Poetry Exam Questions (for Language and Literature)

1. How do the poems “Mid-Term Break” and “Once Upon a Time” explore the differences between childhood and adulthood?

2. Discuss the portrayal of the theme of old age and ageing in two poems you have studied.

3. Analyse the way gender stereotypes are presented in two poems you have studied.

4. Compare and contrast how family relationships help create identity in two poems you have studied.

5. Compare and contrast the ways in which childhood experiences affect identity in two poems you have studied.

6. Discuss the ways in which decisions about identity are presented in two poems you have studied.

7. Compare Mirror and Warning. How does each writer explore the feelings people have about growing old? In your answer you should make close reference to the language of the poems.

8. Look again at St David's Day and one other poem that deals with the theme of memory. Compare and contrast the importance of memory in both poems.

9. Compare and contrast the ways in which culture and background affect identity in two poems you have studied.

10. Re-read the poems Warning and Mirror, both of which raise the theme of ageing. Compare the ways in which the two writers express their views on this subject.

11. Re-read the poem Still I Rise. Choose AT LEAST ONE other poem from Identity which also expresses views in a similar way. Compare the methods used in Still I Rise and in your other chosen poem or poems, in the way the poets express their ideas.

12. Look again at Death of a Naturalist (p18) and Follower (p20), in both of which the poet is reflecting on events from his childhood. How does the poet make the reader aware of the significance of the events he describes?

13. Look again at Mid-Term Break (p22) and ONE other poem from Identity about an event or activity which made a lasting impression on the poet. In what ways does each poem bring this event or activity to life?

14. Many poems in this collection deal with a place or experience which has a memorable atmosphere and significance for the writer. Discuss how an intensely-felt experience is presented in TWO poems you have studied, comparing that methods by which the writers convey their thoughts and feelings.

15. 'The Barn' is about a childhood experience. Referring to this poem and one other poem of your choice, discuss the significance of memory and the past when writing about identity.

16. Re-read the poems Once Upon a Time and Not my Best Side. These poems both raise the issues of honesty and pretence. Compare the presentation of the issues of honesty and pretence in the two poems.

17. Re-read the poem The Road Not Taken, in which the poet writes about being at an important point in his life. Choose ONE other poem from the Identity section in which the poet, or a character in the poem, writes about an important, or significant, moment in life. Compare how the writers express their thoughts and feelings about these important times, in the two poems.

18. Look again at Mirror (p31) and Old Man, Old Man (p32). How does each writer explore the worries people have about growing old?

19. Look again at The Barn (p19) and ONE other poem from Identity in which the writer draws strongly on the imagination to create a powerful sense of place or feelings. How does each writer use the imagination to create this sense of place or feelings?
21. Re-read *Death of a Naturalist* and *The Barn*. In both of these poems the writer recreates episodes from his childhood. Compare the methods used to give these episodes significance. (2008)

22. Re-read *At Grass*, in which the writer compares the present with the past. Choose at least one other poem from *Identity* which also raises this issue and compare how effectively the writers convey their ideas. (2008)

23. Look again at *Mid-Term Break* and *Once Upon a Time*. How does each writer explore the ways in which people show or conceal their true emotions? (2008)

24. Look again at *Warning* and ONE other poem from *Identity* in which people challenge how they are viewed or judged. How does each writer question stereotypical views of people? (2008)