QUESTION 1: PRESCRIBED POETRY – ESSAY QUESTION

somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
– ee cummings

somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence:
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

your slightest look easily will unclose me
though i have closed myself as fingers,
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens
(touching skillfully, mysteriously) her first rose

or if you wish to be close to me, i and
my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,
as when the heart of this flower imagines
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals
the power of your intense fragility: whose texture
compels me with the colour of its countries,
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens; only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all the roses)
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands

Cummings once commented that 'love is the mystery-of-mysteries'.

Critically discuss to what extent this view of love is evident in the poem by referring to the **paradoxes**, **imagery** and **tone**.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 250–300 words (1–1½ pages). **[10]**

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QUESTION 2: PRESCRIBED POETRY – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

VULTURES – Chinua Achebe

In the greyness
and drizzle of one despondent
dawn unstirred by harbingers
of sunbreak a vulture
perching high on broken
bones of a dead tree
nestled close to his
mate his smooth
bashed-in head, a pebble
on a stem rooted in
a dump of gross
feathers, inclined affectionately
to hers. Yesterday they picked
the eyes of a swollen
corpse in a water-logged
trench and ate the
things in its bowel. Full
gorged they chose their roost
keeping the hollowed remnant
in easy range of cold
telescopic eyes...
Strange
indeed how love in other
ways so particular
will pick a corner
in that charnel-house
tidy it and coil up there, perhaps
even fall asleep – her face
turned to the wall!

...Thus the Commandant at Belsen
Camp going home for
the day with fumes of
human roast clinging
rebelliously to his hairy
nostrils will stop
at the wayside sweet-shop
and pick up a chocolate
for his tender offspring
waiting at home for Daddy's
return...
Praise bounteous
providence if you will
that grants even an ogre
a tiny glow-worm
tenderness encapsulated
in icy caverns of a cruel
heart or else despair

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48	for in the very germ
49	of that kindred love is
50	lodged the perpetuity
51	of evil.

2.1 How does the alliteration in line 2 contribute to the atmosphere? (2)

2.2 What does the speaker find 'Strange' in line 22? (2)

2.3 Comment on the contrast between the physical description of the Commandant and his interaction with his child. (3)

2.4 Refer to lines 48–51: 'for in the very germ of that kindred love is lodged the perpetuity of evil'.

Critically comment on the parallel drawn between the vultures and the Commandant at Belsen. (3)

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