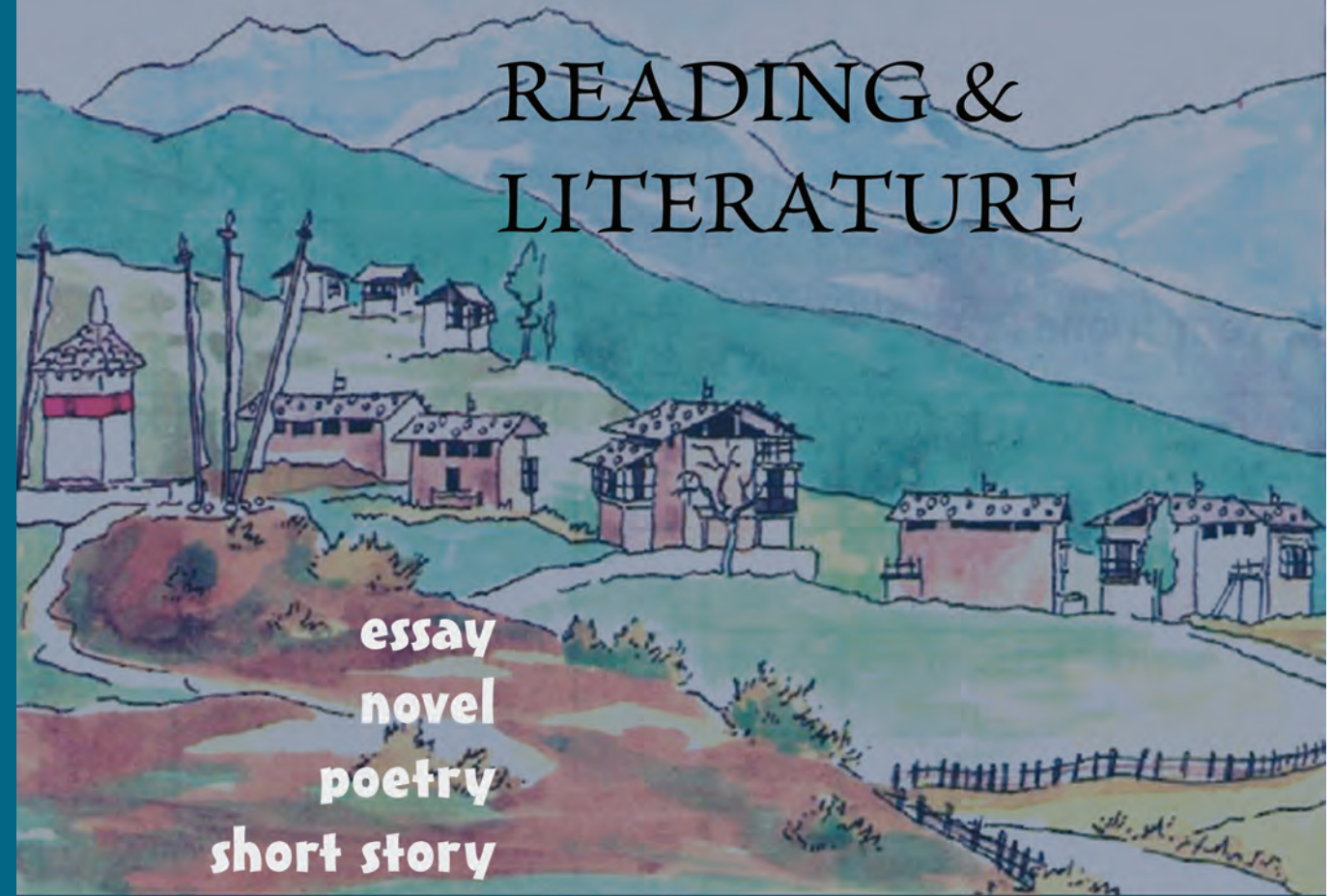


ENGLISH  
CLASS IX



ENGLISH CLASS IX READING & LITERATURE

READING &  
LITERATURE



essay  
novel  
poetry  
short story

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# ENGLISH

## Reading & Literature

### Class IX



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Paro

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## Foreword

Following the advent of modern education in the country, the English language has been given an important place along with Dzongkha, the national language, and Mathematics. English has, in fact, been the language of instruction for many school subjects, and it has served our purpose well even outside the curriculum.

Even though it has long been the desire of the Ministry of Education to keep the English programme up-to-date by incorporating changes in English usage, new developments in literature and the understanding of how language is acquired, there has been a general perception that the standard of English in the country has declined over the years. In response to these concerns, the Ministry has maintained the development of English curriculum as the main focus in the Ninth Five Year Plan (2002-2007). Major steps have been planned, which include the revision of the English curriculum for classes Pre-Primary to XII, the provision for in-service training to bring the teachers up-to-date on the revised curriculum, and a programme of academic courses to improve the teachers' knowledge of English.

In the new English curriculum, the emphasis is on the improvement of the language skills of students, on literature studies written in contemporary English language, the inclusion of non-fiction writing and changes in the approach to the assessment of students' performance. The new curriculum also demands change in the way in which students are taught, specifically a movement away from the teacher-centred classroom to a gender-sensitive, student-centred learning environment. This means that the teacher is responsible for designing activities that promote active learning while the students play a greater role in their own learning. The teacher will act as a facilitator and be a source of knowledge of language and literature.

This selection of texts represents a conscious and rigorous effort to bring to our classrooms an assortment of rich and varied literary experiences presented through different genres which celebrate the dignity of content and the beauty of language.

The plans put forward in the revised curriculum offer a balanced programme with adequate instructional time to develop the skills in each strand of Reading & Literature, Listening and Speaking, Writing, and Language. The goal is to provide adequate time to learn these skills so that students are able to communicate with eloquence and receive the communication of others with respect and clarity.

The Ministry of Education hopes that the new English curriculum will open the doors to new opportunities for our students to improve their English language skills. The programme

will ensure that they will acquire the knowledge to continue higher studies and the skills they require to become competent communicators - in Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking as required in the workplace and society.

The Ministry of Education acknowledges the contributions of the Government of Canada and the support of our Government to carry out this important project. The Ministry also wishes to acknowledge the valuable contributions of the teachers and teacher-educators to the development of this new English curriculum.

Trashi Delek.



**Thinley Gyamtsho**  
**Minister**  
**Ministry of Education**

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## Introduction

The task of building a curriculum necessarily involves an acknowledgement of the diverse claims made on it by the society and the citizens essentially because of the high stakes at play. Expectations are higher and concerns deeper especially in situations where the entire system follows a national curriculum that is delivered through similar arrangements and assessed against largely obvious criteria. An honourable curriculum is, therefore, called upon to discover and advance the best that is thought and known in the diverse spheres of human endeavour while at the same time beckoning the young minds to look for and to love what is true and good and beautiful in life and living. A curriculum for Reading & Literature has a special responsibility.

To this end, the revised English curriculum for Reading & Literature is built on the conviction of the need for minimum standards, as presented in *The Silken Knot: Standards for English for Schools in Bhutan* (CERD, 2002), that students are expected to achieve as they graduate from school. From these Standards have evolved the Learning Objectives for each class for different genres. The Learning Objectives then were seen to be achieved through a rigorous process of selection of materials that would support both the Standards and the Learning Objectives themselves. Further, the selection of teaching and learning materials was informed by several other significant considerations: that the texts had to have the best ideas written in the best language possible, that they had to be gender-sensitive, that they had to present fine examples of classical and modern language, that they had to attempt a fair blend of both Bhutanese and international writing in English, and, of course, the texts had to be age-appropriate and appealing.

As can be seen from the selection, some of the literary icons of the past still preside over the revised curriculum with their never-aging voice and presence. There is yet ample space for novelty and innovation in style and structure so refreshing in the modern idiom. Excellent samples of poetry, short stories, essays and plays from different cultures have been put together both as main texts as well as supplementary reading materials. A short biography of the author places the text in context.

Underneath the obvious diversity and variety in time and space, there is, yet, the self-evident fact of life that is the common denominator that literature affirms and celebrates. In spite of the often inexorable irony of fate, the agony of loss and privation, the corrosive evil inherent in hate and lies, there is the ultimate message of compassion and human solidarity. It is the privileged province of literature to discover and advance what makes life really worthwhile, provide templates of the possible and the perfect. Literature seeks and affirms the soul and sovereignty of humans and nations. Literature is truly the essential autobiography of life in all its variety and profundity.

It is our belief that our students and teachers will be able to celebrate the beauty of words and their sounds, their meanings and their implications, the power of suggestiveness and the authority of goodness. It is our hope too that the selections presented here will provide opportunities to our young men and women to discover and celebrate their own individual gifts and the marvels of their minds and hearts which they can bring to bear on the content and character of our beautiful nation.

**T. S. Powdyel**  
**Chairman**  
**English Subject Committee**

## **An Introduction to the English Curriculum**

“We remain grateful for the wise policy of His Majesty the late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck to take full advantage of the English language which is in fact the international language - the language of the sciences, technologies, trade, and international relations”.

- *His Excellency the Prime Minister Lyonchen Jigmi Y Thinley (Annual Report to the 82<sup>nd</sup> session of the National Assembly, July 2004.)*

Like many other happy developments, the advent of the English language to Bhutan was a matter of choice. When the veil of self-imposed isolation was lifted, Bhutan looked beyond its borders and began to prepare itself to modernise and join the community of nations. Which language to use to interact with the international community was one of the many decisions that had to be made.

English was seen as the most advantageous language to assist Bhutan in the articulation of its identity and the elevation of its profile in the many organizations to which it would belong. That choice has served Bhutan well, as it has undertaken to become a full charter member of the United Nations and has established bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements with other countries. English has enhanced its capacity to participate more effectively and purposefully in the global community.

The flexibility, versatility, and richness of English allow it to be used in a variety of circumstances and to be used by the Bhutanese people to meet their own goals. As His Late Majesty envisioned, Bhutan has been able to access and share in the knowledge and wisdom of the different peoples of the world in the diverse spheres of human endeavour. The discoveries of science and mathematics, medicine and information technology, much of which uses English as the language of publication, are now available to Bhutan.

The cultural and intellectual resources of the English-speaking world and the formulations of philosophy, jurisprudence and economics, to mention a few, have been opened to the Bhutanese people directly. In return, Bhutan has been able to share with the international community its rich cultural and spiritual heritage and, in the ensuing dialogues, enrich the intellectual resources of the world.

The need for people in Bhutan to be competent in English has led to the decision to use English as the language of instruction for many of the subjects taught in school. Along with Dzongkha, it is, one of the official languages of communication. In all likelihood it will continue to play this partner role with Dzongkha in the foreseeable future.

Given these circumstances, the question of how best to build and maintain a modern English programme for Bhutan continues to be addressed by educators. As time goes on, revisions

are necessary to keep the programme up to date with the changes in English usage, new developments in literature and the understanding of how language is acquired. The Ministry of Education has taken several measures to address the issue of quality English instruction. Major steps include the complete revision of the English curriculum, Classes Pre - Primary to XII, the provision for in-service training to update the teachers on the revised curriculum and a programme of academic courses to improve the teachers' knowledge of English.

That task of revision has been undertaken as part of The Strengthening of Support to Education in Bhutan (SSEB) Project, a cooperative effort sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in cooperation with the University of New Brunswick (UNB) and the Royal Government of Bhutan. The project consists of three parts – Education, Engineering and Information Technology – with the revision of the English curriculum, PP – XII, as one task of the Education component of the project. At the request of the Bhutan Ministry of Education, the committee was charged with the task of revising the curriculum to reflect contemporary language and to include non-fiction writing. This, of course, necessitated a change in the materials used. While efforts have been made to include classical literature, there is a greater emphasis on modern writers of both fiction and non-fiction.

The Ministry also asked for a change in the way in which students are taught, requesting a movement away from the teacher-centred classroom. The revised curriculum, therefore, reflects a student or learner-centred approach to classroom instruction. In brief that means that students, especially those at the upper levels of school, will be more involved as active participants in the classroom. The teacher will be involved directly, assuming the roles of the planner of activities, of the source of knowledge of language and literature and as the facilitator of learning. She designs activities that promote active student learning

### **Some Thoughts on Language Learning**

The decision to set out a learner-centred programme which calls for study in each of the four strands shown in the curriculum, is informed by the kinds of theories of language learning encountered in James Moffett's (1983) explanation of how people learn language and how, by extension, teachers should teach language.

In *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*, Moffett presents four modes of discourse (the Strands in this curriculum) through which people learn to use language. Those are Listening, Talking, Writing and Reading. The former two are oral modes of discourse while the latter are textual. He posits that it is useful to consider the modes of Talking and Writing as productive, or producing modes, while the Reading and Listening as receptive, or receiving modes. Despite the nomenclature, the hallmark for all modes is the active engagement of the learner.

Moffett understands the universe of discourse to be an active “place” where the learner first receives language input as s/he listens to expert speakers, and then, after a long period of trial and error, produces his or her own ideas in the language which s/he hears spoken around him. It is with the modes of discourse Listening and Talking that the learner first learns both to give and receive, to shape and modify messages, so that they more precisely reflect his thinking and help him communicate that thinking more accurately.

A visit to most Pre-Primary classes in Bhutan will find the Pre-Primary teachers actively engaged in helping their students to listen a great deal to learn sounds, to learn the intentions of the teacher as s/he gives instructions; and then, after a long time, assisting her students to produce in their own speech, ideas and concepts of their own. It is a struggle for them, and takes hours of practice and repetition. The learning is active but slow and takes enormous patience and consistency on the part of the teacher. But it works. The students learn how to converse in English as they would in any language taught this way.

The move on the part of the learner to begin to use the writing mode of discourse requires new skills of Reading and Writing. Again, the acquisition of these skills takes hours of practice during which the students learn that letters represent the sounds they have learned to make, and that they can use these letters to communicate their ideas in writing. At the same time, they are learning to read, so that they can receive the ideas of others, who like them, have learned to write down their thoughts, ideas and feelings.

Once the students are engaged in each of these modes of discourse, language learning becomes increasingly dynamic. Ideas, feelings, words and structures flow between the learner and himself, his immediate community, and even a community removed from him in time and place but available through writing and reading.

Again, visits to Primary classes in Bhutan will allow the visitor to see students and teachers actively engaged in experiences which develop the skills necessary to use each of these modes of discourse. They talk, they write, they listen, they read. Through trial and error and months of practice, they come to use English.

In brief, the decision by the Ministry of Education to plan for an activity based, learner-centred curriculum for all classes Pre-Primary-XII is informed by ideas like Moffett’s which explain how we learn language. It is helpful for this discussion, as well, to know that the international testing program (PISA) of the OECD (the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) has adopted similar principles of active language learning to be used when designing its examinations.

The concept of Reading put forward by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and used in their international testing program, PISA (Programme of

International Student Assessment) supports the need to put in place programs that require the students to be actively engaged in the learning of a language. OECD defines reading as “an interactive process..... which leads to understanding, using and reflecting on written texts in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential and to participate in society.” To gauge the reading literacy of its member countries, OECD tests from 4500-10000 students in each of forty-three countries on these reading skills: forming a broad general understanding of texts, retrieving information, developing an interpretation of a text, reflecting on the content of a text, and reflecting on the form and purpose of a text. It is evident that students need to learn how to read independently, reflectively and interactively if they are to be able to do these things. The curriculum planning committee has adopted Bloom’s Taxonomy to organise the classroom activities in each of the strands for similar reasons. It provides a way to build an ascending order of skills for the program and, of course, it is well known to Bhutanese teachers.

### **Guides for Teachers**

To accompany this document, and to assist with the implementation of the new programme, the Curriculum Development Committee has prepared a Guide for Teachers for each Class level. The guides set out materials and activities for each Class level. Teachers will find in the guides a description of the materials for each strand, justifications or rationales for each piece of literature, and suggested activities for each strand. They will also find a Timeline for each week, which sets out a plan that allows the teacher to engage the students in studies for each strand in a consistent and thorough way.

### **Student-centered Classrooms**

The decision by the Ministry to develop a curriculum for English which is student-centred means that classroom practise has to change. As reported in *The Silken Knot*, and later confirmed by a study commissioned by CAPSD in 2003, observers of classes, especially in Classes VII-XII, found English teachers talking and explaining texts while students sat passively or made notes on what the teachers were saying, directly into their textbooks. As a result, they were not able to practice Speaking and Writing, nor were they being taught how to read at the higher levels required of an adult reader. (See Moffett and the discussion of PISA above). The changes in the test items used in the NEA call for students to manipulate texts at both the knowledge and inferential levels. Teachers will have to plan for practice in that kind of reading and writing if the students are to be able to meet the expectations raised by this programme of testing.

The recommendation, by both reports cited above, that students be actively engaged in their own learning, was accepted by the Ministry; however, there is a fear that if an active classroom program be put in place then teachers will have nothing to do. That fear has been addressed directly. Teachers and parents will see in the guides an approach that balances direct teacher

input and planning with the participation of students in activities that help them develop the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the standards set out in this document.

To conclude this introduction, this document presents the revisions, which the Ministry of Education is recommending at this time to keep the English curriculum up to date. They are as follows:

**Revision 1:** The curriculum has been Organised so that classroom practice is informed by the set of Standards presented by CERD in *The Silken Knot: Standards for English for Schools in Bhutan* for each of the four Strands, or modes of discourse, namely Reading & Literature, Listening and Speaking, Writing, and Language. These set out in global terms what students can be expected to be able to do and to know in English, following graduation at the end of Class XII.

**Revision 2:** The Standards are elaborated by a set of detailed Learning Objectives for each Class level, PP-XII, which integrate the work in English across the curriculum. The Objectives serve to indicate to students, teachers and parents, the details of what students need to learn at each class level in order to make progress towards the attainment of the Standards. The Objectives are set out for each of the four Strands and are cumulative, sequenced developmentally, Pre-Primary-XII, and arranged so that they can be dealt with separately or integrated at each class level.

**Revision 3:** The curriculum marks a change in thinking about English studies, especially the English studies for Classes VII – XII. To date, the emphasis has been on learning the content of the literature in the syllabus. Little time has been given to the use of the literature to aid in the development of the language skills presented in the four strands in this programme.

The literature materials recommended here have been selected to help students develop reading skills and to aid as a resource for assistance with the development, and practice, of the skills of Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language. The content of the literature is important, and to that end, care has been taken to choose excellent literature: however, the English Curriculum Review Committee is persuaded that content must play a secondary role to the advancement of the skills necessary for proficiency in English.

**Revision 4:** The curriculum calls for a shift in teaching and learning practices to student-centred learning and the establishment of learner-centred classrooms.

**Revision 5:** Students will read both fiction and non-fiction in the Reading and Literature strand for each class. This curriculum sets out to achieve a balance in the kinds of literature



which students are expected to learn how to read.

**Revision 6:** The document calls for the direct teaching of reading strategies in each class, PrePrimary – XII.

**Revision 7:** Care has been taken to select materials that are gender sensitive and are age/class appropriate.

**Revision 8:** Care has been taken to select texts which engage students in a discussion of the cultural values of Bhutan and introduce them to the notable writers of Bhutan and of other cultures.

**Revision 9:** Care has been taken to introduce texts that are written in contemporary English.

**Revision 10:** The curriculum calls for the teaching of English grammar, pronunciation and syntax in a consistent, thorough and interactive manner, Classes IV – XII.

**Revision 11:** Timelines are set out to ensure that each of the strands gets its share of the time allocated to English studies. The Timeline is different for each class level to permit teachers to make provision for a balanced programme that meets the changing needs of the students but still requires teachers to set aside time for work in each strand.

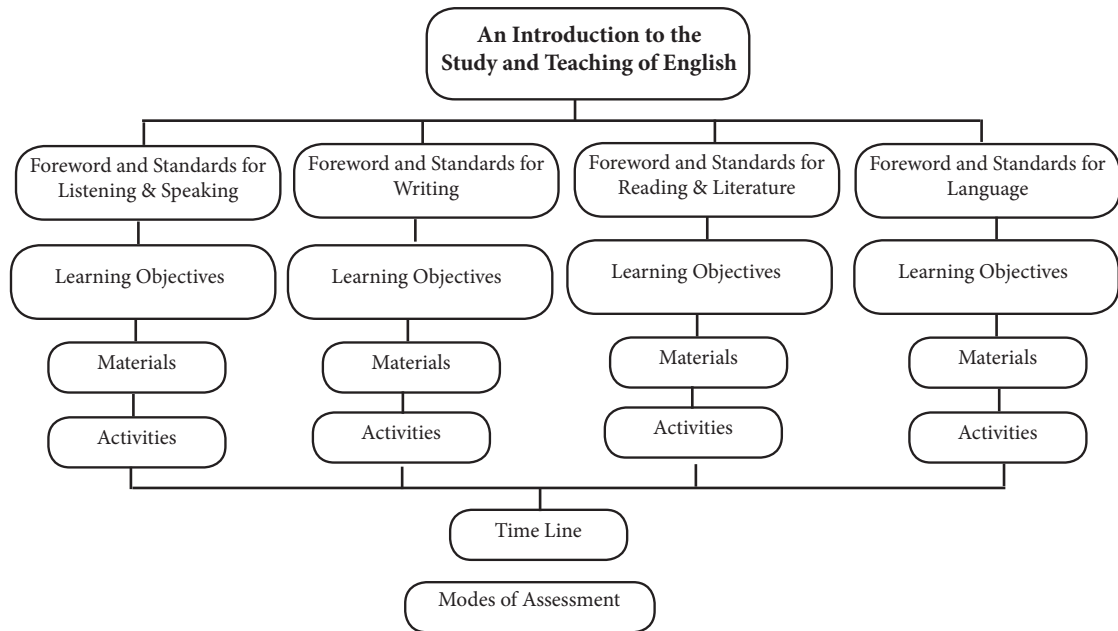
**Revision 12:** The curriculum presents changes in the Modes of Assessment in examination test items which will permit students to show that they have learned the skills and content presented in each strand.

Finally, the Ministry of Education wants to compliment the educators of Bhutan on the excellent work, which has produced graduates who have a capacity in English second to none in those countries that use English as a second language.

The plans put forward in this curriculum to provide for time to develop the skills in each mode, or strand, of Listening and Speaking, Language, Writing, and Reading & Literature are in keeping with this thinking about language learning. The goal is an English speaker who can integrate the modes or strands so that he can communicate with eloquence and receive the communication of others with respect and clarity.

It is the wish of the Ministry to build on the extraordinary capacities of both teachers and students to learn English and offer a revised programme, which will graduate students with the level of fluency in English needed at this time.

## Organisational Chart



The Organisational Chart above will help readers understand the different components of the English curriculum. Every effort has been made to integrate the components. The Introduction sets out a brief history of English in the schools of Bhutan and introduces the principles which inform the curriculum. Twelve suggested revisions are included. The Standards for each of the four strands – Reading & Literature, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language – flow from these principles. They are exit Standards which set out what graduates can be expected to know and do when they leave school in Class XII. The Standards are elaborated as the Learning Objectives which set out what students must learn to know and do at each class level to achieve the standards.

The Learning Objectives will serve as indicators of achievement at each class level in reference to the Standards.

The Materials and Activities have been developed to help the students acquire the skills and the knowledge they need to be successful in attaining the Learning Objectives, and ultimately, the Standards. The Timetable sets out a ‘time-budget’ for each strand. The Modes of Assessment are informed by the principles espoused in the Introduction to the Foreword and are organised to test the students on their skill development and knowledge.

## Foreword to Reading & Literature

*I am part of all that I have met;  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
Gleams that untrav'l'd world, whose margin  
Fades for ever and for ever when I move.*

*From "Ulysses" by Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

Like Ulysses, when we read, we become travellers through worlds whose horizons beckon and entice us farther and farther into realms beyond our own daily experiences. We travel from our own world to different places and times, go to a universe beyond our own, a universe in which we meet people who hold ideas and beliefs which confirm, challenge, and elaborate what we know, understand and believe.

Reading is the key to unlocking the vault of the wisdom of the race. To read well is to be in contact with those who have gone before us, and have discovered what it is to be human, and the best ways to organise themselves to achieve happiness.

We do not always read for such exalted reasons. Reading is also something we use to do everyday things at work or at home: things like shopping, reading mail, getting information on topics of interest and getting instructions on how to do things or put things together; also we read to learn the ideas of others on more abstract issues like political thought or religious beliefs. We also read for pleasure and to pass the time. Sometimes, we read our favourite authors simply because we like to read their works. Whatever the reasons we have for doing it, it is making meaning with text in an interactive process that engages the reader, the writer, and the text in a dialogue about the subject of the piece.

Engaging in the dialogue begins when the reader tries to be clear about what the writer or her characters are saying and doing. Frequently, once that has been achieved and is clear, the reader does not want to go further. The knowledge of what has been read is enough. But just as frequently, readers want to move beyond the simple knowledge of a book to levels of dialogue which engage them, the writer, and the text in negotiations about the significance of what has been said or enacted in the piece. It is in this kind of dialogue that the focus shifts to attempts to comprehend what has been read at more profound levels, to delight in possible interpretations, to analyse how the writer achieves the cogency of the piece, and ultimately, the evaluation of the beauty and the validity of what has been said.

Whatever the level of the dialogue, the readers bring to the table not only their knowledge of the text under study, but also their experiences with other texts, the experiences they have

had in real life, or have imagined, and quite likely, sets of beliefs that challenge the point of view of the writer. They need to be taught the strategies to read in these ways and they need time to participate in activities which are planned by the teachers to allow them to practise the strategies.

The literature in the syllabus provides the material to teach students how to read, while at the same time, permitting them to read some of the best literature available in English. Students have to learn how to make meaning by themselves and to appreciate what it means to have met some of the best writers and their works in the course of their studies. If we can build classroom communities where that can be arranged, then, like Ulysses, our readers will be drawn to travel through new worlds of experience whose horizons keep expanding.

## **Standards for Reading & Literature**

1. Graduates are able to read a wide range of texts – fiction and non-fiction – independently.
2. Graduates know the different forms of literature and the purposes they serve.
3. Graduates know and use appropriate reading strategies for making meaning with a variety of texts- fiction and non-fiction.
4. Graduates have read relevant major literary works from Bhutan and other countries.
5. Graduates have an interest in books and continue to read for enjoyment and learning.
6. Through their reading, graduates have studied and reflected on the cultural values of Bhutan and other countries, particularly the different ways in which people discover meaning in their lives; different expressions of fundamental values like Truth, Goodness, and Beauty; the possibilities of human achievement; and have found directions and models for their own aspirations.
7. Through their reading, graduates have developed a heightened sense of beauty and harmony which informs their lives.

## Learning Objectives for Reading & Literature

### Class IX students will demonstrate that they can:

1. Use the reading strategies introduced in earlier classes.
2. Read and articulate personal and critical responses to fiction and non-fiction texts.
3. Talk and write about major classical and modern writers, including Bhutanese writers, and their works.
4. Utilise the features of literary texts to help them understand the ideas they encounter in the texts they are reading.
5. Evaluate the point of view of the writer on issues like right and wrong, justice and injustice, in literature.
6. Read a modern one-act play and learn its elements.
7. Build their vocabulary and use the pronunciation skills to pronounce new words correctly.
8. Read 40 pieces of fiction and non-fiction.
9. Have fun as they read.

### Note:

1. *Students must read a minimum of 20 literature pieces - short novels from outside the textbook and write book reviews on two books from out of 20 they have read. The reviews should be included in their Reading Portfolio for assessment. Students will have to maintain reading log for the prescribed number of books read. Reading log can be kept even for the books read beyond the recommended number.*
2. *Viva voce will be conducted as part of the assessment in the Listening and Speaking strand from classes IX to XII. Teachers will ask students to share/speak/talk about one book from out of 20 books they have read and reviewed.*
3. *In the Writing Portfolio students will be asked to write 3 different types of writing-Transactional, personal and poetic – in classes IX to XII.*

## Reading Strategies

### Secondary Reading Strategies

Reading is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among:

- the reader's existing knowledge,
- the information suggested by the written language, and
- the context of the reading situation.

Four general purposes of reading are:

- to gain information
- to perform a task
- to experience and enjoy literature
- to form opinions

### Critical Reading

Critical reading means **learning to look through texts rather than at them**; it means **reading beyond and beneath** surface meanings to the assumptions, arguments, and strategies behind them. Critical reading means learning about **how texts work**: how they make their meaning, how they appeal to your emotions and intellect, how they present arguments that are explicit and implicit; how they reason with readers and manipulate them.

To be a critical reader, you need to learn how to “slow down” your reading. Slowing down your reading doesn't mean you ought to read more slowly; it means that you need to **read in such a way that you learn to be aware of a text's various parts and processes**. Running your eye over the words on the page it is easy to think of any piece of writing as a smooth and solid object. But all writing — whether a short story by a famous writer or a paper by one of your classmates — is the result of a process and the product of a context. Both the process and context that produce a piece of writing are reflected in various ways in a text's parts and layers. When you learn to slow down your reading you will be able to see that all writing is made up of parts and layers that come together in the writing process to make something that seems whole.

### Critical Reading Classroom Environment

For active, critical reading to occur, teachers must create an atmosphere which fosters inquiry. Students must be encouraged to question, to make predictions, and to organize ideas which support value judgments. Two techniques for developing these kinds of critical reading skills include **problem solving** and **learning to reason through reading**. Flynn (1989) describes an instructional model for problem solving which promotes analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of

ideas. She states that, “When we ask students to analyze we expect them to clarify information by examining the component parts. Synthesis involves combining relevant parts into a coherent whole, and evaluation includes setting up standards and then judging against them to verify the reasonableness of ideas.”

Beck (1989) adopts a similar perspective, using the term “reasoning” to imply higher order thinking skills. Comprehension requires inferencing, which plays a central role in reasoning and problem solving. For Beck, children’s literature has the potential to engage students in reasoning activities.

When literature is approached from a problem solving perspective, students are asked to evaluate evidence, draw conclusions, make inferences, and develop a line of thinking (Riecken and Miller, 1990). According to Flynn (1989), children are capable of solving problems at all ages and need to be encouraged to do so at every grade level. (See, for example, “Using Fairy Tales” 1991 for young children; Anton 1990 for elementary children; Johannessen 1989 for middle school children.) Teachers may want to experiment with a particular children’s book and plan a lesson which places reasoning at the center of instruction.

Wilson (1988) suggests that teachers re-think the way they teach reading and look critically at their own teaching/thinking processes. She cautions against skills lessons that are repackaged in the name of critical thinking but which are only renamed worksheets. She points out that teaching students to read, write, and think critically is a dramatic shift from what has generally taken place in most classrooms.

According to Wilson, critical literacy advocates the use of strategies and techniques like formulating questions prior to, during, and after reading; responding to the text in terms of the student’s own values; anticipating texts, and acknowledging when and how reader expectations are aroused and fulfilled; and responding to texts through a variety of writing activities which ask readers to go beyond what they have read to experience the text in personal ways.

### **Critical Reading Strategies**

Mastering these strategies will not make the critical reading process an easy one, it can make reading much more satisfying and productive and thus help students handle difficult material well and with confidence.

Fundamental to each of these strategies is annotating directly on the page: underlining key words, phrases, or sentences; writing comments or questions in the margins; bracketing important sections of the text; constructing ideas with lines or arrows; numbering related points in sequence; and making note of anything that strikes you as interesting, important, or questionable.



- **Previewing:** Learning about a text before really reading it. Previewing enables readers to get a sense of what the text is about and how it is organized before reading it closely. This simple strategy includes seeing what you can learn from the headnotes or other introductory material, skimming to get an overview of the content and organization, and identifying the rhetorical situation.
- **Contextualizing:** Placing a text in its historical, biographical, and cultural contexts. When you read a text, you read it through the lens of your own experience. Your understanding of the words on the page and their significance is informed by what you have come to know and value from living in a particular time and place. But the texts you read were all written in the past, sometimes in a radically different time and place. To read critically, you need to contextualize, to recognize the differences between your contemporary values and attitudes and those represented in the text.
- **Questioning to understand and remember:** Asking questions about the content. As students, you are accustomed to teachers asking you questions about your reading. These questions are designed to help you understand a reading and respond to it more fully, and often this technique works. When you need to understand and use new information it is most beneficial if you write the questions, as you read the text for the first time. With this strategy, you can write questions any time, but in difficult academic readings, you will understand the material better and remember it longer if you write a question for every paragraph or brief section. Each question should focus on a main idea, not on illustrations or details, and each should be expressed in your own words, not just copied from parts of the paragraph.
- **Reflecting on challenges to your beliefs and values:** Examining your personal responses. The reading that you do for this class might challenge your attitudes, your unconsciously held beliefs, or your positions on current issues. As you read a text for the first time, mark an X in the margin at each point where you feel a personal challenge to your attitudes, beliefs, or status. Make a brief note in the margin about what you feel or about what in the text created the challenge. Now look again at the places you marked in the text where you felt personally challenged. What patterns do you see?
- **Outlining and summarizing:** Identifying the main ideas and restating them in your own words. Outlining and summarizing are especially helpful strategies for understanding the content and structure of a reading selection. Whereas outlining reveals the basic structure of the text, summarizing synthesizes a selection's main argument in brief. Outlining may be part of the annotating process, or it may be done separately (as it is in this class). The key to both outlining and summarizing is being able to distinguish between the main ideas and the supporting ideas and examples. The main ideas form

the backbone, the strand that holds the various parts and pieces of the text together. Outlining the main ideas helps you to discover this structure. When you make an outline, don't use the text's exact words.

- **Summarizing** begins with outlining, but instead of merely listing the main ideas, a summary recomposes them to form a new text. Whereas outlining depends on a close analysis of each paragraph, summarizing also requires creative synthesis. Putting ideas together again — in your own words and in a condensed form — shows how reading critically can lead to deeper understanding of any text.
- **Evaluating an argument:** Testing the logic of a text as well as its credibility and emotional impact. All writers make assertions that want you to accept as true. As a critical reader, you should not accept anything on face value but to recognize every assertion as an argument that must be carefully evaluated. An argument has two essential parts: a claim and support. The claim asserts a conclusion — an idea, an opinion, a judgment, or a point of view — that the writer wants you to accept. The support includes reasons (shared beliefs, assumptions, and values) and evidence (facts, examples, statistics, and authorities) that give readers the basis for accepting the conclusion. When you assess an argument, you are concerned with the process of reasoning as well as its truthfulness (these are not the same thing). At the most basic level, in order for an argument to be acceptable, the support must be appropriate to the claim and the statements must be consistent with one another.
- **Comparing and contrasting related readings:** Exploring likenesses and differences between texts to understand them better. Many of the authors we read are concerned with the same issues or questions, but approach how to discuss them in different ways. Fitting a text into an ongoing dialectic helps increase understanding of why an author approached a particular issue or question in the way he or she did.

## THE STUDENT'S ROLE

Critical thinking implies that a reader is actively and constructively engaged in the process of reading. The reader is continually negotiating what s/he knows with what s/he is trying to make sense of. The role of background knowledge and the student's ability to draw upon it are essential to critical thinking/learning.

It is not an easy task to incorporate higher level thinking skills into the classroom, but it is a necessary one. For students to participate in the society in which they live, they must have experiences which prepare them for life. In order to become critical thinkers, it is essential that students learn to value their own thinking, to compare their thinking and their interpretations with others, and to revise or reject parts of that process when it is appropriate.

A classroom environment which is student-centered fosters student participation in the learning process. Learning that is both personal and collaborative encourages critical thinking. Students who are reading, writing, discussing, and interacting with a variety of learning materials in a variety of ways are more likely to become critical thinkers.

## THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Teachers who encourage **pre-reading discussions** to help readers activate prior knowledge or fill in gaps in background knowledge set the stage for critical reading. They help students identify purposes for reading, formulate hypotheses, and test the accuracy of their hypotheses throughout the reading process. In addition, asking students to examine their own reading and learning processes creates the awareness necessary for critical reading.

**Post-reading activities that extend texts** provide an opportunity for teachers to check for learning. Transforming ideas from reading into artwork, poetry, etc. is an evaluative, interpretive act that reveals the student's level of understanding. Critical readers are active readers. They **question, confirm, and judge** what they read throughout the reading process. Students engaged in such activities are likely to become critical thinkers and learners.

## How Do I Sharpen My Critical Reading Strategies?

Reading critically does not mean that you are criticizing the writer's message but rather that you are **assessing the validity and reliability of the writer's material**. Critical readers are also aware that they bring their beliefs, values, experiences, and prior knowledge to the reading process. Critical readers ask questions about themselves, the writer, and the writing. Below is a set of questions to sharpen your critical reading strategies.

## Menu of Critical Reading Questions

1. **Reader's Background and Value Assumptions**
  1. What do I know about the topic?
  2. What are my beliefs and values regarding the topic?
  3. What is my purpose for reading this material?
  
2. **Writer's Background and Value Assumptions**
  1. What is the writer's background?
  2. How might it affect the writer's approach to the topic and the selection and interpretation of the evidence presented?
  3. What are the writer's value assumptions regarding this topic?
  
3. **Writer's Argument, Conclusion, and Evidence**
  1. What is the topic of the writer's argument?

2. What is the writer's conclusion?
3. How has the writer limited the scope of the argument through definitions of key terms and the use of qualifying words and phrases?

#### 4. **Writer's Use of Evidence to Support the Conclusion**

1. Are there any logical fallacies?
2. What sort of evidence does the writer use to support the conclusion(s)?
3. Does the evidence offer adequate support for the writer's conclusion?
4. Are the sources creditable?
5. If the writer uses research studies as evidence, does the research satisfy these conditions:
  - Is it timely?
  - Is the sample group representative of the target population?
  - Who conducted the research? What was the purpose of the research?
  - Has the research been replicated?
  - Are the statistical findings and writer's conclusion focused on the same topic?
  - Do the graphic illustrations represent the data in a truthful manner?
  - Do the various physical dimensions of the graphic accurately portray the numerical relationships?
  - What is the source of the data in the illustration?
  - Are the statistical findings and the writer's conclusion focused on the same topic?

#### 5. **Reader's Reaction to the Reading**

1. Do I accept the writer's evidence as reliable and valid support of the conclusion?
2. To what degree do I accept the conclusion?
3. How does the conclusion relate to what I already know and believe about the topic?
4. How has the writer's argument changed my views on this topic?

**Here are some strategies that may be used:**

##### **1. Take inventory of what you will be reading.**

Think about what you already know about the subject. Write down some notes on these thoughts. Look over the material you are reading - look for key words and phrases that may be in italics or boldface. Look for any graphs, captions, pictures or other graphics. See if there is a summary at the end or a set of comprehension questions. Most textbooks have summaries and questions. These can be very helpful to guide your reading. You should always read the

summary and the questions before you read the text. These will give you a good idea of what to look for when you read. Remember: not everything in the text is equally important: read for the main ideas.

## **2. See the forest, not the trees!**

There is an English idiom that says, “You can’t see the forest for the trees.” This means that a person cannot see the overall picture or idea because she/he is concentrating on the details too much. When you are reading, don’t try to understand every word - get the overall idea.

## **3. Don’t just read —WRITE!**

Take notes while you are reading. Sometimes notes can be words and phrases that help you remember main ideas. However, you can also draw pictures or diagrams of key ideas. It’s like drawing a map with roads connecting different cities or locations. If each location is an idea, connect them together in your notes.

## **4. If at first you don’t succeed, try again.**

If possible, read the text more than once.

## **5. Don’t be afraid to make guesses.**

Try to guess at meaning by looking at the context. The sentences and words immediately before and after the point you are reading can give you good ideas.

## **6. Try to analyze the text.**

Look for the introduction and conclusion. Look for the topic sentences in each paragraph.

## **7. Make connections.**

Try to make connections between main ideas and supporting details. Well-written texts will attempt to make connections of their ideas in a logical way.

## **8. Summarize & Paraphrase.**

When you have finished reading a paragraph or a portion of the text, stop and try to summarize in your own words what you have read. You can do this in your notes or you can explain it orally to someone else.

## **9. Talk with your friends.**

Discuss what you have read with others who have also read the same text.

**SQ3R....for students & teachers**

When you read, it is important to have a strategy or a plan for reading effectively. If you do not have a plan, you may be easily distracted or may not focus on the right things in the text. As a result, when you are finished reading, you may not understand very much of what you have read. Also, you may not have developed your English very much, either.

When you read, you must be actively involved in the reading process in order to understand most effectively. The SQ3R method is one way to help you do this.

## **How does the SQ3R method work?**

### **Survey**

Survey means to scan the main parts of the text you are going to read. This includes looking at the title, headings of paragraphs, introduction and conclusion, first lines of each paragraph, and any extra information that may be presented in boxes on the page. Doing this gives you some basic understanding of what the text is about and helps you know what to expect when you read in more detail.

### **Question**

Questions are very helpful when you read a text. Most of the time, people read first, and then look at questions at the end of the text. However, this is not the best way to read. If possible, read the questions provided for you FIRST. This will help you know what specific information to look for. Questions (those that are provided with text and those provided by your teacher) are designed to focus on the main points. Therefore, if you read to answer these questions, you will be focusing on the main points in the text. This helps you read with a goal in mind - answering specific questions.

### **3 R's**

#### **Read**

Once you have some idea of what the text is about and what the main points might be, start reading. Do not be afraid if the text has many words you cannot understand. Just read!

#### **Follow these suggestions:**

- Do not use your dictionary the first time through the text.
- Try to understand as much as you can from the context.
- Take notes as you go.
- Make a note of places that you do not understand, or words that are unclear.
- Go through the text a second time.
- Try to answer the questions.

## **Recite**

Studies have suggested that students remember 80% of what they learn, if they repeat the information verbally. If they do not repeat verbally, they often forget 80%. Writing down the answers to questions from the text and saying these answers will help you remember the information. One good way to do this is to discuss the information with a friend or classmate, or with the teacher. Try to summarize the main points you have learned from the reading and add to your knowledge from the comments and responses of the person you are talking with.

## **Review**

Review means to go over something again. In order to remember information, you cannot simply memorize it one day and then put it aside. After you have read and discussed and studied your information, it is important to review your notes again a few days or weeks later. This will help you keep the information fresh in your mind.

## **Strategies for Teaching Reading Strategies**

### **Modes of Reading**

Different modes of reading offer varying levels of support for students, from having the teacher read the entire text aloud to having students read the text independently. It is frequently appropriate to combine several modes of reading at once. The combination provides a scaffold for learning that gradually releases responsibility to the students and helps them to become more proficient readers. Different combinations are used to meet the differing needs of students in relation to the materials they are reading.

### **Reading Aloud**

The teacher reads aloud from a text that is too challenging for the students to read and comprehend alone. Usually the students do not have a copy of the text. The teacher may complete the text in one reading or may continue reading a longer text over a period of time. Reading aloud is used to develop background information, to make connections across texts, or for enjoyment.

### **Teacher-Directed Interactive Reading**

Using grade level materials which may include magazine or newspaper articles, poems, charts, or other forms of print, the teacher provides direct, supported reading of text to the whole class. The text is read in a variety of ways.

- The teacher introduces the text and sets a purpose for independent, silent reading of a part or all of the text.
- The teacher reads the text or part of the text aloud while students follow the reading in their own texts. The teacher pauses for predictions, clarifications, and questions. A summary of what was read is developed orally or in writing with the class.

- Students are paired for buddy reading of the text.
- Small groups of students read the text together using reciprocal teaching strategies.
- The teacher reads the text aloud to a small group of students while the rest of the class reads the selection independently, with a buddy, or in a small group.
- Groups of students or the whole class may read the text together as a choral reading activity.

## Guided Reading

The teacher provides small group instruction using materials at the instructional level of the group. The teacher supports the development of effective reading strategies for processing new texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty. This progression of difficulty must be in increments small enough to allow the reader to bridge the gap without being frustrated. Therefore, the best materials for guided reading are sets of books that have the progression built in. For elementary school students whose instructional reading level is close to grade level, the grade level basal may be used to provide guided reading instruction.

During Guided Reading, the teacher works with a small group of students who use similar reading processes and are able to read similar levels of text with support. The teacher introduces a text to this small group and works briefly with individuals in the group as each student reads to him/herself. The teacher may select one or two reading strategies to present to the group following the reading and may have students participate in extension activities. Basic to Guided Reading is that the text is one that offers the reader a minimum of new concepts to learn so that students can read the text with the strategies they currently have, but it provides an opportunity for new learning.

## Structured Independent Reading

Students build reading fluency, practice strategic reading skills, and increase their vocabularies by spending sustained periods of in-class time engaged in independent reading. Books may be self-selected or teacher assigned, but are at the students' independent reading levels. Time for this fluency practice must be built into the school day and must include a daily homework assignment.

Students in Pre-primary should spend a minimum of 15 minutes each day in developmentally appropriate independent reading behavior. **Students in grades 1-12 must spend 30 minutes each day on in-class independent reading. All students, PP-12, must read 30 minutes each night as daily reading homework.** Activities which support and strengthen independent reading include:

- drawing a picture of a favorite part of the book;
- discussing the book/chapter read with a partner or a small group;
- keeping a record or log of each book completed;



- writing a brief summary of the content;
- making a personal response to the reading in a log or journal;
- writing dialogue journals to the teacher about the independent reading material; and/  
or
- taking the Accelerated Reader test.

### **Working With Words**

Students receive daily explicit, systematic instruction in one or more of the following as appropriate:

- phonemic awareness, students are taught the sounds of the language;
- phonics instruction, students receive instruction in letter/sound matching;
- blending and segmenting sounds, and decoding;
- graphophonic instruction, students learn to use letter/sound correspondence to write;
- syntactic, students learn word patterns and spelling, prefixes, suffixes, root words, etymologies; and
- vocabulary, students learn word meanings, analogies, usage, and cognates.

### **Reciprocal Teaching**

Students are taught to become **strategic readers through an active dialogue** with a teacher/leader and other students. Working in small groups, students practice the following critical reading strategies:

- making predictions based on titles, captions, pictures, prior knowledge, etc.;
- formulating good questions based on the text (e.g., writing test questions);
- seeking clarification of words, phrases, or concepts not understood;
- summarizing, getting the main idea; and
- forming visual images while reading.

### **Questions and Discussion**

Critical to reading comprehension is the ability to ask and answer higher order thinking questions about text and to defend or challenge answers using information and details from the text to support positions. Students at all levels and in all subject areas **must have daily opportunities** to raise questions to be used in group discussions about texts. Student-generated questions should be used to formulate teacher-made tests.

### **Read and Retell**

Retellings are powerful tools because they serve authentic instructional and assessment purposes. Students retell, orally or in writing, narrative or expository text. In the retelling, they use the same form, style, and language of the original text. This strategy aids comprehension of

text, expands vocabulary, and provides good models for students to transfer to their personal writing. Retellings provide insights into the thinking, organization, and comprehension levels of the readers. In primary grades students may use drawings in combination with oral retelling.

### **Learning to Write, Writing to Learn**

Writing and reading are reciprocal skills which strongly support one another. It is important that students receive daily instruction in effective writing and that they use writing to demonstrate what they have learned. Writing is thinking made visible. It supports students in learning to construct meaning and become proficient readers. It involves many activities including:

- exploring different modes of writing;
- mini-lessons that include modeling; and
- engaging students in meaningful interactions with text.



# Essays

## 1. My Struggle for an Education – *Booker T. Washington*

1. One day, while at work in the coal mine, I happened to overhear two miners talking about a great school for coloured people somewhere in Virginia. This was the first time that I had ever heard anything about any kind of school or college that was more pretentious than the little coloured school in our town.

2. As they went on describing the school, it seemed to me that it must be the greatest place on earth. Not even Heaven presented more attractions for me at that time than did the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia about which these men were talking. I resolved at once to go to that school, although I had no idea where it was, or how many miles away, or how I was going to reach it. I was on fire constantly with one ambition, and that was to go to Hampton. This thought was with me day and night.

3. In the fall of 1872, I determined to make an effort to go there. My mother was troubled with a grave fear that I was starting out on a “wild-goose chase”. At any rate, I got on a half-hearted consent from her that I might start. I had very little money with which to buy clothes and pay my traveling expenses. My brother John helped me all that he could; but, of course, that was not a great deal.

4. Finally the great day came, and I started for Hampton. I had only a small, cheap satchel that contained the few articles or clothing I could get. My mother at the time was rather weak and broken in health. I hardly expected to see her again, and thus our parting was all the more sad. She, however, was very brave through it all.

5. The distance from Malden to Hampton is about eight hundred kilometers. By walking, begging rides both in wagons and in the cars, in some way, after a number of days, I reached the city of Richmond, Virginia, about eighty-two miles from Hampton. When I reached there, tired, hungry, and dirty, it was late in the night.

6. I had never been in a large city, and this rather added to my misery. When I reached Richmond, I was completely out of money. I had not a single acquaintance in the place; and, being unused to city ways, I did not know where to go: I asked at several places for lodging, but they all wanted money, and that was what I did not have. Knowing nothing else better to do, I walked the streets.

7. I must have walked the streets till after midnight. At last I became so exhausted that I could walk no longer. I was tired, I was hungry, I was everything but discouraged. Just about the time when I reached extreme physical exhaustion, I came upon a portion of a street where the board sidewalk was considerably elevated. I waited for a few minutes till I was sure that

no passer-by could see me, and then crept under the sidewalk and lay for the night on the ground, with my satchel of clothing for a pillow. Nearly all night I could hear the tramp of feet over my head.

8. The next morning I found myself somewhat refreshed, but I was extremely hungry. As soon as it became light enough for me to see my surroundings, I noticed that I was near a large ship. It seemed to be unloading a cargo of pig-iron. I went at once to the vessel and asked the captain to permit me to help unload the vessel in order to get money for food. The captain, a white man, who seemed to be kind hearted, consented. I worked long enough to earn money for my breakfast; and it seems to me, as I remember it now, to have been about the best breakfast that I have ever eaten.

9. My work pleased the captain so well that he told me I could continue working for a small amount per day. This I was very glad to do. I continued working on this vessel for a number of days. After buying food with my small wages there was not much left to pay my way to Hampton. In order to economize in every way possible, I continued to sleep under the sidewalk.

10. When I had saved enough money with which to reach Hampton, I thanked the captain of the vessel for his kindness, and started again. Without any unusual occurrence I reached Hampton, with a surplus of exactly fifty cents with which to begin my education. The first sight of the large, three-storey, brick school building seemed to have rewarded me for all that I had undergone in order to reach the place. The sight of it seemed to give me new life.

11. As soon as possible after reaching the grounds of the Hampton Institute, I presented myself before the head teacher for assignment to a class. Having been so long without proper food, a bath, and change of clothing, I did not, of course, make a very favourable impression upon her. I could see at once that there were doubts in her mind about the wisdom of admitting me as a student. For some time she did not refuse to admit me, neither did she decide in my favour. I continued to linger about her, and to impress her in all the ways I could with my worthiness. In the meantime I saw her admitting other students, and that added greatly to my discomfort. I felt, deep down in my heart, that I could do as well as they, if I could only get a chance to show what was in me.

12. After some hours had passed, the head teacher said to me. "The adjoining recitation room needs sweeping. Take the broom and sweep it."

13. It occurred to me at once that here was my chance. Never did I receive an order with more delight.

14. I swept the recitation room three times, then I got a dusting cloth, and I dusted it four times. All the woodwork around the walls, every bench, table, and desk, I went over four times with my dusting cloth. Besides, every piece of furniture had been moved and every closet and corner in the room had been thoroughly cleaned. I had the feeling that in a large measure my future depended upon the impression I made upon the teacher in the cleaning of that room. When I was through I reported to the head teacher. She was a “Yankee” woman who knew just where to look for dirt. She went into the room and inspected the floor and closets; then she took her handkerchief and rubbed it on the woodwork about the walls, and over the table and benches. When she was unable to find one bit of dirt on the floor, or a particle of dust on any of the furniture, she quietly remarked, “I guess you will do to enter this institution”.

15. I was one of the happiest souls on earth. The sweeping of that room was my college examination. I have passed several examinations since then, but I have always felt that this was the best one I ever passed...

## 2. Nature is Not Always Kind - *Helen Keller*

I RECALL many incidents of the summer of 1887 that followed my soul's sudden awakening. I did nothing but explore with my hands and learn the name of every object that I touched; and the more I handled things and learned their names and uses, the more joyous and confident grew my sense of kinship with the rest of the world.

When the time of daisies and buttercups came Miss Sullivan took me by the hand across the fields, where men were preparing the earth for the seed, to the banks of the Tennessee River, and there, sitting on the warm grass, I had my first lessons in the beneficence of nature. I learned how the sun and the rain make to grow out of the ground every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, how birds build their nests and live and thrive from land to land, how the squirrel, the deer, the lion and every other creature finds food and shelter. As my knowledge of things grew I felt more and more the delight of the world I was in. Long before I learned to do a sum in arithmetic or describe the shape of the earth, Miss Sullivan had taught me to find beauty in the fragrant woods, in every blade of grass, and in the curves and dimples of my baby sister's hand. She linked my earliest thoughts with nature, and made me feel that "birds and flowers and I were happy peers."

But about this time I had an experience which taught me that nature is not always kind. One day my teacher and I were returning from a long ramble. The morning had been fine, but it was growing warm and sultry when at last we turned our faces homeward. Two or three times we stopped to rest under a tree by the wayside. Our last halt was under a wild cherry tree a short distance from the house. The shade was grateful, and the tree was so easy to climb that with my teacher's assistance I was able to scramble to a seat in the branches. It was so cool up in the tree that Miss Sullivan proposed that we have our luncheon there. I promised to keep still while she went to the house to fetch it.

Suddenly a change passed over the tree. All the sun's warmth left the air. I knew the sky was black, because all the heat, which meant light to me, had died out of the atmosphere. A strange odor came up from the earth. I knew it, it was the odor that always precedes a thunderstorm, and a nameless fear clutched at my heart. I felt absolutely alone, cut off from my friends and the firm earth. The immense, the unknown, enfolded me. I remained still and expectant; a chilling terror crept over me. I longed for my teacher's return; but above all things I wanted to get down from that tree.

There was a moment of sinister silence, then a multitudinous stirring of the leaves. A shiver ran through the tree, and the wind sent forth a blast that would have knocked me off had I not clung to the branch with might and main. The tree swayed and strained. The small twigs snapped and fell about me in showers. A wild impulse to jump seized me, but terror held me fast. I crouched down in the fork of the tree. The branches lashed about me. I felt the intermittent jarring that came now and then, as if something heavy had fallen and the shock had travelled up till it reached the limb I sat on. It worked my suspense up to the highest point, and just as I was thinking the tree and I should fall together, my teacher seized



my hand and helped me down. I clung to her, trembling with joy to feel the earth under my feet once more. I had learned a new lesson - that nature “wages open war against her children, and under softest touch hides treacherous claws.”

After this experience it was a long time before I climbed another tree. The mere thought filled me with terror. It was the sweet allurements of the mimosa tree in full bloom that finally overcame my fears. One beautiful spring morning when I was alone in the summerhouse, reading, I became aware of a wonderful subtle fragrance in the air. I started up and instinctively stretched out my hands. It seemed as if the spirit of spring had passed through the summerhouse. “What is it?” I asked, and the next minute I recognized the odor of the mimosa blossoms. I felt my way to the end of the garden, knowing that the mimosa tree was near the fence, at the turn of the path. Yes, there it was, all quivering in the warm sunshine, its blossom-laden branches almost touching the long grass. Was there ever anything so exquisitely beautiful in the world before! Its delicate blossoms shrank from the slightest, earthly touch; it seemed as if a tree of paradise had been transplanted to earth. I made my way through a shower of petals to the great trunk and for one minute stood irresolute; then, putting my foot in the broad space between the forked branches, I pulled myself up into the tree. I had some difficulty in holding on, for the branches were very large and the bark hurt my hands. But I had a delicious sense that I was doing something unusual and wonderful, so I kept on climbing higher and higher, until I reached a little seat which somebody has built there so long ago that it had grown part of the tree itself. I sat there for a long, long time, feeling like a fairy on a rosy cloud. After that I spent many happy hours in my tree of paradise, thinking fair thoughts and dreaming bright dreams.

## About the Author

Helen Keller became blind and deaf when she was very young. If you happen to watch the movie “The Miracle Worker,” you will be able to learn more about Helen and her teacher, Anne Sullivan. This essay is an excerpt from Helen Keller’s autobiography, *The Story of My Life*. We have chosen for a title a phrase from one of the most important sentences in the excerpt. This essay is both narrative and descriptive. It will help you understand the argument of the essay, and the important lessons that Helen learned from her experience.

### 3. Bhutan: Biodiverse Diamond of the Himalayas - Robin Smilie

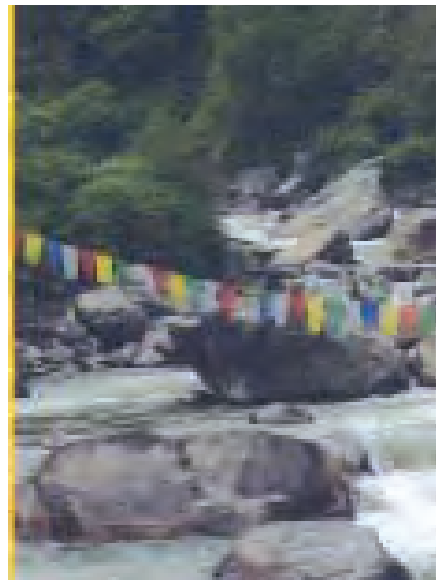
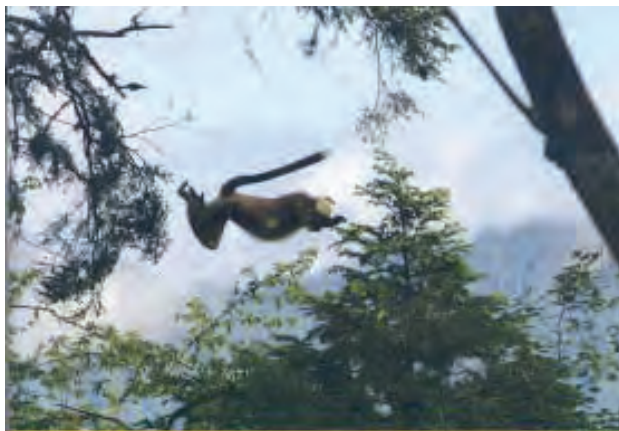
Like a jewelled bracelet crusted with large and small stones, the Himalayan Mountains stretch for 1,500 miles from Kashmir to Assam. The tiniest diamond of the four countries that make up the Himalayas is Bhutan. In terms of biological diversity and retention of native habitat – acre for acre – Bhutan is the richest country in Asia. Christened as the “Land of the Thunder Dragon”, it is one of the most biological diverse countries in the world, on par with Madagascar and the tropical rainforest countries in Central and South America.



While the meaning of the word Himalaya is “abode of snow”, one should not think that Bhutan’s landscape is made up solely of permanently covered snowcapped peaks or alpine scrub zones. Several distinctly different biological realms converge between the low-lying rain forest in the south and the alpine meadows in the north – the altitude difference is nearly 24,000 feet.

Situated in the heartland of Bhutan, between these two regions, are vast rhododendron and conifer forests. With heavy rains of the monsoon season and different climates associated with varying altitudes, it is easy to see how biodiversity has been able to take hold of the country.

With heavy rains of the monsoon





Within the scientific community, Bhutan's list of rare and endangered wildlife and fauna is legendary: Bengal tigers sighted above 2,900 meters, snow leopards, golden langur, blue sheep, red panda, takin, black-necked crane, over 600 species of birds – 70 discovered in the last ten years, over 5,000 plants, many of which contain medicinal properties, rare

orchids, carnivorous plants, and 50 species of rhododendrons round up the list. One species of bird, the Satyr Tragopan, was once thought be extinct but was recently sighted in Jigme Dorji National Park. Several white bellied heron, one of the fifty rarest birds on the planet with a population estimated between 20 and 200, have been recently sighted a number of times.



The challenge of conserving these national, indeed, world treasures, has fallen on various government agencies that are charged by the King and the National Assembly with policies that mandate strict conservation of Bhutan's natural wonders. A trust fund has been set up for environmental conservation. In 1995, the National Assembly passed a resolution that the country must maintain no less than 60 per cent of its area under forest cover (Bhutan currently has approximately 70 per cent of its area under forest cover). These forests are home to some of the rarest plants and animals in the world.

For many conservations, the crown jewel of Bhutan's effort to maintain biodiversity are the "biological corridors" that connect four national parks, four wildlife sanctuaries, and one nature preserve. These nine areas make up 26 per cent of the country's total land area, with the corridors accounting for another 9 per cent.

The purpose of these biological or ecological corridors is to prevent fragmentation of natural habitats by preserving the connection between protected areas. The parks and conservation areas might otherwise be separated by human activities such as farming and other developments. When a species is cut off from its main population, i.e. its genetic pool, sub-species begin to develop. The genetic survival of the new and smaller population is more difficult. By designing this system of interconnecting corridors, Bhutan has made significant strides to promote the survival of future generations of its diverse ecosystems.

Presently, the most significant ecotourism area of Bhutan is Jigme Dorje National Park, the largest protected area within the country, where popular trekking routes cross rivers at 1,400 metres and traverse mountains that soar to 7,000 metres. Visitation within the park is confined to visitor zones. Bhutan is approaching development of ecotourism even more cautiously than it has approached general tourism, recognising that areas of tiger habitat and rare medicinal plants cannot withstand an onslaught of tourists.

In an effort to pursue ecotourism, while protecting the environment, new efforts are being implemented to promote community-based tourism and trekking. This new approach actively engages the local community in development and management of ecotourism, as well as promoting the conservation of nature.

### **Religion plays a role**

Bhutan remains the only surviving Mahayana Buddhist country in the world. To live in harmony with the mysteries and complexities of nature is a crucial Buddhist practice. One has only to look at acid rain, the ozone hole, and contamination of the earth's waters to realise how mankind harms itself by harming nature. The Buddhist approach to nature is to show reverence and compassion to all forms of life, as well as limiting consumption to basic needs, i.e. food, shelter and clothing.

The Buddhist philosophy, coupled with longstanding belief that the key ecological areas are inhabited by underworld spirits, gods and goddesses, as well as a variety of deities have served to protect much of Bhutan's landscape. If the local people believe that a powerful deity resides in a certain lake, then they will not pollute the stream originating from it. Likewise, if a certain forest is thought to be the home of gods and goddesses, the trees of that forest are not hewed. Since habitat preservation is a key element in preservation of species such belief encourages a culture that supports biodiversity and conservation of natural resources.

The world scientific community recognises that Bhutan has a significant portion of the planet's remaining rare and endangered species. It is, therefore, actively assisting the kingdom in its efforts to balance environmental management and economic development.

With the help of these worldwide stakeholders, the government and people of Bhutan, and every person that visits Bhutan, we do hope that this biodiverse diamond of the Himalayas will continue to shine forever.



## 4. The Dignity of Work – Charles Finn

*“No person ever stood lower in my estimation for having a patch in their clothes.”*

We work in factories, on farms, in blazing sun, and on the sides of the roads, in forests, in ditches. You see us in shipyards, apartment buildings, under your cars. Ask us our names: We’re Alex, Rob, Peter, and Hank. We’re Sally, Susan, Deborah, and Pam.

What do we do? We bring home a pay cheque, fibreglass in our lungs, and have a few beers. We’re what people call working stiffs. We feel that way. We have strong backs, set minds, dirt under our nails. We look you straight in the eye. It’s no joke, we say. We have bills to pay.

The other day I was standing in a drugstore looking through a rack of greeting cards. My greasy overalls and thick fingers confirmed I belonged to the dented pickup outside. Turning the carousel, my eyes fell on a black-and-white photo of a well-dressed man and a woman standing on the corner of a busy city street. They were holding a cardboard sign that read, “Will work for latte.”

The card got an audible chuckle out of me, more of a snicker really, but my amusement was quickly followed by a very real sadness. It seemed to me the card was exposing a general callousness toward the plight of the poor, and I felt a slight embarrassment because of my filthy clothes.

Still holding the card, I looked around at the other casual but well-dressed customers. I’m not poor, I wanted to tell them, just trying to get by. Then I thought of how many times I’d been to urban centres and walked past the homeless, putting a few coins in their cups but avoiding their eyes. Such uneasiness, I believe, is an indicator of an increasingly harmful society; the accumulated buildup of guilt, silent, yet a subtlecrippler of soul.

There was also an undercurrent of classism the card hinted at. Although fictitious, I could hardly imagine this couple accepting a minimum-wage job as high-school janitor or letting themselves sink to the status of a construction labourer like me. It was Thoreau who said, “No person ever stood lower in my estimation for having a patch in their clothes.”

The knees of my pants were testimonies to what Henry David would probably have viewed as frugality. These days it’s called hard luck, and it goes along with the attitude that to work with your hands implies you don’t have the wherewithal to work with your head. The assumption is if you sit at a computer you’re more useful than if you mix cement for a living.

To her credit, my mother has always supported me no matter what occupation I’ve tried, even as a banger of nails, but there are friends who continually ask me when I’m going to get a real job. I’d like to ask them how real is the mechanic that fixes their car when it breaks down, or the nurse who empties bedpans for a living? A doctor is a vital part of any community. So, too, the man who comes every week to haul away garbage.

Still in the store, I realized it's not the odd greeting card, or the media as a whole teaching this classism, it's adults. Too often we're not proud of ourselves or the jobs that we do.

We think people with degrees and white-collar jobs are the only ones worthy to hold their heads in the air. Don't become a farmer, we say to our children. There's no money in that. With this subtle form of bigotry, our children are growing up believing the lower classes are lower beings. We're teaching them a person's worth is gauged by economic, not moral, success.

I didn't buy that card. I went home and reheated some chili. In the shower I scrubbed the tar from my hands and looked down at my feet. Chips of sawdust were being washed out of my hair and sliding past my toes. Each one represented a skill I'd learned and a few pennies earned. Looking in the mirror I was proud of my working-class tan and before going to bed, I fixed my lunch for the next day and set the alarm.

Then for the hell of it, or maybe in defiance, I made a large decaf latte and read for an hour in bed. I told my partner I'd had a good day.

## **Notes**

Charles Finn lives in Argenta, British Columbia.

Classism: discrimination against people from a different social class.

Henry David Thoreau: famous nineteenth-century American writer who lived a simple, frugal, life.



# Supplementary Essays



## 1. Dogs and Books - *Christie Blatchford*

At some of the lowest moments of my life, in my times of worst despair, I have depended on two categories of friends to pull me through, and neither has ever let me down. One is books; the other is dogs.

This is not meant to disparage my human friends, some of whom I have relied on heavily, all of whom I love. But, as we all learn sooner or later, people can't always be with you when you need them. Sometimes, they mean to say the right thing, the comforting thing, but they say the wrong one. Other times, they have problems of their own and cannot be strong for you. Even when they are there, to hold your hand and kiss it better, they cannot take away the source of your unhappiness.

Books can. And so can dogs.

Books are the ultimate escape. When my heart has been broken, when I worry about my job or my writing, when I feel let down, betrayed, or unloved, I read a book. As a young woman in search of romance, I read, oddly enough, John D. MacDonald's Travis McGee books. When no one else was there to play the part, Travis was my white knight, a man both rough and tender, who loved both his friends and a woman who was loyal and sexy, fierce and faithful.

When my dad was in hospital and I was frantic he would never, ever get out, I could lose myself only when I read. I read everything, anytime - in the bathroom, on the subway, waiting for a bus, and every night before I fell asleep. And when my father went into hospital for the last time, and when he died, I cried and cried, and then remembered and remembered. The only thing that could stop the tears and the memories was reading. Much later, when I feared he was slipping away from my memory, I could bring him back, as sharp as daylight, by reading the book of Edna St. Vincent Millay's poetry he'd given me, or Kipling's *The Jungle Book* that he used to read to me as a child, or one of his favourite novels.

Not throughout my life, but for periods of it, the other source of comfort and love was my dog. As a pudgy young girl with all the usual insecurities, I came home from school every day to the wholehearted adoration of Lucky, a big, ham-footed, foolish boxer. As a shy, easily embarrassed (and thus perfectly normal) teenager, it was sweet Mickey who welcomed me. As a reasonably young adult, I looked to wondrous, even-tempered, overtly affectionate Susie. And now, as a fairly well-adjusted, usually happy adult, I have Blux, the big black half-Labrador with paws like hamburger buns and a heart the size of his geographic name.

It is trite to say that dogs love you no matter what; but they do, and there are times when the human being craves undemanding, uncritical, and wholly accepting love. If you're lucky, you get it as a child, from your parents; but as you become an adult you lose the right to remain uncriticized. They may love you anyway, but they are likely to explain that "anyway" at great and painful length. You can ignore a dog, leave him unattended and unwalked for far too long; yet the minute you walk through the door, he will be all over you like a cheap suit. You can be mean to a dog, and he will forgive you; what's more, he will never remember

your meanness, let alone extract vengeance. When you want to play, so will he; when you need hugging, he will, too. When you crave quiet, pleasant company, that's just what he'll give you; when nothing and no one can make you laugh, he can reduce you to stupid, teary howling within seconds. When everyone you know is busy or in love or on vacation or booked up, it will be his distinct pleasure to be available.

Dogs are individuals as much as people are, but all dogs that are treated well share some delightful characteristics: loyalty, generosity, and a temperament that is warm and loving. And though it is silly to imbue them with human characteristics or understanding, they are nonetheless bright, inquisitive creatures who can immensely enrich your life. Also, they are worthy of love. Probably, there are some nice people around who happen not to like dogs, but I'll be damned if I can think of any.

I remember a friend whose three-year relationship abruptly ended. Suddenly, he was cut off from everything familiar - the woman he still loved, the house they had worked on together, the bed he knew, the street he was fond of, neighbours he knew, flowers he had planted. When he left, all he took were his clothes and a small knapsack of personal treasures.

He moved into a stark, modern apartment; he had virtually no furniture but cardboard boxes. David and I lived nearby, and I saw him frequently in those days; and many times, when he thought no one would notice, I caught him looking with incredible love and gratitude at a large tan-and-white object on the floor beside him.

His dog was the one familiar, beloved face in his brave new world. He was properly appreciative, and respectful, and enamoured of her for simply being with him. And later, when his life straightened out, as it usually does for good people, and there was a new woman to share things with, he never forgot what his hound had meant to him in the dark days. You stick with them what brung you, my daddy always said. And nine times out of ten, that's a hound.

Now, if only I could find a dog who'd read out loud to me: a jug of wine, a book to read, a dog beside me panting in the sun, tail wagging in slow motion in the heat. Well, that's heaven.

### **About the Author**

Christie Blatchford graduated from the Ryerson Journalism Program in 1973 and went on to write columns for the *Toronto Sun* and *National Post*. She is well known for her honest, no-holds-barred writing style.

## 2. A Small Cheese Pizza - *Rachel Svea Bottino*

It was an intensely cold November day with a biting wind. My mom and I entered the first restaurant we saw in a hurry to get away from the harsh weather. Mom ordered a pizza and I found a cozy booth near the heater. As I gazed around, I saw a homeless man sitting at a corner table. For some reason - I'm still not sure why - he intrigued me.

I studied him, absorbing every detail. Growing up, I was taught never to stare, but the temptation was overwhelming. Because of the way his knees grazed the bottom of the tabletop, it was evident that he was tall. His clothes were filthy. Even though he was wearing endless layers of clothing, he looked as though he weighed nothing. A mass of tangled hair, thick as a lion's mane, covered most of his face and a shaggy, knotted beard covered the rest. I focused on his eyes because they were the only part I could see.

His eyes were transfixed, almost hypnotized by the steam that curled up from the coffee cup sitting in the middle of the table. An employee came over and gave him a small cheese pizza, and what I saw next would change my whole perspective on life.

The man looked at that pizza as if it were the most precious thing in the world. He didn't touch it at first, almost like a person who has a priceless object he is afraid might break. He stared at that pizza as though it were made of gold. When he finally decided to eat it, he didn't grab a slice and devour it like we do. He ate unusually slowly, savouring every bite.

When we got our pizza, my mom placed it in the middle of the table and started eating. She couldn't see the man from where she was sitting and asked me why I wasn't eating. I nodded toward the man and she turned. When she saw him, she understood. That circular piece of dough in the middle of our table suddenly looked different. It was no longer just an inexpensive supper. People think of pizza as a matter-of-fact thing that has no significance whatsoever. But now, after seeing this man, something as simple as a small cheese pizza was suddenly so much more complicated.

I was drawn to this man not out of pity, but curiosity. I wanted to know who he was. I wanted to know what was going on in his mind. He is a human being, like everyone else, but is viewed as though he is incapable of having thoughts and feelings. When people look at him, they see a lost cause. But I saw a soul waiting to be found.

I watched him as he got up to leave. He finished the last of his coffee and headed toward the door. As the door opened, a gust of frigid air rushed into the store. Holding his collar tightly around his neck and bowing his head against the snapping wind, he walked through the parking lot and out of sight.

### Notes

Rachel Svea Bottino wrote this story when she was a high-school student.

### 3. Restaurants - R.K. Narayan

Someone recently complained that the serving boy in a hotel dipped all his five fingers into a tumbler while fetching drinking water; this brought out the indignant repudiation from the manager, 'How could he have had all the five fingers in? It must have been only four. Otherwise he could not have carried the tumbler.' This seems to me typical of the utter divergence in outlook between two sections of the present-day population: those who visit hotels and those who run them. Probably in order to improve the situation a questionnaire was sent out sometime ago, intended to catch all aspects of the problem. I believe when the investigators attempted to elicit facts all that they got was complaints from the servers regarding work and wages, complaints from hotel-goers regarding quality, quantity, cost and everything. I think the committee gathered a voluminous quantity of paper, properly filled up. It is probably too early even to say what they will do with it.

Most people are miles away from their homes at tiffin time. This is a characteristic of urban life. Students, office-goers, businessmen, have no choice in the matter. It would be unthinkable for a man from Adyar working in First Line Beach to return home for his afternoon coffee; nor can he wait till the closing of his office. At office awaiting the tiffin-break is one of the pleasantest states of existence. When one returns to one's desk an hour later chewing a *beeda* one has definitely acquired a pleasanter outlook. Now, I would like to examine what has happened to the man between his leaving his office table and returning to it an hour later. No doubt when he returns our friend is chewing betel leaves and looking the picture of satisfaction but he has been through a trial.

He goes to his favourite hotel as fast as his feet can take him, but he cannot enter it. He has to wait, then push his way through a file of others moving in, and finally stand in a corner scanning the hall for a vacant seat. It is most awkward standing there, he has a feeling of waiting for a dole. His trained eye catches someone at a table sipping the last few ounces of coffee in his cup, and our friend knows that the other will presently get up. He cleverly slips through the crowd and approaches the about-to-be vacated chair cautiously: he does not like to appear too inquisitive about the other man's movements lest it should look ungracious but hovers about the back of the chair with a look of unconcern while the man is enjoying the last drop. If the man at the table knows that his seat is wanted he will try to brave it for a while but will ultimately vacate it, unable to bear the silent, implacable pressure exerted by the one waiting behind him. If our friend is lucky - that is, if someone else more nimble-footed does not descend on the seat like a bolt from the blue - he can feel certain that he has won his seat. I don't think any election candidate could reflect with greater gratification on his triumph.

When our friend gets his hard won seat, what happens? He looks at the time. Half-an-hour wasted in manoeuvres alone. The sands of time are running low, he will have to be back soon at his office. He desperately tries to draw the attention of the man serving at his table as he catches glimpses of him here and there. At this point one is reminded of the epitaph for a restaurant waiter, 'God finally caught his eye.' Finally, when the server comes, his demeanour may be affable or sour according to his constitution; but it is patent that he is extremely

harassed and fatigued. If he should run amok he would knock down all plates and cups and tiffin and tiffin-eaters as the greatest irritants in life...But he asks formally, 'What do you want, sir?' And then the counter-question, 'What have you?' It is a routine question that a hundred others have already asked although the whole menu - Sweets, Savoury, and 'Today's Special' - is chalked up on the board. The server mechanically repeats the catalogue of edibles at lightning speed, takes his order, and goes out of sight.

As our friend awaits the arrival of his food he notices that his table is littered with used cups and plates and remnants left by other people, and as he eyes them distastefully, a tremendous cry rings out, 'Table clean!', and a man arrives with a bucket overflowing with unwashed crockery and vessels, reaches over the shoulder of our friend, leaving him in acute suspense for the safety of his clothes, and clears the table: he then rubs the table-surface with a very damp blue cloth, which our friend would rather avoid looking at. There are a few other things which he attempts to ignore while he is in the process of appeasing his hunger. He tries not to look at the wash-basin right across his table which sprays around a vast quantity of water as person after person comes up to wash his hands, some of them none-too-gently. The general noise in this hall is something that frays his nerves - the radio (somehow our restaurants seem to have stations to tune in to at all the twenty-four hours), the deafening clatter of vessels dumped out for cleaning, somebody shouting orders to the kitchen, shouting across of the bill amount, customers greeting each other... through all this babble our friend can hardly make himself heard. He ignores the crack in the china cup which bears his coffee, and the notches and grease on the spoon given to him. He thinks these are minor terrors which ought to be borne patiently. When he carries his bill to the payment counter and the man there sticks it on a miniature harpoon on his table while sweeping the cash in, our friend is happy that he is out of all this trouble. Perhaps that's why he wears such a merry look coming out of a restaurant.

## About the Author

R.K.Narayan was born in Madras, South India, and educated there at Maharaja's College in Mysore. His first novel *Swami and Friends* (1935) and its successor *The Bachelor Of Arts* (1937) are both set in the enchanting fictional territory of Malgudi. Other "Malgudi" novels are *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher* (1945), *Mr. Sampath* (1949), *The Financial Expert* (1952), *The Painter Of Signs* (1977), *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983), *The Talkitive Man* (1986). His Novel *The Guide* (1958) won him the National Prize of the Indian Literacy Academy, India's highest Literary honour. He was awarded in 1980 the A.C. Benson Medal by the Royal Society of Literature and in 1981 he was made an Honorary Member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and letters.

He has also written five collections of Short Stories, *A Horse and Two Goats*, *An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories*, *Lawley Road*, *Under the Banyan Tree* and *Malgudi Days*. He has also written three collections of essays, *A writers Nightmare*, *Next Sunday* and *Reluctant Guru*.

## 4. The Songs of Ap Dawpel - *Jigme Dukpa*

I first met Ap Dawpel in 1986 when I was a student. As I began learning from him, I discovered how much there was to learn about the wonderful tradition of Bhutanese music.

Ap Dawpel, the ‘father of Bhutanese music’, is now 72, years old. Dawpel, short for his name Daw Peljor (moon wealth), comes from Talo in Punakha, the former capital and residence of the old Dharma Rajas (priestly Kings) where a particularly fine tradition of music was preserved.

Ap Dawpel became the Queen Mother’s painter and musician in 1945. Also known as *Ge-te* (ex-monk) and *Lhadrip* (painter), he was the *Chhampon* (mask dance master) for several years in Talo monastery. For the past five decades, Ap Dawpel has taught and influenced many young musicians and dancers. Had it not been for his zeal to share his knowledge with many young musicians, the Bhutanese *dramnyen* (a lute with six and a half strings) and its music would have long become a forgotten tradition.

Ap Dawpel’s professional life saw its peak in 1999 when he was awarded the *Thugsey* (son of Bhutan) medal for his outstanding musical services by His Majesty the King.

### An Oral Tradition

Like all musicians of his time, Apa never had formal music training. He learnt the songs and dances in the ‘teacher- pupil’ tradition. Barely nine years old, he became a monk and lived in Punakha Dzong until he was twenty-three. During those years, he learnt some popular songs like *Dramnyen Ludra* and *Bermo Bermo*, from Sewla Pem Dorji, a renowned *dramnyen* player.

### Repertoire and Traditions

Apa’s music repertoire consists mainly of *Zhungdra*, or classical music, and *Boedra*, or court music. Some of the first songs he learned, such as *Choki Tsawa Mitsu*, *Dranyen Ludra* and *Bermo Benno*, are popular even today. He learned some of the songs from Aku Tongmi (now 95 years old), the first person in Bhutan to have trained in brass band music.

*Gur* (devotional songs), *Drunglu* (epic songs), *Tshoglu* (propitious songs), *Mani* (Buddhist mantras), *Tsangmo* (reciprocal songs), *Lozey* (ornaments of speech, only recited), and *Chham* (mask dances) make up Apa’s repertoire, musically classified as *Zhungdra* and *Boedra*.



## Zhungdra

'*Zhungdra* is made up of two words, 'Zhung' and 'dra', (Zhung = main and dra = sound). Musically speaking, Zhungdra songs are characterised by the use of very long notes with no definite rhythm. Sung in a meditative style, *Zhungdra* is the classical music of Bhutan.

Ap Dawpel explains that the *Zhungdra* tradition had evolved locally under the patronage of the government, *Zhung*. "People from around the country regarded the capital as the seat of government and, therefore, the form of music it promoted developed into what is known today as the original music of the country," he explains. *Zhungdra* songs were generally composed by great lamas and scholars, and, therefore, had a religious theme.

## Boedra

'*Boedra*' is also formed from two words, 'Boe', which means Court, and 'dra' which means sound or music. There are two different explanations for its etymology. The first is that Boedra music is influenced by Tibetan folk music. The second is that Boedra is music performed by 'Boegarps', court attendants in medieval Bhutan.

Ap Dawpel believes that *Boedra* music became popular only in the late 1950s with the arrival of more Tibetans in Bhutan after the Chinese annexation of their homeland.

*Boedra* music is now fully absorbed into local traditions with Dzongkha replacing the Tibetan words.

## Regional Music

Ap Dawpel has also identified several songs in the local dialects, although he never learnt them. I refer to such songs as '*Yuedra*', literally meaning 'local music'. Normally sung in Tshanglalo, Khengkha, Bumthangkha and other dialects, the songs are also classified as *Zhungdra* and *Boedra*.

## BHUTAN'S 'FATHER OF BHUTANESE MUSIC' HAS HELPED KEEP THE ART OF DAMNYEN (LUTE) PLAYING ALIVE.

Regional celebration songs and dances like *Zhay* and *Zhaym* are traditions known by the area of their origin. Examples of some of the surviving traditions that Ap Dawpel loves include *Gasa Goenzhay*, *Trongsa Nub Zhay*, *Thimphu Wang Zhay*, and *Paro Wochupai Zhay*.

## Apa's Musical Instruments

Apa plays an amazing variety of musical instruments. His favourite is his family's five generations old *dramnyen* which he learnt on his own. He also plays the *lim* (flute made of

bamboo), *pivang* (two-stringed fiddle), *pili/pipi* (tiny reed flute), *dung* (long trumpet-like horns), *jali* (oboe-like reed instruments), *roelm* (cymbals), *nga* (double-sided drums), *drib tangti* (hand bells and hand drums), *dungkar* (conch shell), and *kangdu* (human thigh-bone trumpet).

### **New Influences**

As a mentor to many musicians today, Ap Dawpel is concerned that the inevitable change and modernisation taking place in Bhutan is making an irreversible impact on the culture and lives of the people, particularly on music.

Apa feels the popularity of '*Rigsarlu*' (modern songs), with catchy tunes taking advantage of the electronic musical instruments, is already replacing traditional music and instruments. He points out the need for efforts to balance the development of traditional and modern music forms.

Activities have been initiated to preserve and promote Bhutanese folk music and musical instruments. The Royal Academy of Performing Arts is documenting traditional songs and the Institute of Language and Cultural Studies has begun an inventory on Bhutan's performing arts traditions. Formal music training and research have improved, and song and dance competitions keep the musical arts alive.

"I have been thinking and praying for the future of Bhutanese music," says Apa Dawpel as he takes his daily walk up and down the hill, his head and body bent as if listening to the music of bygone days. "I pray that it continues to bring greater harmony, joy and happiness in the lives of our people."



## 5. New images bring new Values to Bhutan (Kuensel July 24, 2004)

- *Siok Sian Pek Dorji*

**Sir,** A glamour girl has arrived in town. Dressed in black, with her midriff discernible through the gauzy material of her blouse, she smiles coyly at us. Her long hair frames a movie star face that is perfectly made up. Her body curves to match the curvaceous bottle of fizzy drink she holds in her hand.

The advertisement, like many more that are coming to Bhutan, uses the most basic ingredient for commercials - seduction and sex appeal. And, not surprisingly, the age-old recipe of the commercial world - stereotyping the woman as an alluring temptress.

It is worrying because such billboards represent an overwhelming consumeristic world that is now penetrating homes and families deep in our remotest villages.

It is more worrying because the Bhutanese woman, who is generally self-confident, happy and full of self-esteem whether she is fat, thin, curvaceous or otherwise, is now being faced with a new global image of womanhood. It promulgates perfect, hour-glass figures, and unnaturally coy expressions.

And most worrying is the lack of awareness in our society of how these subliminal messages may penetrate the psyche of the Bhutanese men, women, youth and children watching these attention grabbing and appealing images may eventually buy into this 'reality'.

Bhutan is guided by Gross National Happiness and we claim to tread a middle path. Logically then, this implies that the path should teach us to balance the giddy consumerism of the modern world. More important we should not be misled, as millions in the developing world have been, into thinking that middle class consumer values (and the stereotyping of women) are modern day realities. Advertising worldwide is a multi-billion dollar industry that is founded on extensive research aimed deliberately at making us avid consumers. It has made many people in developed and developing societies buy into the materialistic world that puts pleasure and consumption high on life's agenda. And it has promoted a new way of life just as it is promoting a homogenous image of womanhood that is based on gender stereotyping.

Much has been written about the portrayal of women in commercials but very little has changed even in the 21st century. To sell products and services, today's advertisements continue to stereotype women with physical beauty as her most important asset.

Bhutan is being inundated with images from the world outside, particularly through television. We are, unfortunately, still largely consumers of these images since our own creative production industry is young and barely keeping up in the production and creation of local images and content.

It is important that we in Bhutan are also conscious of the 'language' of advertisers in global advertising. We must learn quickly this new language and the tricks of the trade so we can reflect images of ourselves.

One answer is to produce our own commercials. And advertisers will agree that local commercials will have greater impact. We also need to encourage research as we eventually begin to produce our own commercials.

Advertisers who put up such ads are probably uncaring of some of the negative impact they may have on society in terms of gender stereotyping. Commercials for Bhutan should be culturally sensitive, wholesome and relevant to a small society trying to keep pace with a larger world.

As for global images through TV, that's another story.



# Poetry

## 1. I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings - *Maya Angelou*

The free bird leaps  
on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream  
till the current ends  
and dips his wings  
in the orange sun rays  
and dares to claim the sky.  
But a bird that stalks  
down his narrow cage  
can seldom see through  
his bars of rage  
his wings are clipped and  
his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.  
The caged bird sings  
with fearful trill  
of the things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.  
The free bird thinks of another breeze  
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees  
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn  
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams  
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream  
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing  
The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.

## **About the Author**

Maya Angelou, born April 4, 1928 as Marguerite Johnson in St. Louis, was raised in segregated rural Arkansas. She is a poet, author, actress, playwright, civil-rights activist, producer and director. She has published ten best selling books and numerous magazine articles earning her Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award nominations.

Maya Angelou was among the first African-American women to hit the bestsellers list with her “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”, held the Great Hall audience spellbound with stories of her own childhood. “The honorary duty of a human being is to love” Angelou said. She is currently Reynolds Professor at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

## 2. Buddha's Death - Romesh Chander Dutt

### I

Thus in many lands they wandered,  
    Buddha and his faithful friend,  
Teaching truth to many nations,  
    Till his life approached its end.  
And they say, along the pathway,  
    As the saintly Master went,  
Fruit trees blossomed out of season  
    And a lovely fragrance lent!  
And that flowers and sandal-powder  
    Gently fell on him from high,  
And came strains of heavenly music  
    Gently wafted from the sky!

### II

But the saintly Master whispered  
    To his friend beloved and blest,  
"Tis not thus, O friend Ananda!  
    That the Buddha's honoured best.  
Not by flowers or sandal-powder,  
    Not by music's heavenly strain,  
Is the soul's true worship rendered,  
    Useless are these things and vain!  
But the brother and the sister,  
    Man devout and woman holy,\_\_\_  
Pure in life, in duty faithful,\_\_\_  
    They perform the worship truly!

### III

Night came on, and saintly Buddha  
    Slept in suffering, sick and wan,  
When a Brahman, seeking wisdom,  
    Came to see the holy man.  
Anxiously Ananda stopped him.  
    But spoke Buddha, though in pain,  
"He who comes to seek for wisdom  
    Shall not come to me in vain!"  
And he to the pious stranger  
    Told the truth, in language plain,  
Taught the law with dying accents,  
    Stopped and never spoke again!

### 3. The Road Not Taken - Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveller, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence;  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I\_\_  
I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

#### **Author: Robert Frost.**

Robert Frost (1874 – 1963) was born in San Francisco but moved to New England at the age of eleven and became interested in reading and writing poetry during his high school years in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Frost was much influenced by contemporary poets like Edward Thomas, Rupert Brooke, and Robert Graves. By the nineteen-twenties, he was the most celebrated poet in America, and with each new book – including *New Hampshire*, *A Further Range*, *Steeple Bush*, and *In the Clearing* – his fame and honours (including four Pulitzer Prizes) increased. The author is a quintessentially modern poet in his adherence to language as it is actually spoken, in the psychological complexity of his portraits, and in the degree to which his work is infused with layers of ambiguity and irony.



#### 4. Amalkanti - Nirendranath Chakrabarthy

Amalkanti is a friend of mine,  
we were together at school.  
He often came late to class  
and never knew his lessons.  
When asked to conjugate a verb,  
he looked out of the window  
in such puzzlement  
that we all felt sorry for him.

Some of us wanted to be teachers,  
some doctors, some lawyers.  
Amalkanti didn't want to be any of these.  
He wanted to be sunlight\_\_  
the timid sunlight of late afternoon,  
when it stops raining  
and the crows call again,  
the sunlight that clings like a smile  
to the leaves of the *jaam* and the *jaamrul*.

Some of us have become teachers,  
some doctors, some lawyers.  
Amalkanti couldn't become sunlight.  
He works in a poorly lit room  
for a printer.  
He drops in now and then to see me,  
chats about this and that  
over a cup of tea, then gets up to go.  
I see him off at the door.

The one among us who's a teacher  
could easily have become a doctor.  
If the one who'd wanted to be a doctor  
had become a lawyer,  
it wouldn't have made much difference to him.  
All of us got more or less what we wanted,  
all except Amalkanti\_\_  
who used to think so much about sunlight  
that he wanted to become sunlight.

*Translated from Bengali by Sujit Mukherjee and Meenakshi Mukherjee*

## 5. No More Clichés - *Octavio Paz*

Beautiful face  
That like a daisy opens its petals to the sun  
So do you  
Open your face to me as I turn the page.

Enchanting smile  
Any man would be under your spell,  
Oh, beauty of a magazine.  
How many poems have been written to you?  
How many Dantes have written to you, Beatrice?  
To your obsessive illusion  
To your manufactured fantasy.  
But today I won't make one more Cliché  
And write this poem to you.  
No, no more clichés.  
This poem is dedicated to those women  
Whose beauty is in their charm,  
In their intelligence,  
In their character,  
Not on their fabricated looks.  
This poem is to you women,  
That like a Shahrazade wake up  
Everyday with a new story to tell,  
A story that sings for change  
That hopes for battles:  
Battles for the love of the united flesh  
Battles for passions aroused by a new day  
Battles for the neglected rights  
Or just battles to survive one more night.  
Yes, to you women in a world of pain  
To you, bright star in this ever-spending universe  
To you, fighter of a thousand-and-one fights  
To you, friend of my heart.  
From now on, my head won't look down to a magazine  
Rather, it will contemplate the night  
And its bright stars,  
And so, no more clichés.

### About the Author

Octavio Paz was born in 1914 in Mexico City. Paz began to write at a very young age, and in 1937, he travelled to Valencia, Spain to participate in the Second International Congress of Anti- Fascist Writers. Upon his return to Mexico in 1938, he became one of the founders of the journal, Taller (Workshop), a magazine which signaled the emergence of a new generation of writers in Mexico as well as a new literary sensibility.

Paz is a poet and an essayist. His poetic corpus is nourished by the belief that poetry constitutes “the secret religion of the modern age.” Eliot Weinberger has written that, for Paz, “the revolution of the word is the revolution of the world, and that both cannot exist without the revolution of the body: life as art, a return to the mythic lost unity of thought and body, man and nature, I and the other.” This is a poetry written within the perpetual motion and transparencies of the eternal present tense. Paz’s poetry has been collected in *Poemas 1935-1975* (1981) and *Collected Poems, 1957-1987*(1987). A remarkable prose stylist, Paz has written a prolific body of essays, including several book-length studies, in poetics, literary and art criticism, as well as on Mexican history, politics and culture.



# Supplementary Poetry

## 1. The Slave's Dream - *H.W. Longfellow*

Beside the ungathered rice he lay,  
His sickle in his hand;  
His breast was bare, his matted hair  
Was buried in the sand.  
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,  
He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams  
The lordly Niger flowed;  
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain  
Once more a king he strode;  
And heard the tinkling caravans  
Descend the mountain-road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen  
Among her children stand;  
They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,  
They held him by the hand!\_\_\_\_  
A tear burst from the sleepers lids  
And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode  
Along the Niger's bank;  
His bridle reins were golden chains,  
And, with a martial clank,  
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel  
Smiting his stallion's flank.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,  
The bright flamingoes flew;  
From morn till night he followed their flight,  
O'er plains where the tamarind grew,  
Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,  
And the ocean rose to view.

At night he heard the lion roar,  
And the hyena scream,  
And the river-horse, as he crushed the reeds  
Beside some hidden stream;  
And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,  
Through the triumph of his dream.

The forests, with their myriad tongues,  
Shouted of liberty;  
And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,  
With a voice so wild and free,  
That he started in his sleep and smiled  
At their tempestuous glee.

He did not feel the driver's whip,  
Nor the burning heat of day;  
For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,  
And his lifeless body lay  
A worn-out fetter, that the soul  
Had broken and thrown away!



## 2. The Professor - *Nissim Ezekiel*

Remember me? I am Professor Sheth.  
Once I taught you geography. Now  
I am retired, though my health is good.  
My wife died some years back.  
By God's grace, all my children  
Are well settled in life.  
One is Sales Manager,  
One is Bank Manager,  
Both have cars.  
Other also doing well, though not so well.  
Every family must have black sheep.  
Sarala and Tarala are married,  
Their husbands are very nice boys.  
You won't believe but I have eleven grandchildren.  
How many issues you have? Three?  
That is good. These are days of family planning.  
I am not against. We have to change with times.  
Whole world is changing. In India also  
We are keeping up. Our progress is progressing.  
Old values are going, new values are coming.  
Everything is happening with leaps and bounds.  
I am going out rarely, now and then  
Only, this is price of old age  
But my health is O.K. Usual aches and pains.  
No diabetes, no blood pressure, no heart attack.  
This is because of sound habits in youth.  
How is your health keeping?  
Nicely? I am happy for that.  
This year I am sixty-nine  
and hope to score century,  
You were so thin, like stick,  
Now you are man of weight and consequence.  
That is good joke.  
If you are coming again this side by chance,  
Visit please my humble residence also.  
I am living just on opposite house's backside.

**Zhaleh Esfahani**, also known as “Zhaleh Soltani” and “Zhaleh”; b. 1921, Esfahan. She left Iran in 1947 and lived in the former Soviet Union until her return to Iran in 1979, after the Revolution. Currently she lives in London.

### 3. Forest and River- *Zhaleh Esfahani*

“I wish I were like you,”  
Said the forest  
to the roaring river,  
“Always travelling,  
always sightseeing;  
Rushing towards the pure domain  
of the sea,  
The kingdom of water;  
Water,  
The passionate, vigorous spirit  
of life,  
The liquid turquoise of light  
With eternal flow ...  
“But what am I?  
Only a captive,  
chained to the earth.  
In silence I grow old,  
In silence I wither and die,  
And before long  
nothing will remain of me  
But a handful of ashes.”  
“O forest, half-asleep, half-awake”,  
Cried the river,  
“I wish I were you,  
Enjoying a seclusion  
of living emerald,  
And illuminated by moonlit nights;  
Being a mirror  
reflecting the beauties  
of Spring;  
A shaded rendezvous for lovers.  
“Your destiny, a new life  
every year;  
My life, running away from myself  
all the time;  
Running, running, running  
in bewilderment;  
And what is my gain  
Of all this meaningless journey?”

Ah ... never having a moment of calm  
and rest!

“No one can ever know  
what the other feels;  
Who does care to ask  
about a passer-by  
If he really existed  
or was only a shadow?”

Now a passer-by  
Aimlessly walking in the shade  
Comes to ask himself,  
“Who am I? a river? a forest?  
Or both?  
River and forest?  
River and forest!”

#### 4. My Grandmother's House - *Kamala Das*

There is a house now far away where once  
I received love....That woman died,  
The house withdrew into silence, snakes moved  
Among books I was then too young  
To read, and my blood turned cold like the moon.  
How often I think of going  
There, to peer through blind eyes of windows or  
Just listen to the frozen air,  
Or in wild despair, pick an armful of  
Darkness to bring it here to lie  
Behind my bedroom door like a brooding  
Dog...you cannot believe, darling,  
Can you, that I lived in such a house and  
Was proud, and loved...I who have lost  
My way and beg now at strangers' doors to  
Receive love, at least in small change?

## 5. Richard Cory - *Edwin Arlington Robinson*

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,  
We people on the pavement looked at him:  
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,  
Clean favoured, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,  
And he was always human when he talked;  
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,  
“Good-morning,” and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich - yes, richer than a king -  
And admirably schooled in every grace:  
In fine, we thought that he was everything  
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,  
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;  
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,  
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

## 6. Haikus

### Snow

Gently drifting down  
Winter flurries are coming  
Tickling my cold face

**Sean Klabough**

### Trees

Green every spring  
Bright orange in autumn  
Bare in winter

**Kellie Webster**

### Cheery tree

I see a cherry tree  
Standing in the winter sun  
Birds are resting there

**Amanda Hauschildt**



### Snow

Snow drifting softly  
Piling up in soft blankets  
All around our yard

**Chandra Morgan**

## **Autumn**

Leaves changing color  
Nearly covering our yard  
Starting to get cold

## **Jared Hines**

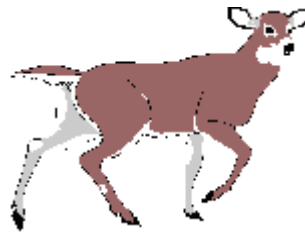
### **Deer**

Running through the field  
I can only see a white flash  
Quickly vanishing

## **Daniel Paulson**

### **Forest**

Seeing animals  
Listen to the stream flowing  
Building a treehouse



## **Tyler Kenall**

# Short Stories



## 1. The Big Story - *George Loveridge*

Ernie Gibson wanted to be a newspaper reporter. After he finished school he got a job on a small-town newspaper. Most of the time he worked in the *News* office, reading proof and checking facts. Sometimes he wrote about women's club meetings or high-school activities. Once in a while he handled routine police cases. His boss, a man named Truelove, covered everything that was interesting. Only if Truelove quit or dropped dead, Ernie said to himself, would he ever get a chance to show what he could do with a real story.

One morning Ernie was on his way back to the office with some notes he had taken about a dog show. The big story that day was a robbery in a supermarket. But Truelove was covering that.

It was hot and still early so Ernie decided to stop in at the Half Moon for a cup of coffee.

As soon as he entered the coffee shop, the counterman said, "Hear about the drowning?" "No. When?"

"Just now. Over at Willow Lake. Officer Trask was here and he got a call. He didn't even finish his coffee."

"Thanks," Ernie said.

He ran to his car and backed it quickly into the road. It took him less than ten minutes to drive to the lake, and he spent the time hoping and praying that Truelove hadn't heard the news.

In a meadow near the lake Ernie spotted a state police car. He went bumping across the field and parked beside it. Then he saw Officer Trask down by the bank, staring out into the water. Near him was a small pile of clothing.

"Who is it?" Ernie asked.

"Don't know for sure", Trask said. "A kid heard someone yell for help and found this pile of clothes. We're bringing a boat to look for the body".

"Any identification on the clothes?"

"An Army I.D. card \_\_\_ for a John Vollmer. There's a letter addressed to him, too. In the back pocket."

Ernie copied down the name and address \_\_\_ John Vollmer, 44 Cargill Street.

"When will the boat get here"?

"Here it comes now" Trask said.

The small boat was lifted off the trailer and launched quickly. One man rowed and another pulled grappling hooks through the water. Except for the ripples caused by the oars and the hooks, the lake was smooth and still.

"No telling how far out he was," Trask said.

Ernie nodded and watched for a few minutes. Then he said, "I'm going to check something".

"Okay".

Ernie drove to Cargill Street and found John Vollmer's house. When he rang the bell, a tall, gray-haired man came to the door.

"Does John Vollmer live here?" Ernie asked.

"Yes," the man said. "Is he here?"

"Not now"

"Are you his father?"

"Yes."

"I'm from the *News*," Ernie said. "I wanted to get a little information about him. Maybe you can help."

A stout woman came up behind the man. "What's the matter?" she asked.

"Why, nothing I know of," the man told her; then he turned back questioningly to Ernie.

"I heard your son was home," Ernie said. "We have a column in the *News* about servicemen, and I thought maybe I could write something about him."

"Yes, I see that column," the man said. "Come on in."

Ernie went into the front room, which was small and crowded with furniture. He stepped around a low table and saw a picture of a young man in an Army uniform. The television set in the corner was on, and the woman went over to it and turned down the volume.

"Have a seat," she said. "Johnny just got home from overseas. Just yesterday it was. He was over there more than a year, and I thought he'd never come back."

The father smiled. "It's tough on mothers. On fathers, too. Have some coffee, young man? We've got some on the stove."

"No, thanks," said Ernie. "Was he wounded?"

"Not a scratch, thank God," the woman said. "He came back safe and sound."

A pretty girl, about eighteen, came into the room. The woman smiled and said, "This is Johnny's sister \_\_\_ Margie. This young man is from the *News*. He's going to put something in the paper about Johnny."

"Why don't you turn off the TV, Mother?" the girl asked. "Then maybe he can hear better."

"I turned it down. Does it bother you, Mr. \_\_\_?"

"Gibson, my name is. No. It doesn't bother me".

"All the time Johnny was gone, I didn't watch TV much," the woman explained. "I said to myself, 'What if something was happening to him and I was watching a show and enjoying myself?' You know what I mean? But now he's back and I watch it again."

Ernie nodded. Then he began asking all the questions he could think of: "When is John's birthday? Where did he go to school? How were his grades? Did he ever win any athletic awards? Does he have a girlfriend?"

Ernie took notes on the answers, but all the time he was writing he was also listening nervously for the ring of the telephone or a knock on the door.

"Sure you won't have a cup of coffee?" the father asked again.

“No, thanks.”

“Maybe he’d like some ginger ale,” said Margie.

“Would you, Mr. Gibson?”

“No, nothing. Thanks very much. Where is John now?”

“He went out,” the mother *said*. He got home just yesterday, and then this morning he decided he had to go out.”

The father smiled. “Women. You can’t please them. What’s he want to sit around the house with us old people for?”

Margie said, “Johnny thought he might go over to Willow Lake for a swim. He used to swim there when he was a kid. He was going to do that or maybe look up some of his friends.”

Ernie pointed to the picture of the soldier on the table. “Is that John? Could I borrow it?”

“Yes, but you’ll be careful with it, won’t you?” the mother said. “That’s my best picture of Johnny.”

“Nothing will happen to it.” “Will you promise to bring it back?”

“Of course.”

“He’s a good boy,” the woman said.

“You can put that in your story. He never forgets his mother. It was my birthday when he was over there, but he didn’t forget. He sent his sister here some money to get me a present.”

Ernie got up and took the picture from the table. “I’ll return it,” he said.

The father and mother stood up, too, and the father said, “When’s this story going to be in the paper?”

Probably this afternoon.

“Soon as that? You work fast, you fellows don’t you? I’ll have to get a couple of extra copies. I’ll send one to his grandmother.”

Ernie said good-by.

“Come again,” the mother said. . “And be sure to bring my picture back.”

“Yes,” the father said. “Come back. I bet Johnny would like to meet you. Say, will this cost anything \_\_\_ to have the story in the paper?”

“No. Oh, no. Thanks. See you again.”

Ernie hurried down the steps and got into his car and drove back to Willow Lake.

About a dozen people were gathered on the bank of the lake. A doctor was trying to revive the body of a young man in blue swimming trunks. There was a cut on the young man’s leg, probably from the grappling hook.

Ernie went up to the state trooper. “Can they help him?”

“No chance. Been in too long.”

“Is it Vollmer?”

“Yeah,” said Trask. “He’s still wearing his Army dog tags.”

Ernie nodded; then he looked around and saw a house on the other side of the meadow. He ran across the field and knocked on the front door.

A woman opened it and said. "Yes?"

Ernie gave his name and business and asked permission to use the telephone.

"Trouble at the lake?" she asked.

"I'm afraid so."

The woman let him in and showed him where the telephone was.

Ernie called the newspaper office and started reading his notes to the rewrite man at the news desk. He spoke quickly and professionally, spelling out the name \_\_\_\_ "Vollmer. 'V' as in 'vinegar.' 'o' as in 'olive.' ..."

Then he added, "I've got a picture of him. I'll bring it in. Leave space for it."

Ernie thanked the woman and went back to his car. As he drove away, he passed an ambulance heading for the lake.

He stopped for a quick lunch and then went back to the *News* office. After he turned in the picture of John Vollmer, Ernie leaned back in his chair, put his hands in his pockets and propped his feet on his desk.

Around three o'clock Truelove came in with the afternoon *News*. "Well, you're on the front page with the story of the drowned soldier. You might have let me know about it. It's good work but \_\_\_\_"

Ernie said, "Thanks." He put the newspaper on his desk but didn't look at it.

"And here," Truelove said. He pulled a brown envelope out of his pocket. "Here's the dead guy's picture. Someone said you wanted it back".

Ernie took the envelope and stared at it for a minute; then slowly he got to his feet. "I've got to go out," he told Truelove. "I'll be back soon".

'Once again Ernie drove to Cargill Street. This time he pulled up behind a police car that was parked in front of the Vollmer house.

Ernie ran up the steps and dropped the picture of John Vollmer into the mailbox near the front door. Then he walked back to his car and after a little while \_\_\_\_ not knowing what else to do \_\_\_\_ he drove away.

## 2. A Grain of Mustard Seed - *Edith Pargeter*

When I was a little girl in Lahore, my father had a friend who was a Muslim. Indeed, he had many, but Mahdar Iqbal was a special one. He was the shoemaker who used to make our sandals. When we first knew him, he was heavily in debt, but my father began to throw business his way, and tell our friends about him, and gradually he was able to pay off his debts, and even to save a little. He had only a poor booth in the doorway of his house, and his dream was to have a shop in the bazaar. By the time of the troubles, he had more than fifteen hundred rupees saved up towards it, so he told my father.

In appearance these two men were not unlike; both thin, bright, active men, but my father's slenderness was small-boned and frail, and Mahdar Iqbal's was sinewy and tough as his own leather. Two or three times a week I'd see them bent over the chessboard in the cool corner of my father's shop\_\_\_ he was a jeweller, and we were quite well off in those days\_\_\_putting the whole world right. One thing they had in common was that they both believed it was possible.

It was my father who taught me, also, to believe that god was universal and benevolent, and man was perfectible, and by his very origin, disposed to good. I adored him, so naturally, I took his word for it.

The bad days were already coming upon us then. In Lahore, when partition came, the hate burst out from nowhere and overwhelmed everything. We dared not go out in the streets at all. Our shop and house were looted and burnt down. They left us a roof at least, and there we stayed in hiding, and thought now only of getting away\_\_\_back to India. It was very strange for us; Lahore was no longer India.

My father suffered, perhaps, more than most of our people, because all his ideas about men were being broken in pieces, one by one, and kicked into the dust. At first he would not believe that this hatred and unreason could go on, and he would not run before it. But in the end, it was plain that we must run or die.

Those of our people who had left in good time had been able to take some of their possessions with them. By the time we set our minds on leaving, we had nothing left to take but the clothes we stood in, and by then, too, it seemed that we might not be able to leave at all. But at last they said that a train would be allowed to leave on a certain day; but no one was permitted to take anything of value.

On the morning when the tram was to leave, we crept out of the shell of our house, and went to the railway station. The streets were full of Muslims, decent people who had been our neighbours, all screaming threats at us, spitting at us, even throwing stones as we hurried by. It was on my mother we leaned on then; she had never thought as highly of her fellow men as my father had, and therefore she was not so terribly hurt as he was; she could hate them back, and he could not.

On the platform, the crowd broke through the barrier and ran after us. And suddenly, I saw Mahdar Iqbal's face among them. We had not seen him for weeks; no one dared move about normally, or go near his friends. I saw the flare of hope that brightened the wreckage of my father's face, for one meaningful glance exchanged with Mahdar Iqbal could at least

save something for him.

And Mahdar Iqbal shoved his way through the press, flung himself upon my father, and shook him savagely by the shoulders.

‘Dog of a Hindu!’ he yelled into his face, ‘Let’s see what you’ve got there in your pockets! Let’s see what you’re stealing from us!’

He plunged his hands into my father’s pockets and turned out everything he had there: his handkerchief, his spectacle case, the fragments he had left from a life, all the time raving and reviling him like a madman.

My father stood like a dead creature, and let himself be mishandled. The man who had been his friend pawed over the last of his possessions disgustingly, spat his contempt on the ground, and laughed, bundling the poor bits back again.

‘Go, then, and get fat on it! Take your pocketful of garbage home with you!’ he shouted. And he took my father by the shoulders and threw him into the train, so roughly, that he stumbled and fell.

My mother thrust me in after him, and put herself between me and the rush of people that suddenly welled down the train, beating at the slatted windows and yelling curses at us. The last I ever saw of Mahdar Iqbal, he was standing on the platform with a demon’s grin on his face, shaking a fist at us. But we were in the train, we had a corner to crouch in, a wall at our backs.

We were lucky enough \_\_\_is that the word?\_\_\_ to escape with nothing worse than my father’s broken glasses and broken heart.

People died in the train, too, before we reached Amritsar. We were crushed together so that we could scarcely move. And that was terrible, to be welded to my father’s side like a piece of his very flesh, and to know that he was not there with me at all, but somewhere a long way off, and quite alone.

‘What did you expect?’ my mother said to him, sounding angry. ‘Could he fold you in his arms, and wish you a safe journey? He has a wife and children to consider, just as much as you.’

My father sat with his broken glasses sagging on his nose, and stared at nothing.

‘I know he could not come to me with his blessing’, he said. ‘But could he not be content with holding off from me. Why was it necessary to lay hands on me in unkindness? Was he forced to do me violence?’

‘He had to show himself a good Muslim,’ said my mother bitterly, ‘and good Muslims hate us. It is not enough not to love us. He wanted to show how utterly he had cut us off. Do you think they don’t know he used to visit us?’

‘He could have put that out of mind better,’ said my father, with quiet, hopeless certainty, ‘by staying out of sight, not by running to be the first to humiliate me. No, he is gone mad with hate, like all the world.’

And after a while of silence he said, in that soft, distant, haunting voice, ‘I would not have claimed him. He need not have come near me. One look of kindness would have been enough. I could have lived on that, simply knowing he was as he had always been.’

My mother, because she was frightened, began to abuse him a little, saying that there were

still good men in the world; but I knew she did not really believe it. If hatred could destroy Mahdar Iqbal, it could destroy every man.

My father turned his face to the wall. And in a moment I heard him say in a cold voice: 'Man is irreclaimable. There is no hope for him. And God does not care.'

I had been listening to every word that he uttered, and I could understand what he meant. But he had taught me so well that I could not believe what he was now telling me.

If God did not care then why had Lord Vishnu entered the world nine times already to help his people? Why had Christ come to be among men, and suffer? Why did the Bodhisattva turn his back on the perfect bliss of Nirvana and return to the world, to show men the way by which they could enter and share enlightenment? Why should God\_\_\_all the aspects of God in all the world\_\_\_spend so much time on the reclamation of man if man was irreclaimable? Who would know it better than he? My heart told me it could not be true.

It seemed to me that if I really had faith, it ought to be possible to turn this experience inside out, to find in it the fallacy that quite altered its meaning, and would restore my father to life. So I made up a very short and pointed prayer within my mind, and said it to God.

'Please consider, God,' I said to him reasonably, 'that I am only a little girl, and you can't leave it all to me. I know I'm right, I know the proof is there, but I don't know how to find it. Please take my hand and lead me to whatever it is I need, or else my father will surely die.'

I didn't expect anything to happen at once, and nothing happened. I didn't mind that. I had taken action in declaring myself, and that is always a liberating thing to do. The oppression seemed to lift from me at once, I even felt cooler.

I looked again at my father, and I saw that there were tears streaming down his cheeks. We were so crushed he could not get his hand to the pocket of his *achkan* to pull out his handkerchief. But my hand was smaller and already folded into the hollow of his side, and by wriggling patiently, I got my fingers into the opening, and drew out a corner of the handkerchief between them.

And something else came out with it, a tight little roll screwed into a square of tissue. It rolled into my father's lap, and the wrapping parted; we saw the crumpled edges of a number of banknotes slowly uncoiling, and a scrap of white paper in the heart of the roll.

My mother instinctively put out her hand to cover all that money from sight.

My father had taken up the scrap of paper in a trembling hand, and was staring from that to the banknotes as though he had been shocked back into life by the certainty that he was going mad.

'But it is impossible! I had no money. I had nothing, I swear. Where did this come from?'

But I knew! I pressed my cheek close to his shoulder, and gasped into his ear: 'Don't you see? Don't you understand? Who put his hands into your pockets, turned out all your belongings, and then pushed everything back in again?'

'Mahdar Iqbal!' he breathed, and stared at the money; but I knew it was not the money that was bringing back feeling and form and meaning into his face. 'Read the note,' said my mother urgently.



It was as he read it through for the first time, silently, that he became in his essence the man he had always been, and a little nearer, surely, to being indestructible. And when he read it the second time, aloud, he was already a little less and a little more than he had always been. A little less by not being able to make amends, a little more by accepting humbly his eternal disability.

“Forgive me,” he read, “but there is no other way of getting this to you. If I spoke with you as a friend, both you and I would be torn to pieces. Take in kindness to me what you now need so much more than I. Forgive me, and remember me not as I am to you today, but as I shall be to you always in spirit. I shall never know a better man.”

There were more than fifteen hundred rupees in the roll of notes. Mahdar Iqbal had given us everything he had.

### **About the Author**

Edith Pargeter was born in 1913 at Horsehay, Shropshire. She attended Dawley Church of England School and the Coalbrookdale High School for Girls. Her first published novel was *Hortensius, friend of Nero* (1936), a rather dry tale of martyrdom that was not a great success but she persevered and *The city lies foursquare* (1939) was much more warmly received.

During the war she worked in an administrative role with the Women’s Royal Navy Service in Liverpool and she received the British Empire Medal. Many more novels appeared at this time, including **Ordinary people** (1941) and **She goes to war** (1942), the latter based on her own wartime experiences.

She won awards for her writing from both the British Crime Writers Association and the Mystery Writers of America. After her death in October 1995, **The Times** published a full obituary that declared that here was “a deeply sensitive and perceptive woman....an intensely private and modest person” whose writing was “direct, even a little stilted, matching a self-contained personality”.



### 3. I've Got Gloria - M.E. Kerr

"Hello? Mrs. Whitman?"

"Yes?"

"I've got Gloria."

"Oh, thank heaven! Is she all right?" "She's fine, Mrs. Whitman."

"Where is she?"

"She's here with me."

"Who are you?"

"You can call me Bud."

"Bud who?"

"Never mind that, Mrs. Whitman. I've got your little dog and she's anxious to get back home."

"Oh, I know she is. She must miss me terribly. Where are you? I'll come and get her right away."

"Not so fast, Mrs. Whitman. First, there's a little something you must do."

"Anything. Just tell me where to find you."

"I'll find *you*, Mrs. Whitman, *after* you do as I say."

"What do you mean, Bud?"

"I mean that I'll need some money before I get Gloria home safely to you".

"Money?"

"She's a very valuable dog."

"Not really. I got her from the pound."

"But she's valuable to you, isn't she?" "She's everything to me."

"So you have to prove it, Mrs. Whitman."

"What is this?"

"A dognapping. I have your dog and you have to pay to have her returned safely to you." There was a pause.

I could just imagine her face\_\_\_that face I hated ever since she flunked me. That mean, freckled face, with the glasses over those hard little green eyes, the small, pursed lips, the mop of frizzy red hair topping it all... Well, top this, Mrs. Whitman: I do not even have that nutsy little bulldog of yours. She *is lost*, just as your countless signs nailed up everywhere announce that she is...All I have is this one chance to get revenge, and I'm grabbing it!

Now her voice came carefully. "How much do you want?"

"A thousand dollars, Mrs. Whitman. A thou, in one-hundred-dollar bills, and Gloria will be back drooling on your lap."

"A *thousand* dollars?"

Got to you, didn't I? Did your stomach turn over the way mine did when I saw that F in math?

“You heard me, Mrs. Whitman.” “Are you one of my students?” “Oh, like I’m going to tell you if I am.”

“You must be.”

“I could be, couldn’t I? You’re not everyone’s dream teacher, are you?”

“Please, don’t hurt my dog.”

“I’m not cruel by nature.”

I don’t take after my old man. He said he was sorry that I flunked math because he knew how much I was counting on the hike through Yellow-stone this summer. He said maybe the other guys would take some photos so I could see what I was missing while I went to summer school to get a passing grade. “Gee, Scott,” he said, “what a shame, and now you won’t get an allowance, either, or have TV in your bedroom, or the use of the computer. But never mind, sonny boy,” he said, there’ll be lots to do around the house. I’ll leave lists for you every day of things to be done before I get home.”

Mrs. Whitman whined, “I just don’t have a thousand dollars. I don’t know where I’ll get so much money, either.”

Sometimes I whined that way, and my mom would say, “Scotty, we wouldn’t be so hard on you if you’d only take responsibility for your actions. We tell you to be in at eleven p.m. and you claim the bus was late. We ask you to take the tapes back to Videoland and you say we never said to do it. You always have an excuse for everything! You never blame yourself!”

“Mrs. Whitman? I don’t mean to be hard on you but that’s the deal, see. A thou in hundreds”.

“Just don’t hurt Gloria.”

“Gee, what a shame that you have to worry about such a thing. She’s a sweet little dog, and I know she misses you because she’s not eating.”

“She doesn’t eat dog food, Bud. I cook for her.”

“That’s why she doesn’t eat, hmm? I don’t know how to cook”.

“You could just put a frozen dinner in the microwave. A turkey dinner, or a Swanson’s pot roast. I’ll pay you for it.”

“A thousand dollars plus ten for frozen dinners? Is that what you’re suggesting?”

“Let me think. Please. I have to think how I can get the money.”

“Of course, you do. I’ll call you back, Mrs. Whitman, and meanwhile I’ll go to the store and get some Swanson’s frozen dinners.”

“When will you\_\_\_”

I hung up.

I could hear Dad coming up the stairs.

“Scott?”

“Yes, sir?”

“I’m going to take the car in for an oil change. I want you to come with me.”

“I have some homework, sir.”

“I want you to come with me. *Now.*”

In the car, he said, "We need to talk."

"About what?" I said.

There was one of her Lost Dog signs tacked to the telephone pole at the end of our street.

"We need to talk about this summer," he said.

"What about it?"

"You *have* to make up the math grade. That you *have* to do. I'm sorry you can't go to Yellowstone."

"Yeah."

"There's no other way if you want to get into any kind of college. Your other grades are fine. But you need math... What's so hard about math, Scott?"

"I hate it!"

"I did, too, but I learned it. You have to study."

"Mrs. Whitman doesn't like me."

"Why doesn't she like you?"

"She doesn't like anyone but that bulldog."

"Who's lost, apparently?"

"Yeah."

"The signs are everywhere."

"Yeah."

"But she wouldn't deliberately flunk you, would she?"

"Who knows?"

"Do you really think a teacher would flunk you because she doesn't like you?"

"Who knows?"

"Scott, you've got to admit when you're wrong. I'll give you an example. I was wrong when I said you couldn't have an allowance or TV or use of the computer, et cetera. I was angry and I just blew! That was wrong. It wouldn't have made it any easier for you while you're trying to get a passing grade in math. So I was wrong! I apologize and I take it back."

"How come?"

"How come? Because I'm sorry. I thought about it and it bothered me. I'm a hothead, and I don't like that about myself. Okay?"

"Yeah."

"Maybe that's what's wrong here".

"What's wrong where?"

"Between *us*"

"Is something wrong between us?"

"Scotty, I'm trying to talk with you. About us. I want to work things out so we get along better."

"Yeah."

"Sometimes I do or say rash things."

“Yeah.”

“I always feel lousy after.”

“Oh, yeah?”

“Do you understand? I shouldn’t take things out on you. That’s petty. Life is hard enough. We don’t have to be mean and spiteful with each other. Agreed?”

“Yeah.” I was thinking about the time our dog didn’t come home one night. I couldn’t sleep. I even prayed. When he got back all muddy the next morning, I broke into tears and told him, “Now you’re making me blubber like a baby!”

Dad was still on my case.

“Scott, I want you to think about why Mrs. Whitman flunked you.”

“I just told you: she doesn’t like me.”

“Are you really convinced that you’re good at math but the reason you failed was because she doesn’t like you?”

“Maybe.”

“Is she a good teacher?”

“She never smiles. She’s got these tight little lips and these ugly freckles.”

“So she’s not a good teacher?”

“I can’t learn from her.”

“Did you study hard?”

“I studied. Sure. I studied.”

“How many others flunked math?”

“What?”

“How many others flunked math?”

“No one.”

“Speak up.”

“I said, I’m the only one.”

“So others learn from her despite her tight little lips and ugly freckles?”

“I guess.”

“Scott, who’s to blame for your flunking math?”

“Okay,” I said. “Okay.”

“Who is to blame?”

“Me. Okay? I didn’t study that hard.”

He sighed and said, “There. Good. You’ve accepted the blame...How do you feel?”

“I feel okay.” I really didn’t, though. I was thinking about that dumb bulldog running loose somewhere, and about Mrs. Whitman worried sick now that she thought Gloria’d been dognapped.

Dad said, “I think we both feel a lot better.”

We sat around in the waiting room at the service centre.

Dad read *Sports Illustrated*, but I couldn't concentrate on the magazines there or the ballgame on TV. I was down. I knew what Dad meant when he'd told me he felt bad after he "blew" and that he didn't like himself for it.

I kept glancing toward the pay phone. I stuck my hands in my pants pockets. I had a few quarters.

"I'm going to call Al and see what he's doing tonight," I said.

Dad said, "Wait until you get home. We'll be leaving here very shortly. "

"I'm going to look around," I said.

I didn't know Mrs. Whitman's number. I'd copied it down from one of the Lost Dog signs and ripped it up after I'd called her. I hadn't planned to follow up the call, get money from her: nothing like that. I just wanted to give her a good scare.

I went over to the phone book and looked her up.

Then I ducked inside the phone booth, fed the slot a quarter, and dialed.

"Hello?"

"Mrs. Whitman? I don't have your dog. I was playing a joke."

"I know you don't have my dog. Gloria's home. The dog warden found her and brought her back right after you hung up on me."

I was relieved. At least she wouldn't have to go all night worrying about getting Gloria back.

"I was wrong," I said. "It was petty. I'm sorry."

"Do you know what you put me through, Scott Perkins?"

I just hung up.

I stood there with my face flaming.

"Scott?" My father was looking all over for me, calling me and calling me. "Scott! Are you here? The car's ready!"

All the way home, he lectured me on how contrary I was. Why couldn't I have waited to phone Al? What was it about me that made me just go ahead and do something I was expressly told I shouldn't do? "Just when I think we've gotten someplace," he said, "you turn around and go against my wishes.

"*Why?*" he shouted.

I said, "What?" I hadn't been concentrating on all that he was saying.

I was thinking that now she knew my name \_\_\_ don't ask me how \_\_\_ and now what was she going to do about it?

"I asked you *why* you go against my wishes," Dad said. "Nothing I say seems to register with you."

"It registers with me," I said. "I just seem to screw up sometimes."

"I can hardly believe my ears." He was smiling. "You actually said sometimes you screw up. That's a new one."

"Yeah," I said. "That's a new one."

Then we both laughed, but I was still shaking, remembering Mrs. Whitman saying my name that way.

When we got in the house, Mom said, “The funniest thing happened while you were gone. The phone rang and this woman asked what number this was. I told her, and she asked whom she was speaking to. I told her and she said, ‘Perkins...Perkins. Do you have a boy named Scott?’ I said that we did, and she said, ‘This is Martha Whitman. Tell him I’ll see him this summer. I’m teaching remedial math.’”

I figured that right after I’d hung up from calling her about Gloria, she’d dialed \*69. I’d heard you could do that. The phone would ring whoever called you last. That was why she’d asked my mother what number it was and who was speaking.

Dad said, “You see, Scott, Mrs. Whitman doesn’t dislike you, or she wouldn’t have called here to tell you she’d see you this summer.”

“I was wrong,” I said. “Wrong again.”

Oh, was I ever!

## **About the Author**

M.E.Kerr was born on May 27, 1927 as Marijane Agnes Meaker in Auburn, NY. She received B.A. from the University of Missouri in 1949.

She was partly influenced by her father who was an ardent reader. “Our living room was lined with book cases and I was always borrowing books from them to take up to my room and devour”, she says about herself.

During her prolific writing career she has published under the pseudonyms of M.E. Kerr, Ann Aldrich, Mary James and Vin Packer. At present she is a member of PEN, Authors League of America and society of children’s Book Writers. M.E Kerr is the winner of 1993 Margaret Edwards Award for her life time achievement in writing books for young adults.



# Supplementary Short Stories



## 1. The Night Train at Deoli - *Ruskin Bond*

When I was at college I used to spend my summer vacations in Dehra, at my grandmother's place. I would leave the plains early in May and return late in July. Deoli was a small station about thirty miles from Dehra: it marked the beginning of the heavy jungles of the Indian Terai.

The train would reach Deoli at about five in the morning, when the station would be dimly lit with electric bulbs and oil-lamps, and the jungle across the railway tracks would just be visible in the faint light of dawn. Deoli had only one platform, an office for the station master and a waiting room. The platform boasted a tea stall, a fruit vendor, and a few stray dogs; not much else, because the train stopped there for only ten minutes before rushing on into the forests.

Why it stopped at Deoli, I don't know. Nothing ever happened there. Nobody got off the train and nobody got in. There were never any coolies on the platform. But the train would halt there a full ten minutes, and then a bell would sound, the guard would blow his whistle, and presently Deoli would be left behind and forgotten.

I used to wonder what happened in Deoli, behind the station walls. I always felt sorry for that lonely little platform, and for the place that nobody wanted to visit. I decided that one day I would get off the train at Deoli, and spend the day there, just to please the town.

I was eighteen, visiting my grandmother, and the night train stopped at Deoli. A girl came down the platform, selling baskets.

It was a cold morning and the girl had a shawl thrown across her shoulder. Her feet were bare and her clothes were old, but she was a young girl, walking gracefully and with dignity.

When she came to my window, she stopped. She saw that I was looking at her intently, but at first she pretended not to notice. She had a pale skin, set off by shiny black hair, and dark, troubled eyes. And then those eyes, searching and eloquent, met mine.

She stood by my window for some time and neither of us said anything. But when she moved on, I found myself leaving my seat and going to the carriage door. She noticed me at the door, and stood waiting on the platform, looking the other way. I walked across to the tea stall. A kettle was boiling over on a small fire, but the owner of the stall was busy serving tea somewhere on the train. The girl followed me behind the stall.

Do you want to buy a basket?' she asked. 'They are very strong, made of the finest cane. ...'

'No,' I said, 'I don't want a basket.'

We stood looking at each other for what seemed a very long time and then she said, 'Are you sure you don't want a basket?'

'All right, give me one,' I said, and I took the one on top and gave her a rupee, hardly daring to touch her fingers.

As she was about to speak, the guard blew his whistle; she said something, but it was lost in the clanging of the bell and the hissing of the engine. I had to run back to my compartment. The carriage shuddered and, jolted forward.

I watched her as the platform slipped away. She was alone on the platform and she did not move, but she was looking at me and smiling. I watched her until the signal-box came in the way, and then the jungle hid the station, but I could still see her standing there alone....

I sat up awake for the rest of the journey. I could not rid my mind of the picture of the girl's face and her dark, smouldering eyes.

But when I reached Dehra the incident became blurred and distant; for there were other things to occupy my mind. It was only when I was making the return journey, two months later, that I remembered the girl.

I was looking out for her as the train drew into the station and I felt an unexpected thrill when I saw her walking up the platform. I sprang off the foot-board and waved to her.

When she saw me, she smiled. She was pleased that I remembered her. I was pleased that she remembered me. We were both pleased, and it was almost like a meeting of old friends.

She did not go down the length of the train selling baskets, but came straight to the tea stall; her dark eyes were suddenly filled with light. We said nothing for some time but we couldn't have been more eloquent. I felt the impulse to put her on the train there and then, and take her away with me; I could not beat the thought of having to watch her recede in to the distance of Deoli station. I took the baskets from her hand and put them down on the ground. She put out her hand for one of them, but I caught her hand and held it.

'I have to go to Delhi?' I said.

She nodded. 'I do not have to go anywhere.'

The guard blew his whistle for the train to leave and how I hated the guard for doing that.

'I will come again,' and, as she nodded, the bell changed and the train slid forward. I had to wrench my hand away from the girl and run for the moving train.

This time I did not forget her. She was with me for the remainder of the journey, and for long after. All that year she was a bright, living thing. And when the college term finished I packed in haste and left for Dehra earlier than usual. My grandmother would be pleased at my eagerness to see her.

I was nervous and anxious as the train drew into Deoli, because I was wondering what I should say to the girl, and what I should do; I was determined that I wouldn't stand helplessly before her, hardly able to speak or do anything about my feelings.

The train came to Deoli, and I looked up and down the platform, but I could not see the girl anywhere.

I opened the door and stepped off the foot-board. I was deeply disappointed, and overcome by a sense of foreboding. I felt I had to do something, and so I ran up to the station master and said, 'Do you know the girl who used to sell baskets here?'

'No, I don't', said the station master. You'd better get on the train if you don't want to be left behind.'

But I paced up and down the platform, and stared over the railings at the station yard; all I saw was a mango tree and a dusty road leading into the jungle. Where did the road go? The train was moving out of the station, and I had to run up the platform and jump for the door of my compartment. Then, as the train gathered speed and rushed through the forests, I sat brooding in front of the window.

What could I do about finding a girl I had seen only twice, who had hardly spoken to me,

and about whom I knew nothing-absolutely nothing-but for whom I felt a tenderness and responsibility that I had never felt before?

My grandmother was not pleased with my visit after all because I didn't stay at her place more than a couple of weeks. I felt restless and ill-at-ease. So I took the train back to the plains, meaning to ask further questions of the station-master at Deoli.

But at Deoli there was a new station master. The previous man had been transferred to another post within the past week. The new man didn't know anything about the girl who sold baskets. I found the owner of the tea stall, a small, shrivelled-up man, wearing greasy clothes, and asked him if he knew anything about the girl with the baskets.

'Yes, there was such a girl here, I remember quite well,' he said. 'But she has stopped coming now.'

'Why?' I asked 'What happened to her?'

'How should I know?' said the man. 'She was nothing to me.'

And once again I had to run for the train.

As Deoli platform receded, I decided that one day I would have to break journey there, spend a day in the town, make enquiries, and find the girl who had stolen my heart with nothing but a look from her dark, impatient eyes.

With this thought I consoled myself throughout my last term in college. I went to Dehra again in the summer and when, in the early hours of the morning, the night train drove into Deoli station, I looked up and down the platform for signs of the girl, knowing I wouldn't find her but hoping just the same.

Somehow I couldn't bring myself to break journey at Deoli and spend a day there. (If it was all fiction or a film, I reflected, I would have got down and cleared up the mystery and reached a suitable ending for the whole thing.) I think I was afraid to do this. I was 'afraid of discovering what really happened to the girl. Perhaps she was no longer in Deoli, perhaps she was married, perhaps she had fallen ill....

In the last few years I have passed through Deoli many times, and I always look out of the carriage window, half expecting to see the same unchanged face smiling up at me. I wonder what happens in Deoli, behind the station walls. But I will never break my journey there. I prefer to keep hoping and dreaming, and looking out of the window up and down that lonely platform, waiting for the girl with the baskets.

I never break my journey at Deoli, but I pass through as often as I can.

### **About the Author**

Ruskin Bond (1934-) comes from Himachal Pradesh but lives in Mussoorie. He was educated in Shimla and became a professional writer at a young age. His famous novel is 'The Room on the Roof' and one of his short stories, 'A Flight of Pigeons', has been made into the film 'Junoon'. 'The Night Train at Deoli' beautifully translates an apparently insignificant and transient feeling into a deeper and more profound emotion.

## 2. Too Soon a Woman - *D. Johnson*

WE LEFT the home place behind, mile by slow mile, heading for the mountains, across the prairie where the wind blew forever.

At first there were four of us with the one-horse wagon and its skimpy load. Pa and I walked, because I was a big boy of eleven. My two little sisters romped and trotted until they got tired and had to be boosted up into the wagon bed.

That was no covered Conestoga, like Pa's folks came West in, but just an old farm wagon, drawn by one weary horse, creaking and rumbling westward to the mountains, toward the little woods town where Pa thought he had an old uncle who owned a little two-bit sawmill.

Two weeks we had been moving when we picked up Mary, who had run away from somewhere that she wouldn't tell. Pa didn't want her along, but she stood up to him with no fear in her voice.

"I'd rather go with a family and look after kids," she said, "but I ain't going back. If you won't take me, I'll travel with any wagon that will."

Pa scowled at her, and her wide blue eyes stared back.

"How old are you?" he demanded.

"Eighteen," she said. "There's teamsters come this way sometimes. I'd rather go with you folks: But I won't go back."

"We're prid' near out of grub," my father told her. "We're clean out of money. I got all I can handle without taking anybody else." He turned away as if he hated the sight of her. "You'll have to walk," he said.

So she went along with us, looked after the little girls, wouldn't talk to her.

On the prairie, the wind blew. But in the mountains, there was rain. When we stopped at little timber claims along the way, the homesteaders said it had rained all summer. Crops among the blackened stumps were rotted and spoiled. There was no cheer anywhere, and little hospitality. The people we talked to were past worrying. They were scared and desperate.

So was Pa. He traveled twice as far each day as the wagon, ranging through the woods with his rifle, but never saw game. He had been depending on venison. But we never got any except as a grudging gift from the homesteaders.

"He brought in a porcupine once, and that was fat meat and good. Mary roasted it in chunks over the fire, half crying with the smoke. Pa and I rigged up the tarp sheet for shelter to keep the rain from putting the fire clean out.

The porcupine was long gone, except for some of the tried-out fat that Mary had saved, when we came to an old, empty cabin. Pa said we'd have to stop. The horse was wore out, couldn't pull anymore up those grades on the deep-rutted roads in the mountains.

At the cabin, at least there was shelter. We had a few potatoes left and some corn meal. There was a creek that probably had fish in it, if a person could catch them. Pa tried it for half a day before he gave up. To this day I don't care for fishing. I remember my father's sunken eyes in his gaunt, grim face.

He took Mary and me outside the cabin to talk. Rain dripped on us from branches overhead.

“I think I know where we are,” he said. “I calculate to get to old John’s and back in about four days. There’ll be grub in the town, and they’ll let me have some whether old John’s still there or not.”

He looked at me. “You do like she tells you,” he warned. It was the first time he had admitted Mary was on earth since we picked her up two weeks before.

“You’re my pardner,” he said to me, “but it might be she’s got more brains. You mind what she says.”

He burst out with bitterness. “There ain’t anything good left in the world, or people to care if you live or die. But I’ll get grub in the town and come back with it”.

He took a deep breath and added, ‘If you get too all-fired hungry, butcher the horse. It’ll be better than starving.”

He kissed the little girls good-bye and plodded off through the woods with one blanket and the rifle.

The cabin was moldy and had no floor. We kept a fire going under a hole in the roof, so it was full of blinding smoke, but we had to keep the fire so as to dry out the wood.

The third night we lost the horse. A bear scared him. We heard the racket, and Mary and I ran out, but we couldn’t see anything in the pitch-dark.

In gray daylight I went looking for him, and I must have walked fifteen miles. It seemed like I had to have that horse at the cabin when Pa came or he’d whip me. I got plumb lost two or three times and thought maybe I was going to die there alone and nobody would ever know it, but I found the way back to the clearing.

That was the fourth day, and Pa didn’t come. That was the day we ate up the last of the grub.

The fifth day, Mary went looking for the horse. My sisters whimpered, huddled in a quilt by the fire, because they were scared and hungry.

I never did get dried out, always having to bring in more damp wood and going out to yell to see if Mary would hear me and not get lost. But I couldn’t cry like the little girls did, because I was a big boy, eleven years old.

It was near dark when there was an answer to my yelling, and Mary came into the clearing.

Mary didn’t have the horse - we never saw hide nor hair of that old horse again - but she was carrying something big and white that looked like a pumpkin with no color to it.

She didn’t say anything, just looked around and saw Pa wasn’t there yet, at the end of the fifth day.

“What’s that thing?” my sister Elizabeth demanded.

“Mushroom,” Mary answered. “I bet it hefts ten pounds.”

“What are you going to do with it now?” I sneered. “Play football here?”

“Eat it -maybe,” she said, putting it in a corner. Her wet hair hung over her shoulders. She huddled by the fire.

My sister Sarah began to whimper again. “I’m hungry!” she kept saying.

“Mushrooms ain’t good eating,” I said. “They can kill you.”

“Maybe,” Mary answered. “Maybe they can. I don’t set up to know all about everything, like some people.”

“What’s that mark on your shoulder?” I asked her. “You tore your dress on the brush.”

“What do you think it is?” she said, her head bowed in the smoke.

“Looks like scars,” I guessed.

“ ‘Tis scars. They whipped me. Now mind your own business. I want to think.”

Elizabeth whimpered, “Why don’t Pa come back?”

“He’s coming,” Mary promised.

“Can’t come in the dark. Your pa’ll take care of you soon’s he can.”

She got up and rummaged around in the grub box.

“Nothing there but empty dishes,” I growled. “If there was anything, we’d know it.”

Mary stood up. She was holding the can with the porcupine grease. “I’m going to have something to eat,” she said coolly. “You kids can’t have any yet. And I don’t want any squalling, mind.”

It was a cruel thing, what she did then. She sliced that big, solid mushroom and heated grease in a pan.

The smell of it brought the little girls out of their quilt, but she told them to go back in so fierce a voice that they obeyed. They cried to break your heart.

I didn’t cry. I watched, hating her.

I endured the smell of the mushroom frying as long as I could. Then I said, “Give me some.”

“Tomorrow,” Mary answered.

“Tomorrow, maybe. But not tonight,” She turned to me with a sharp command: “Don’t bother me! Just leave me be.”

She knelt there by the fire and finished frying the slice of mushroom.

If I’d had Pa’s rifle, I’d have been willing to kill her right then and there.

She didn’t eat right away. She looked at the brown, fried slice for a while and said, “By tomorrow morning, I guess you can tell whether you want any.”

The little girls stared at her as she ate. Sarah was chewing an old leather glove.

When Mary crawled into the quilts with them, they moved away as far as they could get.

I was so scared that my stomach heaved, empty as it was.

Mary didn’t stay in the quilts long. She took a drink out of the water bucket and sat down by the fire and I looked through the smoke at me.

She said in a low voice, "I don't know how it will be if it's poison. Just do the best you can with the girls. Because your pa will come back, you know. You better go to bed. I'm going to sit up."

And so would you sit up. If it might be your last night on earth and the pain of death might seize you at any moment, you would sit up by the smoky fire, wide-awake, remembering whatever you had to remember, savoring life.

We sat in silence after the girls had gone to sleep. Once I asked. "How long does it take?"

"I never heard," she answered.

"Don't think about it."

I slept after a while, with my chin on my chest. Maybe Peter dozed that way at Gethsemane as the Lord knelt praying.

Mary's moving around brought me wide-awake. The black of night was fading.

"I guess it's all right," Mary said. "I'd be able to tell by now, wouldn't I?"

I answered gruffly, "I don't know."

Mary stood in the doorway for a while, looking out at the dripping world as if she found it beautiful. Then she fried slices of the mushroom while the little girls danced with anxiety.

We feasted, we three, my sisters and I, until Mary ruled, "That'll hold you," and would not cook any more. She didn't touch any of the mushroom herself.

That was a strange day in the moldy cabin. Mary laughed and was gay; she told stories, and we played "Who's Got the Thimble?" with a pine cone.

In the afternoon we heard a shout, and my sisters screamed and I ran ahead of them across the clearing.

The rain had stopped. My father came plunging out of the woods leading a pack horse \_\_\_ and well I remember the treasures of food in that pack.

He glanced at us anxiously as he tore at the ropes that bound the pack.

"Where's the other one?" he demanded.

Mary came out of the cabin then, walking sedately. As she came toward us, the sun began to shine.

My stepmother was a wonderful woman.



### 3. Shelling Peanuts - *Yvonne Vera*

‘Take cover! Take cover!’

The small boys run through the streets and the yards carrying AK-rifles. They shoot through the hedges and yell as they drop to the ground, then rise again to confront each other. They contort their faces, making them as diabolical as possible. They want to look mean and merciless. They imitate the rut-a-tut sound of bursting fire. The girls watch and laugh gleefully as the boys roll themselves on the ground and hide behind tall grasses and imaginary protective rocks.

‘You are cheating. I said “Take cover!” but you kept on running. You don’t know how to play this game. If I say “Take cover!” you must lie down and hide. It means I am going to shoot at the enemy or else the enemy is going to shoot.’

‘We should start again. We need more people to make the game exciting. Let us call the girls to join us, then we can have two teams.’

‘Girls don’t know how to fight and they cry if you push them. I don’t think we should call the girls into our team.’

‘Not all girls cry if you push them. Rebecca doesn’t cry. Let’s call her, then there will be four of us.’

‘My mother told me that some women have also gone to fight and that they hold big guns and fight beside the men. I have seen pictures of dead women who have been killed by the soldiers in *The African Times*. My uncle shows them to us. This means we must call the girls to join us.’

‘Okay then. But let us decide first how we are going to play the game. You two are going to be the soldiers and I will be the rebel with Rebecca. You must first of all tell us your demands, then we will refuse. You must then go away and we will start fighting. If we shoot and you haven’t said “Take cover” then you are captured. We must also wear banana leaves as helmets and paint our faces. What are your demands?’

‘We want more money. We want to know why you cannot make enough money in your machine to give to everyone?’

The mother watched from where she sat under a shade, listening to the boys argue and decide. Her cheeks shivered slightly, though her eyes were dry of tears. She held her knitting needles tightly together between her outstretched legs. A basket of unshelled peanuts rested on one side of the mat. She watched her daughter Rebecca join the boys in the fight for territory, and was disturbed. Was it possible the daughter and the father were at this moment carrying out the same act? They had never met. The father and the daughter.

‘Take cover! Take cover!’ the daughter shouted. The woman was in an agony of recollection. She put the needles aside, picked up the basket of peanuts, and folded her legs under her. The shade had shifted a little and she got up to move her mat to the other side of the tree.

‘You’re dead! You’re dead!’ The children’s voices pierced the air. They dived into the hedge, raising small clouds of dust behind them, their bare feet protruding beneath the shadows.

The woman thought about the face that she remembered, scanning in her mind the broad



shoulders, the muscular arms, and she was afraid. A young man not much older than herself, then. What would she do now that she was carrying his child? He said he couldn't stay, as he had already made plans to leave. He had not thought that their circumstances would change, that a baby would be on the way.

'I shot you! You're dead ... stop cheating!' Rebecca shouted indignantly. The young boy only laughed, then turned rapidly around in mock anger, his brow contorted, firing a chain of bullets towards her. The mother heard the shrieking voice of her daughter, then the pleading tones of the father whose memory was awakened.

'We shall start all over when I return,' he had told her.

'When you return?' she echoed. 'Will you return?'

He looked away to his trousers, which were torn at the knees.

'Those who have no jobs have to leave. There is a job out there.' In his mind he meant no place in particular, only a piece of battleground in the bush, where he could claim some territory.

'What shall I do,' she asked, seeking his eyes, 'on my own?'

He did not answer. Perhaps he was ashamed of what he could not do for her.

'Take cover! Take cover!' The children's guns sent metallic fire over the rooftops.

'We shall wipe you out!' the daughter shouted.

The mother, disturbed, could not bear her daughter's determined voice. She wanted to call her and send her to the shops, or give her some woman's duty in the house. She saw the daughter's legs disappearing behind the tree under which she sought shade, and saw a small boy run after her, clutching a hand grenade.

'Surrender,' the little boy said as the two struggled behind the tree. The mother closed her eyes in search of the missing face.

The man, standing up, was about to leave but kept looking at the woman, whom he was seeing for the last time. Perhaps she would say or do something to make him stay. Not only today, but for good. But what could she say? Everything had come to her already decided. She could not reshape what had come to her complete, already out of reach. Only something of the man was left with her, and she had to nurture it, inside her. The man stared again at the woman, wanting to touch her for the last time, but he wanted her to come forward, to give herself. She would not do it, however, and he left.

The dead ones got up and walked. In the noonday heat the children ran around in circles, tiring of their game. They were laughing at each other and at the silliness of their sport. The mother had shelled the peanuts into a small basket, which she secured steadily with her knees. Each of the children withdrew into his own world, lying under the shade of the green hedge and recovering his energy.

'You're dead! You're dead!' The children mocked the collapse of their fantastic visions, as the game drew to an end, and the mother welcomed the quiet that followed their play.

The mother knew that if they invented another game, they would all jump up in enthusiasm, if it pleased them to do so. She called Rebecca, and sent her inside the house with the shelled peanuts.

#### 4. Samphel's pride and woes - *Rinzin Rinzin*

Uncle Tobgay was my mother's 32 years old only brother, a bachelor who had sworn never to get married. He dedicated his life in supporting his aged mother, widowed elder sister and his only nephew. The village folks called him uncle *Tshongpa*- 'uncle' after me, but then again, even my mother addressed him as uncle, and till I was eight, I always thought that my uncle was my mother's uncle too. He would make at least three trips a year to Gudama, an Indian town on the Indo-Bhutanese border. There he would barter hand-woven garments, bee wax, walnuts and pig-tail-hair with cotton, wool and silk yarn, salt, kerosene, cloth, dry-fish, rubber shoes, sandals, tea, sugar and a score of varied other goods that his experiences over the years would tell him are in high demand back home. He would pack them all up firm and good, load them up on the backs of half a dozen ponies, and start the long journey home.

Uncle Tobgay's every departure to Gudama would always be followed by my consistent daily inquiry of his return, from my mother. Since I knew how to count till 20 only, my mother would initially tell me that he would be back after 20 days. Then, after she had already told me the same thing for 20 days, the real countdown would begin, and I would be the happiest boy in the whole village. I would go around and 'show-off' my uncle's return to every single child in the village. And, every kid in the village would willingly share the peaches, pears, dried beef, beaten maize, and dry fried rice their mothers filled up their small pouches with when they came out to play with other kids. Of course, there were always some kids who wouldn't want to share their riches with me, but I would always know how to lure them into parting a portion of what they had. All I had to utter was, "Uncle Tobgay will be back tomorrow, and he will be bringing me candies and balloons." And the spell never failed.

At least two days before uncle's arrival, my mother would distil some wine, and store it in my late grand father's favourite short cylindrical wooden container with silver linings and gold curving. She would even shine the gold curving on the container with a piece of clean white cotton rug.

"This is how your uncle wants his wine and container" she would say with a sense of satisfaction after she had removed the last particle of dirt from it.

Uncle's first night at home after every trip always started with a ceremonial reception wine followed by a sumptuous dinner composed of dried beef and pork with potatoes and red chillies, fried cheese and a bamboo shoot soup prepared with mother's 30 years' experience in cooking. I would be sitting right beside my uncle. After dinner, some relatives and friends would drop by with long cylindrical bamboo containers filled with wine and sit around him like a flock of vultures eagerly waiting for their leader to finish partaking his share from a carcass of horse. And uncle would begin the tales of his latest adventures. I would be sitting beside him, my neck craned and staring into his face to pick up every detail of the tale. He

would be stroking my dust and lice ridden hair every now and then with his big callused hand in synchrony with the tales of his journey. And the tales would go on late into the night and early into the next day till all the long bamboo containers were emptied, and his own wine container emptied and refilled half a dozen times by my mother. The house would be filled with *Paaaah, Zaaie and Waaie* of surprises and admiration of uncle's tales from the audience. And, I would be reassured that my uncle was truly the village hero. I would be eventually laying in his lap and dozing off. And in my sleep, I would be uncle *Tshongpa* myself on a journey to a distant land at the head of 20 ponies.

Uncle's first day after arrival would always begin with a cup of wine served by my mother from his wine container. When I looked at him curiously, he would try to explain his early morning drinking habit to me.

"This is to drive away last night's ghosts from my body." Then he would stroke my head again with his heavy hand and say, "Do not do this when you are a big boy, Samphel."

And that would be just about enough for him to unleash the master big mouth in me. I would be talking to him and mother and grandmother and myself and Dungkarmo the cow, and Baytu the dog, and Mindula the horse, and Takarmo the cat ...till I fell asleep on his lap again that night.

Well, after the wine and a breakfast of millet dough with buttermilk, fresh cow's butter, potato curry and salted butter tea, uncle would unpack loads and loads of things. After every load had been unpacked, the gift distribution, the most awaited session, would begin. I would be the first person to get his gift, followed by mother, grandmother and other relatives. He would also bring a slab of dried tea leaves, some betel nut and some dried fish for every household in the village. My mother and I would go from door to door to deliver the gift.

"Uncle sends this humble gift with his apologies that he couldn't bring more," my mother would say every time someone opened the door.

"Oh! He shouldn't have. It's not possible that he brings gifts every time he goes to Gudama. Would you please, thank him for me," the recipient would counter simultaneously receiving the gift.

After we had visited a few households, I would insist to my mother that I will deliver uncle's message. And right after someone had opened the door, I would crane my neck and repeat the message at the top of my voice. My mother and the other person would laugh their heads off, and I would blush.

"You did it very well there," mother would say as she lead me by holding me by my hand to the next house.

"I can do even better at the next house," I would declare with confidence.

And, my mother would sweep me off my feet and kiss my red cheeks.

By the time my mother and I had delivered all the gifts, uncle would have already finished his part of the job. He would have already put aside enough quantities of cotton, wool and silk yarn for my mother to weave embroidered garments, salt, sugar, tea and dry fish for

the family to last till his next trip from Gudama, plain white cotton cloth for the twelve flag poles outside our house and wind-horses on the hillocks far north of our village, one fourth of his remaining goods put aside to be exchanged with rice, butter, cheese and meat for the family; that one fourth, he would consider as his net profit from the trip. After all things have been sorted out to his own satisfaction, as usual he would tell my very approving mother and grandmother that he would barter the rest with hand-woven garments, walnuts, bee wax, and pig tail hair again.

“After all, the business must go on,” he would say with a chuckle and raised eyebrows, and even the village’s deaf and dumb man could make out from the expression on his face that uncle *Tshongpa* was happy with the prospect of his business.

Come the second day, and I would always wake up to see my uncle sitting in the middle of many 20’s of things, and almost the entire village folks tugged up inside our small house. And still tugged up in my blanket, my eyes would traverse from uncle to the people in the house and the traffic at the door, and I would be lost for a moment or two to the humble bumble of the crowd and in a thought of my own. I would always imagine myself in uncle’s present ‘throne’ in the middle of many more 20’s of things and many more 20’s of people. And as usual, my uncle would walk over to my bed, and say ‘*Way*; my *prince* is up’ and rescue me out of the bed and curl me up in between his big masculine arms that felt as soft as the wool on a lamb’s skin. Everybody would look at my uncle dressing me up in the new cotton *gho* and the gumboot he had brought for me.

“Such love for your nephew, uncle *Tshongpa*!” the people around him would exclaim with envy.

“Samphel is my prince,” uncle would say with unhidden pride.

And my red cheeks would redden even more from blushing with the added attention from the crowd while in a corner near the chimney, bent over a shimmering pot of maize powder porridge, my mother would acknowledge that I was a lucky boy, and wipe a drop of tear from the corner of her eyes with the back of her soot laden hand.

When I was five, uncle admitted me in the village’s school for lay monks. Soon after, he left home for Gudama again at the head of half a dozen ponies as usual. And the very next day I started counting the days of his return again. One night of the second half of 20 days, we heard a horse neighing outside our house.

“Mindula!” my mother exclaimed in surprise.

She lit a pinewood flint in a flash and ran outside.

“It is Mindula, *ama*! It is Mindula!” she shouted excitedly when she was outside.

And I ran out of the house calling out, “uncle, uncle” at the top of my voice.

“But he is alone” mother gasped.

Mindula, uncle’s favourite horse was surely standing outside alone.

When my mother saw me drowning in disappointment, she held my hand and said, “Uncle must have sent Mindula ahead to inform us of his arrival. Let’s go inside and wait.”

When my mother went out to feed Mindula with unhusked rice and maize, my grandmother put her fragile hand on my head and double assured me that uncle will be home any moment. Just then, my mother walked in and sat beside grandmother, her face drained of blood.

“Mindula is not eating,” she said after a long time.

And the long wait began. Uncle did not arrive.

Next morning while going to school, I saw Mindula still standing outside the house. As I walked by, something told me to stop. And as I stood still, Mindula walked towards me and muzzled me gently. Then, just as I was reaching out to stroke his forehead, he slumped to the ground in slow motion. Nervously, I took a closer look at him, and then I realised how lean and thin he had grown. I bent over him, and stroked his forehead with utmost sympathy. He didn't move. Mindula was dead.

I continued the countdown again. I counted the days over and over again. At school I was promoted from *Ka, Kha, Ga*, and *Nga* to *Shanlob*, then to *Tshidue*, to *Dorchoed* and to *Digsha* and finally to *Shaju* but my uncle was not still back from Gudama. My mother cooked ground maize more often than usual. The menu at breakfast was always the same maize powder porridge. There was not even a scent of dry fish in the house. The holes in my gumboot either kept on becoming bigger or multiplied in numbers till finally I had to part with it and walk barefoot. My two plain cotton *ghos* had already returned to mother earth while the last one already had a few multicoloured patches on it. My mother and I did not go door to door to deliver uncle's gifts anymore. Instead, we received gifts from other *Tshongpas*. My spell to lure other village children into sharing their riches with me did not work anymore. My mother grew paler and leaner by the day, and the numbers of grey hair on her head kept on doubling by the day till her head was as grey as her mother's. My grandmother's gentle sobs changed to pathetic cries. Finally, she started running around naked, and eventually jumped from the roof of our house and never moved again. And I counted many 20's of 20's of days till I could finally count till 100 over and over again. However, my uncle still did not come home. I would still tell my mother and everybody in the village that my uncle would be home any moment. But my uncle still did not come home.

Then one day, my teacher at the school summoned me to his room.

“Samphel, I know how much you want your uncle to come home,” he said carefully “Everyone including me in the village also knows how much you love your uncle and how much he loved you.” Then, he wore an uneasy look on his face, took a deep breath and said, “But I am sorry to tell you that your uncle will not be coming home anymore. You are old enough now. You must understand that certain things that happen in life cannot be undone once they have already happened. Your uncle disappeared in Gudama five years ago. Much as we have tried to find his body, we couldn't. And knowing how much you loved him, no one could tell you the truth till now. Now, you must be brave and accept this fact, but always remember that your uncle is always with you. I know he is. I can see him in you.”

# Novel

## **Dawa: The Story of a Stray Dog in Bhutan.**

### **Rationale**

Kunzang Choden's **Dawa: The Story of a Stray Dog in Bhutan** is a story about the journey of a stray dog who is in search of self-discovery. The story reveals the hardships that he must face in order to achieve his destination: enlightenment.

The story is divided into chapters, which are comfortable in length and convenient for study. The story unfolds with Dawa's decision to travel beyond his immediate community, which is Paro. The story is episodic in structure with each chapter revealing an adventure which effects Dawa's development. The story is not static; it moves along providing interesting adventures to Dawa and also to the reader.

The language used is accessible and can be emulated. The vocabulary, sentence structure and paragraph development are modern and rich. It will provide students with information on how writers use language for effect.

The students can easily relate to the setting since the geography of the novel is the geography of Bhutan. Dawa's travels take him across the different regions of Bhutan to various urban and rural settings.

The main characters are dogs and should appeal to the readers especially because the comparisons of the dog society and human society can lead to very interesting findings about both. Moreover the protagonist Dawa is a character that matures through the various experiences he undergoes.

Through the tone the writer presents the protagonist as a mild character who respects others, who is curious to learn, is also humble but determined to achieve his goals. His quest to learn and do something thoroughly even though it takes him a long time is a positive attitude that he carries with him always.

The themes in this novel are profound and can contribute a lot to discussions and active learning. There are themes that have direct religious and cultural relevance to Bhutanese readers. The search for self-knowledge takes a lifetime and is realised as a result of hardships, losses and reflections. The need to belong to a society by building strong bonds of friendship and loyalty are essential to pursue happiness. Besides this, perseverance is a necessary quality of character if one is to succeed. The values which the character espouses are values which are

held in high esteem by the Bhutanese people like tolerance, leadership, pursuit of one's own way, modernisation taking a toll on Bhutan, altruism as a leader, changes in the physical and spiritual kingdom of Bhutan and finding significance in everyday life.

The themes are universal and a consideration of them will allow for intertextual connection with Gelong Ma Pelmo and the rural myths of Bhutan. Students can also make text to life connections. The patterns of development of the characters are patterns which most humans follow and the students can be set to finding parallel patterns in their lives and in society. The episodic journey can offer a structure for the lessons and activities with which to teach the novel.

There is a good balance of gender in the main characters. Molay the only female character is portrayed as a wise dog who gives advice to Dawa.

### **About the Author**

Kunzang Choden was born in Bumthang, central Bhutan in the year of the Dragon (1952). She is the first writer to chronicle Bhutan's oral tradition in English. In her early fifties, she has written a number of short stories, which include Bhutanese Tales of the Yeti, The Yeti in Bhutan, Folktales of Bhutan. Besides this she has written two novels *The Circle of Karma* and *Dawa: The Story of a Stray Dog in Bhutan*.



## Annual Timetable for classes IX and X.

This document assumes a school year with 150 teaching days exclusive of holidays and examination time. For classes IX and X, it assumes the school year divided into two terms of fifteen weeks each, and that each week will have 5 periods of 40 minutes for teaching English. Therefore, classes IX and X will have 150 periods in a year.

### Time Allocation

Reading & Literature	68 periods
Writing	37 periods
Language	30 periods
Listening & Speaking	15 periods.
<b>Total</b>	<b>150 periods.</b>

### Suggestive Plan:

#### Term 1

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Reading & Literature	Reading & Literature	Writing	Listening & Speaking	Language
2	”	”	”	Writing	”
3	”	”	Reading & Literature	”	”
4	”	”	Writing	Listening & Speaking	”
5	”	”	”	”	”
6	”	”	”	Writing	”
7	”	”	Reading & Literature	”	”
8	”	”	Writing	Listening & Speaking	”
9	”	”	”	Writing	”
10	”	”	Reading & Literature	Listening & Speaking	”
11	”	”	Writing	Writing	”
12	”	”	”	Listening & Speaking	”
13	”	”	Reading & Literature	Writing	”
14	”	”	Writing	Writing	”
15	”	”	”	Listening & Speaking	”



## Term 2

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Reading & Literature	Reading & Literature	Writing	Listening & Speaking	Language
2	”	”	”	Writing	”
3	”	”	Reading & Literature	”	”
4	”	”	Writing	Listening & Speaking	”
5	”	”	”	”	”
6	”	”	”	Writing	”
7	”	”	Reading & Literature	”	”
8	”	”	Writing	Listening & Speaking	”
9	”	”	”	Writing	”
10	”	”	Reading & Literature	Listening & Speaking	”
11	”	”	Writing	Writing	”
12	”	”	”	Listening & Speaking	”
13	”	”	Reading & Literature	Writing	”
14	”	”	Writing	Writing	”
15	”	”	”	Listening & Speaking	”

**Note:** Library Period, which is ONE period per week, is NOT included in the plan.

## Modes of Assessment for Class IX

### Introduction

In the new English curriculum the emphasis was given to improve the language skills - *reading, writing, listening and speaking* - of the students. The new curriculum also demands for a change in which students are assessed, a movement away from the formal or examination oriented approach to informal or alternative assessment. The targets of assessment are:

- to assess how well students are progressing in their studies
- to assess the performance level of the students in reference to the set Standards (*for promotion to a higher grade level*)
- to monitor the overall student achievement

### Standards

The Standards are statements of what the public can expect students to know and be able to do in English when they graduate from the school system (The Silken Knot: *Standards for English for schools in Bhutan*). The Standards for Writing and Language are listed in the English Curriculum Framework Document – Pre-primary to Class XII.

### Learning Objectives

The Learning Objectives will serve as indicators of achievement at each class level in reference to the Standards. The assessment is guided by the Learning Objectives.

### Assessment Objectives

The objectives are listed under the Learning Objectives for Class IX under Language and Writing Strand in the English Curriculum Framework document. These objectives are inter-related and it will not normally be possible or desirable to test them in isolation.

### Assessment Scheme

The overall assessment during the year will consist of the following:

- Continuous Formative Assessment (CFA)
- Continuous Summative Assessment (CSA)
- Examinations
  - Mid-term examinations
  - Annual Examinations

### Continuous Formative Assessment

The Continuous Formative Assessment (CFA) is an assessment of student's learning that is carried out throughout the academic year involving a variety of organised, both formal and informal learning activities to facilitate quality teaching and learning in schools.

The main aims of Continuous Formative Assessment (CFA) are to:

- provide opportunities to both the teacher and the learner to reflect on the learning process and on the level of achievement
- help teachers to find out what teaching methods and materials work best
- help teachers pay attention to individual differences and learning styles of the learners
- make learners realize how well they can do certain types of work and what they need to improve
- enable learners to see the connection between efforts and results
- allow the learners to evaluate themselves and also in peer group
- enable learners to take on multiple roles – as learners, helpers, evaluators and reviewers of the learning processes
- enable learners to appreciate each other’s talents and accept the weaknesses
- develop and tap the higher level thinking and problem solving skills of learners

The following are some of the suggested Continuous Formative Assessment activities:

- Ask series of questions to the class verbally as the teaching is going on
- In pair provide opportunities for peer assessment among students
- Provide individual students with the opportunities for self assessment
- In group/pair work, observe students and keep notes
- In writing activities, keep ample time for corrections and giving feedback to students
- Rubrics can be used for assessing students’ writing, class participation, listening speaking and reading skills
- Keep literacy Portfolios for both reading and writing activities
- Teachers could keep anecdotal records, observation notes and conference diaries for students as part of CA, and follow the FA activities that are suggested in the teachers’ manuals under various genres.

### **Continuous Summative Assessment:**

The Continuous Summative Assessment (CSA) consists of the school-based assessment on the Listening and Speaking Strand, Portfolios and the two written examinations.

The Listening and Speaking Strand carries 20 marks. The Portfolio Assessment consists of Reading portfolio (record of reading, journal writing, critical response, text talk or book talk) and Writing portfolio (best pieces of writing selected by students and best pieces selected by the teacher) maintained for each student in Reading & Literature and Writing Strands. Each portfolio values 10%.

There are two written examinations for class IX: The Mid-term Examination conducted in the first term will be marked out of 30%. The Annual Examination conducted at the end of the year will be marked out of 70%.

## **CLASS IX**

### **PAPER I: LANGUAGE AND WRITING**

In Paper I the Assessment will consist of Listening & Speaking and the written examination.

#### **Listening & Speaking : 20%**

- Listening Skill exercise
- Debates
- Extempore Speeches
- Presentations
- Book Talks
- Reports etc.

There will be two papers for the Examination. Paper I will consist of Language and Writing strands. The time allotted for the written examination is as given below:

**Time: 3 hours for writing and 15 minutes for reading the questions**

**Weighting: 100marks (60 marks for writing and 40 marks for Language)**

#### **Question Format:**

The Paper I will have two sections-Section A and Section B

#### **SECTION A**

Section A is for Writing and it will be marked out of 60%. This section will test students' writing skills through extended response questions. This section will have two questions.

#### **Question 1:**

Students are required to choose and write an expository essay from the three choices provided. It will be worth 25 marks.

#### **Question 2:**

Students are required to write any of these letters, business letter or an invitation letter from the 3 choices provided. They will be examined on their letter writing skills. It will be worth 15 marks.

## SECTION B

The questions under section B will test students' language skills through short answer questions. It will be worth 40marks.

### Question 1:10marks

The students will be examined on their understanding of origin of words (etymology) and purposes of language and its features.

### Question 2: 30marks

There will be questions on grammar which will require students to correct, rewrite, edit, and complete sentences. It will be worth 30 marks.

### Examination weighting for:

#### Writing

Essay	25%
Letter Writing	15%

#### Language

Nature of Language	10%
Grammar Structure	30%
Total	80%

Term One			Term Two		
Class IX	Continuous Assessment	Examination	Continuous Assessment	Annual Examination	Total
	10 % Listening & Speaking	30%	10 % Listening & Speaking	50%	100%

#### Note:

- For class X, BCSE will be conducted out of 80%. Each school submits 20% marks for the Listening & Speaking to the BBE as internal assessment marks which will be added to the Board Examination marks to make it 100%.
- The schools should conduct term one examination out of 100% and convert it to 30%, similarly the term two examination should be conducted out of 100% and convert it to 50%. By adding 20% CA for Listening & Speaking Paper I, the overall weighting will be 100%.

## PAPER II: READING & LITERATURE

In Paper II the Assessment will consist of Reading and Writing Portfolios, and the Written Examinations.

The Reading Portfolio includes - Reading Record for books read, critical responses, text talk or book talk, and book reviews by the students on teacher's guidance based on the criteria. The portfolio is to be maintained for each student and must be assessed and awarded marks as the part of CA.

The Writing Portfolio includes- best pieces of writing, the process of work, journal writing for books read, number of types and genre.

The Reading Portfolio carries 10%, and writing portfolio carries 10% and the written examinations (Term 1 and Term 2) are of 80%.

<b>Reading Portfolio : 10%</b>	<b>Writing Portfolio : 10%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Record of reading</li><li>• Critical response to books read</li><li>• Text talk or book talk</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Best pieces of writing</li><li>• Journal writing for books read</li><li>• The process of work</li><li>• The number and types of genre</li></ul>

The second part is the written examination on the Reading & Literature strand. The time allotted for the written examination is as given below:

**Time: 3 hours for writing and 15 minutes for reading**

### **Weightings:**

Short Stories: 20 marks

Essay: 20 marks

Poetry: 20 marks

Novel: 20 marks

### **Question Format:**

In Paper II there will be four sections as shown below:

Section A: Short Stories

Section B: Essay

Section C: Poetry

Section D: Novel

In each Section there will be two sets of questions of which either set I or set II to be attempted. However students must attempt at least one set II (Extended Response) questions from any of the four sections.

### **Assessment Scheme and Question Pattern:**

#### **Section A: Short Stories**

##### **Set I: 20 marks**

Multiple Choice Questions - 5 marks

Short Answer Questions – 15 marks

##### **Set II: 20 marks**

Extended Response Questions – Two questions: 10+10=20marks

*Note: In section A questions will be set on seen texts.*

#### **Section B: Essay**

##### **Set I: 20 marks**

Multiple Choice Questions - 5 marks

Short Answer Questions – 15 marks

##### **Set II: 20 marks**

Extended Response Questions – Two questions: 10+10=20marks

*Note: In section B questions will be set on unseen texts.*

#### **Section C: Poetry**

##### **Set I: 20 marks**

Multiple Choice Questions - 5 marks

Short Answer Questions – 15 marks

##### **Set II: 20 marks**

Extended Response Questions – Two questions: 10+10=20marks

*Note: In section C questions will be set on unseen texts.*

#### **Section C: Novel**

##### **Set I: 20 marks**

Multiple Choice Questions - 5 marks

Short Answer Questions – 15 marks

##### **Set II: 20 marks**

Extended Response Questions – Two questions: 10+10=20marks

*Note: In section D questions will be set on seen text.*

In each genre, the questions will test the students' ability to:

- Understand the text
- Give relevant interpretations of the contents in their own words
- Identify elements, points of view, themes, ideas, and analyse, synthesize, evaluate the texts and apply the ideas.

Term One			Term Two		
Class IX	Continuous Assessment	Examination	Continuous Assessment	Trial Examination	Total
	5% Reading Portfolio	30%	5% Reading Portfolio	50%	100%
	5% Writing Portfolio		5% Writing Portfolio		

**Note:**

- For class X, BCSE will be conducted out of 80%. Each school submits 20% marks for the Reading Portfolio and the Listening & Speaking strand to the BBE as internal assessment marks which will be added to the Board Examination marks to make it 100%.
- The schools should conduct term one examination out of 100% and convert it to 30%, similarly the term two examination should be conducted out of 100% and convert it to 50%. By adding 20% CA for Reading Portfolio and Listening & Speaking strand to Paper II, the overall weighting will be 100%.



## TEXTS FOR STUDY

### Short Stories (20 periods)

1. The Big Story - *George Loveridge*
2. A Grain of Mustard Seed - *Edith Pargeter*
3. I've Got Gloria - *M.E. Kerr*
4. The Tiger's Heart - *Jim Kjelgaard (keel-gard)*

### Essay (20 periods)

1. My Struggle for Education - *Booker T. Washington*
2. Nature is Not Always Kind - *Helen Keller*
3. Bhutan - Biodiverse Diamond of the Himalayas - *Robin Smilie*
4. The Dignity of Work - *Charles Finn*

### Poetry (18 periods)

1. Amalkanti - *Nirendranath Chakrabarti*
2. The Road Not Taken - *Robert Frost*
3. No More Clichés - *Octavio Paz*
4. I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings - *Maya Angelou*
5. Buddha's Death - *Romesh Chander Dutt*

### Section D: Novel (22 periods)

Dawa: The Story of a Stray Dog in Bhutan - *Kunzang Choden*

### Textbooks and References

1. Lyons, John (1981) Language and Linguistics: An Introduction Cambridge University Press
2. Swan, Michael (1980) Practical English Usage: International Student's Editions OUP
3. Millward, C.M (1996) A Biography of the English Language Harcourt Brace College Publishers
4. Sinha, R.P (2002) Current English Grammar and Usage with Composition OUP
5. Wren and Martin High School Grammar and Composition
6. Eastwood, John Oxford Practice Grammar – New Edition Oxford India (Text book for Language and Grammar for classes IX and X ; Student's copy)

## Acknowledgements

The Curriculum and Professional Support Division (CAPSD) is a non-profit government organisation under the Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan. CAPSD is primarily responsible for developing curriculum materials, providing professional development services to the teachers, and publishing school curriculum materials. The materials that are developed at the CAPSD are solely for educational purposes and are distributed free of cost to all the children studying in Bhutan.

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### Reading & Literature Texts for Classes IX

#### Essays

1. My Struggle for Education, Booker T. Washington, I Am The People, English Reader, National Council of Educational Research And Training.
2. Nature is not Always Kind, Helen Keller, Exits and Entrances King/LeDrew/Porter, Academic Press Canada.
3. Bhutan- Biodiverse Diamond of the Himalayas, Robin Smilie, Tashi Delek Magazine, Druk Air Corporation, © Bhutan Tourism Corporation.
4. Dignity of Work, Charles Finn, Between the Lines 12, Thomson Nelson.

#### Supplementary Essays

1. Dogs and Books, Newspaper Column, Personal Essay.
2. A Small Cheese Pizza, Rachel Svea Bottino, Between the Lines 12, Thomson Nelson.
3. Restaurant, R.K Narayan, A Penguin Original.
4. Songs of Ap Dawpel, Jigme Dukpa, Department of Tourism, Bhutan, 2005.
5. New images bring new values to Bhutan, Siok Sen-Pek Dorji, Kuensel, July 24, 2004.

## Poetry

1. I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou.
2. Buddha's Death, Romesh Chander Dutt, Flights of Fantasy, Frank Brothers & Company (Publishers) Ltd.
3. The Road Not Taken, Robert Frost, Flights Of Fantasy An Anthology of Poems, Frank Bros. & Co.
4. Amalkanti, Nirendrath Chakrabarti, The Oxford Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry, Oxford University Press.
5. No More Clichés, Octavio Paz.

## Supplementary Poetry

1. Slaves Dream, H.W. Longfellow, English Poems and Ballads, an Anthology of narrative verse, London Oxford University Press.
2. The Professor, Nizim Ezekeil, Pageant of Poems, Selina Publishers 4725/21A, Dayanand Marg, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002.
3. Forest and River, Zhaleh Esfahani.
4. My Grandmother's House, Kamala Das, The Twentieth-Century Indian Poets, Oxford University Press.
5. Richard Cory, Edwin Arlington Robinson, SUNBURST an Anthology of Poetry Edited by James A. Macneill, Nelson Canada, A Division International Thomson Limited, 1982.
6. Haikus - Internet.

## Short Stories

1. The Big Story, George Loveridge.
2. A Grain of Mustard Seed, Edith Pargeter, Oxford Reading Circle, Oxford University Press.
3. I've Got Gloria, M.E. Kerr.

## Supplementary Short Stories

1. Night Train at Deoli, Ruskin Bond, Selected Readings, Frank Bros. & Co.
2. Too Soon A Woman, D. Johnson.
3. Shelling Peanuts, Yvone Vera No Place Like and other short stories by southern African women writers, David Philip Publishers, Cape Town.
4. Samphel's Pride and Woes, Rinzin Rinzin