

KEY STAGE FOUR

GCSE English Literature

Unseen Poetry



Name:

Class:

Teacher:



Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Autumn

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

Alan Bold

27

1

In 'Autumn', how does the poet present the effects of the season of autumn?

[24 marks]



Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

On Aging

When you see me sitting quietly,
Like a sack left on the shelf,
Don't think I need your chattering.
I'm listening to myself.
5 Hold! Stop! Don't pity me!
Hold! Stop your sympathy!
Understanding if you got it,
Otherwise I'll do without it!
10 When my bones are stiff and aching,
And my feet won't climb the stair,
I will only ask one favor:
Don't bring me no rocking chair.
When you see me walking, stumbling,
Don't study and get it wrong.
15 'Cause tired don't mean lazy
And every goodbye ain't gone.
I'm the same person I was back then,
A little less hair, a little less chin,
A lot less lungs and much less wind.
20 But ain't I lucky I can still breathe in.

Maya Angelou

27 . 1

In 'On Aging' how does the poet present the speaker's attitudes to growing old?

[24 marks]



Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

The Richest Poor Man in the Valley

On the outside
he seemed older than he was.
His face was like a weather map
full of bad weather
5 while inside
his heart was fat with sun.

With his two dogs
he cleared a thin silver path
across the Black Mountain.
10 And when winter
kicked in
they brought his sheep
down from the top
like sulky clouds.

15 Harry didn't care for things
that other people prize
like money, houses, bank accounts
and lies.
He was living in a caravan
20 until the day he died.

But at his funeral
his friends' tears
fell like a thousand
diamonds.

Lindsay Macrae

27.1

In 'The Richest Poor Man in the Valley', how does the poet present ideas about living a happy and contented life?

[24 marks]



Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

I Am Offering this Poem

I am offering this poem to you,
since I have nothing else to give.
Keep it like a warm coat
when winter comes to cover you,
5 or like a pair of thick socks
the cold cannot bite through,

I love you,

I have nothing else to give you,
so it is a pot full of yellow corn
10 to warm your belly in winter,
it is a scarf for your head, to wear
over your hair, to tie up around your face,

I love you,

Keep it, treasure this as you would
15 if you were lost, needing direction,
in the wilderness life becomes when mature;
and in the corner of your drawer,
tucked away like a cabin or hogan*
in dense trees, come knocking,
20 and I will answer, give you directions,
and let you warm yourself by this fire,
rest by this fire, and make you feel safe

I love you,

It's all I have to give,
25 and all anyone needs to live,
and to go on living inside,
when the world outside
no longer cares if you live or die;
remember,

30 I love you.

*hogan: wooden hut/shelter

Jimmy Santiago Baca

2 7 . 1

In 'I Am Offering this Poem', how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about love?

[24 marks]



Section B: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Shoulders

A man crosses the street in rain,
stepping gently, looking two times north and south,
because his son is asleep on his shoulder.

No car must splash him.

5 No car drive too near to his shadow.

This man carries the world's most sensitive cargo
but he's not marked.
Nowhere does his jacket say FRAGILE,
HANDLE WITH CARE.

10 His ear fills up with breathing.
He hears the hum of a boy's dream
deep inside him.

We're not going to be able
to live in this world

15 if we're not willing to do what he's doing
with one another.

The road will only be wide.
The rain will never stop falling.

Naomi Shihab Nye

0 7 . 1

In 'Shoulders', how does the poet present ideas about the importance of protecting and taking care of each other?

[24 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]



Section B: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

A London Thoroughfare* . 2 A.M.

- They have watered the street,
It shines in the glare of lamps,
Cold, white lamps,
And lies
- 5 Like a slow-moving river,
Barred with silver and black.
Cabs go down it,
One,
And then another.
- 10 Between them I hear the shuffling of feet.
Tramps doze on the window-ledges,
Night-walkers pass along the sidewalks.
The city is squalid and sinister,
With the silver-barred street in the midst,
- 15 Slow-moving,
A river leading nowhere.
- Opposite my window,
The moon cuts,
Clear and round,
- 20 Through the plum-coloured night.
She cannot light the city;
It is too bright.
It has white lamps,
And glitters coldly.
- 25 I stand in the window and watch the moon.
She is thin and lustreless,
But I love her.
I know the moon,
And this is an alien city.

*Thoroughfare: street

Amy Lowell

0 7 . 1

In 'A London Thoroughfare. 2 A.M.' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about the city at night?

[24 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

To a Daughter Leaving Home

When I taught you
at eight to ride
a bicycle, loping along
beside you
5 as you wobbled away
on two round wheels,
my own mouth rounding
in surprise when you pulled
ahead down the curved
10 path of the park,
I kept waiting
for the thud
of your crash as I
sprinted to catch up,
15 while you grew
smaller, more breakable
with distance,
pumping, pumping
for your life, screaming
20 with laughter,
the hair flapping
behind you like a
handkerchief waving
goodbye.

Linda Pastan

27 . 1

In 'To a Daughter Leaving Home', how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about her daughter?

[24 marks]



Section B: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Shoulders

A man crosses the street in rain,
stepping gently, looking two times north and south,
because his son is asleep on his shoulder.

No car must splash him.

5 No car drive too near to his shadow.

This man carries the world's most sensitive cargo
but he's not marked.
Nowhere does his jacket say FRAGILE,
HANDLE WITH CARE.

10 His ear fills up with breathing.
He hears the hum of a boy's dream
deep inside him.

We're not going to be able
to live in this world

15 if we're not willing to do what he's doing
with one another.

The road will only be wide.
The rain will never stop falling.

Naomi Shihab Nye

0 7 . 1

In 'Shoulders', how does the poet present ideas about the importance of protecting and taking care of each other?

[24 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Advice to a Teenage Daughter

You have found a new war-game
called Love.

Here on your dressing-table
stand arrayed
brave ranks of lipsticks
brandishing
swords of cherry pink and flame.
Behold the miniature armies
of little jars,
packed with the scented
dynamite of flowers.
See the dreaded tweezers;
tiny pots
of manufactured moonlight,
stick-on-stars.

Beware my sweet;
conquest may seem easy
but you can't compete with football,
motor-cycles, cars,
cricket, computer games,
or a plate of chips.

ISOBEL THRILLING

0	7	.	1
---	---	---	---

In 'Advice to a Teenage Daughter' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings towards her daughter and young love?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Building Blocks

I have been built out of bullies,
With insults they moulded me.
For a while I walled up my fears,
And hid myself in poetry.

The house of books where I wandered,
In rooms of brain-bright thought,
Sheltered me brick by tender brick,
And the hateful words they taught

I caught and made my own
Confident concrete tower,
To look down on the bullies,
For the pen is a mighty power.

They laughed at the sensitive boy,
And his guttering, spluttering tears,
But bottled up bullies get old and cold,
As they blunder the lonely years.

Oh bully boys that built me,
Don't you know that girls find appealing
Not louts who love to get plastered,
But boys filled up with feeling?

Yes I was the prat that was good for a laugh,
The skinny old git, the swot.
Now I'm living my life with a beautiful wife,
Free from the bully dry rot.

So thank you, bullies that built me,
With all your crumbling hate,
Out of this mess, came a success,
And a man who has mastered his fate.

Andrew Fusek Peters

0	7	1
---	---	---

In 'Building Blocks' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings towards the bullies?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Slow Reader

He can make sculptures
and fabulous machines,
invent games, tell jokes,
give solemn, adult advice –
but he is slow to read.
When I take him on my knee
with his *Ladybird* book
he gazes into the air,
sighing and shaking his head
like an old man
who knows the mountains
are impassable.

He toys with words,
letting them go cold
as gristly meat,
until I relent
and let him wriggle free:
a fish returning
to its element,
or a white-eyed colt – shying
from the bit * – who sees
that if he takes it
in his mouth
he'll never run
quite free again.

VICKI FEAVER

0	7	.	1
---	---	---	---

In 'Slow Reader' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings towards the child and his experience of reading?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Poem For My Sister

My little sister likes to try my shoes,
to strut in them,
admire her spindle-thin twelve-year-old legs
in this season's styles.
She says they fit her perfectly,
but wobbles
on their high heels, they're
hard to balance.

I like to watch my little sister
playing hopscotch,
admire the neat hops-and-skips of her,
their quick peck,
never-missing their mark, not
over-stepping the line.
She is competent at peever.*

I try to warn my little sister
about unsuitable shoes,
point out my own distorted feet, the callouses,**
odd patches of hard skin.
I should not like to see her
in my shoes.
I wish she could stay
sure footed,
sensibly shod.

Liz Lochhead

0	7	1
---	---	---

In 'Poem For My Sister' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings towards her sister?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

A Marriage

You are holding up a ceiling
with both arms. It is very heavy,
but you must hold it up, or else
it will fall down on you. Your arms are tired, terribly tired,
and, as the day goes on, it feels
as if either your arms or the ceiling
will soon collapse.

But then
unexpectedly,
something wonderful happens:
Someone,
a man or a woman,
walks into the room
and holds their arms up
to the ceiling beside you.

So you finally get
to take down your arms.
You feel the relief of respite,
the blood flowing back
to your fingers and arms.
And when your partner's arms tire,
you hold up your own
to relieve him again.

And it can go on like this
for many years
without the house falling.

Michael Blumenthal

0	7	1
---	---	---

In 'A Marriage' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about marriage?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Children In Wartime

Sirens ripped open
the warm silk of sleep;
we ricocheted to the shelter
moated by streets
that ran with darkness.
People said it was a storm,
but flak*
had not the right sound
for rain;
thunder left such huge craters
of silence,
we knew this was no giant
playing bowls.
And later,
when I saw the jaw of glass,
where once had hung
my window spun with stars;
it seemed the sky
lay broken on my floor.

Isobel Thrilling

0	7	.	1
---	---	---	---

In 'Children In Wartime' how does the poet present the ideas about how children are affected by war?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Words

I'm seven, and I'm dead bright,
But words give me a fright.
Words are bullies.
Sneaky things. They gabble and lie.
Sometimes trying to understand
Them makes me cry. Words hurt.
Words are all over the place.
They get shoved in my face.
I don't know why but
Words make me cry.

I wish words were things
You could hug,
Or that they smelt nice.
I wish they came in bottles
Like fizzy drinks, or melted
Like ice-cream. But they don't.
Words are mean. They bully me.
Lock me away
From what I want to say.

I can't even ask for help,
And I'm only seven
(And a bit).
Words spread nasty gossip.
They must. Otherwise why
Would people think I'm thick?

Words.
They make me sick
Inside.

Brian Patten

0 7 . 1

In 'Words' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings towards words?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Words

I'm seven, and I'm dead bright,
But words give me a fright.
Words are bullies.
Sneaky things. They gabble and lie.
Sometimes trying to understand
Them makes me cry. Words hurt.
Words are all over the place.
They get shoved in my face.
I don't know why but
Words make me cry.

I wish words were things
You could hug,
Or that they smelt nice.
I wish they came in bottles
Like fizzy drinks, or melted
Like ice-cream. But they don't.
Words are mean. They bully me.
Lock me away
From what I want to say.

I can't even ask for help,
And I'm only seven
(And a bit).
Words spread nasty gossip.
They must. Otherwise why
Would people think I'm thick?

Words.
They make me sick
Inside.

Brian Patten

0	7	.	1
---	---	---	---

In 'Words' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings towards words?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

The Sea

The sea is a hungry dog.
Giant and grey.
He rolls on the beach all day.
With his clashing teeth and shaggy jaws

Hour upon hour he gnaws
The rumbling, tumbling stones,
And 'Bones, bones, bones, bones!'
The giant sea-dog moans,
Licking his greasy paws.

And when the night wind roars
And the moon rocks in the stormy cloud,
He bounds to his feet and snuffs and sniffs,
Shaking his wet sides over the cliffs,
And howls and hollos* long and loud.

But on quiet days in May or June,
When even the grasses on the dune
Play no more their reedy tune,
With his head between his paws
He lies on the sandy shores,

So quiet, so quiet, he scarcely snores.

James Reeves

*'hollos' : cries or calls used to attract attention or call encouragement

0	7	.	1
---	---	---	---

In 'The Sea' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings towards the sea?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

And Nothing Is Ever As You Want It To Be

You lose your love for her and then
It is her who is lost,
And then it is both who are lost,
And nothing is ever as perfect as you want it to be.

In a very ordinary world
A most extraordinary pain mingles with the small routines,
The loss seems huge and yet
Nothing can be pinned down or fully explained.

You are afraid.
If you found the perfect love
It would scald your hands,
Rip the skin from your nerves,
Cause havoc with a computered heart.

You lose your love for her and then it is her who is lost.
You tried not to hurt and yet
Everything you touched became a wound.
You tried to mend what cannot be mended,
You tried, neither foolish nor clumsy,
To rescue what cannot be rescued.

You failed,
And now she is elsewhere
And her night and your night
Are both utterly drained.

How easy it would be
If love could be brought home like a lost kitten
Or gathered in like strawberries,
How lovely it would be;
But nothing is ever as perfect as you want it to be.

Brian Patten

0 7 . 1

In 'And Nothing Is Ever As You Want' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings towards the love and losing love?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Don't Say I Said

Next time you speak to you-know-who
I've got a message for him.
Tell him that I have lost a stone
Since the last time I saw him.
Tell him that I've got three new books
Coming out soon, but play it
Cool, make it sound spontaneous.
Don't say I said to say it.

He might ask if I've mentioned him.
Say I have once, in passing.
Memorise everything he says
And, no, it won't be grassing
When you repeat his words to me –
It's the only way to play it.
Tell him I'm toned and tanned and fine.
Don't say I said to say it.

Say that serenity and grace
Have taken root inside me.
My top-note is frivolity
But beneath, dark passions guide me.
Tell him I'm radiant and replete
And add that every day it
Seems I am harder to resist.
Don't say I said to say it.

Tell him that all my ancient faults
Have been eradicated.
I do not carp or analyse
As I might have when we dated.
Say I'm not bossy any more
Or, better still, convey it
Subtly, but get the point across.
Don't say I said to say it.

Sophie Hannah

0 7

1

In 'Don't Say I Said' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings towards their ex-partner?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Frost

Frost the jailer
locks each ditch
and pool and pond
and slams the door
on moving water.

Frost the jeweller
fingers each gem
at the leaf's tip
keen to account
for every drip.

Frost the miser
hoards the silver
leaves of winter
in dark hollows
under beech and poplar.

Frost the odd-job man
does up the garden
renewing each post
and leaning fence
at minimum cost.

Frost the magician
binds the day
in a silver spell
draping in white
fold and fell.

Frost the old man
who might not see April
taps with his white
stick in the garden
not feeling right.

Robert Hull

0 7 • 1 In 'Frost' how does the poet present the effects of the cold weather?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

First Love

Falling in love was like falling down the stairs
Each stair had her name on it
And he went bouncing down each one like a tongue-tied lunatic
One day of loving her was an ordinary year
He transformed her into what he wanted
And the scent from her
Was the best scent in the world
Fifteen he was fifteen
Each night he dreamed of her
Each day he telephoned her
Each day was unfamiliar
Scary even
And the fear of her going weighed on him like a stone
And when he could not see her for two nights running
It seemed a century had passed
And meeting her and staring at her face
He knew he would feel as he did forever
Hopelessly in love
Sick with it
And not even knowing her second name yet
It was the first time
The best time
A time that would last forever
Because it was new
Because he was ignorant it could ever end
It was endless

Brian Patten

- 0 7 . 1 In 'First Love' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about falling in love?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Blessing

The skin cracks like a pod.
There never is enough water.

Imagine the drip of it,
the small splash, echo
in a tin mug,
the voice of a kindly god.

Sometimes, the sudden rush
of fortune. The municipal pipe bursts,
silver crashes to the ground
and the flow has found
a roar of tongues. From the huts,
a congregation: every man, woman,
child, for streets around
butts in, with pots,
brass, copper, aluminium,
plastic buckets,
frantic hands,

and naked children
screaming in the liquid sun
their highlights polished to perfection,
flashing light,
as the blessing sings
over their small bones

Imtiaz Dharker

0 7 . 1 In 'Blessing' how does the poet present ideas about the importance of water?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Love After Love

The time will come
when, with elation
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror
and each will smile at the other's welcome,

and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you

all your life, whom you ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,

the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.

Derek Walcott

0	7
---	---

 .

1

 In 'Love After Love' how does the poet present the speaker's hope for the future?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Thirteen

You will be four minutes from home
when you are cornered by an officer
who will tell you of a robbery, forty
minutes ago in the area. *You fit
the description of a man?* – You'll laugh.
Thirteen, you'll tell him: you're thirteen.

You'll be patted on the shoulder, then, by another fed
whose face takes you back to Gloucester Primary School,
a Wednesday assembly about *being little stars*.
This same officer had an horizon in the east
of his smile when he told your class that
you were all *supernovas*,
the biggest and brightest stars.

You will show the warmth of your teeth
praying he remembers the heat of your supernova;
he will see you powerless – plump.
You will watch the two men cast lots for your organs.

Don't you remember me? you will ask.
You gave a talk at my primary school.
While fear condenses on your lips,
you will remember that Wednesday, after the assembly,
your teacher speaking more about supernovas:
how they are, in fact, dying stars
on the verge of becoming black holes.

Caleb Femi

0 7 . 1

In 'Thirteen' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings towards the police and ideas about being a teenager?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Things I Have Stolen

From the highest shelf
my tiptoes could reach me
I stole a Mars bar & Haribo sweets.
It wasn't a big deal: Mum said
their prices were a robbery anyway.

Later years, Marusha stole my heart,
jerked it out through the ribcage.
In desperation I stole another,
then another. Then a few more:
Fatima, Rihanna, Andrea.
Better to have and not need, I thought,
than need and not have.

Aylesbury estate, I saw Kevin steal Frank's
white Air Force Ones. Do you know how long
it takes a fourteen-year-old yout to save
enough Ps to buy those trainers?
Kevin stole Frank's soul, plucked it
like fruit in a swaying tree.

And I thought, what a game changer:
if Kevin can steal a soul, what else can be stolen?
So I stole the flavour from water
and I stole the solar eclipse.

Then I stole my torn name from the mouth
of the policeman who stops
and searches me
every week. Stole hunger pangs
from underneath our bed, at night.

Six years went by. At Kevin's funeral
I reached into the air
and stole the family's grief

Caleb Femi

0 7 . 1 In 'Things I Have Stolen' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings towards stealing and life in general?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

The Breather

Just as in the horror movies
when someone discovers that the phone calls
are coming from inside the house

so too, I realized
that our tender overlapping
has been taking place only inside me.

All that sweetness, the love and desire—
it's just been me dialing myself
then following the ringing to another room

to find no one on the line,
well, sometimes a little breathing
but more often than not, nothing.

To think that all this time—
which would include the boat rides,
the airport embraces, and all the drinks—

it's been only me and the two telephones,
the one on the wall in the kitchen
and the extension in the darkened guest room upstairs.

Billy Collins

0 7 . 1

In 'December how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about unrequited love?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

How to Triumph Like a Girl

I like the lady horses best,
how they make it all look easy,
like running 40 miles per hour
is as fun as taking a nap, or grass.
I like their lady horse swagger,
after winning. Ears up, girls, ears up!
But mainly, let's be honest, I like
that they're ladies. As if this big
dangerous animal is also a part of me,
that somewhere inside the delicate
skin of my body, there pumps
an 8-pound female horse heart,
giant with power, heavy with blood.
Don't you want to believe it?
Don't you want to lift my shirt and see
the huge beating genius machine
that thinks, no, it knows,
it's going to come in first.

Ada Limon

0 7 . 1

In 'How to Triumph Like a Girl' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about believing in yourself?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

The Good Life

When some people talk about money
They speak as if it were a mysterious lover
Who went out to buy milk and never
Came back, and it makes me nostalgic
For the years I lived on coffee and bread,
Hungry all the time, walking to work on payday
Like a woman journeying for water
From a village without a well, then living
One or two nights like everyone else
On roast chicken and red wine.

Tracy K Smith

0	7	.	1
---	---	---	---

In 'The Good Life' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about money and hunger?

[24 marks]

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Brothers

Saddled with you for the afternoon, me and Paul
ambled across the threadbare field to the bus stop,
talking over Sheffield Wednesday's chances in the Cup
while you skipped beside us in your ridiculous tank-top,
spouting six-year-old views on Rotherham United.

Suddenly you froze, said you hadn't any bus fare.
I sighed, said you should go and ask Mum
and while you windmilled home I looked at Paul.
His smile, like mine, said I was nine and he was ten
and we must stroll the town, doing what grown-ups do.

As a bus crested the hill we chased Olympic Gold.
Looking back I saw you spring towards the gate,
your hand holding out what must have been a coin.
I ran on, unable to close the distance I'd set in motion.

Andrew Forster

0	7	.	1
---	---	---	---

In 'Brothers' how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about his brother?

[24 marks]