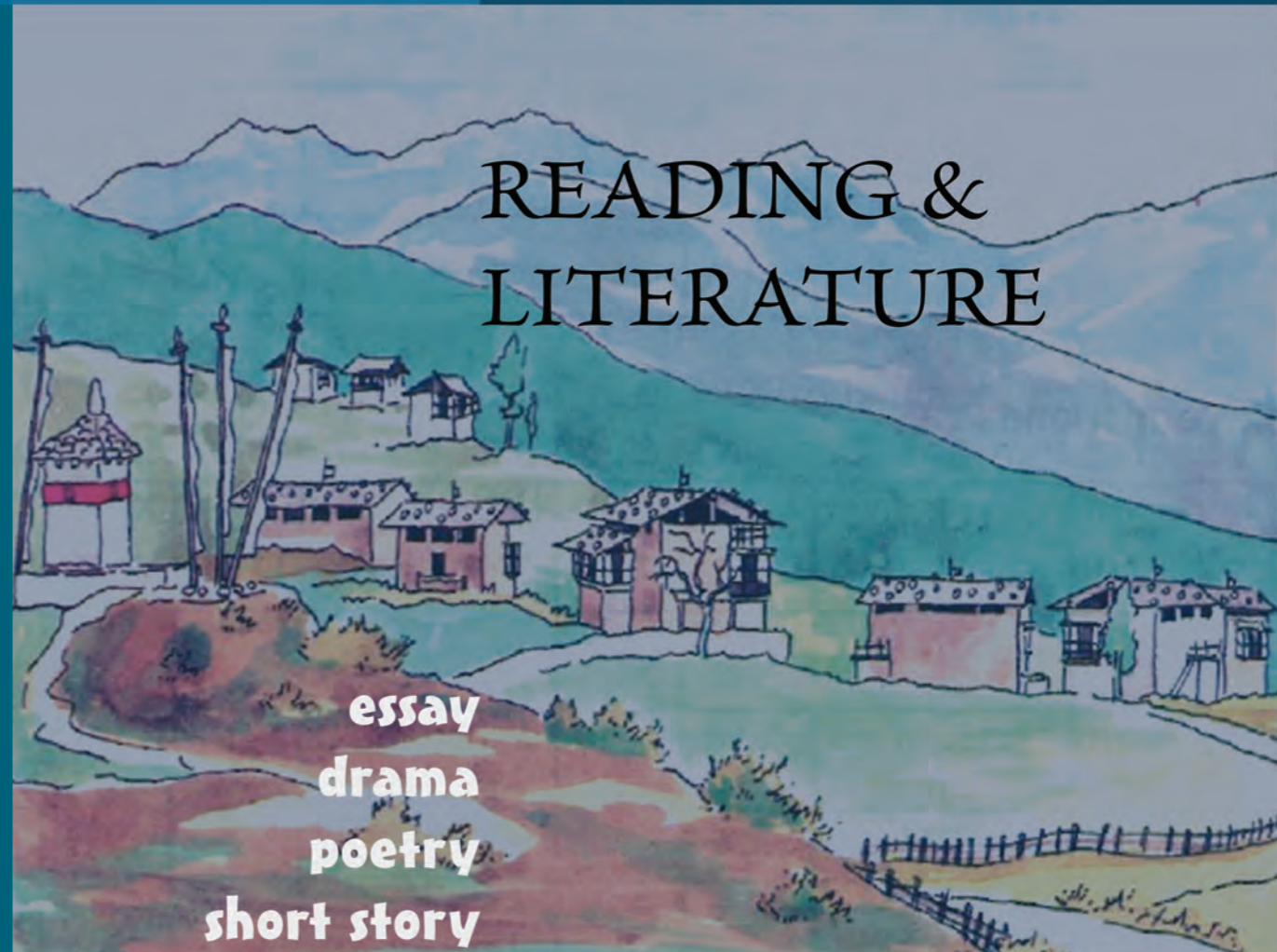


ENGLISH
CLASS XI



ENGLISH CLASS XI READING & LITERATURE

READING &
LITERATURE



essay
drama
poetry
short story

ISBN 99936-0-224-8
REC Publication

REC
PUBLICATION



Published by

Royal Education Council (REC)
Royal Government of Bhutan
Paro, Bhutan.

Tel: + 975 - 8 - 271226

Fax: + 975 - 8 - 271991

Website: www.rec.gov.bt

Copyright © 2017 Royal Education Council (REC)

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission from the Royal Education Council (REC)

NOT FOR SALE

This book is compiled and printed for educational purposes exclusively for schools in Bhutan.

First Edition 2005

Revised 2007, 2010

Reprint 2020

ISBN 99936-0-224-8

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ministry of Education would like to acknowledge the financial assistance of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGOB), and the technical assistance of the University of New Brunswick (UNB) under the Strengthening of Support to Education in Bhutan (SSEB) project. The Ministry of Education would also like to acknowledge the contributions made by the following teachers and educational professionals to the development of this textbook.

Advisers

Dr. Pema Thinley, Secretary, Ministry of Education
Tshewang Tandin, Director, Department of School Education, MoE

Copyediting

T. S. Powdyel, Director, Centre for Educational Research & Development, (Chair, English Subject Committee)
William Bill Buggie, SSEB Outcome I Coordinator, UNB, Canada
Professor George Haley, Consultant, UNB, Canada
Dr. Mary Lou Stirling, SSEB Gender Advisor, UNB
Karma Yeshey, Joint Director, CAPSD
Lhundup Dukpa, SSEB Outcome I Project Officer, CAPSD

Research and Writing Team

Core Group Members

T. S. Powdyel, Director, CERD, (Chair, English Subject Committee)
William Bill Buggie, SSEB Outcome I Coordinator, UNB, Canada
Prof. G. Haley, Consultant, UNB
Lhundup Dukpa, SSEB Outcome I Project Officer, CAPSD
Zinpai Zangmo, English Curriculum Officer, CAPSD

Participants

Pema Wangdi, Education Media, MoE	Tashi Wangmo, Lecturer, NIE, Paro
Sonam Deki, Lecturer, Sherubtse College, Kanglung	Wangmo, Lecturer, NIE, Samtse
Karma Dyenka, EMSSD, MoE	Dechen Dolkar, BBE, MoE
Meena Subha, CCO, Thimphu (Part-time)	Tshewang Yuden, Teacher, Drugyel HSS, Paro
Tshering Lham, Teacher, Chukha HSS Chukha	Deki Yangzom, Teacher, Jakar HSS, Bumthang
Ugyen Tsomo, Teacher, Bajothang HSS, Wangdue	Kunga T. Dorji, Teacher, Punakha HSS
Amber Rai, Teacher, Gyelpoizhing HSS, Mongar	Chundi Dorji, Teacher, Trashigang MSS, Trashigang

Typesetting

Lhundup Dukpa, SSEB Outcome I Project Officer, CAPSD
Nar Bahadur Chhetri, CCO, Thimphu, Secretariat
Ugyen Dorji, Curriculum Officer, CAPSD
Karma Wangmo, CAPSD
Pema Choje, Art & Publication Unit, CAPSD

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.

Trashhi Delek.



Thinley Gyamtsho
Minister
Ministry of Education

CONTENTS

Foreword	v
Introduction	ix
An Introduction to the English Curriculum	xi
Organisational Chart	xvii
Foreword to Reading & Literature	xviii
Standards for Reading & Literature	xx
Learning Objectives for Reading & Literature	xxi
Reading Strategies	xxii

Essays

1. Mother Tongue - <i>Amy Tan</i>	2
2. English Zindabad versus Angrezi Hatao - <i>Khubswant Singh</i>	7
3. African Noel - <i>Mark Patinkin</i>	10
4. The Skier - <i>Nancy Dorey</i>	15

Supplementary Essays

1. National Day - <i>Editorial (Kuensel, December 20, 2003)</i>	18
2. The Legend of Olympics – <i>Charlie Lovett</i>	20
3. New Times - <i>Kuensel Editorial October 2, 2004</i>	24
4. At War with One Self - <i>Ali Hossaini</i>	26
5. Drugyel's Destiny - <i>Tashi Pem</i>	28
6. Classroom without Walls - <i>Marshall McLuhan</i>	30

Poetry

1. Sonnet 18 - <i>William Shakespeare</i>	34
Sonnet 29 - <i>William Shakespeare</i>	34
2. The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter - <i>Ezra Pound</i> - translated by <i>Rihaku (Li T'ai Po)</i>	36
3. A Change of Fate - <i>Excerpt from Gaylong Sundry Tashi:</i> <i>Song of Sorrows – Translated into English by Sonam Kinga</i>	37
4. Where the Mind is Without Fear - <i>Rabindranath Tagore</i>	40
5. Ode To Autumn - <i>John Keats</i>	41
6. My Last Duchess – <i>Robert Browning</i>	43

Supplementary Poetry

1. A Poet's Advice to Students - <i>E E. Cummings</i>	48
2. Nothing Gold can Stay - <i>Robert Frost</i>	49
3. Paper Boats - <i>Rabindranath Tagore</i>	49
4. To a Daughter Leaving Home - <i>Linda Pastan</i>	50
5. Girl's-Eye View of Relatives - <i>Phyllis McGinley</i>	51
6. Before Two Portraits of My Mother - <i>Emile Nelligan</i> (Translated by <i>George Johnston</i>)	52

Short Stories

1. The Accursed House - <i>Emile Gaboriau (1835 - 73)</i>	54
2. Leaving - <i>M.G. Vassanji</i>	59
3. Too Bad - <i>Issac Asimov</i>	65
4. Jamaican Fragment - <i>A.L. Hendricks</i>	73
5. The Open Window - <i>Saki</i>	76

Supplementary Short Stories

1 There will Come Soft Rains - <i>Ray Bradbury</i>	80
2 To Set our House in Order - <i>Margaret Laurence</i>	85
3 Best Friend - <i>Helen J. Rosta</i>	96
4 Marriage Is a Private Affair - <i>Chinua Achebe</i>	98
5 The Taste of Melon – <i>Borden Deal</i>	102

Annual Timetable for the English Curriculum Class XI	112
Modes of Assessment for Class XI	114
Acknowledgements	122

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 82nd 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.

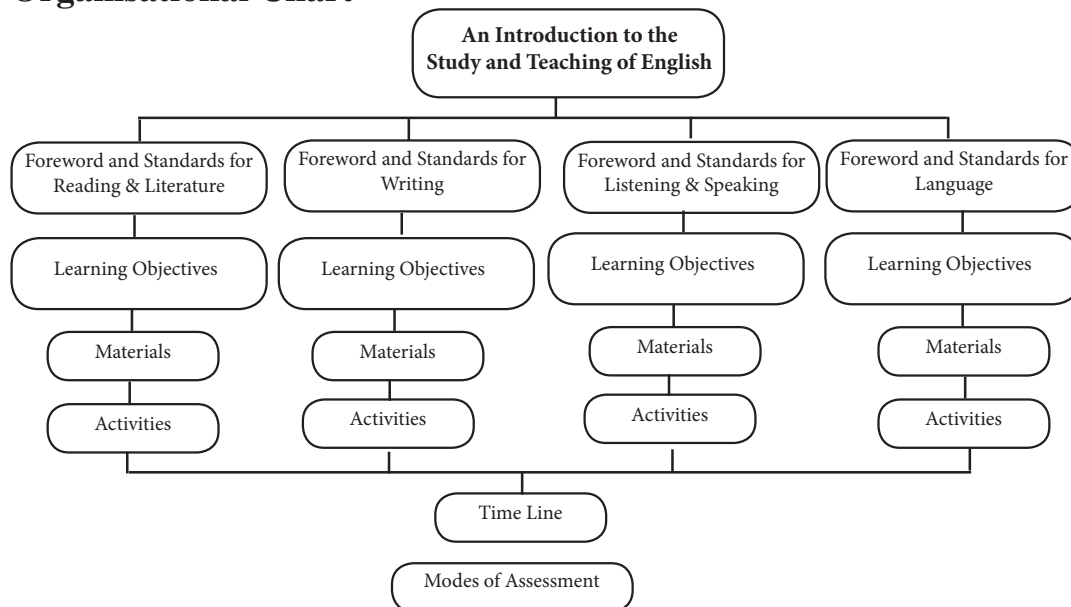
Revision 12: The curriculum presents changes in the Modes of Assessment in examination test items which will permit students to show that they have learned the skills and content presented in each strand.

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.”*

- “Ulysses”, 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, who 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. We also read to learn the ideas of others on more abstract issues like political thought or religious beliefs. We 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 reading, 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 from the surface knowledge of the text 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. Students 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 XI students will demonstrate that they can:

1. Use the reading strategies developed in earlier classes.
2. Read fiction and non-fiction texts with fluency and confidence using the features and purposes of different kinds of texts as a strategy for making meaning.
3. Analyse how authors achieve their effects by the use of linguistic, structural and presentational devices - points of view, figurative language, flashback, parallel argument, symbols and image patterns - and use this information to help make meaning with the text.
4. Select and analyse information from a variety of texts to support their points of view.
5. Come to a new understanding of the human condition through their readings - the notions of spirituality, love, understanding, impermanence, tolerance and patriotism.
6. Assess their own values in the light of what they encounter in the literature they study to enrich their personal, cultural and national beliefs.
7. Talk and write about Bhutanese writers as well as major classical and modern writers and their works.
8. Distinguish the best pieces of literature and make choices for their personal collection.
9. Build their vocabulary and practise pronunciation skills.
10. Read 40 pieces of fiction and non-fiction texts.
11. Enjoy reading as a learning activity.

Note:

1. *Students must read a minimum of 20 literature pieces - short novels or 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 the part of 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 Learning 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 opinion

Critical Reading

Critical reading means **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 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 **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 centre 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:** 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 head notes 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 though 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 levels 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/.

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-centred fosters student participation in the process. that is both personal and collaborative encourages critical thinking. Students who are reading, writing, discussing, and interacting with a variety of 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 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, 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 professor. 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. Mother Tongue - Amy Tan

I AM NOT a scholar of English or literature. I cannot give you much more than personal opinions on the English language and its variations in this country or others.

I am a writer. And by that definition, I am someone who has always loved language. I am fascinated by language in daily life. I spend a great deal of my time thinking about the power of language - the way it can evoke an emotion, a visual image, a complex idea, or a simple truth. Language is the tool of my trade. And I use them all - all the Englishes I grew up with.

Recently, I was made keenly aware of the different Englishes I do use. I was giving a talk to a large group of people, the same talk I had already given to half a dozen other groups. The nature of the talk was about my writing, my life, and my book, *The Joy Luck Club*. The talk was going along well enough, until I remembered one major difference that made the whole talk sound wrong. My mother was in the room. And it was perhaps the first time she had heard me give a lengthy speech, using the kind of English I have never used with her. I was saying things like, "The intersection of memory upon imagination" and "There is an aspect of my fiction that relates to thus-and-thus" - a speech filled with carefully wrought grammatical phrases, burdened, it suddenly seemed to me, with nominalized forms, past perfect tenses, conditional phrases, all the forms of standard English that I had learned in school and through books, the forms of English I did not use at home with my mother.

Just last week, I was walking down the street with my mother, and I again found myself conscious of the English I was using, the English I do use with her. We were talking about the price of new and used furniture and I heard myself saying this: "Not waste money that way." My husband was with us as well, and he didn't notice any switch in my English. And then I realized why. It's because over the twenty years we've been together I've often used that same kind of English with him, and sometimes he even uses it with me. It has become our language of intimacy, a different sort of English that relates to family talk, the language I grew up with.

So you'll have some idea of what this family talk I heard sounds like, I'll quote what my mother said during a recent conversation which I videotaped and then transcribed. During this conversation, my mother was talking about a political gangster in Shanghai who had the same last name as her family's, Du, and how the gangster in his early years wanted to be adopted by her family, which was rich by comparison. Later, the gangster became more powerful, far richer than my mother's family, and one day showed up at my mother's wedding to pay his respects. Here's what she said in part:

"Du Yusong having business like fruit stand. Like off the street kind. He is Du like Du Zong - but not Tsung-ming Island people. The local people call putong, the river east side, he belong

to that side local people. That man want to ask Du Zong father take him in like become own family. Du Zong father wasn't look down on him, but didn't take seriously, until that man big like become a mafia. Now important person, very hard to inviting him. Chinese way, came only to show respect, don't stay for dinner. Respect for making big celebration, he shows up. Mean gives lots of respect. Chinese custom. Chinese social life that way. If too important won't have to stay too long. He come to my wedding. I didn't see, I heard it. I gone to boy's side, they have YMCA dinner. Chinese age I was nineteen."

You should know that my mother's expressive command of English belies how much she actually understands. She reads the *Forbes* report, listens to *Wall Street Week*, converses daily with her stockbroker, reads all of Shirley MacLaine's books with ease - all kinds of things I can't begin to understand. Yet some of my friends tell me they understand 50 percent of what my mother says. Some say they understand 80 to 90 percent. Some say they understand none of it, as if she were speaking pure Chinese. But to me, my mother's English is perfectly clear, perfectly natural. It's my mother tongue. Her language, as I hear it, is vivid, direct, full of observation and imagery. That was the language that helped shape the way I saw things, expressed things, made sense of the world.

Lately, I've been giving more thought to the kind of English my mother speaks. Like others, I have described it to people as "broken" or "fractured" English. But I wince when I say that. It has always bothered me that I can think of no way to describe it other than "broken," as if it were damaged and needed to be fixed, as if it lacked a certain wholeness and soundness. I've heard other terms used, "limited English," for example. But they seem just as bad, as if everything is limited, including people's perceptions of the limited English speaker.

I know this for a fact, because when I was growing up, my mother's "limited" English limited *my* perception of her. I was ashamed of her English. I believed that her English reflected the quality of what she had to say. That is, because she expressed them imperfectly her thoughts were imperfect. And I had plenty of empirical evidence to support me: the fact that people in department stores, at banks, and at restaurants did not take her seriously, did not give her good service, pretended not to understand her, or even acted as if they did not hear her.

My mother has long realized the limitations of her English as well. When I was fifteen, she used to have me call people on the phone to pretend I was she. In this guise, I was forced to ask for information or even to complain and yell at people who had been rude to her. One time it was a call to her stockbroker in New York. She had cashed out her small portfolio and it just so happened we were going to go to New York the next week, our very first trip outside California. I had to get on the phone and say in an adolescent voice that was not very convincing, "This is Mrs. Tan."

And my mother was standing in the back whispering loudly. "Why he don't send me check,

already two weeks late. So mad he lie to me, losing me money.”

And then I said in perfect English, “Yes, I’m getting rather concerned. You had agreed to send the check two weeks ago, but it hasn’t arrived.”

Then she began to talk more loudly. “What he want, I come to New York tell him front of his boss, you cheating me?” And I was trying to calm her down, make her be quiet, while telling the stockbroker, “I can’t tolerate any more excuses. If I don’t receive the check immediately, I am going to have to speak to your manager when I’m in New York next week.” And sure enough, the following week there we were in front of this astonished stockbroker, and I was sitting there red-faced and quiet, and my mother, the real Mrs. Tan, was shouting at his boss in her impeccable broken English.

We used a similar routine just five days ago, for a situation that was far less humorous. My mother had gone to the hospital for an appointment, to find out about a benign brain tumor a CAT scan had revealed a month ago. She said she had spoken very good English, her best English, no mistakes. Still, she said, the hospital did not apologize when they said they had lost the CAT scan and she had come for nothing. She said they did not seem to have any sympathy when she told them she was anxious to know the exact diagnosis, since her husband and son had both died of brain tumors. She said they would not give her any more information until the next time and she would have to make another appointment for that. So she said she would not leave until the doctor called her daughter. She wouldn’t budge. And when the doctor finally called her daughter, me, who spoke in perfect English - lo and behold - we had assurances the CAT scan would be found, promises that a conference call on Monday would be held, and apologies for any suffering my mother had gone through for a most regrettable mistake.

I think my mother’s English almost had an effect on limiting my possibilities in life as well. Sociologists and linguists probably will tell you that a person’s developing language skills are more influenced by peers. But I do think that the language spoken in the family, especially in immigrant families which are more insular, plays a large role in shaping the language of the child. And I believe that it affected my results on achievement tests, IQ tests, and the SAT. While my English skills were never judged as poor, compared to math, English could not be considered my strong suit. In grade school I did moderately well, getting perhaps B’s, sometimes B-pluses, in English and scoring perhaps in the sixtieth or seventieth percentile on achievement tests. But those scores were not good enough to override the opinion that my true abilities lay in math and science, because in those areas I achieved A’s and scored in the ninetieth percentile or higher.

This was understandable. Math is precise; there is only one correct answer. Whereas, for me at least, the answers on English tests were always a judgment call, a matter of opinion and personal experience. Those tests were constructed around items like fill-in-the-blank sentence

completion, such as, “Even though Tom was _____, Mary thought he was_____.” And the correct answer always seemed to be the most bland combinations of thoughts, for example, “Even though Tom was shy, Mary thought he was charming,” with the grammatical structure “even though” limiting the correct answer to some sort of semantic opposites, so you wouldn’t get answers like, “Even though Tom was foolish, Mary thought he was ridiculous.” Well, according to my mother, there were very few limitations as to what Tom could have been and what Mary might have thought of him. So I never did well on tests like that.

The same was true with word analogies, pairs of words in which you were supposed to find some sort of logical, semantic relationship - for example, “*Sunset* is to *nightfall* as ___ is to ___.” And here you would be presented with a list of four possible pairs, one of which showed the same kind of relationship: *red* is to *stoplight*, *bus* is to *arrival*, *chills* is to *fever*, *yawn* is to *boring*. Well, I could never think that way. I knew what the tests were asking, but I could not block out of my mind the images already created by the first pair, “*sunset* is to *nightfall*” - and I would see a burst of colors against a darkening sky, the moon rising, the lowering of a curtain of stars. And all the other pairs of words - red, bus, stoplight, boring - just threw up a mass of confusing images, making it impossible for me to sort out something as logical as saying: “A sunset precedes nightfall” is the same as “a chill precedes a fever.” The only way I would have gotten that answer right would have been to imagine an associative situation, for example, my being disobedient and staying out past sunset, catching a chill at night, which turns into feverish pneumonia as punishment, which indeed did happen to me.

I have been thinking about all this lately, about my mother’s English, about achievement tests. Because lately I’ve been asked, as a writer, why there are not more Asian Americans represented in American literature. Why are there few Asian Americans enrolled in creative writing programs? Why do so many Chinese students go into engineering? Well, these are broad sociological questions I can’t begin to answer. But I have noticed in surveys - in fact, just last week - that Asian students, as a whole, always do significantly better on math achievement tests than in English. And this makes me think that there are other Asian - American students whose English spoken in the home might also be described as “broken” or “limited.” And perhaps they also have teachers who are steering them away from writing and into math and science, which is what happened to me.

Fortunately, I happen to be rebellious in nature and enjoy the challenge of disproving assumptions made about me. I became an English major my first year in college, after being enrolled as pre-med. I started writing non-fiction as a freelancer the week after I was told by my former boss that writing was my worst skill and I should hone my talents toward account management.

But it wasn’t until 1985 that I finally began to write fiction. And at first I wrote using what I thought to be wittily crafted sentences, sentences that would finally prove I had mastery over

the English language. Here's an example from the first draft of a story that later made its way into *The Joy Luck Club*, but without this line: "That was my mental quandary in its nascent state." A terrible line, which I can barely pronounce.

Fortunately, for reasons I won't get into today, I later decided I should envision a reader for the stories I would write. And the reader I decided upon was my mother, because these were stories about mothers. So with this reader in mind - and in fact she did read my early drafts - I began to write stories using all the Englishes I grew up with: the English I spoke to my mother, which for lack of a better term might be described as "simple"; the English she used with me, which for lack of a better term might be described as "broken"; my translation of her Chinese, which could certainly be described as "watered down"; and what I imagined to be her translation of her Chinese if she could speak in perfect English, her internal language, and for that I sought to preserve the essence, but neither an English nor a Chinese structure. I wanted to capture what language ability tests can never reveal: her intent, her passion, her imagery, the rhythms of her speech and the nature of her thoughts.

Apart from what any critic had to say about my writing, I knew I had succeeded where it counted when my mother finished reading my book and gave me her verdict: "So easy to read."

About the Author

From acclaimed novelist to rock n roll maven, Amy Tan is "thoroughly modern, but with a toe perhaps an entire elegant foot in the ancient past" (San Francisco Chronicle). Amy Tan is, of course, the author of The Joy Luck Club, a beloved, internationally best selling novel which explores the relationships between Chinese women and their Chinese-American daughters. She is also author of The Kitchen God's Wife, The Hundred Secret Senses, and two children's books. Recent works include the novel The Bonesetter's Daughter. Ms. Tan's first work of non-fiction, The Opposite of Fate, is crafted from her writings and offers a glimpse into her heart and mind by exploring fate's opposites - lucky accidents, choice, and memory. In her off-hours, Tan is also the lead singer for the Rock Bottom Remainders, a rock band made up of fellow writers, including Stephen King and Dave Barry - they make select appearances at charities and benefits that support literacy programs for children. In 1985, Tan attended a writing workshop for which she wrote the story "Rules of the Game," which later became part of her first work of fiction, The Joy Luck Club. The novel became the longest running title on The New York Times hardcover bestseller list for that year and was also selected as a finalist for the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award. It received the Bay Area Book Reviewers Award for Fiction and the Commonwealth Club Gold Award. The book has been translated into 25 languages, including Chinese, and has been made into a major motion picture.

2. English Zindabad versus Angrezi Hatao - *Khushwant Singh*

WHEN ANYONE asks me, 'What is your mother tongue?' I reply without hesitation: 'English.' They regard my swarthy complexion, the turban on my head and my greying beard. The contemptuous look in their eyes leaves me in no doubt that they see me as a leftover of the breed of toadying spittlelickers of the British. When I add, 'My mother tongue is English though my mother cannot speak one word of it,' they roar with laughter. They think it is a big joke. How can a black man born in India deriving sustenance from the dung-heap of a Punjabi village describe English as his native tongue except in jest?

I do not jest. I call English my mother tongue because I am more familiar with it than with any other language. Since most people I mix with are also more at ease with English than with what they call their mother tongues, I hear more English spoken than any other language. Most of what I read is in English. All my work is done in English. I write it better than my three Indian languages, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu. I know that in writing English I make errors in grammar and my vocabulary is limited. I try to better my diction, improve my syntax and endeavour to turn out a polished sentence which is at once pregnant with meaning and pleasing to the ear. With me English is a passion. No other language gives me quite the same pleasure. I find it more musical and much richer in its literature than any other language of the world.

When I make these assertions, my friends shake their heads, cluck their tongues and remark: 'Even if all you say about English is true, it still does not make it your mother tongue.'

I bark back: 'So much the worse for definitions! If a person cannot speak the language spoken by his mother (not an inconceivable situation, for example, children of Indian parents in England or even children in Westernised Bombay and Delhi) it is a travesty of fact to describe that language as a mother tongue. Let us redefine it as the language one is most at home with and which one loves. So defined, Jawaharlal Nehru's mother tongue was English. His daughter Indira Gandhi's mother tongue is also English. And it is also mine.'

'English, though it has been recognized by our Constitution as a language to be used in India, is not an Indian language,' asserted the poet Dinkar at a meeting to felicitate him on the receipt of the Jnanpith award. He was loudly cheered. I was made to appear as Rai Bahadur Maska Lal trying to unfurl the Union Jack: he, a Khadi-clad Bhagat Singh yelling 'Jai Hind.' Neither the poet's patriotic outburst nor the applause he received squashed me. 'Why,' I asked my black friends, 'do you deny English the status of an Indian language? Is it because it was brought to India by foreign conquerors? So also were Arabic and Persian. So indeed was Sanskrit by our Aryan forefathers.'

'Both Hindi and Urdu were born out of these once-foreign languages. English only happens to be the last of these importations. It has been with us for over two hundred years. It has

insinuated itself in the speech of the illiterate peasant as well as the most sophisticated urbanite. Not one of us can carry on a conversation on any topic without a liberal profusion of English words. Famous and patriotic Indians like Raghunath Hari Navalkar of Maharashtra and Raja Rammohun Roy of Bengal wanted English to be made compulsory and developed as our national language. Very rightly we got rid of our English rulers; but must we foolishly give up the good with the bad? Must we throw out the lovely babbling baby with the dirty English bath-water?

The Angrezi hataowallas change their line of attack. 'English is spoken by barely two percent of the population of the country; how can it ever be given the status of a national language?' they demand. I reply: 'Many languages, e.g., Kashmiri, Sindh, Assamese, Panjabi are spoken by fewer or as many Indians as is English. And the two percent who speak English matter more in national affairs than speakers in other languages. All your cabinet ministers, chief ministers, judges, ambassadors, civil servants, defence personnel, scientists, economists, managers of factories are English speaking. Name anyone who matters and in nine cases out of ten the language he or she speaks best is English. If you weigh languages in terms of the power they wield, you will see that English outweighs all the fourteen other Indian languages (recognized in the Indian constitution) put together. Most of our work is still done in English because no other language is capable of handling the technicalities of administration, justice, technology, science.'

'Let us not forget how English served us in the past and does so today. It was the language of our protest against our rulers - a powerful weapon wielded by Tilak, Gokhale, Sri Aurobindo, Gandhi and Nehru. More than any other language it gave the sense of Indianness. It is not surprising that more people read English newspapers and magazines than publications in any other language.'

'What about the masses?'

'What about them? A survey carried out amongst illiterate peasants and workers around Delhi revealed that, when asked what language they would like to learn, the majority opted for English. It is not only the link language which will keep India together but also the language of opportunity. It opens the window of a village hovel to the city; it opens the window of India to the world.'

Of course, we Angreziwallas derive solace from the conviction that no matter how much the Desi Bashawallas scream in protest, English has come to stay in India and will remain the chief link language between the different States of our Union and the only means of communication with the world outside. ...So, dear Bashawallas, make peace with Angrezi. Drape her in a Banaras brocade sari as you would if your son brought home a foreign daughter-in-law. But don't waste your energies fighting against her because she has come to stay 'till death do us part'.

About the Author

*Khushwant Singh is much the most widely read author in India today. His weekly columns are reproduced by over fifty journals in all the regional languages of the country. He has written regularly for several European and American journals including **The New York Times**. He has also edited and translated a number of literary works.*

*Author of 89 books, Khushwant Singh is best known for his work of fiction, **Train to Pakistan** and his two volumes **History of the Sikhs**. His acerbic pen, his wit and humour and most of all, his ability to laugh at himself has ensured him immense popularity over the years. He lives in New Delhi.*

3. African Noel - *Mark Patinkin*

Timbuktu, Mali - We were all of us homeless this night. They are nomads who have lost their land; I am a traveller, far from everything I am part of. Together, we are spending Christmas Eve in the desert.

We are the oddest of couplings. They wear Moslem robes: I a flannel shirt. I grew up in Chicago and now I live in New England: they've known only the Sahara. I have with me enough cash to cross the ocean in a morning. If they want to visit the nearest village, ten miles away, they must walk. They have nothing. And tonight, I, too, have nothing. I am here because I want to know their world, what they had and what they lost. For this one night we share our lives.

The best way to get here is by Land Rover. My guide is a Western doctor. He gives introductions, then leaves for his own Christmas.

The name of the tribe is Touareg. They live in tents on the banks of the Niger. They came in from the deep desert only a month ago, refugees driven by hunger.

I am taken to the tent of the chief. He gives me his hand and tells me his name. "Hamzata," he says.

Only one thing about him speaks of wealth - his turban. It is bright blue and of fine silk. It must be the only thing of value in this camp. He has as much pride in it as I have in the three things that have gotten me through this trip - my L.L Bean shirt, my Swiss Army Knife, and my Ray-Ban sunglasses. Little items, perhaps, but treasured things that have been with me for years - things necessary in this desert, and right now, my only comfort.

The chief is well educated, fluent in French, but still we share less than half a language. My French is only marginal. This night there would be many gaps to bridge. I watch them unfold the visitor's mat and light a fire for tea, rituals now familiar to me. But unfamiliar, too. I am thinking only of home. I wonder if it is snowing there. Tree lights must be every-where by now. Here I see only sand. In a tent nearby, newcomers are settling to sleep without food. It is hard to feel the season in famine country.

I explain that it is Christmas Eve. I explain that in America this is the best loved of nights. They say they know about Christmas. It is not theirs, but they know it. The chief motions to some of the others. He has them set up a special bed for me, in his tent - I tell him it's not necessary. It's bad enough I've arrived unannounced at five p.m. The ground would be fine. But he insists, I am his guest.

Soon it begins to get cold. A fire is lit. I tell the chief I'm here to understand how his people came to be hungry. It is simple, he says. They lived off cattle. The drought came. The grass disappeared. The cattle died. "There must be more of a story than that," I say. Yes he says, there is. There is a story of loss here that speaks to all peoples who have lost something dear to them. But he does not want to take my time with it.

More tea is poured. More men come around. We gather close to the fire. Why the desert? I ask. Americans would consider it a banishment. That makes him smile. It is the opposite, he says. Desert, for them, is freedom itself. All men, he says, have an aching for land. With the nomad, it is only keener. It is why they choose not a piece of land but a world of it. This way they can even own night. He begins to tell me of the good times, the fat times. They were wealthy then. They'd have been wealthy even in America. Hamzata's family - just he and his brothers - owned 1,000 cows. Had he been born in Texas, he'd have been a rancher. As his ancestors had for centuries, he, too, followed the rhythm of the desert. From October to May they would find a stand of grass, and this would be the time of settlement. And it was a good time. But they could not shake the love of road, the need for road. Even the cattle knew the rhythm of this movement and were themselves restless by June. Then they would follow the time of wandering: a week here, a month there, the stars guiding them, the camps numbering 100 souls, though they did not call them camps. They were families. The chief did most of the talking. The others gave him the respect of their silence. I had to struggle with the French, but slowly the same words were coming again and again.

"Avant." Before.

Before, when things were good, they had fresh steak every night and fresh camel milk, too, which is the best of all milk. There was guitar music and even hunts - the dogs tracking gazelles, the chiefs following on their horses.

"It sounds like the perfect life," I say.

Yes, says the chief. It was. *Avant.*

Before the sun became a constant thing, the nurturer of life changing to the enemy of it, the grass curling under it, the animals beginning to die, year after year, until, last May, the last of them was gone. And a world gone with them.

"And now?" I ask.

Now they are trying to find a new way of living. They are trying to learn the cultivation of crops and a rootedness of their own. Now there is only rice from UNICEF, and not always that. If the women sell their crafts in town, there is dinner. If not, there is none. Around me I can feel how it is ending. I can feel the ache of loss, the confusion of men and women who no longer have the things that make them what they are.

“*Les peuples ont faim,*” says the chief. It is another phrase I would hear throughout the night. The people are hungry.

Soon the cold becomes too much. We go into the tent. And he takes out an album of photographs. A nomad with a Polaroid. He brings a lantern over and begins showing me what times looked like when times were good. His camels. . . his cows. . . his soul. It is important to him that I see this. He understands I am a journalist. This is for history, he says. So people will know there was once such a life.

I had expected we would sleep without food. But as we leaf through the album, I smell cooking. He says it is because I am a stranger who cared enough to come. Tonight, there would be dinner, a true feast. They were preparing the meat from one of the last of their desert sheep, meat they’d until now been saving for more difficult times. The women bring it to the tent. The chief begins cutting the portions with a dull sword. I see he is having trouble and offer him my Swiss Army Knife. He marvels at it and cuts the rest with ease.

Sixteen of us are in the tent. There is enough for each of us to have five bites. There is a seriousness to eating here, a respect for it that only people like this can know. The chief eats only half his portion. He insists I have the rest. He says he is not hungry. When it is done we go back to seek the fire’s warmth. There is no talk for a while. Then I ask how hard this has been for them.

The chief says it is the hardest thing in experience, leaving the one life you know. Even the secrets understood only in their hearts are those that tie them to the desert. How do you give that away? he asks. How do you start over not after a lifetime but after an ancestry?

We stand and talk for more than an hour. I tighten my flannel shirt. I notice he is shivering. “Is there no clothing?”

“If there is no food...” “and he lets the sentence go at that. More phrases become familiar with repetition. *Rien a manger* nothing to eat.

Whenever I bend to take a note, two of the men bring lanterns to help me. Slowly, I begin to feel an unexpected kinship. We are all far from home.

There are only two beds in the tent; the rest of the floor is sand. The chief takes one; I am given the other. At ten p.m. we say goodnight. The lanterns are put out.

“*La Noel joyeux,*” I say into the dark. “*Tu comprends?*”
“*Ab, oui*” he says. “*Te comprends.*”

Christmas Eve in the Sahara. I lie there for an hour but cannot sleep. The cold comes into the tent and into my bed. I get up and walk outside for the embers of the fire. I am alone.

When this sky is clear, there is no sky like the Sahara sky. Under a full moon, you can read a newspaper. It helps me understand the draw of this place. When nature imposes a harshness, it seems to give back a beauty as great. And now I find myself thinking about the things I've seen this month and what they mean. What I've found here in this Touareg camp is what I've found everywhere: A man had a life he loved, the weather changed, and now he can't even feed his children.

I am where I'd begun this journey, in a tent city, where people of the land had gathered by force of weather, people now dependent on nations alone. But here, as there, in the midst of this pain, I find a familiar twist of hope. There is a knowledge of spirit among famine victims here, a knowledge that says even if you lose everything, you can still have civility, and there is wealth in that. I have never known the hospitality I've been given this night.

And I will always remember the hungry of Ethiopia, days from death, walking past a disabled food truck, ignoring its load of wheat, because touching it would have been theft. I try again to sleep. I drift in and out. Finally morning comes.

I recognize this morning. I have seen it before elsewhere in Africa. The children come to me. I can walk nowhere without the children. And always they grow quiet and content when I give them my hand.

Why is it that they, and the adults, too, are drawn to Americans so? I did not expect that. There is a warmth for our country I had not known existed. And it has nothing to do with politics or allegiances, only with what the people here see: that when there is pain, the people of this nation reach out. And I realize more than ever before that what we are, and what we stand for, rests with that compassion.

Before I leave the chief wants me to see what I've come to see. We walk to the newcomers' tents. I notice he is squinting hard into the sun. Soon we pause at one tent, and there we find a true child of famine, one of the more troubled of this flock. The chief embraces him. The child, to him, is a stranger. But to see the hurt in his face it could be father and son. He holds the child close long after I am finished with my photographs. "*Rien a manger,*" he says. "*Rien a manger.*"

There is a kinship here Americans don't know. The greatest of this people feels truly diminished by the difficulties of the least of them. I ask the chief about this. My French could not keep up with him, but I did not need it. I know, from a month in famine country, what he was

saying. That we are one family here, joined together by weather and by the little we have. For he, who like me has nothing, is my family.

We hear the grind of an engine. A half mile distance, we see the doctor's Land Rover. We walk back to the main camp. The chief tells me to wait, then disappears into his tent. Soon he emerges. He is carrying his blue silk turban. He places it in my hand. For you he says.

I take off my LL Bean shirt and hand it to him. Then I give him my Ray Ban sunglasses and Swiss Army knife.

“For you,” I say.
Christmas morning in the Sahara.
I climb into the Land Rover.
“Until next time,” says the chief.

I say it, too. As we begin to drive away, I turn to look back at these people who have been changed but not broken by hunger. I am thinking one thought: *one world*.

4. The Skier - *Nancy Dorey*

Under the fetal warmth of a heavy quilt, muscles stretch and groan, sore from yesterday's turns and spills. The room is dark; outside it's snowing. Sweaty ski clothes are waiting to be put on again. An early morning breakfast is eaten in haste. Stiff boots must once again encase sore feet before you can venture out into the astounding silence of falling snow. You wade through it, shin deep, boots crunching, skis on shoulder; the whole world is white.

The lift is silent and snow covered. You are early. And so, with cold feet and impatience, you share the falling snow with a few others, all waiting while stomping their feet to keep warm.

The lift operator arrives and is soon sweeping snow off the lift with an over-worked broom. White fluff scatters in clouds to reveal dark, greasy metal. A cough, a hum, gears clank, and the chairs lurch into motion, beginning their daily, repetitive journey. The operator nods and you slide into place; the chair comes and you glide upward into the still descending snow. The silent spruce are black against the sombre sky. Suddenly, there's a hint of blue and the falling snow is thinner now. You watch as a single crystal fairy dances down from the sky; another taps you on the nose.

The sky is blue now, the distant peaks etched silver against it. Three more towers and you are in the sun. The ramp arrives and your skis cut through the ridges as you slide off the chair, down into two feet of sparkling virgin snow. You struggle through the drift, then begin working your skis through the wind - packed snow toward the mountain's lip. Looking down, you see the quick, easy runs below, and above, the more remote slopes still lost in the tattered patch of a cloud that remains in the lee of the mountain. You start creeping upward. The track is long gone; you must guess a line and begin the long journey to the top.

Morning creaks, groans, and grunts abound. The sky is a dazzling blue; the snow sparkles. You go slowly, picking up one ski at a time, stomping down a place for it, then shifting upward one step. Progress is slow, and in place it seems non-existent.

Struggling still; the lower slopes are distant now; the top still hides. Sweat, sun glare, and aching muscles - what a way to start the day- but on you go, thrashing upward.

The top draws near - edging slowly, so slowly, closer. Sweat has collected around your waist; clothing half on, half off, goggles up one minute and down the next, eyes squinting into the glare and distance. The final few feet take forever: finally you collapse, panting, exhausted, in the snow.

On the ridge the wind is cutting and stray snow sandpapers your face. Beneath your feet the mountain drops away. Amid the silver minarets of the Canadian Rockies you whisper a chant and contemplate your first turn: that first soft sifting of snow, mind, and body. On the very edge you hesitate, lost in the mountains, snow, and sky. Finally goggles come down; bindings are checked. No words are spoken.

Softly you are away. You turn gently, slowly, then turn again. Turns, more turns, each one like a waltz. You watch the slow arc of arm and pole, feel the flex, turn, and twist of muscles and tendons as you come down the mountain. Your skies are free, arcing around and down into the snow again, creating a fine wave that washes up and over you.

One final steep pitch and you land in an explosion of snow. This time the snow is very deep and you are seconds emerging from it. The surface of the snow is fluid. Whiteness surrounds you again - where is up? Where is the mountaintop? Where is down? Where are you going? Will you survive?

Down and down, through the last few remaining turns to the bottom. The last turn, you carve it wide and slow, coming around to look back up the mountain.

Soon others arrive and walk across the flat ground and into the crowd. There in the middle of the mechanical madness of a bigtime ski resort you stop, skis on your shoulder, and lose yourself in the wonder of skiing.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESSAYS

1. National Day - Editorial (Kuensel, December 20, 2003)

National Day is one of the most significant days of the year for Bhutan. This year the significance assumes greater proportions as we reflect on the true meaning as well as the challenges of nationhood.

People from all sections of the population in Thimphu and other parts of the country were deeply conscious that, even as we gathered to celebrate National Day, His Majesty the King was compelled to lead the Bhutanese armed forces in a military operation to protect the security of the nation. We were disturbed by the risks that this entailed.

Military planners estimate that it takes up to 10 soldiers against each militant when facing guerrilla fighters in the forests. We were painfully aware of the perils of facing more than 3,000 armed militants with a fledging army. We wondered whether, in the absence of experience, numbers, and heavy-duty fire power, we had the extraordinary courage, the skill, and the commitment that would be required.

By the end of the week, this question was answered. Our troops are more than fulfilling our hopes and living up to the expectations of a leadership that we have never doubted for a moment. Our spirits and thoughts are with His Majesty the King and with every man and woman who is placing his or her life in the service of the nation.

We have no doubts at all about the morality of the action against the militants who had illegally occupied our soil and disrupted our lives. Nor are there any questions about the legitimacy of a small country protecting its security. And we have no misgivings over the need to protect the interests of a friend and neighbour, even at risk to ourselves.

The achievements that we have seen so far leave us, not gloating, but in contemplation. We know the extreme strain and pressure of trying to avoid violence. We know the reluctance with which His Majesty took to arms. We regret the fact that blood was shed, even the blood of armed aggressors. His Majesty the King has instilled in this difficult process a strong sense of compassion.

For this generation of Bhutanese people, this was our first encounter with violence of this scale. As common sense and all logic dictate, we truly hope that it will be our last.

The world generally sympathises with the fact that this is not Bhutan's problem. We were victims of the fact that the militants had camped in Bhutan and attacked targets in India, a friendly neighbour. The militants must have known that, under the circumstances, what is happening today was inevitable.

For the past decade, Bhutan has suffered seriously from the presence of the militants. Every Bhutanese citizen was directly or indirectly affected. The lives of more than 66,000 people in more than 300 villages were completely disrupted. Trade and economic activities and agriculture in a large part of the country were affected. Bhutanese travelling through Assam, a friendly state, have been harassed and even killed in cold blood.

Security concerns hampered the development process and, more important, the presence of the militants threatened the security and sovereignty of the country.

The problem has nothing to do with the people in Assam and West Bengal with whom we are closely interlinked socially and economically. Throughout the week, even as Bhutanese troops were flushing out the militants, the government made it very clear that it sought the continued understanding and support of the government and the people of India, particularly in the bordering states of Assam and West Bengal.

This week, for example, people on both sides of the border were affected. Small settlements all along the border and rapidly growing towns like Jaigaon, Bogaigaon, Mela Bazaar are dependant on the Bhutanese market. And nearly all of Bhutan's imports come from India. Peace and stability in the region must be quickly restored because nobody wants a disturbed situation.

Today, the Bhutanese people are sorry that the government had to resort to a military option to solve this problem. We regret that our people, no matter how few, had to sacrifice their lives. But it was a Bhutanese resolve that it had to be done.

A nation has priorities. Life has to go on in Bhutan, a peace-loving nation where the priority is the happiness of the people.

2. The Legend of Olympics *Charlie Lovett*

The Modern Olympic Games are perhaps the *most* modern spectacle on the planet. Their pageantry, ritual, and tradition are beamed to billions via satellite, and every facet of their competition is not merely tinged with but ruled by modern technology. Yet the Olympics have their roots in a festival more ancient than the rites of Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism. Indeed if, as has often been suggested, the coliseums and stadiums our society has constructed in the twentieth century will ultimately be viewed as the cathedrals of our time, then the Olympic Games are our most sacred rite and Olympic champions our high priests. But the Olympics began in a time before satellites and television, a time before electronic timers, photo finishes, and computer rankings, a time when the greatest of gods was not sport, but Zeus.

The origin of the ancient Olympic Games is shrouded in legend, but it may have begun as a commemoration of Zeus' defeating Kronos in a wrestling match—the prize being possession of the earth. The exact date of the first Olympic Games is also lost. Some sources say 1253 B.C., others 884 B.C., One thing is certain, however, every four years from 776 B.C. until 394 A.D., the strongest and swiftest men in Greece assembled to compete in the Olympic Games.

The Games were held in Olympia, a great complex that included a 60,000-seat stadium, a vast hippodrome for equestrian events, and a gymnasium for wrestlers, boxers, gymnasts, and others. Religious buildings were also an important part of Olympia, just as religious ceremonies were an important part of the Games. One building, the Olympium, housed a forty-foot ivory statue of Zeus with robes of gold, one of the seven wonders of the world.

With Zeus watching over the Olympics the Games grew in both size and importance. Wars were suspended during the time of Olympic competition, so great was the respect given the Games. The Olympics began with a single footrace, but grew to encompass a variety of events, many similar to those in modern track and field. However, no race in the ancient Olympics was greater than twenty-four laps around the Olympic stadium, a distance of about three miles.

The ancient Greeks were no strangers to long-distance running, but to them it served as a means to communicate not to compete. The Greeks used foot couriers to take important messages from city to city. Out of this tradition grew a legend so persistent that it would spark the imagination of men nearly 2,500 years later.

In 490 B.C. an army from Persia landed on the plain of Marathon, about twenty-five miles from Athens, with the intention of capturing and enslaving that city. The Athenians prepared for a battle that would determine the course of history for centuries to come. A victory for the powerful Persian Empire could destroy the independence of the Greek city-states and effectively end Greek civilization and culture.

While the massive Persian army landed, the Athenians sent a messenger named Philippides (his

name was corrupted in later texts to Pheidippides) to Sparta to enlist the aid of the Spartans in the upcoming battle. He covered the distance of about 150 miles in less than two days, a remarkable accomplishment by any standard.

Back at Marathon, however, the decision was made not to wait for the Spartans. The Athenian army fell upon the vastly larger Persian forces while they were still preparing for battle. Against great odds, the Greeks prevailed. Though historians writing close to the time of the battle make no mention of the event, writers some 600 years later claim that a runner was dispatched to Athens to carry the news of the great victory. According to legend he reached the city, said, "Rejoice, we conquer," and fell to the ground dead. Though one source gives the runner's name as Philippides, it is highly unlikely that he would have made such a run after having just run to Sparta. If he had, contemporary historians would surely have noted it.

Whether any messenger at all was sent to Athens with the news of victory is a matter of some doubt, but certainly Philippides was not the messenger. Still, in the centuries that followed, the legend of Pheidippides (as he began to be called) and the legend of a runner who died to bring news of victory to the Athenians merged, and many later writers gave the name Pheidippides to the ill-fated runner. In the nineteenth century Robert Browning wrote in his *Dramatic Idylls* of Pheidippides' dash to Athens, his announcement of victory, and his death. Though Pheidippides was certainly not the runner who carried the news of Greek victory to Athens, and though it seems unlikely that any professional foot courier of ancient Greece would have perished after such a run, the legend took hold, and out of that legend grew the modern marathon race.

In 394 A.D., the Roman Emperor Theodosius banned all non-Christian celebrations in the Empire, effectively putting an end to the Olympic Games. Religion, for the time being, had separated from and usurped sport.

In the mid-1900s, interest in ancient Greece was on the rise. Archaeologists began to uncover the "ruins of the ancient stadium at Olympia, and the idea of reviving the Olympic Games was pursued by a Greek businessman named Evangelios Zappas. With the support of the Greek government, Zappas staged an Olympic competition on November 15, 1859. That competition and three others (in 1870, 1875, and 1889) staged by the Greek government with money left by Zappas in his will, were not successful. Because of poor planning and improper facilities, spectators could not see the competition and some got into fights, which spilled over onto the track. It appeared that the Olympic Games, dormant for 1,500 years, would not continue into the new century.

A French baron named Pierre de Coubertin changed all that. Coubertin was an aristocrat who had worked for some years to improve the quality of physical education in France. In addition to a keen interest in athletics, Coubertin was a proponent of internationalism-cooperation

between nations which he felt would promote peace. Inspired by the uncovering of the ruins at Olympia, the failed efforts to revive the ancient Games, and his interest in sports, Coubertin conceived the idea of re-establishing the Olympic Games. In 1892, he hosted a banquet for the Union of French Athletic Sports Clubs, a group he had founded five years earlier. In a speech at the banquet, he proposed reviving the Olympic Games, but the suggestion was met with a mixture of apathy and derision. Was Coubertin suggesting holding footraces in the nude as the ancient Greeks had? Was he seriously suggesting that civilized Europeans should compete with Africans and Asians?

Despite the close-mindedness of his compatriots, Coubertin did not give up. In 1894 he hosted an International Congress of Amateurs. On the program, after several topics concerning amateurism and sports, he listed “Re-establishment of the Olympic Games.” The congress was not to discuss whether to revive the Olympics, but rather how it should be done. By the end of the conference, Coubertin had formed the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and plans were in place to stage the first modern Olympic Games in Athens, Greece in 1896. He was able to convince delegates from many countries to enthusiastically support the idea. Though much work remained to be done before the Games could begin, Coubertin’s dream seemed destined for reality.

Another French delegate to the conference, Michel Breal, a linguist and historian, was enthralled by the legend of Pheidippides and the famous run from Marathon to Athens. Though the run was unrelated to Olympic competition, Breal proposed the establishment of a long-distance footrace to commemorate the effort. He offered a silver trophy to whomever would win such a race. Coubertin loved the idea and promoted the race in many speeches he gave to stir up interest in the Games. “The new race was called “the marathon” and was included as the final event on the Olympic agenda.

Thus, out of an accomplishment by an ancient Greek, a legend corrupted by historians and poets from Greece to England, and the dreams of two Frenchmen, was born, the most audacious of races, the marathon. Little did Breal know that he had struck a chord that would resonate ever louder as the next century progressed. For there is something in man that seeks out challenge, especially the challenge of a single man taking on a task in which all the forces of nature, and often the opinions of men, are arrayed against him; a task in which his own solitude may become his greatest enemy; a task that his own drive, his own desire, and his own ego cannot fail to make him accomplish. There is something in man that makes him climb mountains because they are there, that makes him explore space because no one has gone there before. There is something in man that seeks out the challenge of the unknown. As the world around us became more and more known in this century, man increasingly turned to the unknown within himself and sought to challenge the limits of his very being. There is something in man that makes him run marathons.

There is, too, something in the Olympic Games that makes its marathon the greatest of all, not merely because it was first or because the legend of Pheidippides links the race to ancient Greece. After the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896, a group from Boston that had competed for the United States returned home full of excitement about the marathon race they had witnessed. The result of that excitement was the establishment of the Boston Marathon the following year.

Run every April since 1897, the Boston race is considered by some the most prestigious of all marathons. After all, the Olympic race is run only every four years, while Boston is an annual race. How many great marathoners will be denied an Olympic medal because they are not at the peak of their career in the right year? Boston is run in the cool weather of New England spring, while the Olympic race is run in the often unfavourably hot conditions of midsummer. How can such poor running conditions produce a true champion?

Yet winning the Olympic Marathon remains the ultimate accomplishment for a long distance runner, in part because of the very limitations of the race. Like any other long distance race, the Olympic Marathon requires strength, courage, and endurance but it also requires something else, something the skeptics might call luck but which those versed in their Olympic history might call the blessing of the gods. So, if many of the world's greatest marathoners were never Olympic champions, it is all the more reason to praise the few who have triumphed in this race, for in the religion that twentieth-century sport has become, they have truly been touched by the gods.

3. *New Times - Kuensel Editorial October 2, 2004*

In the age of globalisation, national identities are supposed to matter less. But, in many ways, they matter more. For Bhutan it remains as critical an issue as it has always been and, fortunately, most people who visit nearly always leave with a positive impression.

Visitors see a pristine country and a strongly visible culture. Looking at the festivals, the markets, and the countryside, they see a happy people. They see what many of them lost and seem to leave with pangs of nostalgia of a world that is largely changed.

What they see is true to a great extent. In most parts of the world it is not common these days to see busy markets and local festivals where people are at home, enjoying themselves. Markets are serious impersonal public spaces and festivals are highly commercialised.

A well-travelled British visitor recently remarked that the weekend markets in Bhutan were the only places where people laughed as they conducted business.

Many countries are, in fact, trying hard to revive the human element in the lives of the people because their daily interactions have become too impersonal. Some Asian governments are even trying to enforce social and family values, offering cash incentives and other subsidies like housing for extended families.

But we might ask ourselves how much of this positive impression is true, and for how long? It is so tempting to believe the optimists that we sometimes start blocking out reality.

We realise that visitors see just the surface. They don't necessarily see the problems that we are grappling with and the issues of concern that are cropping up every day. Bhutan is changing, and not all of the change is for the better. Sometimes we don't notice the changes that we ourselves are going through.

As we change from a rural to an urban setting some of the core values that formed the essence of the traditional society are changing even breaking down. This includes family cohesion and, in extension, traditional social systems. While there is some economic connection, mainly in the form of family dependence, the social interaction through the annual CHOKU and other local festivals and ceremonies is starting to disappear. Recent politics have shown us that there is a rift between the urban and rural communities.

A "system of wants", built through exposure to the material world, is taking its toll. We see new imageries of beauty, new symbols of luxury, new forms for entertainment, and entire new lifestyles promoted through the international media. We already need much more to make our lives more comfortable and "happier".

Meanwhile a large section of our population remains oblivious to the changes taking place all around us, particularly to the changes affecting us. We are not aware of the pitfalls so we cannot avoid them. That is why we need the institutions to replace the traditional systems of check and balance. Apart from the conventional institutions like the police force and law enforcers there is already a growing need for corrective centers. In this sense we view last week's initiative to establish a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center with sadness and appreciation. Sadness because our society now needs it and appreciation because it is not a government initiative but it comes from civil society, with the support from the Youth Development Fund.

It is just the beginning because we will need a variety of institutions and professionals to deal with the new mental and social problems that are emerging. Our planning process, previously restricted to the known concept of development, now involves much more complex thinking.

A British visitor might be impressed by the market but, not far up the road, there was a less happy scene that same week. There was an accident and two men were lying on the road but several cars passed by without stopping. It was getting dark and it was raining so these busy Thimphu residents had no time to stop to see what had happened. There was no impulse to help. These are new times.

4. At War With One Self - *Ali Hossaini*

Can I be at war with myself? Watching the World Trade Center collapse, then living through the aftermath, begs that absurd question. I'm American, with a Muslim name but nondescript appearance. No one takes me for Middle Eastern - I was born in West Virginia, and I'm only a quarter Arab. But thanks to the peculiarities of history, and naming, I have an Arab-American identity.

The attack on the World Trade Center puts me in an awful place. On the one hand, I've been deeply fortunate. Neither my loved ones nor I were injured. Like everyone else, I am horrified. I could have been there, munching a bagel on the observation deck. I can't imagine how someone could have planned such an attack, and my shock is turning to anger and mourning. At the same time, I feel excluded from the national unity that happens after such a tragedy. Why? As an Arab-American, I'm subject to reprisals. I'm nervous, wondering if I will somehow share the blame. Slurs, threats and even violence have already been levelled against anyone associated with Islam, and I wonder what will happen to me. I'm looking for work - will I be denied a job? What if a wider war breaks out? Will I lose my liberty?

Some friends have said I should go to Egypt for safety. They meant well but their comments betrayed a misunderstanding that verges on racism. Hard, as it is for the safely white to comprehend, there is only one place for me and other hyphenated Americans: the United States. America produced me. My grandparents hail from four different countries. Where else could they have created a family? If I'm out of place here, thanks to my name, I'm certainly out of place in the Middle East, where I stick out as an American. What is left for me? Do we have to pick sides in the end? And what can I do if neither side will have me, if both treat me as the enemy?

I'm at a loss to answer these questions, at least under the current logic. Some of my fellow citizens are striking out at American Muslims. Some are even calling for a firestorm to be rained upon Islamic nations. Don't they see that the terrorists had the same inspiration? The Afghans were caught between the Soviet Union and the United States for decades. Their country has been reduced to rubble. They have no hope. Violence occurs in cycles, and if we respond senselessly, striking innocent people in our search for criminals, then we'll create more radicals, more suicide bombers who embody the despair of poverty and war. The monopoly on violence is broken, and I shudder to think what comes next.

I'm living in fear, and my identity leaves me no shield. I often fly from Newark to San Francisco. Was the attack a one-time event or the first of many? Will I step onto a doomed jet? Will our cities ever feel safe? Then, again, what will I face in my day-to-day existence? Will I get mocked and beaten up? Are my tears for the dead less potent? Will my name become a Yellow Star that excludes me from society? Will I share in the collective healing that must come?

We are asked to choose sides, but my situation brings a clarity that opposes cries for war. From my hyphenated perspective, I see the absurdity of labels, indeed, of the whole idea that race, religion or flags divide humanity. I have a Muslim name, but my grandfather was Serbian. How would that fly in the Balkans?

I've wondered if I will ever have to choose a side. If so, here is my choice: pacifism and dialogue. I choose love; I choose humanity. I may symbolize Islam to some, and America to others, but I transcend these distinctions. I am proof that love conquers hate. My grandparents conquered tradition to found my family, and I stand tall as an American born from a unique and tolerant soil. What race produced me? The human race. Let me plead for understanding and compassion. Chase the criminals if you must, but let us then begin to fight. Let us fight not for oil, money or revenge, but for a world where hatred and weapons belong to a distant, barbaric past.

5. Drugyels Destiny - Tashi Pem

Bhutan was given a 'Shangri-La' status, and on our part, we lived the fairy tale role to the fullest. Threat to national security was something that always came after the home news. We went through our *losars* and our National Days in the spirit of celebrating our Sundays. Joining the army was just another person choosing just another profession. Armed conflicts only made for some interesting discussions over dinner.

It took a husband packing to leave, a father going down south, a neighbour joining the militia, to drive home the realness of things. It took a Monarch-like-no-other to show me the true meaning of selfless devotion. It took a young face in a picture frame on a funeral pyre to teach me ultimate humility. Fathers and mothers, wives and children have helped loved ones pack for unknown number of days, and we have watched them leave. And as each one of us dealt differently with the emptier rooms, we were all united in the sense of pride that each one of our men and women out front gave us.

December 2003. I do not know what the stars said, but it certainly was a month that gave us a second chance. A chance that was so not 'a chance happening' but handed to us at the cost of our Druk Gyalpo having to walk the non-existent line between life and death in an armed conflict. At the cost of a son, a father, a husband, a lover, a friend.

These men and women, led by our Source of Inspiration, made sure that Drukyel's destiny was not left to chance.

The sense of relief in welcoming my husband back, the sense of sadness in knowing that another woman was mourning the loss of her husband at the very same time. While the turn of events leading to December 2003 is justified, no one can justify why one man comes back to his family and another does not. I can only hope that a few years down the road, we do not forget why he never came back.

'National Security' was for so long, and ashamedly so, thought to be the domain of strangers in uniforms. We were very comfortable with planning our future and raising our children in the face of the magnitude of the danger surrounding us. Comfortable with squabbling over a plot of space, building fences and walls around us. Equally comfortable with 'dedicating' and 'rededicating' our services to the *Tsa-Wa-Sum*.

'Nation is me and my children. It's my friends and my neighbours. When it's security at stake, so is all that we are, and dream will be. The destiny of Drukyel is intertwined with my destiny. It's legends and folklores are my ancestors, it's present is me, and it's future my children. It's independences, our independence. Independence. So beautiful a word, so taken for granted, so

fragile in its existence. In the appreciation of its fragility comes the love for it. In the defence of it emerges true valour. All through history, people have fought for a country to call their own. For a land to belong to. For a place to trace their roots to, and leave behind a legacy. People still do. And yet it was not until our land was turned into a battle ground that I began to see what I have and more.

The battle is over, but is the war? I had dreamt of a cottage on a hill, mentally painted the walls, even chosen the colour of the kitchen tiles. I forgot that the hill had to be secured first that way.

6. Classroom Without Walls - Marshall McLuhan

What did media guru, Marshall McLuhan, envision as a “classroom without walls”? This article was written in 1957. How has our view of media changed?

It's natural today to speak of “audio and visual aids” to teaching, for we still think of the book as norm, of other media as incidental. We also think of the new media—press, radio, movies, TV - as MASS MEDIA & think of the book as an individualistic form.

Individualistic because it isolated the reader in silence & helped create the Western “I.” Yet it was the first product of mass production.

With it everybody could have the same books. It was impossible in medieval times for different students, different institutions, to have copies of the same book. Manuscripts, commentaries, were dictated. Students memorized.

Instruction was almost entirely oral, done in groups. Solitary study was reserved for the advanced scholar. The first printed books were “visual aids” to oral instruction.

Before the printing press, the young learned by listening, watching, doing. So, until recently, our own rural children learned the language & skills of their elders. Learning took place outside the classrooms. Only those aiming at professional careers went to school at all.

Today in our cities, most learning occurs outside the classroom. The sheer quantity of information conveyed by press-mags-film-TV-radio *far exceeds* the quantity of information conveyed by school instruction & texts. This challenge has destroyed the monopoly of the book as a teaching aid & cracked the very walls of the classroom, so suddenly, we're confused, baffled.

In this violently upsetting social situation, many teachers naturally view the offerings of the new media as entertainment, rather than education. *But this view carries no conviction to the student.*

Find a classic which wasn't first regarded as light entertainment. Nearly all vernacular works were so regarded until the 19th century.

Many movies are obviously handled with a degree of insight & maturity at least equal to the level permitted in today's textbooks. Oliver's *Henry V* & *Richard III* assemble a wealth of scholarly & artistic skill which reveal Shakespeare at a very high level, yet in a way easy for the young to enjoy.

The movie is to dramatic representation what the book was to the manuscript. It makes available to many & at many times & places what otherwise would be restricted to a few at few times & places. The movie, like the book, is a ditto device. TV shows to 50,000,000 simultaneously. Some feel that the value of experiencing a book is diminished by being extended to many minds. This notion is always implicit in the phrases “mass media,” “mass entertainment”-useless phrases obscuring the fact THAT *English itself is a mass medium*. Today we’re beginning to realize that the new media aren’t just mechanical gimmicks for creating worlds of illusion, *but new languages with new & unique powers of expression*. Historically, the resources of English have been shaped & expressed in constantly new & changing ways. The printing press changed, not only the quantity of writing, but the character of language & the relations between author & public. Radio, film, TV pushed written English towards the spontaneous shifts & freedom of the spoken idiom. They aided us in the recovery of intense awareness of facial language & bodily gesture. If these “mass media” should serve only to weaken or corrupt previously achieved levels of verbal & pictorial culture, it won’t be because there’s anything inherently wrong with them. *It will be because we’ve failed to master them as a new language in time to assimilate them to our total cultural heritage.*

These new developments, under quiet analytic survey, point to a basic strategy of culture for the classroom. When the printed book first appeared, it threatened the oral procedures of teaching, and created the classroom as we now know it. Instead of making his own text, his own dictionary, his own grammar, the student started out with these tools. He could study, not one, but several languages. Today these new media threaten, instead of merely reinforce, the procedures of this traditional classroom. It’s customary to answer this threat with denunciations of the unfortunate character & effect of movies & TV, just the comic book was feared & scorned & rejected from the classroom. Its good & bad features in form & content, when carefully set beside other kinds of art & narrative, could have become a major asset to the teacher.

Where student interest is already intensely focussed is the natural point at which to be in the elucidation of other problems & interests. *The educational task is not only to provide basic tools of perception, but to develop judgement & discrimination with ordinary social experience.*

Few students ever acquire skill in analysis of newspapers. Fewer have any ability to discuss a movie intelligently. *To be articulate & discriminating about ordinary affairs & information is the mark of an educated man.*

It’s misleading to suppose there’s any basic difference between education & entertainment. This distinction merely relieves people of the responsibility of looking into the matter. It’s like setting up a distinction between didactic & lyric poetry on the ground that one teaches, the other pleases. However, it’s always been true that whatever pleases teaches more effectively.

About the Author

(Herbert) Marshall McLuhan was born in 1911 in Edmonton, Alberta. He taught in schools and at St. Michael's College of the University of Toronto, where he became director of the Centre for Culture and Technology. McLuhan is well known for his theories about the role of the electronic media in mass popular culture.

POETRY

1. Sonnet 18 - *William Shakespeare*

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometimes declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee

Sonnet 29 - *William Shakespeare*

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee- and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

About the Poet

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, allegedly on April 23, 1564. Young William was born of John Shakespeare, a glover and leather merchant, and Mary Arden, a landed heiress.

According to scholars, Shakespeare attended the free grammar school in Stratford, which at the time had a reputation to rival Eton.

The next documented event in Shakespeare's life is his marriage to Anne Hathaway on November 28, 1582. William was 18 at the time, and Anne was 26 and pregnant. Their first daughter, Susanna, was born on May 26, 1583. The couple later had twins, Hamnet and Judith, born February 2, 1585 and christened at Holy Trinity. Hamnet died in childhood at the age of 11, on August 11, 1596.

It is estimated that Shakespeare arrived in London around 1588 and began to establish himself as an actor and playwright. Evidently, Shakespeare garnered envy early on for his talent, as related by the critical attack of Robert Greene, a London playwright, in 1592: "...an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes fac totum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country."

By 1594, he was not only acting and writing for the Lord Chamberlain's Men (called the King's Men after the ascension of James I in 1603), but was a managing partner in the operation as well. With Will Kempe, a master comedian, and Richard Burbage, a leading tragic actor of the day, the Lord Chamberlain's Men became a favorite London troupe, patronized by royalty and made popular by the theatre-going public. When the plague forced theatre closings in the mid-1590s, Shakespeare and his company made plans for the Globe Theatre in the Bankside district, which was across the river from London proper.

William Shakespeare wrote his will in 1611, bequeathing his properties to his daughter Susanna (married in 1607 to Dr. John Hall). To his surviving daughter Judith, he left £300, and to his wife Anne left "my second best bed." William Shakespeare allegedly died on his birthday, April 23, 1616. This is probably more of a romantic myth than reality, but Shakespeare was interred at Holy Trinity in Stratford on April 25. In 1623, two working companions of Shakespeare from the Lord Chamberlain's Men, John Heminges and Henry Condell, printed the First Folio edition of the Collected Works, of which half the plays contained therein were previously unpublished. The First Folio also contained Shakespeare's sonnets.

William Shakespeare's legacy is a body of work that will never again be equaled in Western civilization. His words have endured for 400 years, and still reach across the centuries as powerfully as ever.

2. The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter

- Ezra Pound (Translated by Rihaku (Li T'ai Po))

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead

I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.

You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,

You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.

And we went on living in the village of Chokan:

Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you.

I never laughed, being bashful.

Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.

Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,

I desired my dust to be mingled with yours

Forever and forever and forever.

Why should I climb the look out?

At sixteen you departed,

You went into far Ku-to-en, by the river of swirling eddies,

And you have been gone five months.

The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.

You dragged your feet when you went out.

By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,

Too deep to clear them away!

The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.

The paired butterflies are already yellow with August

Over the grass in the West garden;

They hurt me. I grow older.

If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,

Please let me know beforehand,

And I will come out to meet you

As far as Cho-fu-Sa.

About the Poet

EZRA POUND (1885-1972): Born in the American Northwest, Pound left for Europe at age twenty-two as a crusader on behalf of poetry. He soon became involved with the leading moderns, including W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot. During the Second World War he broadcast on behalf of the Italian fascists, but was later ruled mentally unfit to stand trial for treason. Much of his poetry betrays his wide-ranging and often erratic intellect.

3. A Change of Fate - Excerpt from Gaylong Sumdar Tashi: *Song of Sorrows Translated into English by Sonam Kinga*

When my mother arranged my marriage
With Ngedup Bumo, daughter of Aum Gayling Zam,
I was neither strong nor seasoned;
And yet a son, Dendup Tashi, was born to us.

Before my peasant's life finished its story,
The monk-tax compelled me to start another.
I would have to go the next day
To start my next life, a peasant monk!

That last night, the night of all nights,
My wife, Ngedup Bumo, slept on my right,
And I, Sumdar Tashi, slept on her left.
Our son, Dendup Tashi, was between us.

Even as we spoke our thoughts and emotions,
The sleeping Night awoke as a rising Dawn,
And when the Dawn drowned the Night
I had to take a cleansing bath.

And when I went for the cleansing bath,
The dirt of my outer body
Was washed away by a ladleful of water;
But the deep sorrow of my heart
Could not be removed, even when my beloved faced me;
My anguished grief haunted my dreams
And pained the sole of my foot when I walked.

I, Gaylong Sumdar Tashi, join the order,
Not for fun, not for pleasure.
Oh, my evil fate! I had to bear the monk-tax.
Losing my happiness, sorrow overwhelmed me.

Departure

After descending the hills of the deity and the devil¹³,
I looked back from the hamlet of Phang Yul Gaang¹⁴
And saw my dear mother looking out
Through the eyes of a window facing east.
My beloved Ngedup, a mere shadow,
Held our son, Dendup Tashi, close to her heart.
Alas, I could no longer hear her
But there she was, sadly waving a tattered scarf.

The way she waved the white scarf was a desperate call
That beckoned me to return to her and our son.
The thought of returning haunted me time and again,
But how could I! There was the royal command.
And yet how couldn't I! There was my beloved Ngedup.

As the bright day gave way to dusty dusk,
I arrived at the hamlet of Bajo Thang.¹⁵
The sun in the azure sky
Kissed the summit of the western hills,
The brook of Bajo¹⁶ wailed its songs,
The swans¹⁷ lamented their flight towards Tibet,
The wind shook leaves loose from giant Pema Gesar.¹⁸
When such sorrows combined their forces,
It only bred greater storms of sorrow.

After spending the night in a shaded glade,
I arrived at the glorious *dzong* of Punakha.
Early on the morning of the next day,
I made my offerings to Gyelse Mewang Depa.

.....
13 This hill could not be identified.

14 A village in Shar, Wangdi Phodrang.

15 A village beside Puna Tsangchhu (River Sankosh) in Wangdue Phodrang.

16. Refer 26

17. The birds are identified as Ruddy Shell Duck. They migrate to the warmer valleys of Wangdue Phodrang in winter and leave for Tibet as spring arrives.

18. Bombax ciei (red cotton tree).

Liberation

As the fresh evening swallowed the dying day,
I passed through Rabuna,⁵³ a dreary way!
Reaching my Nyisho, I saw the harsh wind gusts
Slamming and shutting the door of my house.

I stepped in and approached the cold hearth.
My poor mother, Samdrup Pelmo, was shrouded in her bed;
Although her outer breath had almost stopped,
A delicate inner one still held like a frail silken thread.
Her mind was focused on Chenrezi,⁵⁴ her final refuge;
She was waiting for her only son.
All alone, unattended!
Where was Ngedup Bum? Where was Dendup Tashi?

I rushed up to Chito Gonpa⁵⁵
To beseech the holy Lama Rinchen,⁵⁶
I received him at my humble home,
And he delivered my mother's soul to her freedom.
My life-long and only desire was then fulfilled!
Now religious rites for her were over.

Although my beloved, dear wife Ngedup still lives,
No passion burns; I am not tempted.
My son, Dendup Tashi, can no longer hold me back.
It is my moment to decide, to choose!
Toward the *dzong* behind Darchar Gaang
Where the glorious *Drukpa* have their seat,
Toward the Fortress of the Glorious Goddess
Where holy *Khenchen Lam* has his seat,
I, Gaylong Sumdar Tashi, shall retrace my Path.

.....
⁵³ *A small hamlet situated 4 kms away from Wangdue Phodrang on the way to Trongsa. In olden days, people crossed this area only toward the evening, believing that the heat during the day would induce the heat disease' which today has been identified as malaria.*

⁵⁴ *Avalokiteshwara, the Lord of Compassion.*

⁵⁵ *The monastery near Shar Jatey. It is the winter seat of Gangtey Trulku, the mind incarnation of saint Pema Lingpa(1450-1521). Perhaps, he was the abbot of the monastery.*

⁵⁶ *An epithet for Punakha Dzong.*

4. Where the Mind is Without Fear - Rabindranath Tagore

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening
thought and action -
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,
let my country awake

About the Poet

Rabindranath Tagore was born in 1861 and died in 1941. He was a bundle of talents. He was a poet, and essayist, playwright, composer, novelist, short story writer and an educationist. He won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913 and he wrote for both children and adults.

5. Ode To Autumn - *John Keats*

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease;
For Summer has o'erbrimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, - thou hast thy music too,
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river-sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

About the Poet

*John Keats (1795–1821), one of the greatest English poets and a major figure in the Romantic Movement, was born in 1795 in Moorefield, London. Keats was well educated at a school in Enfield, where he began a translation of Virgil's **Aeneid**. His first attempts at writing poetry date from about 1814, and include an 'Imitation' of the Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser. In 1815 he left his apprenticeship and became a student at Guy's Hospital, London; one year later, he abandoned the profession of medicine for poetry.*

Keats's first volume of poems was published in 1817. It attracted some good reviews, but these were followed by the first of several harsh attacks by the influential Blackwood's Magazine. Undeterred, he pressed on with his poem 'Endymion', which was published in the spring of the following year.

After his brother Tom's death in December he moved into a friend's house in Hampstead, now known as Keats House. There he met and fell deeply in love with a young neighbour, Fanny Brawne. During the following year, despite ill health and financial problems, he wrote an astonishing amount of poetry, including 'The Eve of St Agnes', 'La Belle Dame sans Merci', 'Ode to a Nightingale' and 'To Autumn'. His second volume of poems appeared in July 1820; soon afterwards, by now very ill with tuberculosis, he set off with a friend to Italy, where he died the following February.

6. My Last Duchess *Robert Browning*

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
'Fra Pandolf' by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say 'Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much,' or 'Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:' such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart how shall I say? too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men, good! but thanked
Somehow I know not how as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-year-old-name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech (which I have not) to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say 'Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark', and if she let

Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your Master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

About the Poet

Robert Browning (1812-1889) was born in Camberwell, south London, as the son of Robert Browning. He is an English poet, noted for his mastery of dramatic monologue.

Browning received scant formal education. However, his father encouraged him to read and he had access to his large (6,000 volumes) library. The book collection filled most of the third storey at the family's house at New Cross. In his teens, Browning discovered Shelley, adopting the author's confessionals in poetry. His first poems Browning wrote under the influence of Shelley, who also inspired him to adopt atheist principles for a time. At the age of 16, he began to study at newly established London University, returning home after a brief period. At home his parents showed understanding of his decision to withdraw and support him morally and financially.

In 1833 Browning published anonymously PAULINE: A FRAGMENT OF A CONFESSION. It has been said, that it was inspired by Eliza Flower, a performer and composer of religious music. From 1837 to 1846 Browning attempted to write verse drama for the stage. During these years he met Carlyle, Dickens, and Tennyson, and formed several important friendships.

Between 1841 and 1846 Browning works appeared under the title BELLS AND POMEGRANATES. It contained several of his best-known lyrics, such as How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix, and PIPPA PASSES (1841), a dramatic poem depicting a silk winder and his wandering in Italy. Among his earlier works was SORDELLO (1840), set against the background of restless southern Europe of the 13th century. It influenced Ezra Pound in his conception of the Cantos.

In 1846 Browning married the poet Elizabeth Barrett (1806-1861), and settled with her in Florence. When Elizabeth Browning died in 1861, he moved to London. There he wrote his greatest work, THE RING AND THE BOOK (1869), based on the proceedings in a murder trial in Rome in 1698. It consisted of 10 verse narratives, all dealing with the same crime, each from a distinct viewpoint. Browning made poetry compete with prose, and used idioms of ordinary speech in his text. A typical Browning poem tells of a key moment in the life of a prince, priest or painter of the Italian Renaissance. He often crammed his meaning into so few words that many readers could not grasp what he meant.

Robert Browning died on December 12, 1889 in Venice in his son's house. Browning's narrative poem, 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came', has inspired Stephen King's Dark Tower series, which started in 1982 with The Gunslinger.

SUPPLEMENTARY POEMS

1. A Poet's Advice to Students - *E E.cummings*

A poet is somebody who feels, and who expresses his feeling through words.
This may sound easy. It isn't.

A lot of people think or believe or know they feel -but that's thinking or believing or knowing;
not feeling. And poetry is feeling not knowing or believing *or* thinking.

Almost anybody can learn *to* think or believe or know, but not a single human being can be
taught to feel. Why? Because whenever you think or you believe or you know, you're a lot of
other people: but the moment you feel, you're nobody-but-yourself.

To be nobody-but-yourself- in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you
everybody else means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never
stop fighting.

As for expressing nobody-but-yourself in words, that means working just a little harder than
anybody who isn't a poet can possibly imagine. Why? Because nothing is quite as easy as using
words like somebody else. We all of us do exactly this nearly all of the time and whenever
we do it, we're not poets.

If at the end of your first ten or fifteen years of fighting and working and feeling, you find
you've written one line of one poem, you'll be very lucky indeed.

And so my advice to all young people who wish to become poets is: do something easy, like
learning how to blow up the world- unless you're not only willing, but glad, to feel and work
and fight till you die.

Does this sound dismal? It isn't.

It's the most wonderful life on earth.
Or so I feel.

2. **Nothing Gold Can Stay** - *Robert Frost*

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leafs a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

3. **Paper Boats** - *Rabindranath Tagore*

Day by day I float my paper boats one by one down the running stream.
In big black letters I write my name on them and the name of the village where I live.
I hope that someone in some strange land will find them and know who I am.
I load my little boats with *shinli* flowers from our garden,
and hope that these blooms of dawn will be carried safely to land in the night.
I launch my paper boats and look up into the sky and see
the little clouds setting their white bulging sails.
I know not what playmate of mine in the sky sends them
down the air to race with my boats!
When night comes I bury my face in my arms and dream
that my paper boats float on and on under the midnight Stars.
The fairies of sleep are sailing in them, and the lading is their baskets full of dreams.

4. To a Daughter Leaving Home - *Linda Pastan*

When I taught you
at eight to ride
a bicycle, loping along
beside you
as you wobbled away
on two round wheels,
my own mouth rounding
in surprise when you pulled
ahead down the curved
path of the park,
I kept waiting
for the thud
of your crash as I
sprinted to catch up,
while you grew
smaller, more breakable
with distance,
pumping, pumping
for your life, screaming
with laughter,
the hair flapping
behind you like a
handkerchief waving
goodbye.

5. Girl's-Eye View of Relatives - *Phyllis McGinley*

First Lesson

The thing to remember about fathers is, they're men.
A girl has to keep it in mind.
They are dragon-seekers, bent on improbable rescues.
Scratch any father, you find
Someone chock-full of qualms and romantic terrors,
Believing change is a threat
Like your first shoes with heels on, like your first bicycle
It took such months to get.

Walk in strange woods, they warn you about the snakes there.
Climb, and they fear you'll fall.
Books, angular boys, or swimming in deep water
Fathers mistrust them all.
Men are the worriers. It is difficult for them
To learn what they must learn:
How you have a journey to take and very likely,
For a while, will not return.

The Adversary

A mother's hardest to forgive,
Life is the fruit she longs to hand you,
Ripe on a plate. And while you live,
Relentlessly she understands you.

6. Before Two Portraits of My Mother

- *Emile Nelligan (translated by George Johnston)*

I love the beautiful young girl of this
portrait, my mother, painted years ago
when her forehead was white, and there was no
shadow in the dazzling Venetian glass

of her gaze. But this other likeness shows
the deep trenches across her forehead's white
marble. The rose poem of her youth that
her marriage sang is far behind. Here is

my sadness: I compare these portraits, one
of a joy-radiant brow, the other care-
heavy: sunrise and the thick coming on

of night. And yet how strange my ways seem,
for when I look at these faded lips my heart
smiles, but at the smiling girl my tears start.

SHORT STORIES

1. The Accursed House - *Emile Gaboriau (1835 - 73)*

The Vicomte de B , an amiable and charming young man, was peacefully enjoying an income of 30,000 livres yearly, when, unfortunately for him, his uncle, a miser of the worst species, died, leaving him all his wealth, amounting to nearly two millions.

In running through the documents of succession, the Vicomte de B learned that he was the proprietor of a house in the Rue de la Victoire. He learned, also, that the unfurnished building, bought in 1849 for 300,000 francs, now brought in, clear of taxes, rentals amounting to 82,000 francs a year.

‘Too much, too much, entirely,’ thought the generous Vicomte, ‘my uncle was too hard; to rent at this price is usury, one cannot deny it. When one bears a great name like mine, one should not lend himself to such plundering. I will begin tomorrow to lower my rents and my tenants will bless me’.

With this excellent purpose in view, the Vicomte de B sent immediately for the concierge of the building, who presented himself as promptly, with back bent like a bow.

‘Bernard, my friend,’ said the Vicomte, ‘go at once from me and notify all your tenants that I lower their rents by one-third.’

That unheard-of word ‘lower’ fell like a brick on Bernard’s head. But he quickly recovered himself; he had heard badly; he had not understood.

‘Low-er the rents!’ stammered he. ‘Monsieur le Vicomte deigns to jest. Lower! Monsieur, of course means to raise the rents.’ ‘I was never more serious in my life, my friend,’ the Vicomte returned; ‘I said, and I repeat it, lower the rents’.

This time the concierge was surprised to the point of bewilderment so thrown off his balance that he forgot himself and lost all restraint.

‘Monsieur has not reflected,’ persisted he. ‘Monsieur will regret this evening. Lower the tenants’ rents! Never was such a thing known, Monsieur! If the lodgers should learn of it, what would they think of Monsieur? What would people say in the neighbourhood? Truly ’

‘Monsieur Bernard, my friend,’ dryly interrupted the Vicomte, ‘I prefer, when I give an order, to be obeyed without reply. You hear me go!’

Staggering like a drunken man, Monsieur Bernard went out from the house of his proprietor.

All his ideas were upset, overthrown, confounded. Was he, or was he not, the plaything of a dream, a ridiculous nightmare? Was he himself Pierre Bernard, or Bernard somebody else?

‘Lower his rents! Lower his rents!’ repeated he. ‘It is not to be believed! If indeed the lodgers had complained. But they have not complained; on the contrary, all are good payers. Ah, if his uncle could only know this, he would rise from the tomb! His nephew has gone mad, ’tis certain! They should haul up this young man before a family council; he will finish badly! Who knows after this what he will do next? He lunched too well, perhaps, this morning.’

And the worthy Bernard was so pale with emotion when he re-entered his lodge, so pale

and spent, that on seeing him enter, his wife and daughter Amanda exclaimed as with one voice ‘why, what *is* it?’

‘Nothing,’ responded he, with altered voice, ‘absolutely nothing.’ ‘You are deceiving me,’ insisted Madame Bernard. ‘You are concealing something from me; do not spare me; speak, I am strong what did the new proprietor tell you? Does he think of turning us off?’

‘If it were only that! But just think, he told me with his own lips, he told me to ah! you will never believe me

‘Oh, yes; only do go on.’

‘You will have it then! Well, then, he told me, he ordered me to notify all the tenants that he lowered their rents one-third! Did you hear what I said? lower the rents of the tenants ’

But neither Madame nor Mademoiselle Bernard heard him out they were twisting and doubling with convulsive laughter.

‘Lower!’ repeated they; ‘ah! What a good joke, what a droll man! Lower the tenants’ rents.’

But Bernard, losing his temper and insisting that he must be taken seriously in his own lodge, his wife lost her temper too, and a quarrel followed! Madame Bernard declaring that Monsieur Bernard had, beyond a doubt, taken his fantastic order from the bottom of a litre of wine in the restaurant at the corner.

But for Mademoiselle Amanda the couple would undoubtedly have come to blows, and finally Madame Bernard who did not wish to be thought demented, threw a shawl over her head and ran to the proprietor’s house. Bernard had spoken truly; with her own two ears, ornamented with big, glided hoops, she heard the incredible word. Only as she was a wise and prudent woman, she demanded ‘a bit of writing’ to put, as she said, ‘her responsibility under cover’.

She, too, returned thunderstruck, and all the evening in the lodge, father, mother, and daughter deliberated.

Should they obey? Or should they warn some relative of this mad young man, whose common sense would oppose itself to such insanity? They decided to obey.

Next morning, Bernard, buttoning himself into his best frock coat, made the rounds of the three-and-twenty lodges to announce his great news. Ten minutes afterward the house in the Rue de la Victoire was in a state of commotion impossible to describe. People who, for forty years, had lived on the same floor, and never honoured each other with so much as a tip of the hat, now clustered together and chatted eagerly.

‘Do you know, monsieur?’

‘It is very extraordinary.’

‘Simply unheard of!’

‘The proprietor’s lowered my rent!’

‘One-third, is it not? Mine also.’

‘Astounding! It must be a mistake!’

And despite the affirmations of the Bernard family, despite even the ‘bit of writing’ ‘under cover’, there were found among the tenants doubting Thomases, who doubted still in the

face of everything.

Three of them actually wrote to the proprietor to tell him what had passed, and to charitably warn him that his concierge had wholly lost his mind. The proprietor responded to these sceptics, confirming what Bernard had said. Doubt, therefore, was out of the question.

Then began reflections and commentaries.

‘Why had the proprietor lowered his rents?’

‘Yes, why?’

‘What motives,’ said they all, ‘actuate this strange man? For certainly he must have grave reasons for a step like this! An intelligent man, a man of good sense, would never deprive himself of good fat revenues, well secured for the simple pleasure of depriving himself. One would not conduct himself thus without being forced, constrained by powerful or terrible circumstances.’

And each said to himself:

‘There is something under all this!’

‘But what?’

And from the first floor to the sixth they sought and conjectured and delved in their brains. Every lodger had the preoccupied air of a man that strives with all his wits to solve an impossible cipher, and everywhere there began to be a vague disquiet, as it happens when one finds himself in the presence of a sinister mystery.

Someone went so far as to hazard:

‘This man must have committed a great and still hidden crime; remorse pushes him to philanthropy.’

‘It was not a pleasant idea, either, the thought of living thus side by side with a rascal; no, by no means; he might be repentant, and all that but suppose he yielded to temptation once more!’

‘The house, perhaps, was badly built?’ questioned another, anxiously.

‘Hum-m, so-so!’ No one could tell, but all knew one thing it was very, very old.

‘True! and it had been necessary to prop it when they dug the drain last year in the month of March.’

‘Maybe it was the roof, then, and the house is top-heavy?’ suggested a tenant on the fifth floor.

‘Or perhaps,’ said a lodger in the garret, ‘there is a press for coining counterfeit money in the cellar; I have often heard at night a sound like the dull, muffled thud of a coin-stamper.’

The opinion of another was that Russian, may be Prussian, spies had gained a lodgement in the house, while the gentleman of the first storey was inclined to believe that the proprietor proposed to set fire to his house and furniture with the sole object of drawing great sums from the insurance companies.

Then began to happen, as they all declared, extraordinary and even frightful things. On the sixth and mansard floors it appeared that strange and absolutely inexplicable noises were heard. Then the nurse of the old lady on the fourth storey, going one night to steal wine from

the cellar, encountered the ghost of the defunct proprietor he even held in his hand a receipt for rent by which she knew him!

And the refrain from loft to cellar was:

‘There is something under all this!’

From disquietude it had come to fright; from fright it quickly passed to terror. So that the gentleman of the first floor, who had valuables in his rooms, made up his mind to go, and sent in notice by his clerk.

Bernard went to inform the proprietor, who responded:

‘All right, let the fool go!’

But next day the chiropodist of the second floor, though he had naught to fear for his valuables, imitated the gentleman beneath him. Then the bachelors and the little households of the fifth storey quickly followed his example.

From that moment, it was general rout. By the end of the week, everybody had given notice. Everyone awaited some frightful catastrophe. They slept no more. They organised patrols. The terrified domestics swore that they too would quit the accursed house and remained temporarily only on tripled wages.

Bernard was no more than the ghost of himself; the fever of fear had worn him to a shadow.

‘No,’ repeated his wife mournfully at each fresh notification, ‘no, it is not natural.’

Meanwhile three-and-twenty ‘For Rent’ placards swung against the facade of the house, drawing an occasional applicant for lodgings.

Bernard never grumbling now climbed the staircase and ushered the visitor from apartment to apartment.

‘You can have your choice,’ said he to the people that presented themselves, ‘the house is entirely vacant; all the tenants have given notice as one man. They do not know why, exactly, but things have happened, oh yes, things! a mystery such as was never before known the proprietor has lowered his rents!’

And the would-be lodgers fled away affrighted.

The term ended, three-and-twenty vans carried away the furniture of the three-and-twenty tenants. Everybody left. From top to bottom, from foundations to garret, the house lay empty of lodgers.

The rats themselves, finding nothing to live on, abandoned it also.

Only the concierge remained, grey-green with fear, in his lodge. Frightful visions haunted his sleep. He seemed to hear lugubrious howlings and sinister murmurs at night that made his teeth chatter with terror and his hair erect itself under his cotton nightcap. Madame Bernard no more closed an eye than he. And Amanda in her frenzy renounced all thought of the operatic stage and married for nothing in the world but to quit the paternal lodge a young barber and hairdresser whom she had never before been able to abide.

At last, one morning, after a more frightful nightmare than usual, Bernard, too, took a great resolution. He went to the proprietor, gave up his keys, and scampered away.

And now on the Rue de la Victoire stands the abandoned house, ‘The Accursed House’, whose history I have told you. Dust thickens upon the closed slats, grass grows in the court.

No tenant ever presents himself now; and in the quarter, where stands this Accursed House, so funereal is its reputation that even the neighbouring houses on either side of it have also depreciated in value.

Lower one's rent! Who would think of such a thing!

About the Author

Emile Gaboriau (1835-1873) was one of the distinguished French writers of popular detective stories. He was a pioneer in this type of writing and his works have been translated into many other European languages. He is also known for his humorous stories.

'The Accursed House' is one of his famous stories in which he presents an amusing situation. The Vicomte de B, who is a rich landlord, generously decides to lower the rents of his apartments. Ironically, his tenants read in this gesture some sinister design and decide to vacate their lodgings in a body. The story is a subtle satire on human nature.

2. Leaving - *M.G. Vassanji*

“... you will lose your son.”

Kichwele Street was now Uhuru Street. My two sisters had completed school and got married and Mother missed them sometimes. Mehroon, after a succession of wooers, had settled for a former opening batsman of our school team and was in town. Razia was a wealthy housewife in Tanga, the coastal town north of Dar.¹ Firoz dropped out in his last year at school, and everyone said that it was a wonder he had reached that far. He was assistant bookkeeper at Oriental Emporium, and brought home stationery sometimes.

Mother had placed her hopes on the youngest two of us, Aloo and me, and she didn't want us distracted by the chores that always needed doing around the store. One evening she secured for the last time the half a dozen assorted padlocks on the sturdy panelled doors and sold the store. This was exactly one week after the wedding party had driven off with a tearful Razia, leaving behind a distraught mother in the stirred-up dust of Uhuru Street.

We moved to the residential area of Upanga. After the bustle of Uhuru Street, our new neighbourhood seemed quiet. Instead of the racket of buses, bicycles and cars on the road, we now heard the croaking of frogs and the chirping of insects. Nights were haunting, lonely and desolate and took some getting used to. Upanga Road emptied after seven in the evening and the sidestreets became pitch dark, with no illumination. Much of the area was as yet uninhabited and behind the housing developments there were overgrown bushes, large, scary baobab trees, and mango and coconut groves.

Sometimes in the evenings, when Mother felt sad, Aloo and I would play two-three-five with her, a variation of whist for three people. I had entered the University by then and came back at weekends. Aloo was in his last year at school. He had turned out to be exceptionally bright in his studies more so than we realised.

That year Mr Dato, a former teacher from our school who was also a former student, returned from America for a visit. Mr Dato had been a favourite with the boys. When he came he received a tumultuous welcome. For the next few days he toured the town like the Pied Piper followed by a horde of adulating students, one of whom was Aloo.

The exciting event inspired in Aloo the hope that not only might he be admitted to an American university, but he could also win a scholarship to go there. Throughout the rest of the year, therefore, he wrote to numerous universities, culling their names from books at the USIS, often simply at random or even only by the sounds of their names.

Mother's response to all these efforts was to humour him. She would smile. “Your uncles in America will pay thousands of shillings just to send you to college,” she would say. Evidently

she felt he was wasting his time, but he would never be able to say that he did not have all the support she could give him.

Responses to his enquiries started coming within weeks and a handful of them were guardedly encouraging. Gradually Aloo found out which were the better places, and which among them the truly famous. Soon a few catalogues arrived, all looking impressive. It seemed that the more involved he became with the application process, the more tantalising was the prospect of going to an American university. Even the famous places did not discourage him. He learnt of subjects he had never heard of before: genetics, cosmology, artificial intelligence: a whole universe was out there waiting for him if only he could reach it. He was not sure if he could, if he was good enough. He suffered periods of intense hope and hopeless despair.

Of course, Aloo was entitled to a place at the local university. At the end of the year, when the selections were announced in the papers, his name was on the list. But some bureaucratic hand, probably also corrupt, dealt out a future prospect for him that came as a shock. He had applied to study medicine; he was given a place in agriculture. An agricultural officer in a rural district somewhere was not what he wanted to become however patriotic he felt. He had never left the city except to go to the national parks once on a school trip.

When Aloo received a letter from the California Institute of Technology offering him a place with a scholarship, he was stupefied at first. He read and reread the letter, not believing what it seemed to be saying, afraid that he might be reading something into it. He asked me to read it for him. When he was convinced there was no possibility of a mistake he became elated.

“The hell I’ll do agriculture!” he grinned.

But first he had to contend with Mother.

Mother was incredulous. “Go, go,” she said, “don’t you eat my head, don’t tease me!”

“But it’s true!” he protested. “They’re giving me a scholarship!”

We were at the table the three of us and had just poured tea from the thermos. Mother sitting across from me stared at her saucer for a while then she looked up.

“Is it true?” she asked me.

“Yes, it’s true,” I said. “All he needs is to take 400 dollars pocket money with him.”

“How many shillings would that make?” she asked.

“About three thousand.”

“And how are we going to raise this three thousand shillings? Have you bought a lottery? And what about the ticket? Are they going to send you a ticket too?”

As she said this Aloo's prospects seemed to get dimmer. She was right, it was not a little money that he needed.

"Can't we raise a loan?" he asked. "I'll work there. Yes, I'll work as a waiter. A waiter! I know you can do it, I'll send the money back!"

"You may have uncles in America who would help you," Mother told him, "but no one here will."

Aloo's shoulders sagged and he sat there toying with his cup, close to tears. Mother sat drinking from her saucer and frowning. The evening light came in from the window behind me and gave a glint to her spectacles. Finally she set her saucer down. She was angry.

"And why do you want to go away, so far from us? Is this what I raised you for so you could leave me to go away to a foreign place? Won't you miss us, where you want to go? Do we mean so little to you? If something happens ..."

Aloo was crying. A tear fell into his cup, his nose was running. "So many kids go and return, and nothing happens to them ... Why did you mislead me, then? Why did you let me apply if you didn't want me to go ... why did you raise my hopes if only to dash them?" He raised his voice to her, the first time I saw him do it, and he was shaking.

He did not bring up the question again and he prepared himself for the agricultural college, waiting for the term to begin. At home he would slump on the sofa putting away a novel a day.

If the unknown bureaucrat at the Ministry of Education had been less arbitrary, Aloo would not have been so broken and Mother would not have felt compelled to try and do something for him.

A few days later, on a Sunday morning, she looked up from her sewing machine and said to the two of us: "Let's go and show this letter to Mr Velji. He is experienced in these matters. Let's take his advice."

Mr Velji was a former administrator of our school. He had a large egg-shaped head and a small compact body. With his large forehead and big black spectacles he looked the caricature of the archetypal wise man. He also had the bearing of one. The three of us were settled in his sitting-room chairs staring about us and waiting expectantly when he walked in stiffly, like a toy soldier, to welcome us.

“How are you, sister?” he said. “What can I do for you?”

Aloo and I stood up respectfully as he sat down.

“We have come to you for advice ...” Mother began.

“Speak, then,” he said jovially and sat back, joining his hands behind his head.

She began by giving him her history. She told him which family she was born in, which she had married into, how she had raised her kids when our father died. Common relations were discovered between our families. “Now this one here,” she pointed at me, “goes to university here, and *that* one wants to go to America. Show him the documents,” she commanded Aloo.

As if with an effort, Aloo pushed himself out of the sofa and slowly made his way to place the documents in Mr Velji’s hands. Before he looked at them Mr Velji asked Aloo his result in the final exam.

At Aloo’s answer, his *eyes* widened. “Henh?” he said, “All A’s?”

“Yes,” replied Aloo, a little too meekly.

Mr Velji flipped the papers one by one, cursorily at first. Then he went over them more carefully. He looked at the long visa form with the carbon copies neatly bound behind the original; he read over the friendly letter from the Foreign Student Adviser; he was charmed by the letters of invitation from the fraternities. Finally he looked up, a little humbled.

“The boy is right,” he said. “The university is good, and they are giving him a bursary. I congratulate you.”

“But what should I do?” asked Mother anxiously. “What is your advice? Tell us what we should do.”

“Well,” said Mr Velji, “it would be good for his education.” He raised his hand to clear his throat. Then he said, a little slowly: “But if you send him, you will lose your son.”

“It’s a far place, America,” he concluded, wiping his hands briskly at the finished business. “Now what will you have tea? Orange squash?”

His wife appeared magically to take orders.

“All the rich kids go every year and they are not lost,” muttered Aloo bitterly as we walked back home. Mother was silent.

That night she was at the sewing machine and Aloo was on the couch, reading. The radio

was turned low and through the open front door a gentle breeze blew in to cool the sitting room. I was standing at the door. The banana tree and its offspring rustled outside, a car zoomed on the road, throwing shadows on neighbouring houses. A couple out for a stroll, murmuring, came into sight over the uneven hedge; groups of boys or girls chattered before dispersing for the night. The intermittent buzz of an electric motor escaped from Mother's sewing machine. It was a little darker where she sat at the other end of the room from us.

Presently she looked up and said a little nonchalantly, "At least show me what this university looks like bring that book, will you?"

Mother had never seen the catalogue. She had always dismissed it, had never shown the least bit of curiosity about the place Aloo wanted so badly to visit. Now the three of us crowded around the glossy pages, pausing at pictures of the neoclassic facades and domes, columns towering over humans, students rushing about in a dither of activity, classes held on lush lawns in ample shade. It all looked so awesome and yet inviting.

"It's something, isn't it?" whispered Aloo, hardly able to hold back his excitement. "They teach hundreds of courses there," he said. "They send rockets into space ... to other worlds ... to the moon- "

"If you go away to the moon, my son, what will become of me?" she said humorously, her eyes gleaming as she looked up at us.

Aloo went back to his book and Mother to her sewing.

A little later I looked up and saw Mother deep in thought, brooding, and as she often did at such times she was picking her chin absent-mindedly. It was, I think, the first time I saw her as a person and not only as our mother. I thought of what she must be going through in her mind, what she had gone through in bringing us up. She had been thirty-three when Father died, and she had refused several offers of marriage because they would all have entailed one thing: sending us all to the "boarding" the orphanage. Pictures of her before his death showed her smiling and in full bloom: plump but not excessively fat, hair puffed fashionably, wearing high heels and make-up. There was one picture, posed at a studio, which Father had had touched up and enhanced, which now hung beside his. In it she stood against a black background, holding a book stylishly, the nylon pachedi painted a light green, the folds falling gracefully down, the borders decorated with sequins. I had never seen her like that. All I had seen of her was the stern face getting sterner with time as the lines set permanently and the hair thinned, the body turned squat, the voice thickened.

I recalled how Aloo and I would take turns sleeping with her at night on her big bed; how

she would squeeze me in her chubby arms, drawing me up closer to her breast until I could hardly breathe and I would control myself and hope she would soon release me and let me breathe.

She looked at me looking at her and said, not to me, “Promise me ... promise me that if I let you go, you will not marry a white woman.”

“Oh Mother, you know I won’t!” said Aloo.

“And promise me that you will not smoke or drink.”

“You know I promise!” He was close to tears.

Aloo’s first letter came a week after he left, from London where he’d stopped over to see a former classmate. It flowed over with excitement. “How can I describe it,” he wrote, “the sight from the plane ...mile upon mile of carefully tilled fields, the earth divided into neat green squares... even the mountains are clean and civilised. And London ... Oh London! It seemed that it would never end ... blocks and blocks of houses, squares, parks, monuments ... could any city be larger? How many of our Dar es Salaams would fit here, in this one gorgeous city ...?”

A bird flapping its wings: Mr Velji nodding wisely in his chair, Mother staring into the distance.

About The Author

M.G. Vassanji was born in Nairobi in 1950 and was raised in Tanzania. He won a scholarship to MIT where he studied Physics. He completed his PhD at the University of Philadelphia. After graduation Vassanji moved to Canada to work in the atomic power industry. In 1980 he moved to Toronto, where he now lives and writes.

3. Too Bad - *Issac Asimov*

THE THREE LAWS OF ROBOTICS

- A robot may not injure a human being or through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
- A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where that would conflict with the First Law.
- A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

Gregory Arnfeld was not actually dying, but certainly there was a sharp limit to how long he might live. He had inoperable cancer and he had refused, strenuously, all suggestions of chemical treatment or of radiation therapy.

He smiled at his wife as he lay propped up against the pillows and said, "I'm the perfect case. Tertia and Mike will handle it"

Tertia did not smile. She looked dreadfully concerned "There are so many things that can be done, Gregory. Surely Mike is a last resort. You may not need it."

"No, no. By the time they're done drenching me with chemicals and dowsing me with radiation, I would be so far gone that it wouldn't be a reasonable test.... And please don't call Mike 'it'."

"This is the twenty-second century, Greg. There are so many ways of handling cancer."

"Yes but Mike is one of them, and I think the best. This is the twenty-second century, and we know what robots can do. Certainly, I know. I had more to do with Mike than anyone else. You know that."

"But you can't want to use him just out of pride of design. Besides, how certain are you of miniaturization? That's an even newer technique than robotics."

Arnfeld nodded. "Granted, Tertia. But the miniaturization boys seem confident. They can reduce or restore Planck's constant in what they say is a reasonably foolproof manner, and the controls that make that possible are built into Mike. He can make himself smaller or larger at will without affecting his surroundings."

"Reasonably foolproof," said Tertia with soft bitterness.

"That's all anyone can ask for, surely. Think of it, Tertia. I am privileged to be part of the

experiment. I'll go down in history as the principal designer of Mike, but that will be secondary. My greatest feat will be, that of having been successfully treated by a mini robot by my own choice, by my own initiative."

"You know it's dangerous."

"There's danger to everything. Chemicals and radiation have their side effects. They can slow without stopping. They can allow me to live a wearying sort of half-life. And doing nothing will certainly kill me. If Mike does his job properly, I shall be completely healthy, and if it recurs" Arnfeld smiled joyously "Mike can recur as well."

He put out his hand to grasp hers. "Tertia, we've known this was coming, you and I. Let's make something out of this a glorious experiment. Even if it fails and it won't fail-it will be a glorious experiment,"

Louis Secundo, of the miniaturization group, said, "No, Mrs Arnfeld. We can't guarantee success. Miniaturization is intimately involved with quantum mechanics, and there is a strong element of the unpredictable there. As MIK-27 reduces his size, there is always the chance that a sudden unplanned re-expansion will take place, naturally killing the the patient The greater the reduction in size, the tinier the robot becomes, the greater the chance of re-expansion. And once he starts expanding again, the chance of a sudden accelerated burst is even higher. The re-expansion is the really dangerous part."

Tertia shook her head. "Do you think it will happen?"

"The chances are it won't, Mrs Arnfeld. But the chance is never zero. You must understand that."

"Does Dr Arnfeld understand that?"

"Certainly. We have discussed this in detail. He feels that the circumstances warrant the risk." He hesitated. "So do we. I know that you'll see we're not all running the risk but a few of us will be, and we nevertheless feel the experiment to be worthwhile. More important, Dr Arnfeld does."

"What if Mike makes a mistake or reduces himself too far because of a glitch in the mechanism? Then re-expansion would be certain, wouldn't it?"

"It never becomes quite certain. It remains statistical. The chances improve if he gets too small. But then the smaller he gets, the less massive he is, and at some critical point, mass will become so insignificant that the least effort on his part will send him flying off at nearly the

speed of light.”

“Well, won’t that kill the doctor?”

“No. By that time, Mike would be so small he would slip between the atoms of the doctor’s body without affecting them.”

“But how likely would it be that he would re-expand when he’s that small?”

“When MIK-27 approaches neutrino size, so to speak, his half-life would be in the neighbourhood of seconds. That is the chances are fifty-fifty that he would re-expand within seconds but by the time he re-expanded, he would be a hundred thousand miles away in outer space and the explosion that resulted would merely produce a small burst of gamma rays for the astronomers to puzzle over. Still, none of that will happen. MIK-27 will have his instructions and he will reduce himself to no smaller than he will need to be to carry out his mission.”

Mrs Arnfeld knew she would have to face the press one way or another. She had adamantly refused to appear on holovision, and the right-to-privacy provision of the World Charter protected her. On the other hand, she could not refuse to answer questions on a voice-over basis. The right-to-know provision would not allow a blanket blackout.

She sat stiffly, while the young woman facing her said, “Aside from all that, Mrs Arnfeld, isn’t it a rather weird coincidence that your husband, chief designer of Mike the Microbot, should also be its first patient?”

“Not at all, Miss Roth,” said Mrs Arnfeld wearily. “The doctor’s condition is the result of a predisposition. There have been others in his family who have had it. He told me of it when we married, so I was in no way deceived in the matter, and it was for that reason that we have had no children. It is also for that reason that my husband chose his lifework and laboured so assiduously to produce a robot capable of miniaturization. He always felt he would be its patient eventually, you see.”

Mrs Arnfeld insisted on interviewing Mike and, under the circumstances that could not be denied. Ben Johannes, who had worked with her husband for five years and whom she knew well enough to be on first-name terms with, brought her into the robot’s quarters.

Mrs Arnfeld had seen Mike soon after his construction, when he was being put through his primary test, and he remembered her. He said, in his curiously neutral voice, too smoothly average to be quite human, “I am pleased to see you, Mrs Arnfeld.”

He was not a well-shaped robot. He looked pinheaded and very bottom heavy. He was almost conical, point upward.

Mrs Arnfeld knew that was because his miniaturization mechanism was bulky and abdominal and because his brain had to be abdominal as well in order to increase the speed of response. It was an unnecessary anthropomorphism to insist on a brain behind a tall cranium, her husband had explained. Yet it made Mike seem ridiculous, almost moronic. There were psychological advantages to anthropomorphism, Mrs Arnfeld thought, uneasily.

“Are you sure you understand your task, Mike?” said Mrs Arnfeld.

“Completely, Mrs Arnfeld,” said Mike. “I will see to it that every vestige of cancer is removed.”

Johannes said, “I’m not sure if Gregory explained it, but Mike can easily recognize a cancer cell when he is at the proper size. The difference is unmistakable, and he can quickly destroy the nucleus of any cell that is not normal.”

“I am laser equipped, Mrs Arnfeld,” said Mike, with an odd air of unexpressed pride.

“Yes, but there are millions of cancer cells all over. It would take how long to get them, one by one?”

“Not quite necessarily one by one, Tertia,” said Johannes. “Even though the cancer is widespread, it exists in clumps. Mike is equipped to burn off and close capillaries leading to the clump, and a million cells could die at a stroke in that fashion. He will only occasionally have to deal with cells on an individual basis.”

“Still, how long would it take?”

Johannes’s youngish face went into a grimace as though it were difficult to decide what to say. “It could take hours, Tertia, if we’re to do a thorough job. I admit that.”

“And every moment of those hours will increase the chance of re-expansion.”

Mike said, “Mrs Arnfeld, I will labour to prevent re-expansion.”

Mrs Arnfeld turned to the robot and said earnestly, “Can you, Mike? I mean, is it possible for you to prevent it?”

“Not entirely, Mrs Arnfeld. By monitoring my size and making an effort to keep it constant,

I can minimize the random changes that might lead to a re-expansion. Naturally, it is almost impossible to do this when I am actually re-expanding under controlled conditions.”

“Yes, I know. My husband has told me that re-expansion is the most dangerous time. But you will try, Mike? Please?”

“The laws of robotics ensure that I will, Mrs Arnfeld,” said Mike solemnly.

As they left, Johannes said in what Mrs Arnfeld understood to be an attempt at reassurance, “Really, Tertia, we have a holo-sonogram and a detailed cat scan of the area. Mike knows the precise location of every significant cancerous lesion. Most of his time-will be spent searching for small lesions undetectable by instruments, but that can’t be helped. We must get them all, if we can, you see, and that takes time. Mike is strictly instructed, however, as to how small to get, and he will get no smaller, you can be sure. A robot must obey orders.”

“And the re-expansion, Ben?”

“There, Tertia, we’re in the lap of the quanta. There is no way of predicting, but there is a more than reasonable chance, that he will get out without trouble. Naturally, we will have him re-expand within Gregory’s body as little as possible just enough to make us reasonably certain we can find and extract him. He will then be rushed to the safe room where the rest of the re-expansion will take place. Please, Tertia, even ordinary medical, procedures have their risks.”

Mrs Arnfeld was in the observation room as the miniaturisation of Mike took place. So were the holovision cameras and selected media representatives. The importance of the medical experiment made it impossible to prevent that, but Mrs Arnfeld was in a niche with only Johannes for company, and it was understood that she was not to be approached for comment, particularly if anything untoward occurred.

Untoward! A full and sudden re-expansion would blow up the entire operating room and kill every person in it. It was not for nothing the observation room was underground and half a mile away from the viewing room.

It gave Mrs Arnfeld a somewhat grisly sense of assurance that the three miniaturists who were working on the procedure (so calmly, it would seem so calmly) were condemned to death as firmly as her husband was in case of anything untoward. Surely, she could rely on them protecting their own lives to the extreme; they would not, therefore, be cavalier in the protection of her husband.

Eventually, of course, if the procedure were successful, ways would be worked out to perform it in automated fashion, and only the patient would be at risk. Then, perhaps, the patient might be more easily sacrificed through carelessness but not now, not now. Mrs Arnfeld keenly watched the three, working under imminent sentence of death, for any sign of discomposure.

She watched the miniaturization procedure (she had seen it before) and saw Mike grow smaller and disappear. She watched the elaborate procedure that injected him into the proper place in her husband's body. (It had been explained to her that it would have been prohibitively expensive to inject human beings in a submarine device instead. Mike, at least, needed no life-support system.)

Then matters shifted to the screen, in which the appropriate section of the body was shown in holosonogram. It was a three-dimensional representation, cloudy and unfocused, made imprecise through a combination of the finite size of the sound waves and the effects of Brownian motion. It showed Mike dimly and noiselessly making his way through Gregory Arnfeld's tissues by the way of his bloodstream. It was almost impossible to tell what he was doing, but Johannes described the events to her in a low, satisfied manner, until she could listen to him no more and asked to be led away.

She had been mildly sedated, and she had slept until evening, when Johannes came to see her. She had not been long awake and it took her a moment to gather her faculties. Then she said, in sudden and overwhelming fear, "What has happened?"

Johannes said, hastily, "Success, Tertia. Complete success. Your husband is cured. We can't stop the cancer from recurring, but for now he is cured."

She fell back in relief. "Oh, wonderful."

"Just the same, something unexpected has happened and this will have to be explained to Gregory. We felt that it would be best if you did the explaining."

"I?" Then, in a renewed access of fear, "What has happened?" Johannes told her.

It was two days before she could see her husband for more than a moment or two. He was sitting up in bed, looking a little pale, but smiling at her.

"A new lease of life, Tertia," he said buoyantly.

"Indeed, Greg, I was quite wrong. The experiment succeeded and they tell me they can't find a trace of cancer in you."

“Well, we can’t be too confident about that. There maybe a cancerous cell here and there, but perhaps my immune system will handle it, especially with the proper medication and if it ever builds up again, which might well take years we’ll call on Mike again.

At this point, he frowned and said, “You know, I haven’t seen Mike.”

Mrs Arnfeld maintained a discreet silence.

Arnfeld said, “They’ve been putting me off.”

“You’ve been weak, dear, and sedated. Mike was poking through your tissues and doing a little necessary destructive work here and there. Even with a successful operation you need time for recovery.”

“If I’ve recovered enough to see you, surely I’ve recovered enough to see Mike, at least long enough to thank him.”

“A robot doesn’t need to receive thanks.”

“Of course not, but I need to give it. Do me a favour, Tertia. Go out there and tell them, I want Mike right away.”

Mrs Arnfeld hesitated, then came to a decision. Waiting would make the task harder for everyone. She said carefully, “Actually, dear, Mike is not available.”

“Not available! Why not?”

“He had to make a choice, you see. He had cleaned up your tissues marvelously well; he had done a magnificent job, everyone agrees; and then he had to undergo re-expansion. That was the risky part.”

“Yes, but here I am. Why are you making a long story out of it?”

“Mike decided to minimize the risk.”

“Naturally. What did he do?”

“Well, dear, he decided to make himself smaller.”

“What! He couldn’t. He was ordered not to.”

“That was Second Law, Greg. First Law took precedence. He wanted to make certain your life would be saved. He was equipped to control his own size, so he made himself smaller as rapidly as he could, and when he was far less massive than an electron he used his laser beam, which was by then too tiny to hurt anything in your body, and the recoil sent him flying away

at nearly the speed of light. He exploded in outer space. The gamma rays were detected.”

Arnfeld stared at her. “You can’t mean it Are you serious? Mike is dead?”

“That’s what happened. Mike could not refuse to take an action that might keep you from harm.”

“But I didn’t want that. I wanted him safe for further work. He wouldn’t have re-expanded uncontrollably. He would have gotten out safely.”

“He couldn’t be sure. He couldn’t risk your life, so he sacrificed his own.”

“But my life was less important than his.”

“Not to me, dear. Not to those who work with you. Not to anyone. Not even to Mike.” She put out her hand to him. “Come, Greg, you’re alive. You’re well. That’s all that counts.”

But he pushed her hand aside impatiently. “That’s not all that counts. You don’t understand. Oh, too bad. Too bad!”

About the Author

Asimov was born on January 2, 1920 in Russia. Asimov was exposed to Science Fiction as a young boy and he started his writing career by penning fan letters and critiques of science fiction stories to the pulp magazines of the 1930s. In 1987 he won the Grand Master Award for Lifetime’s Achievement in Science Fiction.

4. Jamaican Fragment - *A.L. Hendricks*

EVERY day I walk a half-mile from my home to the tramcar lines in the morning, and from the lines to my home in the evening. The walk is pleasant. The road on either side is flanked by red- and green-roofed bungalows, green lawns and gardens. The exercise is good for me and now and then I learn something from a little incident.

One morning, about half-way between my front gate and the tram track, I noticed two little boys playing in the garden of one of the more modest cottages. They were both very little boys, one was four years old perhaps, the other five. The bigger of the two was a sturdy youngster, very dark, with a mat of coarse hair on his head and coal-black eyes. He was definitely a little Jamaican—a strong little Jamaican. The other little fellow was smaller, but also sturdy—he was white, with hazel eyes and light-brown hair. Both were dressed in blue shirts and khaki pants: they wore no shoes and their feet were muddy. They were not conscious of my standing there watching them; they played on. The game, if it could be called a game, was not elaborate. The little white boy strode imperiously up and down and every now and then shouted imperiously at his bigger playmate. The little brown boy shuffled along quietly behind him and did what he was told.

“Pick up that stick!” The dark boy picked it up.

“Jump into the flowers!” The dark boy jumped.

“Get me some water!” The dark boy ran inside. The white boy sat down on the lawn.

I was amazed. Here before my eyes, a white baby, for they were little more than babies, was imposing his will upon a little black boy. And the little black boy submitted. I puzzled within myself as I went down the road. Could it be that the little dark boy was the son of a servant in the home and therefore had to do the white boy’s bidding? No. They were obviously dressed alike, the little dark boy was of equal class with his playmate. No. They were playmates, the little dark boy was a neighbour’s child. I was sure of that. Then how was it that he obeyed so faithfully the white boy’s orders? Was it that even at his early age he sensed that in his own country he would be at the white man’s beck and call? Could he in such youth divine a difference between himself and the white boy? And did the little white youngster so young, such a baby, realize that he would grow to dominate the black man? Was there an indefinable quality in the white man that enabled his baby, smaller and younger than his playmate, to make him his slave? Was there really some difference between a white man and black man? Something that made the white superior? I could find no answer. I could not bring myself to believe such a thing, and yet, with my own eyes I had seen a little dark boy take orders from a little white boy - a little white boy obviously his social equal, and younger and smaller. Were we as a race really inferior? So inferior that even in our infancy we realized our deficiencies, and accepted a position as the white man’s servant?

For a whole day I puzzled over this problem. For a whole day my faith in my people was shaken. When I passed that afternoon the little boys were not there. That evening I thought deeply on the subject.

The next morning the boys were there again, and a man was standing at the gate watching them. I stopped and looked, just to see what the white boy was making his little servant do. To my utter astonishment the little dark boy was striding imperiously up and down the lawn, while the white youngster walked abjectly behind him.

“Get me a banana!” The little white boy ran into the house and reappeared shortly with a banana. “Peel it for me!” The little white boy skinned the banana and handed it to his dark master.

I saw it now. This was indeed a game, a game I had played as a child. Each boy took it in turn every alternate day to be the boss, the other the slave. It had been great fun to me as a youngster. I smiled as I remembered. I looked at the man standing by the gate. He was a white man. I remembered what I had thought yesterday. He, no doubt, I thought to myself, was wondering if the black race is superior to the white. I laughed gently to myself. How silly grown-ups are, how clever we are, how wonderfully able we are to impute deep motives to childish actions! How suspicious we are when we have been warped by prejudice! This man, I said to myself, will puzzle all day on whether the blacks will eventually arise and rule the world because he thinks he sees a little black boy realizing at a tender age his superiority over the white. I will save him his puzzle. I will explain it to him. I went across to him.

“I know what you’re thinking,” I said. “You’re thinking that maybe the black race is superior to the white, because you just saw the little dark youngster on the lawn ordering the little white boy around. Don’t think that, it’s a game they play. Alternate days one is boss, the other the servant. It’s a grand game. I used to play it and maybe so did you. Yesterday I saw the little white boy bossing the dark one and I worried all day over the dark boy’s realization of his inferiority so young in life! We are silly, we grown-ups, aren’t we?”

The man was surprised at my outburst. He looked at me smiling.

“I know all about the game,” he said. “The boys are brothers - my sons.” He pointed to a handsome brown woman on the veranda who had just come out to call in the children. “That’s my wife,” he said.

I smiled. My spirit laughed within me. This is Jamaica, I said in my heart, this is my country - my people. I looked at the white man. He smiled at me. “We’ll miss the tram if we don’t hurry,” he said.

About The Author

*A.L. Hendricks (1922) was born in Kingston, Jamaica and was educated there and in London. He now lives in England. In his younger years Hendricks was considered a good actor. He has also worked as a journalist and broadcaster. He is best known, however, for his poetry. Hendricks has contributed to anthologies and has published several books of poetry, including **On This Mountain** (1965).*

5. The Open Window - Saki

‘MY AUNT WILL BE DOWN PRESENTLY, Mr Nuttel,’ said a very self-possessed young lady of fifteen; ‘in the meantime you must try and put up with me.’

Framton Nuttel endeavoured to say the correct something which would duly flatter both the niece of the moment and without unduly unaccounting the aunt that was to come. Privately he doubted more than ever whether these formal visits on a succession of total strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure which he was to be undergoing.

‘I know how it will be,’ his sister had said when he was preparing to migrate to this rural retreat; ‘you will bury yourself down there and not speak to a living soul and your nerves will be worse than ever from moping. I shall just give you letters of introduction to all the people I know there. Some of them, as far as I can remember, were quite nice.’

Framton wondered whether Mrs Sappleton, the lady to whom he was presenting one of the letters of introduction, came into the nice division.

‘Do you know many of the people round here?’ asked the niece when she judged that they had had sufficient silent communication.

‘Hardly a soul’, said Framton. ‘My sister was staying here with the rectory, you know, some four years ago, and she gave me letters of introduction to some of the people here.’

He made the last statement in a tone of distinct regret.

‘Then you know practically nothing about my aunt?’ pursued the self-possessed young lady.

‘Only her name and address,’ admitted the caller. He was wondering whether Mrs Sappleton was in the married or widowed state. An undefinable something about the room seemed to suggest masculine habitation.

‘Her great tragedy happened just three years ago,’ said the child. ‘That would be since your sister’s times.’

‘You may wonder why we keep that window wide open on an October afternoon,’ asked the niece, indicating a large French window that opened onto a lawn.

‘It is quite warm for the time of the year,’ said Framton; ‘but has that window got anything to do with the tragedy?’

‘Out through that window, three years ago to a day, her husband and her two young brothers went off for their day’s shooting. They never came back. In crossing the moor to their favourite snipe-shooting ground they were all three engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog. It had been that dreadful wet summer, you know, and places that were safe in other years gave away suddenly without warning. Their bodies were never recovered. That was the dreadful part of it.’

Here the child’s voice lost its self-possessed note and became falteringly human. ‘Poor aunt always thinks that they will come back someday, they and the little brown spaniel that was lost with them, and walk in at that window just as they used to do. That is why the window is kept open every evening till it is quite dusk. Poor dear aunt, she has often told me how they went out, her husband with his white waterproof coat over his arm. And Ronnie the youngest

brother, singing.' "Bertie, why do you bound?" as he always did to tease her, because she said it got on her nerves. Do you know, sometimes on still, quiet evening like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will all walk in through that window-'

She broke off with a little shudder. It was a relief to Framton when the aunt bustled into the room with a whirl of apologies for being late in making her appearance.

'I hope Vera has been amusing you?' she said.

'She has been very interesting,' said Framton.

'I hope you don't mind the open window,' said Mrs Sappleton briskly, 'my husband and brothers will be home directly from shooting, and they always come in this way. They've been out for snipe in the marshes today, so they'll make a fine mess over my poor carpets. So like you men-folk, isn't it?'

She rattled on cheerfully about the shooting and the scarcity of birds, and the prospects for duck in the winter. To Framton, it was all purely horrible he made a desperate but only partially successful effort to turn the talk onto a less ghastly topic; he was conscious that his hostess was giving him only a fragment of her attention, and her eyes were constantly straying passed him to the open window and the lawn beyond. It was certainly an unfortunate incidence that he should have paid his visit on this tragic anniversary.

'The doctors agree in ordering me complete rest, an absence of mental excitement, and avoidance of anything in the nature of violent physical exercise,' announced Framton, who laboured under the tolerably wide-spread delusion that total strangers and chance acquaintances are hungry for the least detail of one's ailments and infirmities, their cause and cure. 'On the matter of diet they are not so much in agreement,' he continued.

'No?' said Mrs Sappleton, in a voice which only replaced a yawn at the last moment. Then she suddenly brightened into alert attention - but not to what Framton was saying.

'Here they are at last!' she cried. 'Just in time for tea, and don't they look as if they were muddy up to the eyes!'

Framton shivered slightly and turned towards the niece with a look intended to convey sympathetic comprehension. The child was staring out through the open window with dazed horror in her eyes. In a chill shock of nameless fear Framton swung round in his seat and looked in the same direction.

In the deepening twilight three figures were walking across the lawn towards the window; they all carried guns under their arms, and one of them was additionally burdened with a white coat hung over his shoulders. A tired brown spaniel kept close at their heels. Noiselessly they neared the house, and then a hoarse young voice chanted out of the dusk: 'I said, Bertie, why do you bound?'

Framton grabbed wildly at his stick and hat; the hall-door, the gravel-drive, and the front gate were dimly noted stages in his headlong retreat. A cyclist coming along the road had to run into the hedge to avoid imminent collision.

'Here we are, my dear', said the bearer of the white mackintosh, coming in through the window; 'fairly muddy, but most of it's dry. Who was that who bolted out as we came up?'

‘A most extraordinary man, a Mr Nuttel,’ said Mrs Sappleton; ‘could only talk about his illnesses, and dashed off without a word of good-bye or apology when you arrived. One would think he had seen a ghost.’

‘I expect it was the spaniel,’ said the niece calmly; ‘he told me he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of pariah dogs, and had to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming just above him. Enough to make any one lose their nerve.’

Romance at short notice was her specialty.

About the author

Hector Hugh Munro (1870-1916), was from British aristocracy and wrote under the pen-name of Saki. As a writer he is better known for his short stories than for his plays and novels. His writing style is witty, and his fiction sometimes borders on the outrageous. He is best known for his darkly humorous satires.

SUPPLEMENTARY SHORT STORIES

1. There will Come Soft Rains - Ray Bradbury

In the living room the voice-clock sang, *Tick-tock, seven o'clock, time to get up, time to get up, seven o'clock!* as if it were afraid that nobody would. The morning house lay empty. The clock ticked on, repeating and repeating its sounds into the emptiness. *Seven-nine, breakfast time, seven-nine!*

In the kitchen the breakfast stove gave a hissing sigh and ejected from its warm interior eight pieces of perfectly browned toast, eight eggs sunny side up, sixteen slices of bacon, two coffees, and two glasses of milk.

"Today is August 4, 2026," said a second voice from the kitchen ceiling, "in the city of Allendale, California." It repeated the date three times for memory's sake. "Today is Mr. Featherstone's birthday. Today is the anniversary of Tilita's marriage. Insurance is payable, as are the water, gas, and light bills."

Somewhere in the walls, relays clicked, memory tapes glided under electric eyes. *Eight-one, tick-tock, eight-one o'clock, off to school, off to work, run, run, eight-one!* But no doors slammed, no carpets took the soft tread of rubber heels, it was raining outside. The weather box on the front door sang quietly: "Rain, rain, go away: rubbers, raincoats for today. . . ." And the rain tapped on the empty house, echoing.

Outside, the garage chimed and lifted its door to reveal the waiting car. After a long wait the door swung down again.

At eight-thirty the eggs were shriveled and the toast was like stone. An aluminum wedge scraped them into the sink, where hot water whirled them down to a metal throat which digested and flushed them away to the distant sea. The dirty dishes were dropped into a hot washer and emerged twinkling dry.

Nine-fifteen, sang the clock, *time to clean*. Out of the warrens in the wall, tiny robot mice darted. The rooms were a crawl with the small cleaning animals, all rubber and metal, they thudded against chairs, whirling their mustached runners, kneading the rug nap, sucking gently at hidden dust.

Then, like mysterious invaders, they popped into their burrows. Their pink electric eyes faded. The house was clean.

Ten o'clock. The sun tamed out from behind the rain. The house stood alone in a city of rubble and ashes. This was the one house left standing. At night the ruined city gave off a radioactive glow which could be seen for miles.

Ten-fifteen. The garden sprinklers whirled up in golden founts, filling the soft morning air with scatterings of brightness. The water pelted windowpanes, running down the charred west side where the house had been burned evenly free of its white paint. The entire west face of the house was black, save for five places. Here the silhouette in paint of a man mowing a lawn. Here, as in a photograph, a woman bent to pick flowers. Still farther over, their images burned on wood in one titanic instant, a small boy, hands flung into the air; higher up, the image of a thrown ball; and opposite him a girl, hands raised to catch a ball which never came down.

The five spots of paint—the man, the woman, the children, the ball—remained. The rest

was a thin charcoaled layer.

The gentle sprinkler rain filled the garden with falling light.

Until this day, how well the house had kept its peace. How carefully it had inquired, “Who goes there? What’s the password?” and, getting no answer from lonely foxes and whining cats, it had shut up its windows and drawn shades in an old-maidenly preoccupation with self-protection which bordered on a mechanical paranoia.

It quivered at each sound, the house did. If a sparrow brushed a window, the shade snapped up. The bird, startled, flew off! No, not even a bird must touch the house!

The house was an altar with ten thousand attendants, big, small, servicing, attending, in choirs. But the gods had gone away, and the ritual of the religion continued senselessly, uselessly.

Twelve noon. A dog whined, shivering, on the front porch.

The front door recognized the dog voice and opened. The dog, once huge and fleshy, but now gone to bone and covered with sores, moved in and through the house tracking mud. Behind it whirred angry mice, angry at having to pick up mud, angry at inconvenience.

For not a leaf fragment blew under the door but what the wall panels flipped open and the copper scrap rats flashed swiftly out. The offending dust, hair, or paper, seized in miniature steel jaws, was raced back to the burrows. There, down tubes which fed into the cellar, it was dropped into the sighing vent of an incinerator which sat like evil Baal in a dark corner.

The dog ran upstairs, hysterically yelping to each door, at last realizing, as the house realized, that only silence was here.

It sniffed the air and scratched the kitchen door. Behind the door, the stove was making pancakes which filled the house with a rich baked odor and the scent of maple syrup.

The dog frothed at the mouth, lying at the door, sniffing, its eyes turned to fire. It ran wildly in circles, biting at its tail, spun in a frenzy, and died. It lay in the parlor for an hour.

Two o’clock sang a voice.

Delicately sensing decay at last, the regiments of mice hummed out as softly as blown gray leaves in an electrical wind.

Two-fifteen. The dog was gone.

In the cellar, the incinerator glowed suddenly and a whirl of sparks leaped up the chimney.

Two-thirty-five. Bridge tables sprouted from patio walls. Playing cards fluttered onto pads in a shower of pips. Martinis manifested on an oaken bench with egg-salad sandwiches. Music played.

But the tables were silent and the cards untouched.

At four o’clock the tables folded like great butterflies back through the paneled walls.

Four-thirty. The nursery walls glowed.

Animals took shape: yellow giraffes, blue lions, pink antelopes, lilac panthers cavorting in crystal substance. The walls were glass. They looked out upon color and fantasy. Hidden films clocked through well-oiled sprockets, and the walls lived. The nursery floor was woven to resemble a crisp cereal meadow. Over this ran aluminum roaches and iron crickets, and in the hot still air butterflies of delicate red tissue wavered among the sharp aroma of animal spoors! There was the sound like a great malted yellow hive of bees within a dark bellows,

the lazy bumble of a purring lion. And there was the patter of okapi feet and the murmur of a fresh jungle rain, like other hoofs, falling upon the summer-starched grass. Now the walls dissolved into distances of parched weed, mile on mile, and warm endless sky. The animals drew away into thorn brakes and water holes.

It was the children's hour.

Five o'clock. The bath filled with clear hot water.

Six, seven, eight o'clock. The dinner dishes manipulated like magic tricks, and in the study a *click*. In the metal stand opposite the hearth where a fire now blazed up warmly, a cigar popped out, half an inch of soft gray ash on it, smoking, waiting.

Nine o'clock. The beds warmed their hidden circuits, for nights were cool here.

Nine-five. A voice spoke from the study ceiling: "Mrs. McClellan, which poem would you like this evening?"

The house was silent.

The voice said at last, "Since you express no preference, I shall select a poem at random." Quiet music rose to back the voice. "Sara Teasdale. As I recall, your favorite.

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,
And wild plum trees in tremulous white;

Robins will wear their feathery fire
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

And no tone will know of the war, no tone
Will care at last when it is done.

No tone would mind, neither bird nor tree
If mankind perished utterly;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,
Would scarcely know that we were gone."

The fire burned on the stone hearth and the cigar fell away into a mound of quiet ash on its tray. The empty chairs faced each other between the silent walls, and the music played.

At ten o'clock the house began to die.

The wind blew. A falling tree bough clashed through the kitchen window. Cleaning solvent, bottled, shattered over the stove. The room was ablaze in an instant!

"Fire!" screamed a voice. The house lights flashed, water pumps shot water from the ceilings. But the solvent spread on the linoleum, licking, eating, under the kitchen door, while

the voices took it up on chorus: “Fire, fire, fire!”

The house tried to save itself. Doors sprang tightly shut, but the windows were broken by the heat and the wind blew and sucked upon the fire.

The house gave ground as the fire in ten billion angry sparks moved with flaming ease from room to room and then up the stairs. While scurrying water rats squeaked from the walls, pistoled their water, and ran for more. And the wall sprays let down showers of mechanical rain.

But too late. Somewhere, sighing, a pump shrugged to a stop. The quenching rain ceased. The reserve water supply which had filled baths and washed dishes for many quiet days was gone.

The fire crackled up the stairs. It fed upon Picassos and Matisses in the upper halls, like delicacies, baking off the oily flesh, tenderly crisping the canvases into black shavings.

Now the fire lay in beds, stood in windows, changed the colors of drapes!

And then, reinforcements.

From attic trap doors, blind robot faces peered down with faucet mouths gushing green chemical.

The fire backed off, as even an elephant must at the sight of a dead snake. Now there were twenty snakes whipping over the floor, killing the fire with a clear cold venom of green troth.

But the fire was clever. It had sent flame outside the house, up through the attic to the pumps there. An explosion! The attic brain which directed the pumps was shattered into bronze shrapnel on the beams.

The fire rushed back into every closet and felt of the clothes hung there.

The house shuddered, oak bone on bone, its bared skeleton cringing from the heat, its wire, its nerves revealed as if a surgeon had torn the skin off to let the red veins and capillaries quiver in the scalded air. “Help, help! Fire! Run, run!” Heat snapped mirrors like the first brittle winter ice. And the voices wailed “Fire, fire, run, run,” like a tragic nursery rhyme, a dozen voices, high, low, like children dying in a forest, alone, alone. And the voices fading as the wires popped their sheathings like hot chestnuts. One, two, three, four, five voices died!

In the nursery the jungle burned. Blue lions roared, purple giraffes bounded off. The panthers ran in circles, changing color, and ten million animals, running before the fire, vanished off toward a distant steaming river. . . .

Ten more voices died. In the last instant under the fire avalanche, other choruses, oblivious, could be heard announcing the time, playing music, cutting the lawn by remote-control mower, or setting an umbrella frantically out and in the slamming and opening front door, a thousand things happening, like a clock shop when each clock strikes the hour insanely before or after the other, a scene of maniac confusion, yet unity; singing, screaming, a few last cleaning mice darting bravely out to carry the horrid ashes away! And one voice, with sublime disregard for the situation, read poetry aloud in the fiery study, until all the film spools burned, until all the wires withered and the circuits cracked.

The fire burst the house and let it slam flat down, puffing out skirts of spark and smoke.

In the kitchen, an instant before the rain of fire and timber, the stove could be seen making breakfasts at a psychopathic rate, ten dozen eggs, six loaves of toast twenty dozen bacon strips,

which, eaten by fire, started the stove working again, hysterically hissing!

The crash. The attic smashing into kitchen and parlor. The parlor into cellar, cellar into subcellar. Deep freeze, armchair, film tapes, circuits, beds, and all like skeletons thrown in a cluttered mound deep under.

Smoke and silence. A great quantity of smoke.

Dawn showed faintly in the east. Among the ruins, one wall stood alone. Within the wall, a last voice said, over and over again and again, even as the sun rose to shine upon the heaped rubble and steam: “Today is August 5, 2026, today is August 5, 2026, today is . . .”

2. To Set our House in Order - *Margaret Laurence*

When the baby was almost ready to be born, something went wrong and my mother had to go into hospital two weeks before the expected time. I was wakened by her crying in the night, and then I heard my father's footsteps as he went downstairs to phone. I stood in the doorway of my room, shivering and listening, wanting to go to my mother but afraid to go lest there be some sight there more terrifying than I could bear.

"Hello Paul?" my father said, and I knew he was talking to Dr. Cates. "It's Beth. The waters have broken, and the fetal position doesn't seem quite well, I'm only thinking of what happened the last time, and another like that would be- I wish she were a little huskier, damn it she's so no, don't worry, I'm quite all right. Yes, I think that would be the best thing. Okay, make it as soon as you can, will you?"

He came back upstairs, looking bony and dishevelled in his pyjamas, and running his fingers through his sand-colored hair. At the top of the stairs, he came face to face with Grandmother MacLeod, who was standing there in her quilted black satin dressing gown, her slight figure held straight and poised, as though she were unaware that her hair was bound grotesquely like white-feathered wings in the snare of her coarse night-time hairnet.

"What is it, Ewen?"

"It's all right. Mother. Beth's having a little trouble, I'm going to take her into the hospital. You go back to bed."

"I told you," Grandmother MacLeod said in her clear voice, never loud, but distinct and ringing like the tap of a sterling teaspoon on a crystal goblet, "I did tell you, Ewen, did I not, that you should have got a girl in to help her with the housework? She would have rested more."

"I couldn't afford to get anyone in," my father said. "If you thought she should've rested more, why didn't you ever oh God, I'm out of my mind tonight just go back to bed, Mother, please. I must get back to Beth."

When my Father went down to the front door to let Dr. Cates in, my need overcame my fear and I slipped into my parents' room. My mother's black hair, so neatly pinned up during the day, was startlingly spread across the white pillowcase. I stared at her, not speaking, and then she smiled and I rushed from the doorway and buried my head upon her.

"It's all right, honey," she said. "Listen, Vanessa, the baby's just going to come a little early, that's all. You'll be all right. Grandmother MacLeod will be here."

"How can she get the meals?" I wailed, fixing on the first thing that came to mind. "She never cooks. She doesn't know how."

"Yes, she does," my mother said. "She can cook as well as anyone when she has to. She's just never had to very much, that's all. Don't worry- she'll keep everything in order, and then some."

My father and Dr. Cates came in, and I had to go, without ever saying anything I had wanted to say. I went back to my own room and lay with the shadows all around me. I listened to the night murmurings that always went on in that house, sounds which never had a source,

rafters and beams contracting in the dry air, perhaps, or mice in the walls, or a sparrow that had flown into the attic through the broken skylight there. After a while, although I would not have believed it possible, I slept.

The next morning I questioned my father. I believed him to be not only the best doctor in Manawaka, but also the best doctor in the whole of Manitoba, if not in the entire world, and the fact that he was not the one who was looking after my mother seemed to have something sinister about it.

“But it’s always done that way, Vanessa,” he explained. “Doctors never attend members of their own family. It’s because they care so much about them, you see, and ”

“And what?” I insisted, alarmed at the way he had broken off. But my father did not reply. He stood there, and then he put on that difficult smile with which adults seek to conceal pain from children. I felt terrified, and ran to him, and he held me tightly.

“She’s going to be fine,” he said. “Honestly she is. Nessa, don’t cry ”

Grandmother MacLeod appeared beside us, steel-spined despite her apparent fragility. She was wearing a purple silk dress and her ivory pendant. She looked as though she were all ready to go out for afternoon tea.

“Ewen, you’re only encouraging the child to give way,” she said. “Vanessa, big girls of ten don’t make such a fuss about things. Come and get your breakfast. Now, Ewen, you’re not to worry. I’ll see to everything.”

Summer holidays were not quite over, but I did not feel like going out to play with any of the kids. I was very superstitious, and I had the feeling that if I left the house, even for a few hours, some disaster would overtake my mother. I did not, of course, mention this feeling to Grandmother MacLeod, for she did not believe in the existence of fear, or if she did, she never let on. I spent the morning morbidly, in seeking hidden places in the house. There were many of these odd-shaped nooks under the stairs, small and loosely nailed-up doors at the back of clothes closets, leading to dusty tunnels and forgotten recesses in the heart of the house where the only things actually to be seen were drab oil paintings stacked upon the rafters, and trunks full of outmoded clothing and old photograph albums. But the unseen presences in these secret places I knew to be those of every person, young or old, who had ever belonged to the house and had died, including Uncle Roderick who got killed on the Somme, and the baby who would have been my sister if only she had managed to come to life. Grandfather MacLeod, who had died a year after I was born, was present in the house in more tangible form. At the top of the main stairs hung the mammoth picture of a darkly uniformed man riding upon a horse whose prancing stance and dilated nostrils suggested that the battle was not yet over, that it might indeed continue until Judgment Day. The stern man was actually the Duke of Wellington, but at the time I believed him to be my Grandfather MacLeod, still keeping an eye on things.

We had moved in with Grandmother MacLeod when the Depression got bad and she could no longer afford a housekeeper, but the MacLeod house never seemed like home to me. Its dark red brick was grown over at the front with Virginia creeper that turned crimson in the fall,

until you could hardly tell brick from leaves. It boasted a small tower in which Grandmother MacLeod kept a weedy collection of anemic ferns. The veranda was embellished with a profusion of wrought-iron scrolls, and the circular rose-window upstairs contained glass of many colors which permitted an outlooking eye to see the world as a place of absolute sapphire or emerald, or if one wished to look with a jaundiced eye, a hateful yellow. In Grandmother MacLeod's opinion, these features gave the house style.

Inside, a multitude of doors led to rooms where my presence, if not actually forbidden, was not encouraged. One was Grandmother MacLeod's bedroom, with its stale and old-smelling air, the dim reek of medicines and lavender sachets. Here resided her monogrammed dresser silver, brush and mirror, nail-buffer and button hook and scissors, none of which must even be fingered by me now, for she meant to leave them to me in her will and intended to hand them over in the same flawless and unused condition in which they had always been kept. Here, too, were the silver-framed photographs of Uncle Roderick as a child, as a boy, as a man in his Army uniform. The massive walnut spool bed had obviously been designed for queens or giants, and my tiny grandmother used to lie within it all day when she had migraine, contriving somehow to look like a giant queen.

The living room was another alien territory where I had to read warily, for many valuable objects sat just-so on tables and mantel-piece, and dirt must not be tracked in upon the blue Chinese carpet with its birds in eternal motionless flight and its water-lily buds caught forever just before the point of opening. My mother was always nervous when I was in this room.

"Vanessa, honey," she would say, half apologetically, "why don't you go and play in the den, or upstairs?"

"Can't you leave her, Beth?" my father would say. "She's not doing any harm."

"I'm only thinking of the rug," my mother would say, glancing at Grandmother MacLeod, "and yesterday she nearly knocked the Dresden shepherdess off the mantel. I mean, she can't help it. Ewen, she has to run around "

"Goddamn it, I know she can't help it," my father would growl, glaring at the smirking face of the Dresden shepherdess.

"I see no need to blaspheme, Ewen," Grandmother MacLeod would say quietly, and then my father would say he was sorry, and I would leave.

The day my mother went to the hospital, Grandmother MacLeod called me at lunch-time, and when I appeared, smudged with dust from the attic, she looked at me distastefully as though I had been a cockroach that had just crawled impertinently out of the woodwork.

"For mercy's sake, Vanessa, what have you been doing with yourself? Run and get washed this minute. Here, not that way you use the back stairs, young lady. Get along now. Oh your father phoned."

I swung around. "What did he say? How is she? Is the baby born?"

"Curiosity killed a cat," Grandmother MacLeod said, frowning. "I cannot understand Beth and Ewen telling you all these things, at your age. What sort of vulgar person you'll grow up to be, I dare not think. No, it's not born yet. Your mother's just the same. No change."

I looked at my grandmother, not wanting to appeal to her, but unable to stop myself. “Will she will she be all right?”

Grandmother MacLeod straightened her already-straight back. “If I said definitely yes, Vanessa, that would be a lie, and the Macleod’s do not tell lies, as I have tried to impress upon you before. What happens is God’s will. The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away.”

Appalled, I turned away so she would not see my face and my eyes. Surprisingly, I heard her sigh and felt her papery white and perfectly manicured hand upon my shoulder.

“When your Uncle Roderick got killed,” she said, “I thought I would die. But I didn’t die, Vanessa.”

At lunch, she chatted animatedly, and I realized she was trying to cheer me in the only way she knew.

“When I married your Grandfather MacLeod,” she related, “he said to me, ‘Eleanor, don’t think because we’re going to the prairies that I expect you to live roughly. You’re used to a proper house, and you shall have one.’ He was as good as his word. Before we’d been in Manawaka three years, he’d had this place built. He earned a good deal of money in his time, your grandfather. He soon had more patients than either at the other doctors. We ordered our dinner service and all our silver from Birks in Toronto. We had resident help in those days, of course, and never had less than twelve guests for dinner parties. When I had a tea, it would always be twenty or thirty. Never any less than half a dozen different kinds of cake were ever served in this house. Well, no one seems to bother much these days, too lazy, I suppose.”

“Too broke,” I suggested: “That’s what Dad says.”

“I can’t bear slang,” Grandmother MacLeod said. “If you mean hard up, why don’t you say so? It’s mainly a question of management, anyway. My accounts were always in good order, and so was my house. No unexpected expenses that couldn’t be met, no fruit cellar running out of preserves before the winter was over. Do you know what my father used to say to me when I was a girl?”

“No,” I said. “What?”

“God loves Order,” Grandmother MacLeod replied with emphasis. “You remember that, Vanessa. God loves Order he wants each one of us to set our house in order. I’ve never forgotten those words of my father’s. I was a MacInnes before I got married. The MacInnes is a very ancient clan, the lairds of Morven and the constables of the Castle of Kinlochaline. Did you finish that book I gave you?”

“Yes,” I said. Then, feeling some additional comment to be called for, “It was a swell book, Grandmother.”

This was somewhat short of the truth. I had been hoping for her cairngorm brooch on my tenth birthday, and had received instead the plaid-bound volume entitled *The Clans and Tartans*

of Scotland. Most of it was too boring to read, but I had looked up the motto of my own family and those of some of my friends' families. *Be then a wall of brass. Learn to suffer. Consider the end. Go carefully.* I had not found any of these slogans reassuring. What with Mavis Duncan learning to suffer, and Laura Kennedy considering the end, and Patsy Drummond going carefully, and I spending my time in being a wall of brass, it did not seem to me that any of us were going to lead very interesting lives. I did not say this to Grandmother MacLeod.

"The MacInnes motto is *Pleasure Arises from Work*" I said.

"Yes," she agreed proudly. "And an excellent motto it is, too. One to bear in mind."

She rose from the table, rearranging on her bosom the looped ivory beads that held the pendant on which a full-blown ivory rose was stiffly carved.

"I hope Ewen will be pleased," she said.

"What at?"

"Didn't I tell you?" Grandmother MacLeod said. "I hired a girl this morning, for the housework. She's to start tomorrow."

When my father got home that evening, Grandmother MacLeod told him her good news. He ran one hand distractedly across his forehead.

"I'm sorry, Mother, but you'll just have to unhire her. I can't possibly pay anyone."

"It seems distinctly odd," Grandmother MacLeod snapped, "that you can afford to eat chicken four times a week."

"Those chickens," my father said in an exasperated voice, "are how people are paying their bills. The same with the eggs and the milk. The scrawny turkey that arrived yesterday was for Logan MacCardney's appendix, if you must know. We probably eat better than any family in Manawaka, except Niall Cameron's. People can't entirely dispense with doctors or undertakers. That doesn't mean to say I've got any cash. Look, Mother, I don't know what's happening with Beth. Paul thinks he may have to do a Caesarean. Can't we leave all this? Just leave the house alone. Don't touch it. What does it matter?"

"I have never lived in a messy house, Ewen," Grandmother MacLeod said, "and I don't intend to begin now."

"Oh Lord," my father said. "Well, I'll phone Edna, I guess, and see if she can give us a hand, although God knows she's got enough, with the Connor house and her parents to look after."

"I don't fancy having Edna Connor in to help," Grandmother MacLeod objected.

"Why not?" my father shouted- "She's Beth's sister, isn't she?"

"She speaks in such a slangy way," Grandmother MacLeod said. "I have never believed she was a good influence on Vanessa. And there is no need for you to raise your voice to me, Ewen, if you please."

I could barely control my rage. I thought my father would surely rise to Aunt Edna's defence. But he did not.

“It’ll be all right,’ he soothed her.” She’d only be here for part of the day, Mother. You could stay in your room.”

Aunt Edna strode in the next morning. The sight of her bobbed black hair and her grin made me feel better at once. She hauled out the carpet sweeper and the weighted polisher and got to work. I dusted while she polished and swept, and we got through the living room and front hall in next to no time.

“Where’s her royal highness, kiddo?” she inquired.

“In her room,” I said. “She’s reading the catalogue from Robinson & Cleaver.”

“Good Glory, not again?” Aunt Edna cried. “The last time she ordered three linen tea-cloths and two dozen serviettes. It came to fourteen dollars. Your mother was absolutely frantic. I guess I shouldn’t be saying this.”

“I knew anyway,” I assured her. “She was at the lace handkerchiefs section when I took up her coffee.”

“Let’s hope she stays there. Heaven forbid she should get onto the banqueting cloths. Well, at least she believes the Irish are good for two things manual labour and linen-making. She’s never forgotten Father used to be a blacksmith, before he got the hardware store. Can you beat it? I wish it didn’t bother Beth.”

“Does it?” I asked, and immediately realized this was a wrong move, for Aunt Edna was suddenly scrutinizing me.

“We’re making you grow up before your time,” she said. “Don’t pay any attention to me, Nessa. I must’ve got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning.”

But I was unwilling to leave the subject.

“All the same,” I said thoughtfully, “Grandmother MacLeod’s family were the lairds of Morven and the constables of the Castle of Kinlochaline. I bet you didn’t know that.”

Aunt Edna snorted. “Castle, my foot. She was born in Ontario, just like your Grandfather Connor, and her father was a horse doctor. Come on, kiddo, we’d better shut up and get down to business here.”

We worked in silence for a while.

“Aunt Edna ” I said at last, “what about Mother? Why won’t they let me go and see her?”

“Kids aren’t allowed to visit maternity patients. Its tough for you, I know that. Look, Nessa, don’t worry. If it doesn’t start tonight, they’re going to do the operation. She’s getting the best of care.”

I stood there, holding the feather duster like a dead bird in my hands. I was not aware that I was going to speak until the words came out.

“I’m scared,” I said.

Aunt Edna put her arms around me, and her face looked all at once stricken and empty of defences.

“Oh, honey, I’m scared, too,’ she said.

It was this way that Grandmother MacLeod found us when she came stepping lightly down into the front hall with the order in her hand for two dozen lace-bordered handkerchiefs of pure Irish linen.

I could not sleep that night, and when I went downstairs, I found my father in the den. I sat down on the hassock beside his chair, and he told me about the operation my mother was to have the *next* morning. He kept on saying it was not serious nowadays.

“But you’re worried,” I put in, as though seeking to explain why I was.

“I should at least have been able to keep from burdening you with it,” he said in a distant voice, as though to himself.

“If only the baby hadn’t got itself twisted around ”

“Will it be born dead, like the little girl?”

“I don’t know,” my father said. “I hope not.”

“She’d be disappointed, wouldn’t she, if it was?” I said bleakly, wondering why I was not enough for her.

“Yes, she would,” my father replied. “She won’t be able to have any more, after this. It’s partly on your account that she wants this *one*, Nessa. She doesn’t want you to grow up without a brother or sister.”

“As far as I’m concerned, she didn’t need to bother,” I retorted angrily. My father laughed. “Well, let’s talk about something else, and then maybe you’ll be able to sleep. How did you and Grandmother make out today?”

“Oh, fine, I guess. What was Grand-father MacLeod like, Dad?”

“What did she tell you about him?”

“She said he made a lot of money in his time.”

“Well, he wasn’t any millionaire,” my father said, “but I suppose he did quite well. That’s not what I associate with him, though.”

He reached across to the bookshelf, took out a small leatherbound volume and opened it. On the pages were mysterious marks, like doodling, only much neater and more patterned.

“What is it?” I asked.

“Greek,” my father explained. “This is a play called *Antigone*. See, here’s the title in English. There’s a whole stack of them on the shelves there. *Oedipus Rex*. *Electro*. *Medea*. They belonged to your Grandfather MacLeod. He used to read them often.”

“Why?” I inquired, unable to understand why anyone would pore over those undecipherable signs.

“He was interested in them,” my father said. “He must have been a lonely man, although it never struck me that way at the time. Sometimes a thing only hits you, a long time afterwards.”

“Why would he be lonely?” I wanted to know.

“He was the only person in Manawaka who could read these plays in the original Greek,” my father said. “I don’t suppose many people, if anyone, had even read them in English translations. Maybe he would have liked to be a classical scholar I don’t know. But his father was a doctor, so that’s what he was. Maybe he would have liked to talk to somebody about these plays. They must have meant a lot to him.”

It seemed to me that my father was talking oddly. There was a sadness in his voice that I had never heard before, and I longed to say something that would make him feel better, but

I could not, because I did not know what was the matter.

“Can you read this kind of writing?” I asked hesitantly.

My father shook his head. “Nope. I was never very intellectual. I guess. Rod was always brighter than I, in school, but even he wasn’t interested in learning Greek. Perhaps he would’ve been later, if he’d lived. As a kid, all I ever wanted to do was go into the merchant marine.”

“Why didn’t you, then?”

“Oh well,” my father said offhandedly, “a kid who’d never seen the sea wouldn’t have made much of a sailor. I might have turned out to be the seasick type.”

I had lost interest now that he was speaking once more like himself.

“Grandmother MacLeod was pretty cross today about the girl,” I remarked.

“I know,” my father nodded. “Well, we must be as nice as we can to her, Nessa, and after a while she’ll be all right.”

Suddenly I did not care what I said.

“Why can’t she be nice to us for a change?” I burst out. “We’re always the ones who have to be nice to her.”

My father put his hand down and slowly tilted my head until I was forced to look at him.

“Vanessa,” he said, “she’s had troubles in her life which you really don’t know much about. That’s why she gets migraine sometimes and has to go to bed. It’s not easy for her these days, either the house is still the same, so she thinks other things should be, too. It hurts her when she finds they aren’t.”

“I don’t see ” I began.

“Listen,” my father said, “you know we were talking about what people are interested in, like Grandfather MacLeod being interested in Greek plays? Well, your grandmother was interested in being a lady, Nessa, and for a long time it seemed to her that she was one.”

I thought of the Castle of Kinlochaline, and of horse doctors in Ontario.

“I didn’t know ” I stammered.

“That’s usually the trouble with most of us,” my father said. “You go on up to bed now. I’ll phone tomorrow from the hospital as soon as the operation’s over.”

I did sleep at last, and in my dreams I could hear the caught sparrow fluttering in the attic and the sound of my mother crying, and the voices of the dead children. My father did not phone until afternoon. Grandmother MacLeod said I was being silly, for you could hear the phone ringing all over the house but nevertheless I refused to move out of the den. I have never before examined my father’s books, but now, at a loss for something to do, I took them out one by one and read snatches here and there. After I had been doing this for several hours, it dawned on me that most of the books were of the same kind. I looked again at the titles.

Seven-League Boots. Arabia Desert. The Seven Pillars of Wisdom. Travels in Tibet. Count Lucknor the Sea Devil. And a hundred more. On a shelf by themselves were copies of the *National Geographic* magazine, which I looked at often enough, but never before with the puzzling compulsion which I felt now as though I were on the verge of some discovery, something which I had to

find out and yet did not want to know. I riffled through the picture filled pages. Hibiscus and wild orchids grew in a soft-petalled confusion. The Himalayas stood lofty as gods, with the morning sun on their peaks of snow. Leopards snarled from the vined depths of a thousand jungles. Schooners buffeted their white sails like the wings of giant angels against the great sea winds.

“What on earth are you doing?” Grandmother Macleod inquired waspishly, from the doorway. “You’ve got everything scattered all over the place. Pick it all up this minute. Vanessa. Do you hear?”

So I picked up the books and magazines, and put them all neatly away, as I had been told to do.

When the telephone finally rang, I was afraid to answer it. At last I picked it up. My father sounded faraway, and the relief in his voice made it unsteady.

“It’s okay, honey. Everything’s fine. The boy was born alive and kicking after all. Your mother’s pretty weak, but she’s going to be all right.”

I could hardly believe it. I did not want to talk to anyone. I wanted to be by myself, to assimilate the presence of my brother, towards whom, without ever having seen him yet, I felt such tenderness and such resentment.

That evening, Grandmother MacLeod approached my father, who, still dazed with the unexpected gift of neither life now being threatened, at first did not take her seriously when she asked what they planned to call the child.

“Oh, I don’t know. Hank, maybe, or Joe. Fauntleroy, perhaps.” She ignored his levity.

“Ewen,” she said, “I wish you would call him Roderick.”

My father’s face changed. “I’d rather not.”

“I think you should,” Grandmother MacLeod insisted, very quietly, but in a voice as pointed and precise as her silver nail-scissors.

“Don’t you think Beth ought to decide?” my father asked.

“Beth will agree if you do.”

My father did not bother to deny something that even I knew to be true. He did not say anything. Then Grandmother MacLeod’s voice, astonishing, faltered a little.

“It would mean a great deal to me,” she said.

I remembered what she had told me *When your Uncle Roderick got killed, I thought I would die. But I didn’t die.* All at once, her feeling for that unknown dead man became a reality for me. And yet I held it against her, as well, for I could see that it had enabled her to win now.

“All right,” my father said tiredly. “We’ll call him Roderick.”

Then alarmingly, he threw back his head and laughed.

“Roderick Dhu!” he cried. “That’s what you’ll call him, isn’t it? Black Roderick. Like before. Don’t you remember? As though he were a character out of Sir Walter Scott, instead of an ordinary kid who ”

He broke off, and looked at her with a kind of desolation in his face.

“God, I’m sorry, Mother,” he said. “I had no right to say that.”

Grandmother MacLeod did not flinch, or tremble, or indicate that she felt anything at all.

“I accept your apology, Ewen,” she said.

My mother had to stay in bed for several weeks after she arrived home. The baby’s cot was kept in my parents’ room, and I could go in and look at the small creature who lay there with his tightly closed fists and his feathery black hair. Aunt Edna came in to help each morning, and when she had finished the housework, she would have coffee with my mother. They kept the door closed, but this did not prevent me from eavesdropping, for there was an air register in the floor of the spare room, which was linked somehow with the register in my parents room. If you put your ear to the iron grille, it was almost like a radio.

“Did you mind very much, Beth?” Aunt Edna was saying.

“Oh, it’s not the name I mind, my mother replied. “Its just the fact that Ewen felt he had to. You knew that Rod had only had the sight of one eye, didn’t you?”

“Sure, I knew. So what?”

“There was only a year and a half between Ewen and Rod,” my mother said, “so they often went around together when they were youngsters. It was Ewen’s air-rifle that did it.”

“Oh Lord,” Aunt Edna said heavily. “I suppose she always blamed him?”

“No, I don’t think it was so much that, really, it was how he felt himself. I think he even used to wonder sometimes if but people shouldn’t let themselves think like that, or they’d go crazy. Accidents do happen, after all. When the war came, Ewen joined up first. Rod should never have been in the Army at all, but he couldn’t wait to get in. He must have lied about his eyesight. It wasn’t so very noticeable unless you looked at him closely, and I don’t suppose the medicals were very thorough in those days. He got in as a gunner, and Ewen applied to have him in the same company. He thought he might be able to watch out for him, I guess, Rod being at a disadvantage. They were both only kids. Ewen was nineteen and Rod was eighteen when they went to France. And then the Somme. I don’t know, Edna, I think Ewen felt that if Rod had had proper sight, or if he hadn’t been in the same outfit and had been sent somewhere else you know how people always think these things afterwards, not that it’s ever a bit of use. Ewen wasn’t there when Rod got hit. They’d lost each other somehow, and Ewen was looking for him, not bothering about anything else, you know, just frantically looking. Then he stumbled across him quite by chance. Rod was still alive, but ”

“Stop it, Beth,” Aunt Edna said. “You’re only upsetting yourself.”

“Ewen never spoke of it to me,” my mother went on, “until once his mother showed me the letter he’d written to her at the time. It was a peculiar letter, almost formal, saying how gallantly Rod had died, and all that. I guess I shouldn’t have, but I told him she’d shown it to me. He was very angry that she had. And then, as though for some reason he were terribly ashamed, he said *I had to write something to her, but men don’t really die like that, Beth. It wasn’t that way at all.* It was only after the war that he decided to come back and study medicine and go into practice with his father.”

“Had Rod meant to?” Aunt Edna asked.

“I don’t know,” my mother said slowly. “I never felt I should ask Ewen that.”

Aunt Edna was gathering up the coffee things, for I could hear the clash of cups and saucers being stacked on the tray.

“You know what I heard her say to Vanessa once, Beth? *The Macleod’s never tell lies*. Those were her exact words. Even then, I didn’t know whether to laugh or cry.”

“Please, Edna ” my mother sounded worn-out now. “Don’t.”

“Oh Glory,” Aunt Edna said remorsefully, “I’ve got all the delicacy of a two-ton truck. I didn’t mean Ewen, for heaven’s sake. That wasn’t what I meant at all. Here, let me plump up your pillows for you.”

Then the baby began to cry, so I could not hear anything more of interest. I took my bike and went out beyond Manawaka, riding aimlessly along the gravel highway. It was late summer, and the wheat had changed color, but instead of being high and bronzed in the fields, it was stunted and desiccated, for there had been no rain again this year. But in the bluff where I stopped and crawled under the barbed wire fence and lay stretched out on the grass, the plentiful poplar leaves were turning to a luminous yellow and shone like church windows in the sun. I put my head down very close to the earth and looked at what was going on there. Grasshoppers with enormous eyes ticked and twitched around me, as though the dry air were perfect for their purposes. A ladybird labored mightily to climb a blade of grass, fell off, and started all over again, seeming to be unaware that she possessed wings and could have flown up.

I thought of the accidents that might easily happen to a person or, of course, might not happen, might happen to somebody else. I thought of the dead baby, my sister, who might as easily have been I. Would she, then, have been lying here in my place, the sharp grass making its small toothmarks on her brown arms, the sun warming her to the heart? I thought of the leatherbound volumes of Greek, and the six different kinds of iced cakes that used to be offered always in the MacLeod house, and the pictures of leopards and green seas. I thought of my brother, who had been born alive after all, and now had been given his life’s name.

I could not really comprehend these things, but I sensed their strangeness, their disarray. I felt that whatever God might love in this world, it was certainly not order.

3. Best Friend - *Helen J. Rosta*

She will come to see me again this evening, carrying in her hand one red rose from the florist downstairs one rose is more significant than a dozen, or six and there will be a great to-do with the ward aides hunting for the bud vase. Finally, the nursing aides will join the search and maybe even the nurses. It will be gay, like a treasure hunt, and after she has gone, they will smile and say, "Your friend is delightful." They will cast meaningful glances at the rose which is audacious in its aloneness. They will not notice that it is trembling on its stem like a drop of blood.

She is wearing something new, a long grey suede coat that looks soft as butter. It has fur at the throat and hem. Squirrel? Her boots and gloves are grey. I tell her how beautiful the costume is. She drops the coat on a chair.

I remember that squirrel is delicate, perhaps extinct. I gesture toward the closet. "Hang it up. "It doesn't matter." She moves around the chair, toward my bed. The coat falls to the floor.

The ward aide has come to my room like a moth out of the night. She has caught the excitement. We need a taller vase. This is a long-stemmed rose. By now the ward aide is frantic. Never mind. Lay it here on the bed beside me and let it die.

The rose is in its vase, sitting on my little bedside table. "I have something else for you." She tiptoes to the door, peeks down the corridor, sees no one. The ward aide has truly disappeared. She brings out the champagne. There is nothing to celebrate, but she is a good friend after all. Anticipating the bubbles bursting on my lips, I am very grateful.

We drink the champagne from plastic water glasses. I long for fine crystal glasses with fragile stems. I am an ungrateful wretch. "I should have some crystal glasses smuggled in."

She frowns. "You were always interested in things," she says. She steps backwards; her heel sinks into the butter softness of her coat. "I'm not interested in material things. They mean nothing to me. Nothing. Nothing." She flings her arm in a dramatic gesture and the champagne splashes from her glass. I lift myself a little from the pillow and follow the spray of champagne with my eyes.

"You are wasting champagne and ruining your coat."

"Things do not matter. Only people matter." Her eyes fill with tears.

I must guard myself or I will be betrayed with the champagne and intimacy. I do not want to break down.

"Only people matter." The tears glitter like diamonds in her eyes.

If I wept, she would stroke my forehead. The tears would tremble under her lashes and go no farther. She would be strong, stroking my forehead, combing my hair with deft, light touches of her fingertips.

And in the midst of my spasm, a whisper to the nurse, "She's very upset." The nurse, almost accusing in her glance, as if to say, "How can you act each matter-of-fact day as if you do not feel, but now when your lovely friend comes...?"

At home, flinging off the grey coat I can project the picture on my mind "Oh, it was ghastly, Arthur, simply ghastly. She wept and wept such racking sobs." She drops her voice. "I

feel as if I am permeated with death. It is like a fog, seeping into every corner of the room. And she is desperate, Arthur. Desperate, desperate.” She throws herself about on the sofa.

He reaches out, caresses her shining hair, comforting her. “You shouldn’t go to see her so often. It’s too upsetting.”

“Arthur, I have to, I simply have to. She’s my best friend, my very best friend.”

She takes my hand. Her fingers are wet with champagne. The tears glisten in her eyes. “You are my best friend and I love you.”

I squeeze her fingers gently and disengage my hand.

My eyes rest on her heel. “You are ruining your coat,” I say. “I wish you would pick it up.”

“This is how much I care for a coat.” She kicks it across the room.

I am too weak to get out of bed and hang it up. “I have been planning a garden,” I say. “I am going to have a blood-red rose in it, and silver trees. I will set little marble tables in the shade and I will give a garden party, but I won’t invite any people. I have never cared for people. Only you can come. We will sit under the silver trees and drink champagne.”

She has a look of exquisite pain on her face. I imagine her sitting down to dinner. She is wearing a black gown and she stretches out her long, white arms to her guests as though she wants to embrace them. “The poor darling. She talked of her garden as if she would live till spring.” They are silent and she does not continue as if it were unseemly to talk of corpses at the dinner table. The centrepiece is a dozen red roses in a crystal bowl. One day she will drop the bowl and the housekeeper will find the fragments like splinters of ice in the corners of the room.

I am thinking of my house, closed in upon its treasures, everything covered with a fine grey dust. Like ashes.

She is putting on her coat. “I couldn’t stand it any longer.” To whom is she speaking? Arthur? Her best friend? “Planning her garden when she could scarcely lift her hand.” She clasps her head in her hands. The fingernails are painted bright red. Is that the fashion now? “Oh God,” she says, “it was horrible. But beautiful, beautiful. She was my closest friend.”

She kisses me on the forehead. She is very strong. She does not shudder. “Goodbye.”

She is gone now. In my mind, I see her moving like a shadow down the corridor. There is a footprint on her fine grey coat. Now she can throw it away and buy another; she cares nothing for possessions. She is my best friend and she loves me.

Soon they will bring the needle. I will watch it greedily, arm extended, lips pressed against my teeth to conceal my pleasure. And then I will float for a little while on a soft grey cloud before I descend into the darkness that is sleep.

But while I wait, I will review again all my precious belongings, choosing for her only the most fragile, the most vulnerable, and the most treasured.

4. Marriage Is a Private Affair - Chinua Achebe

“Have you written to your dad yet?” asked Nene one afternoon as she sat with Nnaemeka in her room at 16 Kasanga Street, Lagos.

“No. I’ve been thinking about it. I think it’s better to tell him when I get home on leave!”

“But why? Your leave is such a long way off yet six whole weeks. He should be let into our happiness now.”

Nnaemeka was silent for a while, and then began very slowly as if he groped for his words: “I wish I were sure it would be happiness to him.”

“Of course it must,” replied Nene, a little surprised. “Why shouldn’t it?”

“You have lived in Lagos all your life, and you know very little about people in remote parts of the country.”

“That’s what you always say. But I don’t believe anybody will be so unlike other people that they will be unhappy when their sons are engaged to marry.”

“Yes. They are most unhappy if the engagement is not arranged by them. In our case it’s worse you are not even an Ibo.”

This was said so seriously and so bluntly that Nene could not find speech immediately. In the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city it had always seemed to her something of a joke that a person’s tribe could determine whom he married.

At last she said, “You don’t really mean that he will object to your marrying me simply on that account? I had always thought you Ibos were kindly disposed to other people.”

“So we are. But when it comes to marriage, well, it’s not quite so simple. And this,” he added, “is not peculiar to the Ibos. If your father were alive and lived in the heart of Ibibio-land he would be exactly like my father.”

“I don’t know. But anyway, as your father is so fond of you, I’m sure he will forgive you soon enough. Come on then, be a good boy and send him a nice lovely letter...”

“It would not be wise to break the news to him by writing. A letter will bring it upon him with a shock. I’m quite sure about that.”

“All right, honey, suit yourself. You know your father.”

As Nnaemeka walked home that evening he turned over in his mind different ways of overcoming his father’s opposition, especially now that he had gone and found a girl for him. He had thought of showing his letter to Nene but decided on second thoughts not to, at least for the moment. He read it again when he got home and couldn’t help smiling to himself. He remembered Ugoye quite well, an Amazon of a girl who used to beat up all the boys, himself included, on the way to the stream, a complete dunce at school.

“I have found a girl who will suit you admirably Ugoye Nweke, the eldest daughter of our neighbour, Jacob Nweke. She has a proper Christian upbringing. When she stopped schooling some years ago her father (a man of sound judgement) sent her to live in the house of a pastor where she has received all the training a wife could need. Her Sunday School teacher has told me that she reads her Bible very fluently. I hope we shall begin negotiations when you come home in December.”

On the second evening of his return from Lagos Nnaemeka sat with his father under a

cassia tree. This was the old man's retreat where he went to read his Bible when the parching December sun had set and a fresh, reviving wind blew on the leaves.

"Father," began Nnaemeka suddenly, "I have come to ask for forgiveness."

"Forgiveness? For what, my son?" he asked in amazement.

"It's about this marriage question."

"Which marriage question?"

"I can't we must I mean it is impossible for me to marry Nweke's daughter."

"Impossible? Why?" asked his father.

"I don't love her."

"Nobody said you did. Why should you?" he asked.

"Marriage today is different..."

"Look here, my son," interrupted his father, "nothing is different. What one looks for in a wife are a good character and a Christian background."

Nnaemeka saw there was no hope along the present line of argument.

"Moreover," he said, "I am engaged to marry another girl who has all of Ugoye's good qualities, and who..."

His father did not believe his ears. "What did you say?" he asked slowly and disconcertingly.

"She is a good Christian," his son went on, "and a teacher in a Girls' School in Lagos."

"Teacher, did you say? If you consider that a qualification for a good wife I should like to point out to you, Emeka, that no Christian woman should teach. St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians says that women should keep silence." He rose slowly from his seat and paced forwards and backwards. This was his pet subject and he condemned vehemently those church leaders who encouraged women to teach in their schools. After he had spent his emotion on a long homily he at last came back to his son's engagement, in a seemingly milder tone.

"Whose daughter is she, anyway?"

"She is Nene Atang."

"What!" All the mildness was gone again. "Did you say Neneataga, what does that mean?"

"Nene Atang from Calabar. She is the only girl I can marry." This was a very rash reply and Nnaemeka expected the storm to burst. But it did not. His father merely walked away into his room. This was most unexpected and perplexed Nnaemeka. His father's silence was infinitely more menacing than a flood of threatening speech. That night the old man did not eat.

When he sent for Nnaemeka a day later he applied all possible ways of dissuasion. But the young man's heart was hardened, and his father eventually gave him up as lost.

"I owe it to you, my son, as a duty to show you what is right and what is wrong. Whoever put this idea into your head might as well have cut your throat. It is Satan's work." He waved his son away.

"You will change your mind, Father, when you know Nene."

"I shall never see her," was the reply. From that night the father scarcely spoke to his son. He did not, however, cease hoping that he would realize how serious was the danger he was heading for. Day and night he put him in his prayers.

Nnaemeka, for his own part, was very deeply affected by his father's grief. But he kept

hoping that it would pass away. If it had occurred to him that never in the history of his people had a man married a woman who spoke a different tongue, he might have been less optimistic. "It has never been heard," was the verdict of an old man speaking a few weeks later. In that short sentence he spoke for all his people. This man had come with others to commiserate with Okeke when news went round about his son's behaviour. By that time the son had gone back to Lagos.

"It has never been heard," said the old man again with a sad shake of his head.

"What did Our Lord say?" asked another gentleman. "Sons shall rise against their Fathers; it is there in the Holy Book."

"It is the beginning of the end," said another.

The discussion thus tending to become theological, Madubogwu, a highly practical man, brought it down once more to the ordinary level.

"Have you thought of consulting a native doctor about your son?" he asked Nnaemeka's father.

"He isn't sick," was the reply.

"What is he then? The boy's mind is diseased and only a good herbalist can bring him back to his right senses. The medicine he requires is *Amalile*, the same that women apply with success to recapture their husbands' straying affection."

"Madubogwu is right," said another gentleman. "This thing calls for medicine."

"I shall not call in a native doctor." Nnaemeka's father was known to be obstinately ahead of his more superstitious neighbours in these matters. "I will not be another Mrs. Ochuba. If my son wants to kill himself then let him do it with his own hands. It is not for me to help him."

"But it was her fault," said Madubogwu. "She ought to have gone to an honest herbalist. She was a clever woman, nevertheless."

"She was a wicked murderess," said Jonathan who rarely argued with his neighbours because, he often said, they were incapable of reasoning. "The medicine was prepared for her husband, it was his name they called in its preparation and I am sure it would have been perfectly beneficial to him. It was wicked to put it into the herbalist's food, and say you were only trying it out."

Six months later, Nnaemeka was showing his young wife a short letter from his father:

"It amazes me that you could be so unfeeling as to send me your wedding picture. I would have sent it back. But on further thought I decided just to cut off your wife and send it back to you because I have nothing to do with her. How I wish that I had nothing to do with you either."

When Nene read through this letter and looked at the mutilated picture her eyes filled with tears, and she began to sob.

"Don't cry, my darling," said her husband. "He is essentially good-natured and will one day look more kindly on our marriage." But years passed and that one day did not come.

For eight years, Okeke would have nothing to do with his son, Nnaemeka. Only three times (when Nnaemeka asked to come home and spend his leave) did he write to him.

"I can't have you in my house," he replied on one occasion. "It can be of no interest to me where or how you spend your leave or your life, for that matter."

The prejudice against Nnaemeka's marriage was not confined to his little village. In Lagos, especially among his people who worked there, it showed itself **in** a different way. Their women, when they met at the village meeting, were not hostile to Nene. Rather, they paid her such excessive deference as to make her feel she was not one of them. But as time went on, Nene gradually broke through some of this prejudice and even began to make friends among them. Slowly and grudgingly they began to admit that she kept her home much better than most of them.

The story eventually got to the village in the heart of the Ibo country that Nnaemeka and his young wife were a most happy couple. But his father was one of the few people in the village who knew nothing about this. He always displayed so much temper whenever his son's name was mentioned that everyone avoided it in his presence. By a tremendous effort of will he had succeeded in pushing his son to the back of his mind. The strain had nearly killed him but he had persevered, and won.

Then one day he received a letter from Nene, and in spite of himself he began to glance through it perfunctorily until all of a sudden the expression on his face changed and he began to read more carefully.

"... Our two sons, from the day they learnt that they have a grandfather, have insisted on being taken to him. I find it impossible to tell them that you will not see them. I implore you to allow Nnaemeka to bring them home for a short time during his leave next month. I shall remain here in Lagos..."

The old man at once felt the resolution he had built up over so many years falling in. He was telling himself that he must not give in. He tried to steel his heart against all emotional appeals. It was a re-enactment of that other struggle. He leaned against a window and looked out. The sky was overcast with heavy black clouds and a high wind began to blow filling the air with dust and dry leaves. It was one of those rare occasions when even Nature takes a hand in a human fight. Very soon it began to rain, the first rain of the year. It came down in large sharp drops and was accompanied by the lightning and thunder which mark a change of season.

Okeke was trying hard not to think of his two grandsons. But he knew he was now fighting a losing battle. He tried to hum a favourite hymn but the pattering of large rain drops on the roof broke up the tune. His mind immediately returned to the children. How could he shut his door against them? By a curious mental process he imagined them standing, sad and forsaken, under the harsh angry weather shut out from his house.

That night he hardly slept, from remorse and a vague fear that he might die without making it up to them.

5. The Taste of Melon *Borden Deal*

At last the melon loomed up before me, deep green in the moonlight, and I gasped at the size of it.

WHEN I THINK of the summer I was sixteen, a lot of things come crowding in to be thought about. We had moved just the year before, and sixteen is still young enough that the bunch makes a difference. I had a bunch, all right, but they weren't sure of me yet. I didn't know why. Maybe because I'd lived in town, and my father still worked there instead of farming, like the other fathers did. The boys I knew, even Freddy Gray and J.D., still kept a small distance between us.

Then there was Willadean Wills. I hadn't been much interested in girls before. But I had to admit to myself that I was interested in Willadean. She was my age, nearly as tall as I, and up till the year before, Freddy Gray told me, she had been good at playing Gully Keeper and Ante-Over. But she didn't play such games this year. She was tall and slender, and Freddy Gray and J.D. and I had several discussions about the way she walked. I maintained she was putting it on, but J.D. claimed she couldn't help it. Freddy Gray remarked that she hadn't walked that way last year. He said she'd walked like any other human being. So then I said, put on or not, I like the way she walked, and then there was a large silence.

It wasn't a comfortable silence, because of Mr. Wills, Willadean's father. We were all afraid of Mr. Wills.

Mr. Wills was a big man. He had bright, fierce eyes under heavy brows and, when he looked down at you, you just withered. The idea of having him directly and immediately angry at one of us was enough to shrivel the soul. All that summer Willadean walked up and down the high road or sat on their front porch in a rocking chair, her dress flared out around her, and not one of us dared do more than say good morning to her.

Mr. Wills was the best farmer in the community. My father said he could drive a stick into the ground and grow a tree out of it. But it wasn't an easy thing with him; Mr. Wills fought the earth when he worked it. When he plowed his fields, you could hear him yelling for a mile. It was as though he dared the earth not to yield him its sustenance.

Above all, Mr. Wills could raise watermelons. Now, watermelons are curious things. Some men can send off for the best watermelon seed, they can plant it in the best ground they own, they can hoe it and tend it with the greatest of care, and they can't raise a melon bigger than your two fists. Other men, like Mr. Wills, can throw seed on the ground, scuff dirt over it, walk off and leave it and have a crop of the prettiest, biggest melons you ever saw.

Mr. Wills always planted the little field directly behind his barn to watermelons. It ran from the barn to the creek, a good piece of land with just the right sandy soil for melon raising. And it seemed as though the melons just bulged up out of the ground for him.

But they were Mr. Wills's melons; he didn't have any idea of sharing them with the boys of the neighborhood. He was fiercer about his melons than anything else; if you just happened to walk close to his melon patch, you'd see Mr. Wills standing and watching you with a glower on his face. And likely as not he'd have his gun under his arm.

Everybody expected to lose a certain quantity of their watermelons to terrapins and a

certain quantity to boys. It wasn't considered stealing to sneak into a man's melon patch and judiciously borrow a sample of his raising. You might get a load of salt in the seat of your pants if you were seen, but that was part of the game. You'd be looked down on only if you got malicious and stamped a lot of melons into the ground while you were about it. But Mr. Wills didn't think that way.

That summer I was sixteen, Mr. Wills raised the greatest watermelon ever seen in that country. It grew in the very middle of his patch, three times as big as any melon anybody had ever seen. Men came from miles around to look at it. Mr. Wills wouldn't let them go into the melon patch. They had to stand around the edge.

Just like all other daredevil boys in that country, I guess, Freddy Gray and J.D. and I had talked idly about stealing that giant watermelon. But we all knew that it was just talk. Not only were we afraid of Mr. Wills and his rages, but we knew that Mr. Wills sat in the hayloft window of his barn every night with his shotgun, guarding the melon. It was his seed melon. He meant to plant next year's crop out of that great one and maybe raise a whole field of them. Mr. Wills was in a frenzy of fear that somebody would steal it. Why, he would rather you stole Willadean than his melon. At least, he didn't guard Willadean with his shotgun.

Every night I could sit on our front porch and see Mr. Wills sitting up there in the window of his hayloft, looking fiercely out over his melon patch. I'd sit there by the hour and watch him, the shotgun cradled in his arm, and feel the tremors of fear and excitement chasing up and down my spine.

"Look at him," my father would say. "Scared to death somebody will steal his seed melon. Wouldn't anybody steal a man's seed melon?"

"He ought to be in the house taking care of that wife of his," my mother would say tartly. "She's been poorly all year."

You hardly ever saw Mrs. Wills. She was a wraith of a woman, pale as a butter bean. Sometimes she would sit for an hour or two on their porch in the cool of the day. They didn't visit back and forth with anybody though.

"There's Willadean," my father would say mildly.

My mother would make a funny kind of sound that meant disgust. "He cares more about that seed melon than he does his wife," she'd say. "I wish somebody would steal it. Maybe then..."

"Helen," my father would say, chiding, "you shouldn't even think of such a thing."

About the time the great watermelon was due to come ripe, there was a night of a full moon. J.D. and Freddy Gray and I had decided we'd go swimming in the creek, so I left the house when the moon rose and went to meet them. The moon floated up into the sky, making everything almost as bright as day, but at the same time softer and gentler than ever daylight could be. It was the kind of night when you feel as though you can do anything in the world, even boldly asking Willadean Wills for a date. On a night like that, you couldn't help but feel that she'd gladly accept.

"Boy, what a moon!" J.D. said when I met them.

"Wouldn't you like to take old Willadean out on a night like this?" Freddy Gray said.

We scoffed at him, but secretly in our hearts we knew how he felt. We were getting old enough to think that that sort of thing might be a lot more fun than going swimming in the moonlight.

As I said before, I was a part of the bunch. J.D. and Freddy Gray were my good friends. But because I was still new, there were certain things and certain feelings where I was left out. This was one of them; they were afraid, because I was more of a stranger to Willadean, that she might like the idea of dating me better than she did either of them. This was all way down under the surface, because none of us had admitted to ourselves that we wanted to be Willadean's boyfriend. But far down though it was, I could feel it, and they could feel it.

"I wish I had a newspaper," I said then. "I'll bet you could read it in this moonlight."

We had reached the swimming hole in the creek, and we began shucking off our clothes. We were all excited by the moonlight, yelling at one another and rushing to be first into the water. Freddy Gray made it first, J.D. and I catapulting in right behind him. The water was cold, and the shock of it struck a chill into us. But we got rid of it by a brisk water fight, and then we were all right.

We climbed out finally, to rest, and sat on the bank. That big old moon sailed serenely overhead, climbing higher into the sky, and we lay on our backs to look up at it.

"Old Man Wills won't have to worry about anybody stealing his melon tonight, anyway," Freddy Gray said. "Wouldn't anybody dare try it, bright as day like it is?"

"He's not taking any chances," J.D. said. "I saw him sitting up in that hayloft when I came by, his shotgun loaded with buckshot. That melon is as safe as it would be in the First National Bank."

"Shucks," I said in a scoffing voice, "he ain't got buckshot in that gun. He's just got a load of salt, like anybody else guarding a watermelon patch."

Freddy Gray sat upright, looking at me. "Don't kid yourself, son," he said loftily. "He told my daddy that he had it loaded with double-ought buckshot."

"Why," I said, "that would kill a man."

"That's what he's got in mind," Freddy Gray said, "if anybody goes after that seed melon."

It disturbed me more than it should have. After all, I'd never had it in mind to try for the melon, had I? "I don't believe it," I said flatly. "He wouldn't kill anybody over a watermelon. Even a seed melon like that one."

"Old Man Wills would," J.D. said.

Freddy Gray was still watching me. "What's got you into such a swivet?" he said. "You weren't planning on going after that melon yourself?"

"Well, yes," I said. "As a matter of fact, I was."

There was a moment of respectful silence. Even from me. I hadn't known I was going to say those words. To this day I don't know why I said them. It was all mixed up with Willadean and the rumor of Mr. Wills having his gun loaded with double-ought buckshot and the boys still thinking of me as an outsider. It surged up out of me not the idea of making my name for years to come by such a deed, but the feeling that there was a rightness in defying the world and Mr. Wills.

Mixed up with it all there came into my mouth the taste of watermelon. I could taste the sweet red juices oozing over my tongue; feel the delicate threaded redness of the heart as I squeezed the juices out of it.

I stood up. "As a matter of fact," I said, "I'm going after it right now."

"Wait a minute," J.D. said in alarm. "You can't do it on a moonlight night like this. It's two hundred yards from the creek bank to that melon. He'll see you for sure."

"Yeah," Freddy Gray said, "wait until a dark night. Wait until..."

"Anybody could steal it on a dark night," I said scornfully. "I'm going to take it right out from under his nose. Tonight."

I began putting on my clothes. My heart was thudding in my chest. I didn't taste watermelon any more; I tasted fear. But it was too late to stop now. Besides, I didn't want to stop.

We dressed silently, and I led the way up the creek bank. We came opposite the watermelon patch and ducked down the bank. We pushed through the willows on the other side and looked toward the barn. We could see Mr. Wills very plainly. The gun was cradled in his arms, glinting from the moonlight.

"You'll never make it," J.D. said in a quiet, fateful voice. "He'll see you before you're six steps away from the creek."

"You don't think I mean to walk, do you?" I said.

I pushed myself out away from them, on my belly in the grass that grew up around the watermelon hills. I was absolutely flat, closer to the earth than I thought it was possible to get. I looked back once, to see their white faces watching me out of the willows.

I went on, stopping once in a while to look cautiously up towards the barn. He was still there, still quiet. I met a terrapin taking a bit out of a small melon. Terrapins love watermelon, better than boys do. I touched him on the shell and whispered, "Hello, brother," but he didn't acknowledge my greeting. He just drew into his shell. I went on, wishing I was equipped like a terrapin for the job, outside as well as inside.

It seemed to take forever to reach the great melon in the middle of the field. With every move, I expected Mr. Wills to see me. Fortunately, the grass was high enough to cover me. At last the melon loomed up before me, deep green in the moonlight, and I gasped at the size of it. I'd never seen it so close.

I lay still for a moment, panting. I didn't have the faintest idea how to get it out of the field. Even if I'd stood up, I couldn't have lifted it by myself. A melon is the slipperiest, most cumbersome object in the world. And this was the largest I'd ever seen. It was not a long melon, but a fat round one. Besides, I didn't dare stand up.

For five minutes I didn't move. I lay there, my nostrils breathing up the smell of the earth and the musty smell of the watermelon vines, and I wondered why I was out here in the middle of all that moonlight on such a venture. There was more to it than just bravado. I was proving something to myself and to Mr. Wills and Willadean.

I thought of a tempting way out then. I would carve my name into the deep greenness of the melon. Mr. Wills would see it the next morning when he inspected the melon, and he would know that I could have stolen it if I'd wanted to. But no crawling to the melon wasn't

the same thing as actually taking it.

I reached one hand around the melon and found the stem. I broke the tough stem off close against the smooth roundness, and I was committed. I looked toward the barn again. All quiet. I saw Mr. Wills stretch and yawn, and his teeth glistened; the moon was that bright and I was that close.

I struggled around behind the melon and shoved at it. It rolled over sluggishly, and I pushed it again. It was hard work, pushing it down the trough my body had made through the grass. Dust rose up around me, and I wanted to sneeze. My spine was crawling with the expectation of a shot. Surely he'd see that the melon was gone out of its accustomed space.

It took about a hundred years to push that melon out of the field. I say that advisedly, because I felt that much older when I finally reached the edge. With the last of my strength I shoved it into the willows and collapsed. I was still lying in the edge of the field.

"Come on," Freddy Gray said, his voice pleading. "He's..."

I couldn't move. I turned my head. He was standing up to stretch and yawn to his content, and then he sat down again. By then I was rested enough to move again. I snaked into the willows, and they grabbed me.

"You did it!" they said. "By golly, you did it!"

There was no time to bask in their admiration and respect. "Let's get it on out of here," I said.

"We're not safe yet."

We struggled with the melon across the creek and up the bank. We started toward the swimming hole. It took all three of us to carry it, and it was hard to get a grip. J.D. and Freddy Gray carried the ends, while I walked behind the melon, grasping the middle. We stumbled and thrashed in our hurry, and we nearly dropped it three or four times. It was the most difficult object I'd ever tried to carry in my life.

At last, we reached the swimming hole and sank down, panting. But not for long; the excitement was too strong in us. Freddy Gray reached out a hand and patted the great melon.

"By golly," he said, "there it is. All ours."

"Let's bust it and eat it before somebody comes," J.D. said.

"Wait a minute," I said. "This isn't just any old melon. This is Old Man Wills's seed melon, and it deserves more respect than to be busted open with a fist. I'm going to cut it."

I took out my pocketknife and looked at it dubiously. It was small, and the melon was big. We really needed a butcher knife. But when the little knife penetrated the thick green rind, the melon split of itself, perfectly down the middle. There was a ragged, silken, tearing sound, and it lay open before us.

The heart meat, glistening with sweet moisture, was grained with white sugar specks. I tugged at it with two fingers, and a great chunk of meat came free. I put it into my mouth, closing my eyes. The melon was still warm from the day's sun. Just as in my anticipation, I felt the juice trickle into my throat, sweet and seizing. I had never tasted watermelon so delicious.

The two boys were watching me savor the first bite. I opened my eyes. "Dive in," I said graciously. "Help yourselves."

We gorged ourselves until we were heavy. Even then, we had still only eaten the heart meat, leaving untouched more than we had consumed. We gazed with sated eyes at the leftover melon, still good meat peopled with a multitude of black seeds. "What are we going to do with it?" I said.

"There's nothing we can do," J.D. said. "I can just see us taking a piece of this melon home for the folks."

"Let's eat it or leave it," Freddy Gray said.

We were depressed suddenly. It was such a waste, after all the struggle and the danger, that we could not eat every bite. I stood up, not looking at the two boys, not looking at the melon.

"Well," I said. "I guess I'd better get home."

"But what about this?" J.D. said insistently, motioning towards the melon.

I kicked half the melon, splitting it in three parts. I stamped one of the chunks under my foot. Then I set methodically to work, destroying the rest of the melon. The boys watched me silently until I picked up a chunk of rind and threw it at them. Then they swept into the destruction also, and we were laughing again. When we stopped, only the battered rinds were left, the meat muddied on the ground, the seed scattered. We stood silent, looking at one another. "There was nothing else to do," I said, and they nodded solemnly.

But the depression went with us toward home and, when we parted, we did so with sober voices and gestures. I did not feel triumph or victory, as I had expected, though I knew that tonight's action had brought me closer to my friends than I had ever been before.

"Where have you been?" my father asked as I stepped up on the porch. He was sitting in his rocker.

"Swimming," I said.

I looked toward Mr. Will's barn. The moon was still high and bright, but I could not see him. My breath caught in my throat when I saw him in the field, walking toward the middle. I stood stiffly, watching him. He reached the place where the melon should have been. I saw him hesitate, looking around, then he bent, and I knew he was looking at the depression in the earth where the melon had lain. He straightened, a great strangled cry tearing out of his throat. It chilled me deep down and all the way through, like the cry of a wild animal.

My father jerked himself out of the chair, startled by the sound. He turned in time to see Mr. Wills lift the shotgun over his head and hurl it from him, his voice crying out again in a terrible, surging yell of pain and anger.

"Lord, what's the matter?" my father said.

Mr. Wills was tearing up and down the melon patch, and I was puzzled by his actions. Then I saw; he was destroying every melon in the patch. He was breaking them open with his feet, silent now, concentrating on his frantic destruction. I was horrified by the awful sight, and my stomach moved sickly.

My father stood for a moment, watching him, then he jumped off the porch and ran toward Mr. Wills. I followed him. I saw Mrs. Wills and Willadean huddled together in the kitchen doorway. My father ran into the melon patch and caught Mr. Wills by the arm.

"What's come over you?" he said. "What's the matter, man?"

Mr. Wills struck his grip away. “They’ve stolen my seed melon,” he yelled. “They took it right out from under me.”

My father grabbed him with both arms. He was a brave man, for he was smaller than Mr. Wills, and Mr. Wills looked insane with anger, his teeth gripped over his lower lip, his eyes gleaming furiously. Mr. Wills shoved my father away, striking at him with his fist. My father went down into the dirt. Mr. Wills didn’t seem to notice. He went back to his task of destruction, raging up and down the field, stamping melons large and small.

My father got up and began to chase him. But he didn’t have a chance. Every time he got close, Mr. Wills would sweep his great arm and knock him away again. At last Mr. Wills stopped of his own accord. He was standing on the place where the great melon had grown. His chest was heaving with great sobs of breath. He gazed about him at the destruction he had wrought, but I don’t think that he saw it.

“They stole my seed melon,” he said. His voice was quieter now than I had ever heard it. I had not believed such quietness was in him. “They got it away, and now it’s gone.”

I saw that tears stood on his cheeks, and I couldn’t look at him any more. I’d never seen a grown man cry, crying in such strength.

“I had two plans for that melon,” he told my father. “Mrs. Wills has been poorly all the spring, and she dearly loves the taste of melon. It was her melon for eating, and my melon for planting. She would eat the meat, and next spring I would plant the seeds for the greatest melon crop in the world. Everyday she would ask me if the great seed melon was ready yet.”

I looked toward the house. I saw the two women, the mother and the daughter, standing there. I couldn’t bear any more. I fled out of the field toward the sanctuary of my house. I ran past my mother, standing on the porch, and went into my room.

I didn’t sleep that night. I heard my father come in, heard the low-voiced conversation with my mother, heard them go to bed. I lay wide-eyed and watched the moon through the window as it slid slowly down the sky and at last brought a welcome darkness into the world.

I don’t know all the things I thought that night. Mostly it was about the terrible thing I had committed so lightly, out of pride and out of being sixteen years old and out of wanting to challenge the older man, the man with the beautiful daughter.

That was the worst of all, that I had done it so lightly, with so little thought of its meaning. In that country and in that time, watermelon stealing was not a crime. It was tolerated, laughed about. The men told great tales of their own watermelon-stealing days, how they’d been set on by dogs and peppered with salt-loaded shotgun shells. Watermelon raiding was a game, a ritual of defiance and rebellion by young males. I could remember my own father saying, “No melon tastes as sweet as a stolen one,” and my mother laughing and agreeing.

But stealing this great seed melon from a man like Mr. Wills lay outside the safe magic of the tacit understanding between man and boy. And I knew that it was up to me, at whatever risk, to repair as well as I could the damage I had done.

When it was daylight, I rose from my bed and went out into the fresh world. It would be hot later on; but now the air was dew-cool and fragrant. I had found a paper sack in the kitchen, and I carried it in my hand as I walked toward the swimming hole. I stopped there,

looking down at the wanton waste we had made of the part of the melon we had not been able to eat. It looked though Mr. Wills had been stamping there, too.

I kneeled down on the ground, opened the paper sack and began picking up the black seeds. They were scattered thickly, still stringy with watermelon pulp, soon my hands were greasy with them, I kept on doggedly, searching out every seed I could find, until at the end I had to crawl over the ground, seeking for the last ones.

They nearly filled the paper sack. I went back to the house. By the time I reached it, the sun and my father had risen. He was standing on the porch.

“What happened to you last night?” he said. “Did you get so frightened you had to run home? It was frightening to watch him, I’ll admit that.”

“Father,” I said, “I’ve got to talk to Mr. Wills. Right now. I wish you would come with me.”

He stopped, watching me. “What’s the matter?” he said. “Did you steal that seed melon of his?”

“Will you come with me?” I said.

His face was dark and thoughtful. “Why do you want me?”

“Because I’m afraid he’ll shoot me,” I said. My voice didn’t tremble much, but I couldn’t keep it all out.

“Then why are you going?” he said.

“Because I’ve got to,” I said.

My father watched me for a moment. “Yes,” he said quietly, “I guess you do.” He came down the steps and stood beside me. “Ill go with you,” he said.

We walked the short distance between our house and his. Though it was so near, I had never been in his yard before. I felt my legs trembling as I went up the brick walk and stood at the bottom of the steps, the paper sack in my hand. I knocked on the porch floor, and Willadean came to the screen door.

I did not look at her. “I want to talk to your father.”

She stared at me for a moment, then she disappeared. In a moment, Mr. Wills appeared in the doorway. His face was marked by the night, his cheeks sunken, his mouth bitten in. He stared at me absent-mindedly, as though I were only a speck in his thinking.

“What do you want, boy?” he said.

I felt my teeth grit against the words I had to say. I held out the paper bag toward him. “Mr. Wills,” I said, “here’s the seeds from your seed melon. That’s all I could bring back.”

I could feel my father standing quietly behind me. Willadean was standing in the doorway, watching. I couldn’t take my eyes away from Mr. Wills’s face.

“Did you steal it?” he said.

“Yes, sir,” I said.

He advanced to the edge of the porch. The shotgun was standing near the door, and I expected him to reach for it. Instead, he came toward me, a great powerful man, and leaned down to me.

“Why did you steal it?” he said.

“I don’t know,” I said.

“Didn’t you know it was my seed melon?”

“Yes, sir,” I said. “I knew it.”

He straightened up again and his eyes were beginning to gleam. I wanted to run, but I couldn’t move.

“And my sick wife hungered for the taste of that melon,” he said. “Not for herself, like I thought. But to invite the whole neighborhood in for a slice of it. She knew I wouldn’t ever think of anything like that myself. She hungered for that.”

I hung my head. “I’m sorry,” I said.

He stopped still then, watching me. “So you brought me the seeds,” he said softly. “That’s not much, boy.”

I lifted my head. “It was all I could think to do,” I said. “The melon is gone. But the seeds are next year. That’s why I brought them to you.”

“But you ruined this year,” he said.

“Yes, sir,” I said. “I ruined this year.”

I couldn’t look at him any more. I looked at Willadean standing behind him. Her eyes were a puzzle, watching me, and I couldn’t tell what she was thinking or feeling.

“I’m about as ashamed of myself last night as you are of yourself,” Mr. Wills said. He frowned at me with his heavy brows. “You ruined the half of it, and I ruined the other. We’re both to blame, boy. Both to blame.”

It seemed there ought to be something more for me to say. I searched for it in my mind and discovered only the thought that I had found this morning in the grey light of dawn.

“The seeds are next year,” I said. I looked at him humbly. “I’ll help you plant them, Mr. Wills. I’ll work very hard.”

Mr. Wills looked at my father for the first time. There was a small, hard smile on his face, and his eyes didn’t look as fierce as they had before.

“A man with a big farm like mine needs a son,” he said. “But Willadean here was all the good Lord saw fit to give me. Sam, I do wish I had me a boy like that.”

He came close to me then, put his hand on my shoulder. “We can’t do anything about this year,” he said. “But we’ll grow next year, won’t we? We’ll grow it together.”

“Yes, sir,” I said.

I looked past him at Willadean, and her eyes were smiling, too. I felt my heart give a thump in my chest.

“And you don’t have to offer the biggest melon in the world to get folks to come visiting,” I blurted. “Why, I’ll set on the porch with Willadean any time.”

Mr. Wills and my father burst out laughing. Willadean was blushing red in the face. But somehow she didn’t look mad. Flustered, I began to beat a retreat toward the gate. Then I stopped, looking back at Mr. Wills. I couldn’t leave yet.

“Can I ask you one thing, Mr. Wills?” I said.

He stopped laughing, and there was no fierceness in his voice. “Anything you want to, boy,” he said.

“Well, I just wanted to know,” I said. “Was there double-ought buckshot in that gun?”

He reached around and picked up the gun. He unbreeched it and took out a shell. He broke the shell in his strong fingers and poured the white salt out onto his palm.

“You see?” he said.

“Yes, sir,” I said, taking a deep breath. “I see.”

I went on then, and the next year started that very day.

Annual Timetable for classes XI & XII.

This document assumes a school year with 150 teaching days exclusive of holidays and examination time. For classes XI and XII, it assumes the school year divided into two terms of fifteen weeks each, and that each week will have 6 periods of 40 minutes for teaching English. Therefore, classes XI and XII will have 180 periods in a year.

Time Allocation:

Reading & Literature	81 periods
Writing	45 periods
Language	36 periods
Listening & Speaking	18 periods
Total	180 periods.

Suggestive Plan:

Term 3

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

13	”	”	”	”	”	Listening & Speaking
14	”	”	Writing	”	”	Language
15	”	”	Reading & Literature	”	”	Writing

Term 2.

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

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

Modes of Assessment for Class XI

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 XI under Language and Writing 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.

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

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

- Continuous Formative Assessment
- Continuous Summative Assessment (CSA),
- Examinations
 - o Mid-term examinations
 - o 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 CFA, and follow the FA activities that are suggested in the teachers' manuals under various genres.

CONTINUOUS SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

The Continuous Summative Assessment consists of the internal school-based assessment on the Listening and Speaking Strand and the two written examinations.

1. Internal Assessment

The following are suggested modes of assessment for awarding internal assessment (CSA) marks for Class XI:

Listening and Speaking - 20 marks:

- Suggested Listening and Speaking activities for assessment purposes:
 - o Extempore speeches
 - o Panel discussions
 - o Listening exercises
 - o Debates
 - o Presentations and reports, etc.,

Detailed Listening and Speaking Activities are suggested in the Teachers' Guides Classes XI and XII.

2. Written Examinations

There are two written examinations for Class XI: 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 80%

CLASS XI

PAPER I: LANGUAGE AND WRITING

In Paper I the Assessment will consist of Listening & Speaking and the written examination. The Listening & Speaking Assessment includes Listening & Speaking exercises, extempore speeches, debates etc. The record of assessment is to be maintained for each student and must be assessed and awarded 20% marks as the part of CA

Listening And Speaking : 20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extempore Speeches• Panel Discussions• Debates• Presentations, 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 persuasive essay from the three choices provided. It will be worth 25 marks.

Question 2:

Students are required to write any original work and demonstrate their understanding of how to create character, establish setting, develop a plot and show that they can handle the elements of short stories. It will be worth 30 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 common theories of language acquisition.

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	30%
Story Writing	30%

Language

Nature of Language	10%
Grammar Structure	30%

Total	100%
-------	------

Suggested break up of CA and Examination weightings

Term One			Term Two		
Class XI	Continuous Assessment	Examination	Continuous Assessment	Trail Examination	Total
	10% Listening & Speaking	30%	10% Listening & Speaking	50%	100%
	5% Writing Portfolio				

Note: 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 and Speaking for 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 selected by the students and the teachers, journal writing for the books read. It is important for the teacher to consider the process of writing while assessing the quality of work. The teacher should also consider the number and the types of genre included in the portfolio.

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

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

Time: 3 hours for writing and 15 minutes for reading

Weightings:

Short Stories: 25 marks

Essay: 25 marks

Poetry: 25 marks

Novel: 25 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: 25 marks

Multiple Choice Questions - 5 marks

Short Answer Questions – 20 marks

Set II: 25 marks

Extended Response Questions – Two questions: $10+15=25$ marks

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

Section B: Essay

Set I: 25 marks

Multiple Choice Questions - 5 marks

Short Answer Questions – 20 marks

Set II: 25 marks

Extended Response Questions – Two questions: $10+15=25$ marks

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

Section C: Poetry

Set I: 25 marks

Multiple Choice Questions - 5 marks

Short Answer Questions – 20 marks

Set II: 25 marks

Extended Response Questions – Two questions: $10+15=25$ marks

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

Section C: Novel

Set I: 25 marks

Multiple Choice Questions - 5 marks

Short Answer Questions – 20marks

Set II: 25 marks

Extended Response Questions – Two questions: 10+15=25marks

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.

Suggested break up of CA and Examination weighting

Class X	Continuous Assessment	Examination	Continuous Assessment	Trail Examination	Total
	5% Reading Portfolio	30%	5% Reading Portfolio	50%	100%
	5% Writing Portfolio		5% Writing Portfolio		

Note: 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 and Writing Portfolios to Paper II, the overall weighting will be 100%.

Texts for Study

Short Stories:

1. Nothing Spoils the Taste of Peanut Butter like Unrequited Love – *Clark Gesner*
2. The Accursed House – *Emile Goborian*
3. Leaving – *M.G Vassanji*
4. Too Bad – *Issac Asimov*
5. Jamaican Fragment – *A.L Hendricks*
6. Simple Arithmetic – *Virginia Moriconi*
7. The Open Window - *Saki*

Essay:

1. Mother Tongue – *Amy Tan*
2. What’s in This Toothpaste? – *David Bodanis*
3. Values and Development: Gross National Happiness – *Lyonpo Jigme Y. Thinley*
4. English Zindabad vs Angrezi Hatao – *Kushwant Singh*
5. African Noel – *Mark Dorey*

Poetry:

1. Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle – *John Tobias*
2. Sonnets 18 and 29 – *William Shakespeare*
3. The River Merchant’s Wife: A Letter – *Ezra Pound*
4. From Gaylong Sumdar Tashi(Songs of sorrow) – **Sonam Kinga**
- (i) A Change of Fate (ii) Department (iii) Liberation
5. Where the Mind is Without Fear – *Rabindranath Tagore*
6. Ode to Autumn – *John Keats*
7. Quarantine – *Eavan Boland*
8. My Last Duchess – *Robert Browning*

Drama(One Act Play):

- Once Upon a Greek Stage – *Beth McMaster*

Note:

On the drama part the students will be examined on their understandings of: Content and the basic elements and features of the drama or the play they have studied.

Textbooks and References

1. The Silken Knot: Standards for English for schools in Bhutan Centre for Educational Research and Development, December 2002
2. Lyons, John (1981) Language and Linguistics: An Introduction Cambridge University Press
3. Swan, Michael (1980) Practical English Usage: International Student’s Editions OUP
4. Millward, C.M (1996) A Biography of the English Language Harcourt Brace College Publishers
5. Sinha, R.P (2002) Current English Grammar and Usage with Composition OUP
6. Wren and Martin High School Grammar and Composition
7. Carter, Ronald. Hughes, Rebecca. MacCarthy, Michael (2000) Exploring Grammar in Context: Grammar reference and Practice upper-intermediate and Advanced University Press ISBN 0-521-56844-7 (Grammar Text book for classes XI and XII: Students’ 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.

CAPSD has made every effort to trace the ownership of copyrighted material to obtain permission for reprints. Information that would enable CAPSD to correct any reference or credit in future editions would be greatly appreciated.

Reading & Literature Texts (Essays) for Classes XI

What's in This Toothpaste? By David Bodanis from **Elements of English (11)** © Harcourt, Canada Ltd.

African Noel by Mark Patinkin from **Passages Literature and Language** © published by.....

Values and Development (GNH) (Pg.12-23) by Lyonpo Jigmi Y Thinley from **Gross National Happiness and Human Development Searching for Common Ground** © Centre for Bhutan Studies, 1999

The Skier by Nancy Dorey from © published by.....

Mother Tongue (Pg.404-409) by Amy Tan from **Echoes- Fiction, Media and Non-Fiction** © OUP, Canada, 2001. ISBN 0-19-541630-9

English Zindabad versus Angrezi Hatao by Khuswant Singh from **Essays by Khuswant Singh** © Delhi Publishers, India

Drukyel's Destiny (Pg. 83-85) by Tashi Pem from **Drukyel's Destiny** © Tarayana Foundation, 2004

New Times from Kuensel Editorial, Kuensel Oct. 2, 2004 © Kuensel Corporation

At War With Oneself (Pg.278-279) by Ali Hossaini from **Passages Literature and Language** (12) ©2002 Gage Learning Corporation, Toronto, Ontario 2002. ISBN 0-7715-0958-8

The Legend of Olympics by Charlie Lovett from the Internet

How to Rule by Chogyam Trungpa from Shambala - The Sacred Path of the Warrior
© Shambala (Random House), 1984. ISBN 1-57062-128-4

The Love That Will Not Die (Pg.86-92) by Pema Chodron from **When Things Fall Apart**
© Shambhala, Boston & London 1997. ISBN 1-57062-160-8

National Day from Kuensel Editorial, December 20,2003 © Kuensel Corporation

The Pleasure of Gardening by H.C. Mahajan from **Selected Essays** (Pg.84-86) © S. Chand & Co. Ltd

Poetry for Classes XI

Sonnets 18 & 29 by William Shakespeare from **The Norton Anthology of English Literature** (Pg.739) © W.W. Norton. ISBN 393-09815X

Ode to Autumn by John Keats from **Touched with Fire** (Pg.143) © Cambridge. ISBN 0-521-31537-9

My Last Duchess by Robert Browning from **Creative Muse** (Pg.35) © Heinemann. ISBN 81-259-1222-3

Where the Mind Is Without Fear by Rabindranath Tagore from **English Poetry Booklet for Classes 1X-X** (Pg.11) © 2000 CAPSD. ISBN 99936-0-026-1

The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter by Ezra Pound from **Through the Open Window** (Pg.183-184) © Oxford. ISBN 0-19-540412-2

Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle by John Tobias from the Internet

Quarantine by Eavan Boland from **Against Love Poetry** from the Internet

From **Gaylong Sumdar Tashi (Songs of Sorrow): i) A Change of Fate ii) Departure iii) Liberation**, Translation: Sonam Kinga Gaylong Sumdar Tashi (Pgs. 6, 14, 46) © Pee Khang. ISBN 99926-611-4-7

Short Stories for Class XI:

The Accursed House by E. Gaboricu from **Stories from East and West** (Pg.1-6) © Frank Bros. and Co. (publishers) Ltd. 2003 ISBN 81-7170-415-8

Too Bad by I. Asimov from **Immortal Stories** (Pg.111-121) © Ratna Sagar 2002. ISBN 81-7070-652-1

Leaving by M.G. Vassanji from **Elements of English 11**(Pg. 228-232) © Harcourt Canada Ltd. ISBN 0-7747-1492-1

Nothing Spoils the Taste of Peanut Butter Like Unrequited Love by C. Gesner from **Passages 11**(Pg.165-166) © Gage Educational Publishing Co. 2001

Jamaican Fragments by A.L. Hendricks from **Literary Experiences Volume 2** (Pg.362-364) ©1990 Prentice-hall Canada Inc. Scarborough. Ontario. ISBN 0-13-538158-4

Simple Arithmetic by V. Moriconi from **Literary Experiences Volume 2** (PG.119-132) © 1990 by Prentice-hall Canada Inc. Scarborough. Ontario. ISBN 0-13-538158-4

The Open Window by Saki from **Selected Short Stories** (Pg.367-370) © Shrishti Publishers and Distributors, 1999. ISBN 81-87075-36-8

Best Friend by H.J. Rosta from **Relating** (Pg.36-37) © 1990 Gage Educational Publishing Company, a Division of Canada Publishing Corporation. ISBN 0-7715-1106-X

Marriage is a Private Affair by C. Achebe from **Foundations of English 11** (Pg.149-153), published by Harcourt Canada © Heinemann Educational Books ISBN 0-7747-1494-8

A Taste of Melon by B. Deal from **Relating** (Pg.196-204) © 1990 Gage Educational Publishing Company, A Division of Canada Publishing Corporation, 1990. ISBN 0-7715-1106-X

He-y, Come on Ou-t! by Shinichi Hoshi from **Imprints Volume 1** (Pg.152-156) ©2001 Gage Educational Publishing Company, A Division of Canada Publishing Corporation. ISBN 0-7715-0941-3

Book

The Silken Knot: Standards for English for Schools in Bhutan Copyright © Centre for Educational Research and Development, December 2002