



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS  
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

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**LITERATURE (ENGLISH)**

**0486/03**

Paper 3 Unseen

**October/November 2008**

**1 hour 20 minutes**

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

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**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.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

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

You are advised to spend about 20 minutes reading the question paper and planning your answer.

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

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.



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

**EITHER**

- 1 Read the following poem about a zoo-keeper in a city at war. His lion has died after he has looked after him for a long time.

**What are your thoughts and feelings as you read this poem, and how do the words of the poem make you respond in this way?**

To help you answer these questions you might consider:

- the way the poet describes the life of the lion and its keeper during their last years together, and the way she communicates the keeper's feelings for the lion
- the way she describes the lion-keeper's response to the lion's death
- the impact of the whole poem on you.

*The Bereavement of the Lion-keeper*

Who stayed, long after his pay stopped,  
in the zoo with no visitors,  
just keepers and captives, moth-eaten,  
growing old together.

Who begged for meat in the market-place  
as times grew hungrier,  
and cut it up small to feed him,  
since his teeth were gone.

Who could stroke his head, who knew  
how it felt to plunge fingers  
into rough glowing fur, who has heard  
the deepest purr in the world.

Who curled close to him, wrapped in his warmth,  
his pungent scent, as the bombs fell,  
who has seen him asleep so often,  
but never like this.

Who knew that elderly lions  
were not immortal, that it was bound  
to happen, that he died peacefully,  
in the course of nature,

but who knows no way to let go  
of love, to walk out of sunlight,  
to be an old man in a city  
without a lion.

OR

- 2 Read the following passage in which the writer tells of his departure from his home in Jamaica to go to university in Cambridge, England. He had left his parents and home many times before – to go to his boarding school or on holiday, for example – but this time his departure seemed to have made a special impact.

**What do you find moving or interesting about the feelings of the author on leaving home on this occasion, and how does the writing help you, the reader, to share the impact of his experience?**

To help you answer these questions you might consider:

- the writer's own analysis of what it meant for him to be leaving home
- the way he tells the story of his departure
- the way he sees himself at the end of the passage.

Jamaica was just one place among many where we lived. Quitting was not sad for me but leaving the island involved one wretched moment – leaving home. I had never conquered homesickness but until then there had been the comfort that, waiting for me back home, was my room. I had a home and family, in a place to which I would sooner or later return. It mattered little where the place was: it existed and it was mine.

For no particularly logical reason, leaving Jamaica for Cambridge felt like giving up that pretence. No point, now, in keeping a place for me at 'home'. Home wasn't home any more, never would be again. After university a man sets up home for himself. Sadness took me quite by surprise, overwhelming me.

Yet I had been lucky. I was enlisted as 'supernumerary'<sup>1</sup> crew on one of a company's sugar-boats, bound (from the West Indies) for London. I was to be paid a shilling. Collecting all my belongings, my books and records – even my Honda 50 scooter – I packed my trunks.

The departure was strange, dreamlike. My parents took me to a jetty at Milk River, a wide plain of sugar plantations and mills where pale green hills and flatlands of cane peter out along a formless coast into a muddy sea. Offshore, my ship was at anchor. It was dusk. A little launch carried me and my trunk away, and I clambered up a swinging ladder. It seemed unreal. Then our ship moved off and out into the ocean.

We sailed along the coast, passing Kingston at dead of night. I could see the dark outline of Blue Mountain towering behind, and all the stars and, at the mountain's feet, the city lights twinkling. You could trace the streetlights climbing the hills behind the town. You could see Redhills. I thought I could make out the lights of our own house. My parents and family would be there. I could – as it seemed – see home, yet home was now so far away and departing for ever. I was helpless. A widening gulf of dark sea separated me from my youth.

Something more than distance was intervening. It was like looking in a photograph album, like watching through the thick round glass of an aeroplane window as friends wave goodbye from the airport terrace, themselves unable to see you: there they were, so loved, so familiar, yet beyond reach, dwindling and fading. They didn't even know where I was. A wall of one-way glass had been interposed. Faces, people, move into another dimension. Thus it must seem to a ghost who revisits to say goodbye. That powerless feeling – I have felt it with friendships too – cut adrift and watching helpless as a slow current takes someone, or something, or somewhere, or part of you, away, is a melancholy thing.

And a lucky, lucky boy, with a place at Cambridge University, a free passage to England, a loving family, every kind of security, a quick enough wit to live on, innumerable narrow escapes behind and more ahead, sat in his quite ridiculously grand cabin, the 'owner's suite', and cried. I was at sea, and all at sea. I was to stay all at sea for longer than the voyage to England.

Which took three weeks. The ship's engines kept breaking down. In the August heat in a heaving and windless Atlantic, surrounded by whales, I discovered a loathing which I shall never shake off, for the stink of warm molasses.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*supernumerary*: extra to the official crew

<sup>2</sup>*molasses*: thick syrup obtained from sugar

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*Copyright Acknowledgements:*

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Question 2            © Matthew Parris; *Chance Witness: An Outsider's Life in Politics*; Penguin Books; 2003.

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