Unseen poetry: Companionship

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.

Solitude

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Laugh, and the world laughs with you;
Weep, and you weep alone,
For the sad old earth must borrow its mirth,
But has trouble enough of its own.
Sing, and the hills will answer;
Sigh, it is lost on the air,
The echoes bound to a joyful sound,
But shrink from voicing care.

Rejoice, and men will seek you;
Grieve, and they turn and go.
They want full measure of all your pleasure,
But they do not need your woe
Be glad, and your friends are many;
Be sad, and you lose them all,-
There are none to decline your nectar'd wine,
But alone you must drink life's gall.

Feast, and your halls are crowded;
Fast, and the world goes by.
Succeed and give, and it helps you live,
But no man can help you die.
There is room in the halls of pleasure
For a large and lordly train,
But one by one we must all file on
Through the narrow aisles of pain.

mirth: happiness or amusement · woe: sorrow · nectar'd: sweetened like nectar · gall: bitterness · train: a group or procession of people

27.1 [24 marks]

In 'Solitude', how does the poet present ideas about companionship and being alone?

Question 27.1 - answer space

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Love and Friendship

Emily Brontë

Love is like the wild rose-brier;
Friendship like the holly-tree.
The holly is dark when the rose-brier blooms,
But which will bloom most constantly?

The wild rose-brier is sweet in spring,
Its summer blossoms scent the air;
Yet wait till winter comes again,
And who will call the wild-brier fair!

Then, scorn the silly rose-wreath now,
And deck thee with the holly's sheen,
That, when December blights thy brow,
He still may leave thy garland green.

brier: thorny shrub · sheen: shine · thee/thy: you/your · blights: damages or spoils · garland: a wreath of flowers or leaves

27.2 [8 marks]

In both ‘Solitude’ and ‘Love and Friendship’, the speakers explore the reliability of human relationships. What are the similarities and/or differences between the methods the poets use to present these ideas?

Question 27.2 - answer space