

**Paper Reference(s) 4EA1/02R**  
**Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1)**

**English Language A**  
**PAPER 2: Poetry and Prose Texts and**  
**Imaginative Writing**

**Monday 12 June 2023 – Morning**

**Time: 1 hour 30 minutes**

**Source Booklet**

**DO NOT RETURN THIS BOOKLET WITH  
THE QUESTION PAPER.**

**Read the following extract carefully and then answer Section A in the Question Paper.**

## **Significant Cigarettes (from The Road Home)**

On the coach, Lev chose a seat near the back and he sat huddled against the window, staring out at the land he was leaving: at the fields of sunflowers scorched by the dry wind, at the pig farms, at the quarries and rivers and at the wild garlic growing green at the edge of the road. 5 10

Lev wore a leather jacket and jeans and a leather cap pulled low over his eyes and his handsome face was grey-toned from his smoking and in his hands he clutched an old red cotton handkerchief and a dented pack of Russian cigarettes. He would soon be forty-three. 15

**(continued on the next page)**

**Turn over**

After some miles, as the sun came up,  
 Lev took out a cigarette and stuck it 20  
 between his lips, and the woman sitting  
 next to him, a plump, contained person  
 with moles like splashes of mud on her  
 face, said quickly: 'I'm sorry, but there is  
 no smoking allowed on this bus.' 25

Lev knew this, had known it in advance,  
 had tried to prepare himself mentally  
 for the long agony of it. But even an  
 unlit cigarette was a companion –  
 something to hold on to, something that 30  
 had promise in it – and all he could be  
 bothered to do now was to nod, just to  
 show the woman that he'd heard what  
 she'd said, reassure her that he wasn't  
 going to cause trouble; because there 35  
 they would have to sit for fifty hours or  
 more, side by side with their separate  
 aches and dreams, like a married couple.  
 They would hear each other's snores  
 and sighs, smell the food and drink each 40  
 had brought with them, note the degree  
 to which each was fearful or unafraid,  
 make short forays into conversation.  
 (continued on the next page) Turn over

And then later, when they finally arrived  
 in London, they would probably separate 45  
 with barely a word or a look, walk out  
 into a rainy morning, each alone and  
 beginning a new life. And Lev thought  
 how all of this was odd but necessary  
 and already told him things about the 50  
 world he was travelling to, a world in  
 which he would break his back working  
 – if only that work could be found. He  
 would hold himself apart from other  
 people, find corners and shadows in 55  
 which to sit and smoke, demonstrate  
 that he didn't need to belong, that his  
 heart remained in his own country.

There were two coach-drivers. These  
 men would take turns to drive and to 60  
 sleep. There was an on-board lavatory,  
 so the only stops the bus would make  
 would be for gas. At gas stations, the  
 passengers would be able to clamber off,  
 walk a few paces, see wild flowers on a 65  
 verge, soiled paper among bushes, sun  
 or rain on the road. They might stretch  
 up their arms, put on dark glasses  
 (continued on the next page) Turn over

against the onrush of nature's light,  
 look for a clover leaf, smoke and stare 70  
 at the cars rushing by. Then they would  
 be herded back onto the coach, resume  
 their old attitudes, arm themselves for  
 the next hundred miles, for the stink of  
 another industrial zone, or the sudden 75  
 gleam of a lake, for rain and sunset  
 and the approach of darkness on silent  
 marshes. There would be times when the  
 journey would seem to have no end.

Sleeping upright was not something 80  
 Lev was practised in. The old seemed  
 to be able to do it, but forty-two was not  
 yet old. Lev's father, Stefan, sometimes  
 used to sleep upright, in summer, on a  
 hard wooden chair in his lunch break 85  
 at the Baryn sawmill, with the hot  
 sun falling onto the slices of sausage  
 wrapped in paper on his knee and onto  
 his flask of tea. Both Stefan and Lev  
 could sleep lying down on a mound of 90  
 hay or on the mossy carpet of a forest.  
 Often, Lev had slept on a rag rug beside  
 his daughter's bed, when she was ill  
 (continued on the next page) Turn over



or afraid. And when his wife, Marina,  
 was dying, he'd lain for five nights on 95  
 an area of linoleum flooring no wider  
 than his outstretched arm, between  
 Marina's hospital bed and a curtain  
 patterned with pink and purple daisies,  
 and sleep had come and gone in a 100  
 mystifying kind of way, painting strange  
 pictures in Lev's brain that had never  
 completely vanished.

Towards evening, after two stops  
 for gas, the mole-flecked woman 105  
 unwrapped a hard-boiled egg. She  
 peeled it silently. The smell of the egg  
 reminded Lev of the sulphur springs  
 at Jor, where he'd taken Marina, just in  
 case nature could cure what man had 110  
 given up for lost. Marina had immersed  
 her body obediently in the scummy  
 water, lain there looking at a female  
 stork returning to its high nest, and said  
 to Lev: 'If only we were storks.' 115

'Why d'you say that?' Lev had asked.

(continued on the next page)

Turn over

**‘Because you never see a stork dying.  
It’s as though they didn’t die.’**

# If only we were storks.

**On the woman's knee a clean cotton napkin was spread and her white hands smoothed it and she unwrapped rye bread and a twist of salt.**

**‘My name is Lev,’ said Lev.**

**‘My name is Lydia,’ said the woman. And 125**  
**they shook hands, Lev’s hand holding**  
**the scrunched-up kerchief, and Lydia’s**  
**hand rough with salt and smelling of**  
**egg, and then Lev asked: ‘What are you**  
**planning to do in England?’ and Lydia 130**  
**said: ‘I have some interviews in London**  
**for jobs as a translator.’**

## ‘That sounds promising.’

**‘I hope so. I was a teacher of English at  
School 237 in Yarbl, so my language is  
very colloquial.’**

**(continued on the next page)**

**135**

**Turn over**

Lev looked at Lydia. It wasn't difficult to imagine her standing in front of a class and writing words on a blackboard. He said: 'I wonder why you're leaving our country when you had a good job at School 237 in Yarbl?' 140

'Well,' said Lydia. 'I became very tired of the view from my window. Every day, summer and winter, I looked out at the school yard and the high fence and the apartment block beyond, and I began to imagine I would die seeing these things, and I didn't want this. I expect you understand what I mean?' 145 150

Lev took off his leather cap and ran his fingers through his thick grey hair. He saw Lydia turn to him for a moment and look very seriously into his eyes. He said: 'Yes, I understand.' 155

Then there was a silence, while Lydia ate her hard-boiled egg. She chewed very quietly. When she'd finished the



egg, Lev said: 'My English isn't too bad. I took some classes in Baryn, but my teacher told me my pronunciation wasn't very good. May I say some words and you can tell me if I'm pronouncing them correctly?' 160

'Yes, of course,' said Lydia. 165

Lev said: 'Lovely. Sorry. I am legal. How much please. Thank you. May you help me.'

'May I help you,' corrected Lydia.

'May I help you,' repeated Lev. 170

'Go on,' said Lydia.

'Stork,' said Lev. 'Stork's nest. Rain. I am lost. I wish for an interpreter. Bee-and-bee.'

**‘Be-and-be?’ said Lydia. ‘No, no. You mean “to be, or not to be”’. 175**

**‘No,’ said Lev. ‘Bee-and-bee. Family hotel, quite cheap.’**

**‘Oh, yes, I know. B & B.’**

**Lev could now see that darkness was 180  
falling outside the window and he thought  
how, in his village, darkness had always  
arrived in precisely the same way, from  
the same direction, above the same trees,  
whether early or late, whether in summer, 185  
winter or spring, for the whole of his life.  
This darkness – particular to that place,  
Auror – was how, in Lev’s heart, darkness  
would always fall.**

**And so he told Lydia that he came from 190  
Auror, had worked in the Baryn sawmill  
until it closed two years ago, and since  
then he’d found no work at all and his  
family – his mother, his five-year-old  
daughter and he – had lived off the 195  
money his mother made selling jewellery  
(continued on the next page) Turn over**

manufactured from tin.

‘Oh,’ said Lydia. ‘I think that’s very resourceful, to make jewellery from tin.’

‘Sure,’ said Lev. ‘But it isn’t enough.’ 200

Tucked into his boot was a small flask of vodka. He extracted the flask and took a long swig. Lydia kept eating her rye bread. Lev wiped his mouth with the red handkerchief and saw his face reflected in the coach window. He looked away. Since the death of Marina, he didn’t like to catch sight of his own reflection, because what he always saw in it was his own guilt at still being alive. 205 210

‘Why did the sawmill at Baryn close?’ asked Lydia.

‘They ran out of trees,’ said Lev.

‘Very bad,’ said Lydia. ‘What other work can you do?’ 215

(continued on the next page)

Turn over

Lev drank again. Someone had told him  
 that in England vodka was too expensive  
 to drink. Immigrants made their own  
 alcohol from potatoes and tap water,  
 and when Lev thought about these 220  
 industrious immigrants, he imagined  
 them sitting by a coal fire in a tall house,  
 talking and laughing, with rain falling  
 outside the window and red buses going  
 past and a television flickering in a corner 225  
 of the room. He sighed and said: 'I will do  
 any work at all. My daughter Maya needs  
 clothes, shoes, books, toys, everything.  
 England is my hope.'

Towards ten o'clock, red blankets were 230  
 given out to the coach passengers, some  
 of whom were already sleeping. Lydia put  
 away the remnants of her meal, covered  
 her body with the blanket and switched  
 on a fierce little light above her under the 235  
 baggage rack and began reading a faded  
 old paperback, printed in English. Lev  
 saw that the title of her book was **The  
 Power and the Glory**. His longing for

(continued on the next page)

Turn over

a cigarette had grown steadily since he'd 240  
 drunk the vodka and now it was acute. He  
 could feel the yearning in his lungs and  
 in his blood, and his hands grew fidgety  
 and he felt a tremor in his legs. How long  
 before the next gas stop? It could be four 245  
 or five hours. Everyone on the bus would  
 be asleep by then, except him and one of  
 the two drivers. Only they would keep a  
 lonely, exhausting vigil, the driver's body  
 tensed to the moods and alarms of the 250  
 dark, unravelling road; his own aching for  
 the comfort of nicotine or oblivion – and  
 getting neither.

He envied Lydia, immersed in her English 255  
 book. Lev knew he had to distract himself  
 with something.... In desperation, he  
 took from his wallet a brand new British  
 twenty-pound note and reached up and  
 switched on his own little reading light  
 and began to examine the note. On one 260  
 side, the frumpy Queen, E II R, with her  
 diadem, her face grey on a purple ground,  
 and on the other, a man, some personage  
 from the past, with a dark drooping  
 (continued on the next page) Turn over



moustache and an angel blowing a trumpet above him and all the angel's radiance falling on him in vertical lines. 'The British venerate their history,' Lev had been told in his English class, 'chiefly because they have never been subjected to Occupation. Only intermittently do they see that some of their past deeds were not good.'

The indicated lifespan of the man on the note was 1857–1934. He looked like a banker, but what had he done to be on a twenty-pound note in the twenty-first century? Lev stared at his determined jaw, squinted at his name written out in a scrawl beneath the wing collar, but couldn't read it. He thought that this was a person who would never have known any other system of being alive but Capitalism. He would have heard the names Hitler and Stalin, but not been afraid – would have had no need to be afraid of anything except a little loss of capital in what Americans called the Crash, when men in New York had

(continued on the next page) Turn over

jumped out of windows and off roofs. 290  
He would have died safely in his bed  
before London was bombed to ruins,  
before Europe was torn apart. Right to  
the end of his days, the angel's radiance  
had probably shone on this man's brow 295  
and on his fusty clothes, because it was  
known across the world: the English  
were lucky. Well, thought Lev, I'm going  
to their country now and I'm going  
to make them share it with me: their 300  
infernal luck. I've left Auror and that  
leaving of my home was hard and bitter,  
but my time is coming.

**Rose Tremain**



**You may choose ONE image to prompt your response to Question 4.**

### **Image 1**

**The black and white photograph below shows a giraffe looking into a room through a window.**



**(continued on the next page)**

**Turn over**



## Image 2

**The photograph shows a woman standing inside a flat, looking out through an open door, onto a balcony.**



**Turn over**

## **Source Information:**

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