

Section A: Poetry

ROBERT FROST: *Selected Poems*

- 1 **Either** (a) Discuss ways in which Frost explores the past in **two** poems.
Or (b) Comment closely on ways in which the following poem presents the accident.

'Out, Out—'

The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard

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Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs.

OWEN SHEERS: *Skirrid Hill*

- 2 **Either** (a) Discuss ways in which Sheers presents human relationships in **two** poems.
Or (b) Comment closely on the presentation of singers in the following poem.

The Singing Men

They are the singing men. Every city has them,
 singing for their supper or just for the hell of it.

Corners and doorways are good places to find them,
 on the edges of things, humming, humming.

Or full-throated, singing to swallow the moon, 5
 the tendons in their necks making valleys in their stubble

and the songs from memory,
 from a time when they weren't just the singing men

but had lives, in which, if they were lucky, they'd squeeze
 a little music in, between the lovers, the kids, the wives. 10

But now it's just the songs that are left
 to keep them threaded to the earth,

the world's greatest group, toting love ballads on the
Staten Island ferry,
 slave songs in New Jersey, folk in Moscow, blues in Leeds 15

and of course here, on the edge of the underground,
 singing opera on the steps of Balham tube,

his solos resounding down to the ticket barriers' greyhound stalls
 and his costume perfect – one gold can of Extra,

beard scribbled over his chin, dirt like grain in the wood, 20
 as he sits there, legs open, welcoming the commuters home.

Songs of Ourselves, Volume 2

- 3 **Either** (a) Discuss ways in which **two** poems explore contrasts between youth and age.
- Or** (b) Comment closely on ways in which work is presented in the following extract from 'The Song of the Shirt'.

from *The Song of the Shirt*

"Work—work—work,
 My labor never flags;
 And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
 A crust of bread—and rags.
 That shatter'd roof—and this naked floor— 5
 A table—a broken chair—
 And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
 For sometimes falling there.

"Work—work—work!
 From weary chime to chime, 10
 Work—work—work,
 As prisoners work for crime!
 Band, and gusset, and seam,
 Seam, and gusset, and band,
 Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumb'd, 15
 As well as the weary hand.

"Work—work—work,
 In the dull December light,
 And work—work—work, 20
 When the weather is warm and bright,
 While underneath the eaves
 The brooding swallows cling
 As if to show me their sunny backs
 And twit me with the spring.

"Oh! but to breathe the breath 25
 Of the cowslip and primrose sweet,
 With the sky above my head,
 And the grass beneath my feet,
 For only one short hour
 To feel as I used to feel, 30
 Before I knew the woes of want
 And the walk that costs a meal,

"Oh, but for one short hour!
 A respite however brief!
 No blessed leisure for Love or Hope, 35
 But only time for Grief!
 A little weeping would ease my heart,
 But in their briny bed
 My tears must stop, for every drop
 Hinders needle and thread!" 40

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,
Would that its tone could reach the Rich!
She sang this “Song of the Shirt!”

45

Thomas Hood

Section B: Prose

E.M. FORSTER: *Howards End*

- 4 **Either** (a) Discuss ways in which Forster explores issues of social class and status in the novel.
- Or** (b) Comment closely on the following passage, considering ways in which it presents Helen's view of Howards End and the Wilcox family.

Dearest Meg,

It isn't going to be what we expected. It is old and little, and altogether delightful—red brick. We can scarcely pack in as it is, and the dear knows what will happen when Paul (younger son) arrives tomorrow. From hall you go right or left into dining-room or drawing-room. Hall itself is practically a room. You open another door in it, and there are the stairs going up in a sort of tunnel to the first-floor. Three bed-rooms in a row there, and three attics in a row above. That isn't all the house really, but it's all that one notices—nine windows as you look up from the front garden. 5

Then there's a very big wych-elm—to the left as you look up—leaning a little over the house, and standing on the boundary between the garden and meadow. I quite love that tree already. Also ordinary elms, oaks—no nastier than ordinary oaks—pear-trees, apple-trees, and a vine. No silver birches, though. However, I must get on to my host and hostess. I only wanted to show that it isn't the least what we expected. Why did we settle that their house would be all gables and wiggles, and their garden all gamboge-coloured paths? I believe simply because we associate them with expensive hotels—Mrs. Wilcox trailing in beautiful dresses down long corridors, Mr. Wilcox bullying porters, etc. We females are that unjust. 10 15

I shall be back Saturday; will let you know train later. They are as angry as I am that you did not come too; really Tibby is too tiresome, he starts a new mortal disease every month. How could he have got hay fever in London? And even if he could, it seems hard that you should give up a visit to hear a schoolboy sneeze. Tell him that Charles Wilcox (the son who is here) has hay fever too, but he's brave, and gets quite cross when we inquire after it. Men like the Wilcoxes would do Tibby a power of good. But you won't agree, and I'd better change the subject. 20 25

This long letter is because I'm writing before breakfast. Oh, the beautiful vine leaves! The house is covered with a vine. I looked out earlier, and Mrs. Wilcox was already in the garden. She evidently loves it. No wonder she sometimes looks tired. She was watching the large red poppies come out. Then she walked off the lawn to the meadow, whose corner to the right I can just see. Trail, trail, went her long dress over the sopping grass, and she came back with her hands full of the hay that was cut yesterday—I suppose for rabbits or something, as she kept on smelling it. The air here is delicious. Later on I heard the noise of croquet balls, and looked out again, and it was Charles Wilcox practising; they are keen on all games. Presently he started sneezing and had to stop. Then I hear more clicketing, and it is Mr. Wilcox practising, and then, 'a-tissue, a-tissue': he has to stop too. Then Evie comes out, and does some calisthenic exercises on a machine that is tacked on to a greengage-tree—they put everything to use—and then she says 'a-tissue,' and in she goes. And finally Mrs. Wilcox reappears, trail, trail, still smelling hay and looking at the flowers. I inflict all this on you because once you said that life is sometimes life and sometimes only a drama, and one must learn to distinguish tother from which, and up to now I have always put that down as 'Meg's clever nonsense.' But this morning, it really does seem not life but a play, and it did amuse me enormously to watch the W's. Now Mrs. Wilcox has come in. 30 35 40

I am going to wear [omission]. Last night Mrs. Wilcox wore an [omission], and 45
Evie [omission]. So it isn't exactly a go-as-you-please place, and if you shut your
eyes it still seems the wiggly hotel that we expected. Not if you open them. The dog-
roses are too sweet. There is a great hedge of them over the lawn—magnificently
tall, so that they fall down in garlands, and nice and thin at the bottom, so that you 50
can see ducks through it and a cow. These belong to the farm, which is the only
house near us. There goes the breakfast gong. Much love. Modified love to Tibby.
Love to Aunt Juley; how good of her to come and keep you company, but what a
bore. Burn this. Will write again Thursday.

Helen

Chapter 1

ANDREA LEVY: *Small Island*

- 5 **Either** (a) Discuss ways in which the novel presents friendships and their importance.
- Or** (b) Comment closely on the presentation of Arthur in the following passage.

Early Bird, my teacher at Bolsbrooke Elementary School, taught us all in English grammar that an apostrophe is a mark to show where something is missing. And that was how I'd always seen Bernard's father, Arthur: a human apostrophe. He was there but only to show us that something precious had gone astray. When Bernard said he was being posted overseas I asked him who was going to look after his father now. A bewildered expression was all I got to tell me that I was. 5

Arthur never spoke. He shook his head, he nodded, he grunted, he sighed, he even tutted. But no word came through his lips – not even his sneeze would accidentally say, 'A tissue.' But gradually I came to notice his eyebrows. Two dark, thick, bushy lines roving over his forehead. I forgot about waiting for his lips to move and started reading those hairy brows instead. They were more expressive than Bernard's mouth had ever been. Two upward flicks and he was asking if I'd like a cup of tea. One up one down, and he wanted to know if I was sure. 10

And it didn't take me long to appreciate that Arthur was a magician. Out in the garden all day he could pull carrots, cabbages, potatoes, turnips, swedes, parsnips out of rubble and stone. One day I came home to find him holding up an onion for me. Big as a ball, a perfect specimen, its skin golden brown and crackling. He laughed when I asked, 'Where in heaven's name did you get that?' Then slowly he revealed another one in his other hand. What wonderful things – I could have gone into the street and sold them for twenty guineas each. No one had seen an onion for months. But Arthur had two. And it was him that lovingly cooked me the sausage and mash with onion gravy. 15

He would queue for hours for food. Lines and lines and lines of women and then Arthur – this ageing gentleman trussed up in his gaberdine with his little cloth bag – standing still and silent as a monument to patience. They'd let him in the queue in front of them sometimes, the women: they felt sorry for him just like I once did. He looked broken, trembling at the slightest noise, his face changing from plain-day to wild and hunted at the drop of a pin. But he wasn't. Without Bernard fussing about him, pulling, coaxing, he began to unfurl as sure as a flower that finally feels the sun when the tree is gone. And in the evenings the rotten beggar always beat me at Monopoly. His metal boot silently hoarding the board until the only course of action left to me was to declare war, sound a siren, then bomb all his blinking hotels and houses to bits. 20 25 30

Chapter 28

Turn over for Question 6

Stories of Ourselves

- 6 **Either** (a) Discuss the presentation of tensions between family members in **two** stories from your selection.
- Or** (b) Comment closely on the following passage, considering ways in which it presents the swallow's relationships.

One night there flew over the city a little Swallow. His friends had gone away to Egypt six weeks before, but he had stayed behind, for he was in love with the most beautiful Reed. He had met her early in the spring as he was flying down the river after a big yellow moth, and had been so attracted by her slender waist that he had stopped to talk to her. 5

'Shall I love you?' said the Swallow, who liked to come to the point at once, and the Reed made him a low bow. So he flew round and round her, touching the water with his wings, and making silver ripples. This was his courtship, and it lasted all through the summer.

'It is a ridiculous attachment,' twittered the other Swallows; 'she has no money, and far too many relations'; and indeed the river was quite full of Reeds. Then, when the autumn came they all flew away. 10

After they had gone he felt lonely, and began to tire of his lady-love. 'She has no conversation,' he said, 'and I am afraid that she is a coquette, for she is always flirting with the wind.' And certainly, whenever the wind blew, the Reed made the most graceful curtseys. 'I admit that she is domestic,' he continued, 'but I love travelling, and my wife, consequently, should love travelling also.' 15

'Will you come away with me?' he said finally to her, but the Reed shook her head, she was so attached to her home.

'You have been trifling with me,' he cried. 'I am off to the Pyramids. Good-bye!' 20 and he flew away.

All day long he flew, and at night-time he arrived at the city. 'Where shall I put up?' he said; 'I hope the town has made preparations.'

Then he saw the statue on the tall column.

'I will put up there,' he cried; 'it is a fine position, with plenty of fresh air.' So he alighted just between the feet of the Happy Prince. 25

'I have a golden bedroom,' he said softly to himself as he looked round, and he prepared to go to sleep; but just as he was putting his head under his wing a large drop of water fell on him. 'What a curious thing!' he cried; 'there is not a single cloud in the sky, the stars are quite clear and bright, and yet it is raining. The climate in the north of Europe is really dreadful. The Reed used to like the rain, but that was merely her selfishness.' 30

Then another drop fell.

'What is the use of a statue if it cannot keep the rain off?' he said; 'I must look for a good chimney-pot,' and he determined to fly away. 35

But before he had opened his wings, a third drop fell, and he looked up, and saw – Ah! what did he see?

The eyes of the Happy Prince were filled with tears, and tears were running down his golden cheeks. His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little Swallow was filled with pity. 40

'Who are you?' he said.

'I am the Happy Prince.'

'Why are you weeping then?' asked the Swallow; 'you have quite drenched me.'

'When I was alive and had a human heart,' answered the statue, 'I did not know what tears were, for I lived in the Palace of Sans-Souci, where sorrow is not allowed to enter. In the daytime I played with my companions in the garden, and in the evening I led the dance in the Great Hall. Round the garden ran a very lofty wall, 45

but I never cared to ask what lay beyond it, everything about me was so beautiful. My courtiers called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was, if pleasure be happiness. So I lived, and so I died. And now that I am dead they have set me up here so high that I can see all the ugliness and all the misery of my city, and though my heart is made of lead yet I cannot choose but weep.' 50

'What! is he not solid gold?' said the Swallow to himself. He was too polite to make any personal remarks out loud. 55

The Happy Prince

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