

SECTION A: Post-2000 Poetry

Answer ONE question from Section A.

You must select your second poem from the prescribed poems listed in the Source Insert on page 2.

Write your answer in the space provided.

EITHER

- 1 Compare the ways in which poets explore regret in *Effects* and **one** other poem of your choice from *Poems of the Decade: An Anthology of the Forward Books of Poetry 2002 – 2011*.

In your answer, you should consider the following:

• regret in failure to come to the aid of a loved one

- the poets' development of themes
- the poets' use of language and imagery
- the use of other poetic techniques.

(Total for Question 1 = 25 marks)

OR

- 2 Compare the ways in which poets present people coping with difficulties in *Please Hold* and **one** other poem of your choice from *Poems of the Decade: An Anthology of the Forward Books of Poetry 2002 – 2011*.

In your answer, you should consider the following:

- the poets' development of themes
- the poets' use of language and imagery
- the use of other poetic techniques.

(Total for Question 2 = 25 marks)

PH
• difficulty in getting what he wants
• Frustration
• future - regression
• lack of feeling
• understanding in robot
• No solution

OH B
• difficulty in illness
• Reshaping
• lack of empathy
• Death



Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

25secA

Chosen question number: Question 1 ☒ Question 2 ☒

In 'Please Hold', Cavan O'Driscoll presents a bleak representation of the future ~~where~~ in which one's daily life is dictated by machines. O'Driscoll deals with the difficulties faced by the persona in the simple act of withdrawing money from a bank account, made nearly impossible by the involvement of technology in the form of a robot. 'On Her Blindness' by Idune Thorpe describes a very different form of difficulty one brought about by debilitating illness and disability. The subject of the poem is Thorpe's mother, whose blindness renders daily life difficult.

There is a clear distinction in the two types of difficulty faced by the persona's in the two poems. O'Driscoll writes about the hardships faced by those living in the somewhat near future, emphasised by the repetition of "This is the future." 'On Her Blindness' on the other hand presents the difficulties of living with disability. The despair of the mother is conveyed through the alliteration of phrases in "could not bear being blind." This creates a poignant effect and ~~as~~ emphasises the sheer



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difficulty of surviving through the "living hell" she has to go through ~~and~~ everyday. There is the idea that mundane, everyday tasks such as eating and simply walking around are rendered impossible by the mother's illness. Thorpe offers up a challenge to "try it / in a pitch black room," the accusatory tone conveying the impossibility of these regular activities. A similar sense of frustration is conveyed through in 'Please Hold' in that "the robot is giving me countless options, / none of which answer my needs." There is a sense of futility in the speaker's attempts to convey to the robot what he wants. The repetition of the line "And I'm talking to a robot on the phone" presents this frustration, in how, after the entire discourse with the robot, the speaker is back in the same position. This stagnation is further emphasised through the repetition of "Eine kleine Nachtmusik. Please Hold," suggesting no end to this difficulty and how trapped in a cycle of impotence and dissatisfaction.

An aspect of ~~the~~ the difficulty faced by the two personas in the two poems is that it is partly contributed to by the lack of empathy and understanding from others. In 'Please Hold' it



is the lack of understanding in the robot to fulfill the speaker's needs. This is conveyed through the unnecessary use of hyperbolic language by the robot, such as "Great" and "Wonderful." The absurdity of using such language to describe such a mundane transaction is conveyed through the speaker's sarcastic mockery that he has a "wonderful telephone number and a great account number." The lack of understanding is depicted as being born out of a breakdown in communication, rendering words meaningless in the future. It contributes to the speaker's mounting frustration and paints a very bleak image of the future, which seems to be founded on regression rather than progress. The mother in 'On Her Blindness' experiences similar difficulty in the lack of empathy she receives from others, such as how her husband "joked" that she has "No built-in compass." The trivialising of her illness suggests a lack of understanding which leaves the mother very much alone in her struggle, exacerbating the difficulty she faces. Thorpe admits to struggling to appear her with comforting words in how he fails to comfort her with anything but "the usual sop, inadequate." Therefore, Thorpe suggests that her difficulty isolates



her from the understanding ~~of~~ of others, rather than living ~~in~~ with the complete absence of understanding, such as what is portrayed in the predicament in 'Please Hold', where even the humans, ironically, are "just as robotic" as the robots themselves.

~~There~~ 'Please Hold' does not provide any solution as to how one would alleviate the difficulty of living in the stagnation of the future, which is ~~entirely~~ ^{more} conveyed through the progressively life less meaning of 'Please hold. Please grow old. Please grow cold', other than to endure it. 'On Her Blindness', similarly does not offer the mother any alleviation of her pain, the only release being ~~the~~ death. Thorpe presents the conventional and rather clichéd idea that through death his mother's sight is restored so that she may be whole in the afterlife. Thorpe imagines that "she was watching, somewhere, in the end," the ambiguity of where exactly this 'somewhere' is conveying the dilemma of whether or not she will receive an end to her suffering. In this way, both poems present rather pessimistic views on suffering and difficulty, failing to find a suitable end to the

Question Number 2	Indicative Content
	<p><i>Please Hold</i></p> <p>All reasonable and relevant interpretations of 'people coping with difficulties' should be rewarded. A pertinent choice of second poem might be <i>An Easy Passage</i> by Julia Copus.</p> <p>Students may include the following in their answers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • both poems deal with a difficult situation: an older person trying to cope with modern technology in <i>Please Hold</i> and the girl making her way into her family's house without a key in <i>An Easy Passage</i> • the irony of both titles: <i>Please Hold</i> becomes an annoying mantra; <i>An Easy Passage</i> involves a fear of heights and falling • contrasts: the frustration of the speaker in <i>Please Hold</i>, in contrast to the smooth talking of the robotic machine, produces some sardonic comedy; the observer in <i>An Easy Passage</i> sees painted toenails and a graceful drop in contrast to the trickiness of the manoeuvres described earlier • the language in <i>Please Hold</i> is concrete and realistic with little that can be called figurative or 'imagery' in the traditional sense of similes, metaphors etc.; in <i>An Easy Passage</i> we have 'the long, grey eye of the street' and 'the warm flank of the house' to aid the description of the girls' escapade • the rhythms of both poems: the rhythmic repetition of <i>Please Hold</i> with three or four metric feet to a line, and the irregular iambic pentameter of <i>An Easy Passage</i>: particular lines might be indicated to show their effect • the broader themes: <i>Please Hold</i> uses the robotic answering service as a model for a changing, and unhelpful, world in which the speaker is growing old. <i>An Easy Passage</i> reflects on the way 'the world admits us less and less/the more we grow'.

Please refer to the specific marking guidance on page 2 when applying this marking grid.				
Level	Mark	AO1 = bullet point 1	AO2 = bullet point 2	AO4 = bullet point 3,4
	0	No rewardable material.		
Level 1	1 – 5	Descriptive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes little reference to texts with limited organisation of ideas. Limited use of appropriate concepts and terminology with frequent errors and lapses of expression. • Uses a narrative or descriptive approach that shows limited knowledge of texts and how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows a lack of understanding of the writer's craft. • Demonstrates limited awareness of connections between texts. • Describes the texts as separate entities. 		
Level 2	6 – 10	General understanding/exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes general points, identifying some literary techniques with general explanation of effects. Aware of some appropriate concepts and terminology. Organises and expresses ideas with clarity, although still has errors and lapses. • Gives surface readings of texts relating to how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows general understanding by commenting on straightforward elements of the writer's craft. • Identifies general connections between texts. • Makes general cross-references between texts. 		
Level 3	11 – 15	Clear relevant application/exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a clear response using relevant textual examples. Relevant use of terminology and concepts. Creates a logical, clear structure with few errors and lapses in expression. • Demonstrates knowledge of how meanings are shaped in texts with consistent analysis. Shows clear understanding of the writer's craft. • Makes relevant connections between texts. • Develops an integrated approach with clear examples. 		
Level 4	16 – 20	Discriminating controlled application/exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructs a controlled argument with fluently embedded examples. Discriminating use of concepts and terminology. Controls structures with precise cohesive transitions and carefully chosen language. • Demonstrates discriminating understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts. Analyses, in a controlled way, the nuances and subtleties of the writer's craft. • Analyses connections between texts. • Takes a controlled discriminating approach to integration with detailed examples. 		
Level 5	21 – 25	Critical and evaluative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a critical evaluative argument with sustained textual examples. Evaluates the effects of literary features with sophisticated use of concepts and terminology. Uses sophisticated structure and expression. • Exhibits a critical evaluation of the ways meanings are shaped in texts. Displays a sophisticated understanding of the writer's craft. • Evaluates connections between texts. • Exhibits a sophisticated connective approach with sophisticated use of examples. 		