Unseen poetry: Appreciating life

AQA-style practice · Paper 2, Section C · 32 marks

Read both poems. Answer 27.1 about the first poem, then answer 27.2 comparing the methods used in both poems.

Barter

Sara Teasdale

Life has loveliness to sell,
All beautiful and splendid things,
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,
Soaring fire that sways and sings,
And children's faces looking up
Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell,
Music like a curve of gold,
Scent of pine trees in the rain,
Eyes that love you, arms that hold,
And for your spirit's still delight,
Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,
Buy it and never count the cost;
For one white singing hour of peace
Count many a year of strife well lost,
And for a breath of ecstasy
Give all you have been, or could be.

barter: exchange goods or services · ecstasy: intense joy

27.1 [24 marks]

In ‘Barter’, how does the poet present ideas about what makes life valuable?

Question 27.1 - answer space

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Leisure

W. H. Davies

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

care: worry or responsibility · boughs: large branches

27.2 [8 marks]

In both 'Barter' and 'Leisure', the speakers explore the importance of appreciating life. What are the similarities and/or differences between the methods the poets use to present these ideas?

Question 27.2 - answer space