

Y10 Unseen Poetry

English Literature Component 2

Section C



Name:

In both poems people reflect on autumn.

Write about both poems and their effect on you.

You may wish to include some or all of these points:

- *The content – what they are about*
- *The themes – ideas the poet wanted the reader to consider*
- *The atmosphere and mood of the poem*
- *Structure – how the poem is organised*
- *How they are written – words and phrase you find interesting*
- *Your personal response*

When Autumn Came

This is the way that autumn came to the trees:
it stripped them down to the skin,
left their ebony bodies naked.
It shook out their hearts, the yellow leaves,
scattered them over the ground.
Anyone could trample them out of shape
undisturbed by a single moan of protest.

The birds that herald dreams
were exiled from their song,
each voice torn out of its throat.
They dropped into the dust
even before the hunter strung his bow.

Naomi Lazard

Autumn

Autumn arrives
Like an experienced robber
Grabbing the green stuff
Then cunningly covering his tracks
With a deep multitude
Of colourful distractions.
And the wind,
The wind is his accomplice
Putting an air of chaos
Into the careful diversions
So branches shake
And dead leaves are suddenly brown
In the faces of inquisitive strangers.
The theft chills the world
Changes the temper of the earth
Till the normally placid sky
Glowes red with a quiet rage.

Alan Bold

Unseen Poetry

	When Autumn Came	Autumn	similarities	differences
<p>Content: Who? Where? When? What?</p>				
<p>Why do you think the poet wrote this poem?</p>				
<p>What is the mood or atmosphere of the poem? Does it change at any point? Why?</p>				
<p>How has the poet used language cleverly? Similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia, alliteration etc. Think why each technique has been chosen.</p>				
<p>Give your opinion of the poem (three sentences)</p>			<p>Which poem did you prefer and why?</p>	

Blackberry-Picking

By Seamus Heaney

for Philip Hobsbaum

Late August, given heavy rain and sun
For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.
At first, just one, a glossy purple clot
Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.
You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet
Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it
Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for
Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger
Sent us out with milk cans, pea tins, jam-pots
Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots.
Round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills
We trekked and picked until the cans were full,
Until the tinkling bottom had been covered
With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned
Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered
With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.

We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre.
But when the bath was filled we found a fur,
A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.
The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush
The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.
I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair
That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.
Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.

Blackberrying

By Sylvia Plath

Nobody in the lane, and nothing, nothing but blackberries,
Blackberries on either side, though on the right mainly,
A blackberry alley, going down in hooks, and a sea
Somewhere at the end of it, heaving. Blackberries
Big as the ball of my thumb, and dumb as eyes
Ebon in the hedges, fat
With blue-red juices. These they squander on my fingers.
I had not asked for such a blood sisterhood; they must love me.
They accommodate themselves to my milkbottle, flattening their sides.

Overhead go the choughs in black, cacophonous flocks—
Bits of burnt paper wheeling in a blown sky.
Theirs is the only voice, protesting, protesting.
I do not think the sea will appear at all.
The high, green meadows are glowing, as if lit from within.
I come to one bush of berries so ripe it is a bush of flies,
Hanging their bluegreen bellies and their wing panes in a Chinese screen.
The honey-feast of the berries has stunned them; they believe in heaven.
One more hook, and the berries and bushes end.

The only thing to come now is the sea.
From between two hills a sudden wind funnels at me,
Slapping its phantom laundry in my face.
These hills are too green and sweet to have tasted salt.
I follow the sheep path between them. A last hook brings me
To the hills' northern face, and the face is orange rock
That looks out on nothing, nothing but a great space
Of white and pewter lights, and a din like silversmiths
Beating and beating at an intractable metal.

In both poems people reflect on death.

Write about both poems and their effect on you.

You may wish to include some or all of these points:

- *The content – what they are about*
- *The themes – ideas the poet wanted the reader to consider*
- *The atmosphere and mood of the poem*
- *Structure – how the poem is organised*
- *How they are written – words and phrase you find interesting*
- *Your personal response*

Funeral Blues

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,

Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,

Silence the pianos and with muffled drum

Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead

Scribbling on the sky the message 'He Is Dead',

Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,

Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,

My working week and my Sunday rest,

My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;

I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now: put out every one;

Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;

Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood.

For nothing now can ever come to any good.

W. H. Auden

About His Person

Five pounds fifty in change, exactly,
a library card on its date of expiry.

A postcard stamped,
unwritten, but franked,

a pocket size diary slashed with a pencil
from March twenty-fourth to the first of April.

A brace of keys for a mortise lock,
an analogue watch, self-winding, stopped.

A final demand
in his own hand,

a rolled up note of explanation
planted there like a spray carnation

but beheaded, in his fist.
A shopping list.

A giveaway photograph stashed in his wallet,
a keepsake banked in the heart of a locket.

no gold or silver,
but crowning one finger

a ring of white unweathered skin.
That was everything.

Simon Armitage

Unseen Poetry

	Funeral Blues	About His Person	similarities	differences
<p>Content: Who? Where? When? What?</p>				
<p>Why do you think the poet wrote this poem?</p>				
<p>What is the mood or atmosphere of the poem? Does it change at any point? Why?</p>				
<p>How has the poet used language cleverly? Similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia, alliteration etc. Think why each technique has been chosen.</p>				
<p>Give your opinion of the poem (three sentences)</p>			Which poem did you prefer and why?	

You should answer both parts as a full exam-style response. You may use the table to help your planning to start with, if you like.

Both poems reflect on prison life.

PART A

Write about the poem 'In the Can' by Rosie Jackson and its effect on you.

[15]

You may wish to consider:

- what the poem is about and how it is organised;
- the ideas the poet may have wanted us to think about;
- the poet's choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poem.

In the Can

Every second is a fishbone that sticks
In the throat. Every hour another slow
Step towards freedom. We're geriatrics
Waiting for release, bribing time to go.
I've given up trying to make anything
Different happen. Mornings: tabloids, page three.
Afternoons: videos or Stephen King,
Answering letters from relatives who bore me.
We're told not to count, but the days mount here
Like thousands of identical stitches
Resentfully sewn into a sampler,
Or a cricket bat made out of matches.
Nights find me scoring walls like a madman,
Totting up runs: one more day in the can.

Rosie Jackson

PART B

Now compare 'In the Can' and 'Human Interest'

[25]

You should compare:

- what the poems are about and how they are organised;
- the ideas the poets may have wanted us to think about;
- the poets' choice of words, phrases and images and the effects they create;
- how you respond to the poems.

Human Interest

Fifteen years minimum, banged up inside
for what took thirty seconds to complete.
She turned away. I stabbed. I felt this heat
burn through my skull until reason had died.

I'd slogged my guts out for her, but she lied
when I knew different. She used to meet
some prick after work. She stank of deceit.

I loved her. When I accused her, she cried
and denied it. Straight up, tore me apart.
On the Monday, I found the other bloke
had bought her a chain with a silver heart.

When I think about her now, I near choke
with grief. My baby. She wasn't a tart
or nothing. I wouldn't harm a fly, no joke.

Carol Ann Duffy

Unseen Poetry

	In The Can	Human Interest	similarities	differences
<p>Content: Who? Where? When? What?</p>				
<p>Why do you think the poet wrote this poem?</p>				
<p>What is the mood or atmosphere of the poem? Does it change at any point? Why?</p>				
<p>How has the poet used language cleverly? Similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia, alliteration etc. Think why each technique has been chosen.</p>				
<p>Give your opinion of the poem (three sentences)</p>			Which poem did you prefer and why?	

In Mrs Tilscher's Class

You could travel up the Blue Nile
with your finger, tracing the route
while Mrs Tilscher chanted the scenery.
Tana. Ethiopia. Khartoum. Aswan.
That for an hour, then a skittle of milk
and the chalky Pyramids rubbed into dust.
A window opened with a long pole.
The laugh of a bell swung by a running child.
This was better than home. Enthralling books.
The classroom glowed like a sweetshop.
Sugar paper. Coloured shapes. Brady and Hindley
faded, like the faint, uneasy smudge of a mistake.
Mrs Tilscher loved you. Some mornings, you found
she'd left a gold star by your name.
The scent of a pencil slowly, carefully, shaved.
A xylophone's nonsense heard from another form.

Over the Easter term the inky tadpoles changed
from commas into exclamation marks. Three frogs
hopped in the playground, freed by a dunce,
followed by a line of kids, jumping and croaking
away from the lunch queue. A rough boy
told you how you were born. You kicked him, but stared at your parents, appalled, when you got
back home.

That feverish July, the air tasted of electricity.
A tangible alarm made you always untidy, hot,
fractious under the heavy, sexy sky. You asked her
how you were born and Mrs Tilscher smiled,
then turned away. Reports were handed out.
You ran through the gates, impatient to be grown,
as the sky split open into a thunderstorm.

Life doesn't frighten me

Shadows on the wall
Noises down the hall
Life doesn't frighten me at all

Bad dogs barking loud
Big ghosts in a cloud
Life doesn't frighten me at all

Mean old Mother Goose
Lions on the loose
They don't frighten me at all

Dragons breathing flame
On my counterpane
That doesn't frighten me at all.

I go boo
Make them shoo
I make fun
Way they run
I won't cry
So they fly
I just smile
They go wild

Life doesn't frighten me at all.

Tough guys fight
All alone at night
Life doesn't frighten me at all.

Panthers in the park
Strangers in the dark
No, they don't frighten me at all.

That new classroom where

Boys all pull my hair
(Kissy little girls
With their hair in curls)
They don't frighten me at all.

Don't show me frogs and snakes
And listen for my scream,
If I'm afraid at all
It's only in my dreams.

I've got a magic charm
That I keep up my sleeve
I can walk the ocean floor
And never have to breathe.

Life doesn't frighten me at all
Not at all
Not at all.

Life doesn't frighten me at all.

Both poems reflect on being a woman.

Write about both poems and their effect on you.

You may wish to include some or all of these points:

- *The content – what they are about*
- *The themes – ideas the poet wanted the reader to consider*
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Overheard in County Sligo

I married a man from County Roscommon
and I live in the back of beyond
with a field of cows and a yard of hens
and six white geese on the pond.

At my door's a square of yellow corn
caught up by its corners and shaken,
and the road runs down through the open gate
and freedom's there for the taking.

I had thought to work on the Abbey* stage
or have my name in a book,
to see my thought on the printed page,
or still the crowd with a look.

But I turn to fold the breakfast cloth
and to polish the lustre and brass,
to order and dust the tumbled rooms
and find my face in the glass.

I ought to feel I'm a happy woman
for I lie in the lap of the land,
but I married the man from County Roscommon
and I live at the back of beyond.

Gillian Clarke

*Abbey: a famous Dublin theatre

Woman Work

I've got the children to tend
The clothes to mend
The floor to mop
The food to shop
Then the chicken to fry
The baby to dry
I got company to feed
The garden to weed
I've got shirts to press
The tots to dress
The can to be cut
I gotta clean up this hut
Then see about the sick
And the cotton to pick.

Shine on me, sunshine
Rain on me, rain
Fall softly, dewdrops
And cool my brow again.

Storm, blow me from here
With your fiercest wind
Let me float across the sky
'Til I can rest again.

Fall gently, snowflakes
Cover me with white
Cold icy kisses and
Let me rest tonight.

Sun, rain, curving sky
Mountain, oceans, leaf and stone
Star shine, moon glow
You're all that I can call my own.

Maya Angelou

Unseen Poetry

	Overhead in County Sligo	Woman Work	similarities	differences
Content: Who? Where? When? What?				
Why do you think the poet wrote this poem?				
What is the mood or atmosphere of the poem? Does it change at any point? Why?				
How has the poet used language cleverly? Similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia, alliteration etc. Think why each technique has been chosen.				
Give your opinion of the poem (three sentences)			Which poem did you prefer and why?	