QUESTION 3: PRESCRIBED POETRY – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

A HARD FROST – Cecil Day Lewis

A frost came in the night and stole my world
And left this changeling for it – a precocious
Image of spring, too brilliant to be true:
White lilac on the windowpane, each grass-blade
Furred like a catkin, maydrift loading the hedge.
The elms behind the house are elms no longer
But blossomers in crystal, stems of the mist
That hangs yet in the valley below, amorphous
As the blind tissue whence creation formed.
The sun looks out, and the fields blaze with diamonds.
Mockery spring, to lend this bridal gear
For a few hours to a raw country maid,
Then leave her all disconsolate with old fairings
Of aconite and snowdrop! No, not here
Amid this flounce and filigree of death
Is the real transformation scene in progress
But deep below where frost
Worrying the stiff clods unclenches their
Grip on the seed and lets our future breathe.

3.1 Why does the speaker refer to the frost as 'precocious' in line 2? (2)

3.2 How is the brilliance of that Winter morning captured in lines 7–10? (2)

3.3 Critically discuss the effect of the image in lines 11–14. Refer to the tone in your response. (3)

3.4 'Real transformation' (line 16) is extraordinary. Critically comment on how this is shown in the poem. (3)
[10]

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QUESTION 4: PRESCRIBED POETRY – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

AN AFRICAN THUNDERSTORM – David Rubadiri

From the west
Clouds come hurrying with the wind
Turning
Sharply
Here and there
Like a plague of locusts
Whirling
Tossing up things on its tail
Like a madman chasing nothing.
Pregnant clouds
Ride stately on its back
Gathering to perch on hills
Like dark sinister wings;
The Wind whistles by
And trees bend to let it pass.
In the village
Screams of delighted children
Toss and turn
In the din of the whirling wind,
Women –
Babies clinging on their backs –
Dart about
In and out
Madly
The Wind whistles by
Whilst trees bend to let it pass.
Clothes wave like tattered flags
Flying off
To expose dangling breasts
As jagged blinding flashes
Rumble, tremble, and crack
Amidst the smell of fired smoke
and the pelting march of the storm.

4.1 How does the simile in line 6 contribute to your understanding of the poem? (2)

4.2 Explain the use of the capital letter in the following line:
'The Wind whistles by' (lines 14 and 25). (2)

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4.3 Critically discuss how the use of the short lines convey the effect of the wind. (3)

4.4 The approaching thunderstorm with the promise of rain should be considered a blessing in African society. Critically comment on how this idea is subverted in the poem. Refer to the tone in your response. (3)
[10]

UNSEEN POETRY: The following question is compulsory.

QUESTION 5: UNSEEN POETRY – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

a teaching fantasy – Margaret Hatcher

I teach.
Ideas and words are my business.
I toss them into the air
and watch them float
softly
as autumn leaves
(though with much less color
and grace)

They float around your heads.
drift in piles on your desk tops.
glide along your sleeves
and whisper – dance
around your ears.

Someday
one may catch your attention
and inspire you with its colour –
at least for a season

5.1 Explain the comparison used in the stanza 1. (2)

5.2 Suggest how the structure of the poem is appropriate to the season of autumn. (2)

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5.3 Refer to stanza 2. Explain critically how the diction reveals the speaker's attitude. (3)

5.4 Refer to the last line of the poem and comment on its appropriateness in the context of the poem. Consider the tone in your response. (3)
[10]

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