came and went like removal men, passing one another on the stairs, working as a team when necessary for the handling of some large or delicate item. They spoke little, and were careful not to brush against each other. And as the house emptied, it began to echo. The rooms that were becoming shells rang with the hollow sound of their footsteps on uncarpeted floors. The place expanded, grew lighter, as though, relieved of its cargo of furnishings, it breathed more freely. Sunshine flooded through the curtainless windows and lay in slanting geometric shapes across the boards that Matthew had once stripped and stained. Dust balls shifted lazily in the draught; cobwebs swung from the ceilings. The walls were 40
45

marked with the pale squares of their pictures, the ghostly imprint of their cupboards and chests. Coming upon Susan unexpectedly in one of the bare rooms, Matthew saw her, too, for an instant, as a precarious presence on the brink of extinction. She stood at the window, looking out, wearing jeans and a checked shirt, the person he knew best in the world, and had once loved most, and he seemed to see through and beyond her to a thousand other moments, a thousand other Susans. And then she turned, saw him, snatched herself from whatever had been in her own head, put on the dispassionate mask they both, now, wore with one another: 'We've forgotten the cupboard under the stairs. We'd better get going on that next.' 50

- 2 The following poems speak of how quickly youth and beauty fade and die, and of how we should make the most of the time we have. Write a critical comparison of all three poems.

To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun, 5
The higher he's a getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first 10
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse and worst
Times still exceed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time, 15
And while ye may, go marry;
For, having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

Robert Herrick (1591–1674)

With Rue My Heart is Laden

With rue* my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping 5
The lightfoot lads are laid;
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade.

A E Housman (1859–1936)

*rue: regret and sorrow; rue is also a kind of garden herb

Little Rosebud Girl

soon to bloom
in splendour
then
to
wither
and
f
a
d
e

5

Anson Gonzales (born 1936)

- 3 Write a critical commentary on the following passage, from *Arms and the Man*, written in 1894 by the Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw. Raina is a young Bulgarian woman who believes herself to be in love with Sergius, a soldier fighting in the war against the Serbs; as the passage begins she is looking adoringly at his picture just before she retires to bed for the night. (The punctuation is Shaw's own.)

RAINA (*looking up at the picture*) Oh, I shall never be unworthy of you any more, my soul's hero: never, never, never My hero! My hero!

A distant shot breaks the quiet of the night. She starts, listening; and two more shots, much nearer, follow, startling her so that she stumbles out of bed, and hastily blows out the candle on the chest of drawers. Then putting her fingers in her ears, she runs to the dressing table, blows out the light there, and hurries back to the bed in the dark The firing breaks out again: there is a startling fusillade quite close at hand. Whilst it is still echoing, the shutters disappear, pulled open from without; and for an instant the rectangle of snowy starlight flashes out with the figure of a man silhouetted in black upon it. The shutters close immediately; and the room is dark again. But the silence is now broken by the sound of panting. Then there is a scratch; and the flame of a match is seen in the middle of the room.

RAINA (*crouching on the bed*) Who's there? (*The match is out instantly*). Who's there? Who is that?

A MAN'S VOICE (*in the darkness, subduedly, but threateningly*) Sh – sh! Dont call out; or youll be shot. Be good; and no harm will happen to you. (*She is heard leaving her bed, and making for the door*). Take care: it's no use trying to run away.

RAINA. But who –

THE VOICE (*warning*) Remember: if you raise your voice my revolver will go off. (*Commandingly*). Strike a light and let me see you. Do you hear. (*Another moment of silence and darkness as she retreats to the chest of drawers. Then she lights a candle; and the mystery is at an end. He is a man of about 35, in a deplorable plight, bespattered with mud and blood and snow, his belt and the strap of his revolver-case keeping together the torn ruins of the blue tunic of a Serbian artillery officer ...*)

Excuse my disturbing you; but you recognize my uniform? Serb! If I'm caught I shall be killed. (*Menacingly*) Do you understand that?

RAINA. Yes.

THE MAN. Well, I dont intent to get killed if I can help it. (*Still more formidably*) Do you understand that? (*He locks the door quickly but quietly*).

RAINA (*disdainfully*) I suppose not ... Some soldiers, I know, are afraid to die.

THE MAN (*with grim good humor*) All of them, dear lady, all of them, believe me. It is our duty to live as long as we can. Now, if you raise the alarm –

RAINA (*cutting him short*) You will shoot me. How do you know that I am afraid to die?

THE MAN (*cunningly*) Ah; but suppose I dont shoot you, what will happen then? A lot of your cavalry will burst into this pretty room of yours and slaughter me here like a pig; for I'll fight like a demon: they shant get me into the street to amuse themselves with: I know what they are. Are you prepared to receive that sort of company in your present undress? (*Raina, suddenly conscious of her nightgown, instinctively shrinks and gathers it more closely about her neck. He watches her and adds pitilessly*) Hardly presentable, eh? (*She turns to the ottoman. He raises his pistol instantly and cries*) Stop! (*She stops*). Where are you going?

RAINA (*with dignified patience*) Only to get my cloak.

THE MAN (*passing swiftly to the ottoman and snatching the cloak*) A good idea! I'll keep the cloak; and youll take care that nobody comes in and sees you without it. This is a better weapon than the revolver: eh? (*He throws the pistol down on the ottoman*).

RAINA (*revolted*) It is not the weapon of a gentleman!
 THE MAN. It's good enough for a man with only you to stand between him and death

50

(There is a tremendous noise of shouting outside the house; Bulgarian troops have been chasing the Serb soldier, and know that he is in the house. Louka, Raina's maid, calls to her from outside her bedroom)

LOUKA (*outside, knocking at the bedroom door*) My lady! my lady! get up quick and open the door. If you dont they will break it down.

55

The fugitive throws up his head with the gesture of a man who sees that it is all over with him, and drops the manner that he has been assuming to intimidate Raina.

THE MAN (*sincerely and kindly*) No use, dear: I'm done for. (*Flinging the cloak to her*) Quick! wrap yourself up: theyre coming.

60

RAINA. Oh, thank you. (*She wraps herself up with intense relief*).

THE MAN (*between his teeth*) Dont mention it.

RAINA (*anxiously*) What will you do?

THE MAN (*grimly*) The first man in will find out. Keep out of the way; and dont look. It wont last long; but it will not be nice. (*He draws his sword and faces the door, waiting.*)

65

RAINA (*impulsively*) I'll help you. I'll save you.

THE MAN. You cant.

RAINA. I can. I'll hide you. (*She drags him towards the window*). Here! behind the curtains.

70

THE MAN (*yielding to her*) Theres just half a chance, if you keep your head.

RAINA (*drawing the curtains before him*) S-sh! (*She makes for the ottoman*).

THE MAN (*putting out his head*) Remember –

RAINA (*running back to him*) Yes?

THE MAN. – nine soldiers out of ten are born fools.

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RAINA. Oh! (*She draws the curtain angrily before him*).

THE MAN (*looking out at the other side*) If they find me, I promise you a fight: a devil of a fight.

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Question 2 A. E. Housman; 'With Rue My Heart is Laden'; *A Shropshire Lad*, Dover Thrift Editions; 1990.
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