1.5 Literature: Poetry Analysis

AQA 7712 · about 200 minutes · Write-in edition

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

Two Original Poems for Unseen Comparison

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POEM A: The Orchard at Closing Time

1

My father counted trees the way most men count coins,
pressing each trunk's bark like a coin he might spend twice.
Sixty Bramleys, forty Coxes, and the one wild seedling
that nobody had asked for, and everybody kept.

2

Now the surveyor's stakes stand where the beehives were,
white flags planted in October mud, and I am told
the orchard will make excellent plots for bungalows,
that fruit, like everything, has had its season.

3

The neighbours say I should be glad of the money,
that four bedrooms and a garage are not to be sniffed at,
and perhaps they are right, though right has never once
tasted of anything, least of all an apple in September.

4

I want to tell the surveyor about the year of hard frost,
how my father wrapped the young trees in his own coats
and walked back to the house bare-armed and laughing,
as if warmth were a debt he could simply forgive himself.

5

Instead I say nothing. I pick an apple, small and sour,

and hold it the way you hold a name you are about to lose,

turning it over, feeling the whole worn weight of it,

before I let the cold air have the last, quiet bite.

POEM B: Nightshift Constellations

1

At 2 a.m. the ward becomes a kind of sky,

each bed a low and steady constellation,

and I am the astronomer who walks between them,

reading pulses like a physicist reads light.

2

Mrs Okafor in Bed Four dreams of her garden,

her fingers moving on the blanket as if weeding

rows that do not exist, and I do not wake her,

I only watch the small, bright work of her hands.

3

Somewhere past the blinds, the city keeps its own quiet vigil,

a lorry changes gear, a fox crosses the empty car park,

and the vending machine hums its one flat note,

patient as a held breath, patient as we are.

4

By four the coffee has gone cold in its paper cup

and my feet have learned the corridor without me,

but Mr Patel in Bed Nine grips my wrist and says thank you,

and for a moment I forget which one of us is tired.

5

When the sun finally climbs over the car park wall,

it finds me switching off the lights one by one,

folding the night into its box like a map

we will not need again until tomorrow.

1 Refer to POEM A, 'The Orchard at Closing Time', for this question.

(a) Identify four words or phrases from across the whole poem that belong to a semantic field of money or economic exchange. **(4)**

(b) Explain how the imagery of coins and counting in stanza 1 shapes the reader's understanding of the father. **(4)**

(c) Explain the effect of the short, caesura-marked sentence 'Instead I say nothing.' in the final stanza. **(3)**

(Total for Question 1 is 11 marks)

2 Refer to POEM A, 'The Orchard at Closing Time', for this question.

(a) Explain how the poet structures the poem to show a shift in the speaker's feelings between stanzas 3 and 4. **(6)**

(b) Explain the effect of the poem's form: five unrhymed quatrains with no regular metre. **(5)**

(Total for Question 2 is 11 marks)

3 Explore how the poet presents ideas about loss and inheritance in 'The Orchard at Closing Time'.

(Total for Question 3 is 12 marks)

4 Refer to POEM B, 'Nightshift Constellations', for this question.

(a) Analyse the effect of the extended metaphor comparing the hospital ward to the night sky in stanza 1. **(5)**

(b) Explain how the poet presents the patients as individuals rather than as an anonymous group. **(5)**

(Total for Question 4 is 10 marks)

5 Refer to POEM B, 'Nightshift Constellations', for this question.

(a) Explain the effect of the personification in stanza 3 ('the city keeps its own quiet vigil', 'the vending machine hums its one flat note, / patient as a held breath'). **(5)**

(b) Explain the effect of the poem's chronological structure, moving from '2 a.m.' in stanza 1 to sunrise in stanza 5. **(5)**

(Total for Question 5 is 10 marks)

6 Explore how the poet presents the value of care and endurance in 'Nightshift Constellations'.

(Total for Question 6 is 12 marks)

7 Refer to both poems for this question.

(a) Compare how the poets use extended metaphor to elevate ordinary work in the two poems. **(6)**

(b) Compare the ways the two speakers respond to an ending: the sale of the orchard in Poem A and the end of the night shift in Poem B. **(6)**

(Total for Question 7 is 12 marks)

8 Compare how imagery of time is used in the two poems to explore ideas about endings and continuity.

(Total for Question 8 is 12 marks)

9 Compare the ways in which structure and form contribute to meaning in the two poems.

(Total for Question 9 is 12 marks)

10 'Both poems ultimately suggest that ordinary lives contain extraordinary dignity.' Comparing the methods used by both poets, discuss how far you agree with this view.

(Total for Question 10 is 25 marks)

11 A reader has suggested: 'The Orchard at Closing Time is really more a poem about guilt than about loss.' Explore this interpretation, analysing the poet's methods.

(Total for Question 11 is 20 marks)

12 A critic has suggested that poems about work often risk sentimentalising hardship. Using both poems, evaluate how far you agree, comparing the methods each poet uses to present labour and endurance.

(Total for Question 12 is 20 marks)

Mark scheme · 1.5 Literature: Poetry Analysis

Question 1

(a) 'coins' / 'counted...coins' (stanza 1) **B1**

(a) 'spend' (stanza 1) **B1**

(a) 'the money' (stanza 3) **B1**

(a) 'debt' (stanza 4); accept any other single word or short phrase clearly from the semantic field of money, oe **B1**

(a) Answer: coins, spend, the money, debt

(b) **L2** Clear explanation of the effect of the coin/counting metaphor (e.g. suggests care disguised as thrift, or a man who values things through careful, repeated attention) with relevant textual support and some comment on connotation. **3-4**

(b) **L1** Simple or general comment on the father counting trees, with little or no reference to the coin imagery or its connotations. **1-2**

(b) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(b) Indicative content:

- The simile 'the way most men count coins' suggests the father's relationship with the trees is habitual and careful, almost ritualistic.
- 'pressing each trunk's bark like a coin he might spend twice' implies a paradox: coins are usually spent once, so this suggests a desire to preserve value rather than use it up, hinting at love expressed through economy of language.
- The specific varietal names (Bramleys, Coxes) and precise numbers (sixty, forty) suggest a practical, detail-oriented character, reinforcing the idea that his affection is shown through diligence rather than sentimentality.
- The 'wild seedling / that nobody had asked for, and everybody kept' introduces a note of unplanned tenderness that complicates the purely transactional coin imagery.

(b) Answer: The coin/counting imagery presents the father as a man who expresses love and care through careful, repeated attention rather than open sentiment; the paradox of 'spending twice' suggests he wants to preserve rather than use up what he values.

(c) **L2** Clear explanation of the effect of the short sentence and caesura (e.g. abrupt full stop enacts the speaker's resignation or suppressed emotion) with reference to the wider stanza. **3**

(c) **L1** General comment that the sentence is short or sad, without developed explanation of the caesura's effect. **1-2**

(c) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(c) Indicative content:

- The mid-line full stop after 'Instead I say nothing' creates an abrupt caesura that mirrors the speaker's own silence, enacting form through content.
- The blunt, very short sentence interrupts the otherwise flowing, enjambed sentences elsewhere in the poem, marking a shift from internal protest to quiet resignation.
- The brevity contrasts with the longer, more discursive sentences about the neighbours and the frost, suggesting words have failed the speaker at the moment of greatest feeling.

(c) Answer: The abrupt caesura enacts the speaker's silence and resignation, contrasting with the longer, flowing sentences elsewhere in the poem.

Question 2

(a) **L3** Clear, well-supported explanation of the structural shift, tracking the movement from the neighbours' communal voice in stanza 3 to the private memory of stanza 4, with apt textual detail. **5-6**

(a) **L2** Some relevant comment on the change between the stanzas with reference to the text, but explanation may be uneven or partial. **3-4**

(a) **L1** Simple or general comment that the poem changes, with little textual support. **1-2**

(a) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(a) Indicative content:

- Stanza 3 presents reported speech ('The neighbours say...') representing outside, communal, pragmatic opinion.
- The rhetorical move 'though right has never once / tasted of anything' signals the speaker's internal resistance beginning to surface, using taste imagery to counter abstract reasoning.
- Stanza 4 turns inward and backward in time ('I want to tell the surveyor about the year of hard frost'), shifting from present-tense communal dialogue to past-tense private memory.
- The enjambment running across stanza 4 ('how my father wrapped... / and walked back... / as if warmth were a debt...') mirrors the flow of unspoken, uninterrupted memory, contrasting with the more clipped syntax of stanza 3.
- This structural pivot from public voice to private recollection prepares the reader for the volta of stanza 5, where the speaker chooses silence over articulation.

(a) Answer: The poem moves from the communal, reported speech of the neighbours to the speaker's private, uninterrupted memory of the father, using a shift in tense, voice and sentence flow to show feeling overtaking argument.

(b) **L3** Perceptive explanation of the effect of the free-verse quatrain form, linking it convincingly to meaning. **5**

(b) **L2** Clear comment on the form with some link to meaning or effect. **3-4**

(b) **L1** Simple identification of the form with little or no explanation of effect. **1-2**

(b) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(b) Indicative content:

- The regular four-line stanzas may echo the ordered rows of an orchard, suggesting a controlled, cultivated world about to be disrupted.
- The absence of rhyme and regular metre gives the poem a conversational, almost prose-like quality, suiting the reflective, first-person narrative voice.
- Enjambment across line and stanza breaks creates a flowing, unresolved quality that mirrors the speaker's unresolved grief and suppressed protest.
- The uniformity of the quatrains across changing subject matter (memory, present reality, dialogue) creates a steady, restrained tone that contains strong emotion beneath a controlled surface.

(b) Answer: The controlled quatrain form suggests order and restraint (echoing the orchard's rows), while the lack of rhyme and metre and frequent enjambment create a flowing, conversational, reflective tone that contains the speaker's suppressed emotion.

Question 3

Level 4 Perceptive, well-developed exploration of loss and inheritance, analysing a range of methods (imagery, structure, form, voice) with sophisticated use of textual detail and critical vocabulary; a coherent, well-organised personal response. **10-12**

Level 3 Clear exploration of loss and inheritance with relevant analysis of methods and appropriate textual support; generally well organised. **7-9**

Level 2 Some relevant comment on loss and/or inheritance with some reference to methods, but analysis may be thin, descriptive, or unevenly developed. **4-6**

Level 1 Simple, general or largely narrative response with limited textual support and little analysis of method. **1-3**

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Indicative content:

- Loss is presented on multiple levels: loss of land (the orchard sold for development), loss of the father (implied through memory and past tense), and loss of a way of life and identity tied to the land.
- The coin/counting metaphor in stanza 1 presents the father's care as an inheritance of practice and attention, later ironically undercut by the literal financial transaction of the sale.
- The wild seedling 'that nobody had asked for, and everybody kept' can be read as a symbol of unplanned inheritance, of things valued precisely because they were not chosen for profit.
- Euphemistic, impersonal language ('excellent plots for bungalows', 'fruit...has had its season') represents the erasure of personal history by commercial and bureaucratic discourse.
- The final image of the apple, held 'the way you hold a name you are about to lose', fuses the physical inheritance (the fruit itself) with the more abstract inheritance of memory and identity, suggesting both may soon be lost.
- The controlled, unrhymed quatrain form and restrained final caesura ('Instead I say nothing.') suggest a stoic, quietly dignified response to loss rather than open lament, which itself may be presented as an inherited trait from the father ('laughing' in the frost).
- Sensory and tactile imagery (bark, frost, the sour apple, cold air) roots abstract ideas of loss and inheritance in the physical world, giving the poem an elegiac, embodied quality.

Question 4

(a) **L3** Perceptive analysis of the extended metaphor, exploring more than one effect with precise textual reference and clear critical vocabulary. **5**

(a) **L2** Clear comment on the metaphor with relevant textual support, though development may be limited to a single effect. **3-4**

(a) **L1** Simple identification of the metaphor with little explanation of effect. **1-2**

(a) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(a) Indicative content:

- 'the ward becomes a kind of sky' and 'each bed a low and steady constellation' elevate an ordinary, clinical setting into something vast, ordered and quietly beautiful.
- Describing the nurse as 'the astronomer who walks between them' suggests distance, precision and reverence, dignifying routine night-time observation as a form of careful study.
- The simile 'reading pulses like a physicist reads light' links medical care to scientific precision and wonder, suggesting patients are treated with the same careful attention as celestial phenomena.
- The steadiness implied by 'low and steady' contrasts with the vulnerability of illness, suggesting a reassuring, ordered calm that the speaker imposes on a potentially frightening night-time environment.

(a) Answer: The astronomy metaphor elevates routine nursing care into something vast and reverent, presenting the ward as an ordered, steady universe and the nurse as a careful, precise observer, dignifying an unglamorous job.

(b) **L3** Clear, well-supported explanation of how individualisation is achieved, with more than one relevant technique identified. **5**

(b) **L2** Relevant comment on individualisation with some textual support, though may focus on only one technique. **3-4**

(b) **L1** Simple or general comment with limited textual reference. **1-2**

(b) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(b) Indicative content:

- Named patients (Mrs Okafor, Mr Patel) with specific bed numbers ('Bed Four', 'Bed Nine') give each figure a distinct identity within the institutional setting.
- Mrs Okafor's dream of gardening, 'her fingers moving on the blanket as if weeding / rows that do not exist', gives her an inner life beyond her patient status, humanising her through specific, tender detail.
- Mr Patel's direct action, gripping the speaker's wrist and saying 'thank you', creates a moment of individual human connection that momentarily reverses the caring roles.
- The specificity of these small, private moments contrasts with the wider, impersonal setting of 'the ward' and 'the corridor', suggesting the nurse's attentiveness restores individuality to those under her care.

(b) Answer: Named patients with specific, tender details (Mrs Okafor's dream of gardening, Mr Patel's grip and words of thanks) give the ward individual human warmth against its otherwise anonymous, institutional backdrop.

Question 5

(a) **L3** Perceptive explanation of the personification, exploring the pun on 'patient' and its link to theme, with precise textual detail. **5**

(a) **L2** Clear comment on the personification with relevant textual support. **3-4**

(a) **L1** Simple or general comment with limited development. **1-2**

(a) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(a) Indicative content:

- Personifying the city as keeping 'its own quiet vigil' extends the poem's central idea of watchful care beyond the ward, suggesting the whole city is engaged in a parallel act of waiting and watching.
- The vending machine's hum described as 'patient as a held breath' plays on the double meaning of 'patient' (the noun, referring to those in hospital beds, and the adjective, meaning enduring calmly), linking the mundane object thematically to the ward's patients.
- The repetition 'patient as a held breath, patient as we are' extends this pun to include the speaker herself, suggesting endurance and quiet waiting unite object, city and staff.
- The mundane images (lorry, fox, vending machine) are treated with the same calm reverence as the ward itself, reinforcing the poem's wider theme that ordinary, unnoticed labour and waiting have quiet dignity.

(a) Answer: The personification extends the poem's theme of watchful patience beyond the ward to the whole sleeping city, and the pun on 'patient' links the vending machine, the speaker and the hospital patients through a shared idea of quiet endurance.

(b) **L3** Clear, well-supported explanation of the effect of the linear time structure, linking it convincingly to theme or tone. **5**

(b) **L2** Relevant comment on the time structure with some link to meaning. **3-4**

(b) **L1** Simple identification of the passage of time with little explanation of effect. **1-2**

(b) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(b) Indicative content:

- The explicit time markers ('At 2 a.m.', 'By four', 'When the sun finally climbs') create a clear linear progression through the night shift, mirroring the real, lived experience of enduring a long, tiring stretch of time.
- This structure builds a sense of gradual exhaustion (cold coffee, feet that have 'learned the corridor without me') that culminates in the moment of connection with Mr Patel, positioned deliberately near the end of the shift.
- The final stanza's arrival of sunrise provides a natural, cyclical resolution, contrasting with the enclosed, static setting of the ward and suggesting renewal after endurance.
- The closing metaphor of 'folding the night into its box like a map / we will not need again until tomorrow' completes the chronological journey with a sense of orderly, cyclical closure, suggesting the shift's end is routine rather than final, unlike the more permanent ending in Poem A.

(b) Answer: The clear chronological markers build a sense of mounting tiredness before the sunrise brings cyclical renewal, and the closing 'folding' metaphor gives the ending a routine, repeatable quality rather than a sense of permanent loss.

Question 6

Level 4 Perceptive, well-developed exploration of care and endurance, analysing a range of methods with sophisticated textual detail and critical vocabulary; coherent, well-organised personal response. **10-12**

Level 3 Clear exploration with relevant analysis of methods and appropriate textual support; generally well organised. **7-9**

Level 2 Some relevant comment with reference to methods, but analysis may be thin or unevenly developed. **4-6**

Level 1 Simple, general or largely narrative response with limited textual support and little analysis of method. **1-3**

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Indicative content:

- Care is elevated through the extended astronomy metaphor, presenting the nurse's watchfulness as precise, dignified and almost sacred ('astronomer', 'reading pulses like a physicist reads light').
- Endurance is conveyed through physical detail: cold coffee, feet that 'have learned the corridor without me', suggesting the body continuing through habit even as the mind tires.
- The individualised patients (Mrs Okafor, Mr Patel) demonstrate that care is reciprocal: Mr Patel's gratitude causes the speaker to 'forget which one of us is tired', collapsing the distinction between carer and cared-for.
- Personification of the city and the vending machine as 'patient' extends the theme of endurance beyond the ward, suggesting quiet perseverance is a wider, shared condition of night-time labour.
- The chronological structure from '2 a.m.' to sunrise embodies endurance formally, with the poem itself 'enduring' through the night alongside its speaker.
- The closing image of 'folding the night into its box like a map' suggests care and endurance are part of an ongoing, cyclical routine rather than a single, dramatic act, giving quiet, repeated labour a sense of dignity and order.
- Contrast between the vastness of the sky metaphor and the smallness of domestic, mundane detail (paper cup, blanket, corridor) suggests that endurance and care are found in the accumulation of small acts rather than grand gestures.

Question 7

(a) **L3** Clear, well-supported comparison of both extended metaphors, identifying genuine similarity and/or difference with apt textual detail from both poems. **5-6**

(a) **L2** Some relevant comparison with reference to both poems, though development may be uneven or one poem may be treated in more depth. **3-4**

(a) **L1** Simple or general comment, possibly on only one poem, with limited comparison. **1-2**

(a) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(a) Indicative content:

- Poem A uses a financial metaphor (counting coins) to elevate orchard farming, suggesting value expressed through careful, repeated attention.
- Poem B uses an astronomical metaphor (the ward as sky, the nurse as astronomer) to elevate night-shift nursing, suggesting value expressed through precision and reverence.
- Both metaphors transform an unglamorous, physical form of labour (farming, nursing) into something with greater significance (financial care/inheritance; cosmic order), inviting the reader to see quiet dignity in unnoticed work.
- A key difference is register: Poem A's metaphor is earthbound and domestic (coins, bark), while Poem B's is expansive and celestial (sky, constellations, physicist), which may reflect the difference between an intimate, single relationship and a wider, communal one.

(a) Answer: Both poems use extended metaphor to dignify ordinary labour, but Poem A grounds this in earthbound, financial imagery suited to a private, familial relationship, while Poem B uses expansive, celestial imagery suited to a wider, more communal caring role.

(b) **L3** Clear, well-supported comparison of the two responses to ending, identifying genuine similarity and/or difference with apt textual detail from both poems. **5-6**

(b) **L2** Some relevant comparison with reference to both poems, though development may be uneven. **3-4**

(b) **L1** Simple or general comment, possibly on only one poem, with limited comparison. **1-2**

(b) **L0** No rewardable material. **0**

(b) Indicative content:

- In Poem A, the ending is final and irreversible: the orchard will be sold and built over, and the speaker responds with silence and quiet resignation ('Instead I say nothing').
- In Poem B, the ending (sunrise, the close of the shift) is cyclical and temporary: the speaker 'folds' the night away 'like a map / we will not need again until tomorrow', implying the shift, and the caring role, will simply begin again.
- Both speakers respond with a kind of quiet acceptance rather than dramatic protest, suggesting a shared theme of stoic dignity in the face of change.
- The key difference is tone: Poem A's ending carries a note of loss and mourning (the sour apple, the 'name you are about to lose'), while Poem B's ending carries a note of renewal and order (the sun, the folded map), reflecting the difference between permanent loss and routine, repeatable labour.

(b) Answer: Both speakers respond to their respective endings with quiet acceptance rather than protest, but Poem A's ending is final and elegiac (loss of the orchard) while Poem B's is cyclical and orderly (the shift will recur), giving the two poems contrasting tones despite similar restraint.

Question 8

Level 4 Perceptive, well-developed comparison of time imagery in both poems, exploring subtle similarities and differences with sophisticated textual detail and critical vocabulary. **10-12**

Level 3 Clear comparison of time imagery with relevant textual support from both poems. **7-9**

Level 2 Some relevant comparative comment with reference to both poems, but analysis may be thin or one-sided. **4-6**

Level 1 Simple, general or largely one-poem response with limited comparison. **1-3**

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Indicative content:

- Poem A moves between past (the father, the frost) and present (the surveyor, the sale), using time imagery to show how the past is threatened with erasure by present-day development ('fruit, like everything, has had its season').
- Poem B moves forward chronologically through a single night, from '2 a.m.' to sunrise, using explicit time markers to build a sense of endurance and eventual renewal.
- Both poems use seasonal or diurnal cycles (autumn/harvest in Poem A; night/day in Poem B) to frame human experience, but Poem A's cycle is disrupted (the orchard's season is ending permanently) while Poem B's cycle is intact and will recur.
- The closing images reflect this contrast: Poem A's apple is 'small and sour' and about to be lost, a symbol of finality, while Poem B's night is 'folded... like a map / we will not need again until tomorrow', a symbol of orderly, temporary pause.
- Both poems use the passage of time to build towards a quiet, restrained emotional climax rather than a dramatic one, suggesting a shared interest in the dignity of enduring rather than resisting time's passage.
- Verb tense supports this contrast: Poem A's use of past tense for the father ('counted', 'wrapped', 'walked back') creates distance and loss, while Poem B's consistent present tense creates immediacy and ongoing continuity.

Question 9

Level 4 Perceptive, well-developed comparison of structure and form, exploring subtle similarities and differences with sophisticated textual detail and critical vocabulary. **10-12**

Level 3 Clear comparison of structure and form with relevant textual support from both poems. **7-9**

Level 2 Some relevant comparative comment with reference to both poems, but analysis may be thin or one-sided. **4-6**

Level 1 Simple, general or largely one-poem response with limited comparison. **1-3**

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Indicative content:

- Both poems share the same form: five unrhymed quatrains, which invites direct comparison of how a shared structural container is used differently.
- In Poem A, the quatrains may echo the ordered rows of an orchard, giving formal shape to a world about to be disrupted by development.
- In Poem B, the quatrains may echo the ordered rows of hospital beds ('each bed a low and steady constellation'), giving formal shape to the ward's steady, watchful order.
- Both poems use enjambment extensively, creating a flowing, conversational quality suited to first-person reflection, though Poem A's enjambment often carries the reader through memory, while Poem B's carries the reader through the passage of time within a single night.
- Both poems place a significant shift or volta in a similar structural position: Poem A's turn to silence occurs in the final stanza ('Instead I say nothing'), and Poem B's turn to connection occurs in the penultimate stanza (Mr Patel's 'thank you'), suggesting both poets reserve their most significant emotional moment for late in the poem.
- The final stanzas of both poems use a controlling image (the apple; the folded map) to bring the poem to a quiet, contained close, though Poem A's image suggests irreversible loss while Poem B's suggests ordered continuation.

Question 10

Level 6 A sophisticated, well-substantiated argument that engages directly and critically with the statement, comparing a wide range of methods across both poems with precise, apt textual detail and assured critical vocabulary; a fluent, well-structured personal response. **21-25**

Level 5 A convincing, clearly argued response to the statement, comparing several methods across both poems with well-chosen textual support; clearly organised. **17-20**

Level 4 A clear response to the statement with relevant comparison of methods and textual support, though development may be less consistent across the two poems. **13-16**

Level 3 Some relevant engagement with the statement and some comparison of the poems, but points may be underdeveloped or the comparison may be limited. **9-12**

Level 2 A largely descriptive or narrative response with limited engagement with the statement and little effective comparison. **5-8**

Level 1 A simple, general response with minimal reference to the poems and no meaningful comparison. **1-4**

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Indicative content:

- Candidates might broadly agree, arguing that both poets use elevating extended metaphor (coins/financial value in Poem A; astronomy in Poem B) to argue that unglamorous, everyday labour (farming, nursing) carries a significance usually reserved for grander subjects.
- Specific, humanising detail (the wild seedling; Mrs Okafor's dream, Mr Patel's gratitude) can be used to argue that dignity is located in small, particular human moments rather than abstract statements.
- Both poems' restrained, controlled form (unrhymed quatrains, understated voltas) could be used to argue that dignity is expressed through quiet endurance rather than dramatic assertion, supporting the statement.
- Stronger responses might complicate or partially challenge the statement: Poem A arguably emphasises loss and erasure as much as dignity, since the orchard's history is ultimately overwritten by 'excellent plots for bungalows', suggesting dignity is fragile or under threat rather than secure.
- Poem B's dignity might be read as more affirmed and continuous (the cyclical ending, the reciprocal moment of thanks), while Poem A's is more elegiac and threatened, meaning the two poems support the statement to different degrees.
- Candidates could question whether 'extraordinary' is the right word for either poem, given both deliberately use understatement and ordinary, domestic diction (coats, coffee, corridors) rather than grand or heightened language, arguing the poems locate dignity precisely in resisting the extraordinary.
- The best responses will use precise, comparative textual evidence throughout and reach a genuine, substantiated judgement on 'how far' they agree, rather than treating the poems in sequence without direct comparison.

Question 11

Level 5 A sophisticated, well-substantiated exploration of the interpretation, analysing a wide range of methods with precise textual detail and assured critical vocabulary; a fluent, well-organised personal response that reaches a clear, justified position. **17-20**

Level 4 A convincing exploration of the interpretation with clear analysis of methods and well-chosen textual support. **13-16**

Level 3 A clear response to the interpretation with relevant analysis of some methods and appropriate textual support. **9-12**

Level 2 Some relevant comment on the interpretation with limited analysis of method and thin textual support. **5-8**

Level 1 A simple, general or largely narrative response with minimal reference to the poem. **1-4**

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Indicative content:

- Candidates might agree that guilt is present: the speaker's silence in the final stanza ('Instead I say nothing') can be read not just as resignation but as a failure to defend the orchard or the father's memory, implying self-reproach.
- The speaker's admission 'I want to tell the surveyor...' followed immediately by 'Instead I say nothing' creates a gap between intention and action that could be read as guilt at inaction, rather than simple sadness at loss.
- The description of the father 'bare-armed and laughing' after giving his coat to protect the trees sets a standard of selfless care that the speaker may feel unable to live up to, especially in accepting the sale.
- However, candidates might argue the poem is more convincingly read as being about loss, since the dominant imagery (the sour apple, the 'name you are about to lose', the surveyor's stakes) centres on absence and ending rather than culpability or wrongdoing.
- A balanced response might argue the poem blends both: loss is the dominant, explicit subject, but an undertone of guilt (at not resisting, at benefiting financially, at outliving the father's values) runs beneath it, particularly in the unresolved tension of stanza 3's 'though right has never once / tasted of anything'.
- Strong responses will support their position throughout with specific, apt textual reference and will address the interpretation directly rather than simply describing the poem's themes in general terms.

Question 12

Level 5 A sophisticated, well-substantiated evaluation that engages directly and critically with the claim, comparing a wide range of methods across both poems with precise textual detail and assured critical vocabulary; reaches a clear, well-justified overall judgement. **17-20**

Level 4 A convincing evaluation of the claim with clear comparison of methods across both poems and well-chosen textual support. **13-16**

Level 3 A clear response to the claim with relevant comparison of some methods and appropriate textual support, though development may be uneven. **9-12**

Level 2 Some relevant comment on the claim with limited comparison and thin textual support. **5-8**

Level 1 A simple, general response with minimal reference to the poems and no meaningful comparison. **1-4**

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Indicative content:

- Candidates might argue both poems risk sentimentality: Poem A's tender image of the father giving his coat to the trees, and Poem B's moment of a grateful patient gripping the speaker's wrist, could both be seen as emotionally engineered moments designed to move the reader.
- However, candidates might counter that both poems undercut potential sentimentality with understatement and restraint: Poem A's final image is a 'small and sour' apple, not a triumphant or idealised one, and the speaker's response is silence rather than open emotion; Poem B's speaker admits practical exhaustion (cold coffee, aching feet) alongside the moment of connection, grounding tenderness in physical reality.
- The precise, unglamorous diction in both poems (bark, mud, coats; paper cup, corridor, blanket) resists sentimentality by keeping the poems rooted in physical, often unflattering detail rather than idealised or abstract language.
- Comparing the two, candidates might argue Poem B is slightly more vulnerable to the charge of sentimentality, given its warmer, more affirming ending (mutual connection, sunrise, renewal), whereas Poem A's harder, more ambiguous ending (silence, a sour apple, implied guilt) resists easy comfort more successfully.
- Strong responses will weigh evidence on both sides before reaching a clear, personal judgement about how far the claim applies to each poem individually and to the pair overall, using well-chosen quotations from both texts throughout.
- The best answers might also note that authorial control of tone (restraint, precise physical detail, absence of explicit emotional commentary) is itself evidence against sentimentality, since sentimentality is usually associated with excess or a lack of authorial distance.