Unseen poetry: Travel and attention

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.

Adlestrop

Edward Thomas

Yes. I remember Adlestrop-
The name, because one afternoon
Of heat the express-train drew up there
Unwontedly. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.
No one left and no one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop-only the name

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,
No whit less still and lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther and farther, all the birds
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

unwontedly: unusually · meadowsweet: a plant with creamy white flowers · haycocks: small piles of cut hay · no whit less: not at all less

27.1 [24 marks]

In ‘Adlestrop’, how does the poet present the speaker’s experience of an unexpected pause during a journey?

Question 27.1 - answer space

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From a Railway Carriage

Robert Louis Stevenson

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
And charging along like troops in a battle,
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.
Here is a child who clambers and scrambles,
All by himself and gathering brambles;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;
And there is the green for stringing the daisies!
Here is a cart run away in the road
Lumping along with man and load;
And here is a mill and there is a river:
Each a glimpse and gone for ever!

clambers: climbs awkwardly · brambles: prickly blackberry bushes · tramp: a person travelling on foot without a settled home

27.2 [8 marks]

In both ‘Adlestrop’ and ‘From a Railway Carriage’, the speakers explore noticing the world during a railway journey. What are the similarities and/or differences between the methods the poets use to present these ideas?

Question 27.2 - answer space