

***INDIAN WRITING IN  
ENGLISH***

**VI SEMESTER *(2011 Admission)***

**V SEMESTER *(2012 Admission)***

***CORE COURSE***

***BA ENGLISH***

**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**

**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

**16**

**Calicut university P.O, Malappuram Kerala, India  
673 635.**

# **UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

## **STUDY MATERIAL**

**Core Course**

**BA ENGLISH**

**VI Semester (2011 Admission)**

**V Semester (2012 Admission)**

## **INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH**

*Prepared by: Smt. Hema. K.S.  
Blossom Arts and Science College,  
Valiyaparamba. P.O.  
Kondotty, Malappuram.*

*Scrutinized by: Dr. M.A. Sajitha  
Assistant Professor,  
Centre for Advanced Studies and Research in English.  
Farook College, Calicut.*

*Layout: Computer Section, SDE*

©  
Reserved

<b><u>CONTENTS</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE No</u></b>
<b>SECTION - I</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SECTION - II</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>SECTION - III</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>SECTION-IV</b>	<b>51</b>



**SECTION ONE**  
**POETRY**

***Songs of Radha: The Quest***  
**Sarojini Naidu**

**Introduction**

Sarojini Naidu, born as Sarojini Chattopadhyaya, known by the sobriquet as The Nightingale of India, was a child prodigy, Indian independence activist and poet. She was the first Indian woman to become the president of the Indian National Congress and the first woman to become the Governor of an Indian state. Besides being a poet, she was a national worker who took part in the Indian Independence movement and took part in Mahatma Gandhi's Salt March to Dandi. Though a Bengali, she was born at Hyderabad. When she was twelve years old she got through the matriculation examination winning the first rank. Thereafter she studied at King's College in London and Girton College, Cambridge. She was proficient in English, Urdu, Telugu, Bengali and Persian. She married Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu, when she was nineteen.

As it was an inter-caste marriage, it was forbidden in those days, but she lived happily with him and had four children. She died of heart attack on 2, March, 1949.

Sarojini Naidu's works include "The Golden Threshold" (1905), "The Bird of Time" (1912) and "The Burden Wing" (1917). She was awarded the title "Bharat Kokila" (the Nightingale of India) by Rabindranath Tagore for her melodious rhythmic poetry dealing with Indian myth, the mountains, rivers and temples in India. "The Quest" is from "The Feather of the Dawn" published after her death by her daughter Padmaja Naidu.

### **Paraphrase**

The poem is about the incomparable love of Radha and Krishna. Radha is searching for her beloved Kanhaya. She asked the wind about him. But she could not find her. At the time of noon she asked the forest about him, under whose shade he used to take rest. At the late evening she enquired the grey coloured tide about the dwelling place of her dear flute player. The waters, the wind and the woods remained dumb for her each questions. None of them knew about him. She carried her crying face in her arms. She kept weeping- where her Ghanashyam has gone.

Her heart suddenly shook from top to bottom by his hidden laughter. He mocked her with the usual tricks of Krishna. Then he asks her why she is searching him in the wind, wave and the flowering valley. He said that he belongs to her. She can look into the mirror of her heart to see him.

### **Word meanings and explanations**

quest	: searching for something
thee	: you
Kanhaya	: Krishna
noonrise	: noontime
glade	: an open place in the forest
dusk	: late in the evening
pleaded	: begged
dove-gray tides	: tides having the grey colour like that of doves
abides	: dwells
dumb	: silent
moan	: lament

art	: are
thou	:you
Ghanashyam	: Krishna
keel	: the base of a boat
rafter	: slopped beams extend from the ridge
mock	: ridicule
thy	: your
tender malice	: loving or sensitive tricks of Krishna
nectar	: honey
chalice	: cup
self-slain	: destroyed by oneself
doth	: does

### Short questions and answers

1. Whom was the narrator seeking in the poem?

Ans: The narrator was seeking her kanhayya: Lord Krishna in the poem.

2. What did she enquire to the dove-gray tides?

Ans: She pleaded the gray tides to show the dwelling place of her beloved flute player.

3. How did Krishna mock her?

Ans: He mocked her with the usual tricks played by Lord Krishna to entice women.

4. Why does Krishna say that she does not need him all around?

Ans: Krishna is a secret which lies within her. Hence he told her not to search for him all around.

5. Bring out the beauty of the expression: 'foolish love'.

Ans: The poet uses this expression to show the depth of love Radha keeps in her mind for Krishna. Foolish love refers to the love in which she had melted and had forgotten everything.

6. Justify the figure of speech in 'like a boat that rocked from keel to rafter'.

Ans: The poet explains the mind set of Radha with a beautiful simile. He describes that her heart was stirred like a boat which has been rocked from top to the bottom by

the waves.

7. Comment on the rhyme used in the poem.

Ans: The poem follows the rhyming scheme aa bb cc dd...

8. Describe the theme of the poem.

Ans: The theme of the poem is the unadulterated love and sublime devotion for Lord Krishna.

### Paragraph Questions

1. Describe the theme of *The Quest*.

Ans: *The Quest* is about the love and devotion of Radha towards Lord Krishna. The image of Radha and Krishna is one of the most celebrated one in Indian mythology. We can see the concept of 'Prakriti' and 'Purusha' in the poem. She uses the image of divine love to portray her concept of love. Hence the love in the poem becomes eternal. She narrates the poem according to the traditional concept of India. She turns out in to an idea that the highest level of devotion is love. That love is portrayed well in the poem when she says god rests in the heart of the people who worships him. The poem is a journey from the personal love to the universal. She brings oneness of the hearts of the idol and the devotee.

2. The diction in the poem *The Quest*.

Ans: Sarojini Naidu's poems show the influence of the Romanticists and Pre-Raphaelites in the selection of the words and the style. She proclaims her love for nature through the poem. In order to show her love towards nature, she carefully selects the words dawn, wind, forest glade, friendly shade, dove-gray tides etc in the beginning of the poem. She ornamentally creates phrases foolish love, forest glade and dove-gray tides. The use of the phrase 'foolish love' is meant for the purpose of showing the state of Radha. She uses two different names of Krishna, namely Kanhaya and Ghanashyam to express the divinity of his love. The mode she adapted in the beginning of the poem is the conversation with the nature. Later she expands the theme with beautiful similes: 'like a boat that rocks from keel to the rapture/ my heart was shaken by thy hidden laughter', along with that she again uses a simile which compares his tender malice to the nectar bubbling from her heart.

### Essay

1. Narrate how devotion and love are portrayed in *The Quest*.

Ans: *The Quest* is about the incomparable love of Radha and Krishna. In the poem Radha is searching for her beloved Krishna. Lord Krishna is the symbol of

imperishable love who can provide the shelter of love to everyone. Radha has given the highest rank among the lovers of Krishna. It is not easy to define whether the passion she feels towards Krishna is love or devotion. According to the beliefs, the zenith of devotion is love. Radha searches her beloved Krishna. She asks the wind about him. But she cannot find him. Krishna has the habit of resting in the forest at the noon time. She searches for him in the forest too, but fails to find him out. At the late evening she enquires the grey coloured tide about the dwelling place of her dear flute player. The waters, the wind and the woods do not give any answer to her questions. None of them know anything about him. She carries her crying face in her arms. She keeps weeping- where her Ghanashyam has gone.

Her search shows the passion in the heart of Radha towards Krishna. In the love for him, she becomes a silly girl who always makes complaints to her lover. Her heart is suddenly awakened like a boat which shook from top to bottom by his hidden laughter. He mocks her with the usual tricks of Krishna and honey bubbled in the chalice of her heart. She always thinks like every other girl and tries to find out some reasons to quarrel with him. Even then she realizes that all the silly thoughts raised in her heart are only because of the love hidden in her.

Then he asks her why she is searching for him in the wind, wave and the flowering valley. He says that he belongs to her. She can look into the mirror of her heart to see him.

*The Quest* is about the love and devotion of Radha towards Lord Krishna. The image of Radha and Krishna is one of the most celebrated one in Indian mythology. We can see the concept of 'Prakriti' and 'Purusha' in the poem. Here Krishna stands for the concept of Purusha and Radha for Prakriti and this union is considered as the basics of life upon the earth. She uses the image of divine love to portray her concept of love. Hence the love in the poem becomes eternal. She narrates the poem according to the traditional concept of love in India. The poem is the transfer of personal love to the universal love. She brings oneness of the hearts of the idol and the devotee. She believes in the love before which everyone is compelled to surrender.

In *The Quest*, the nightingale of India sings about love which is imperishable. She sings about the love of Radha and Krishna, the iconic couple of Indian Myths. She seeks him all over but fails to find him out. As in every love, she finds that her lover is always playing with her, but fails to accept the fact. She shares her complaints to herself. But at the same time she enjoys his teasing. In the end she realizes the fact that he resides in her mind and it is her fault that she could not identify the platonic love hidden in the mind of Krishna towards every woman who adores him. The love described in this poem is platonic in nature which refers to the union of the minds rather than the union of the bodies.

## *Breezy April*

### Rabindranath Tagore

#### Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore was a [Bengali writer](#) who reshaped his region's [literature](#) and [music](#). Author of [Gitanjali](#) and its "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse", he became the first non-European to win the [Nobel Prize in Literature](#) in 1913. In translation his poetry was viewed as spiritual and mercurial; however, his "elegant prose and magical poetry" remain largely unknown outside Bengal. Tagore introduced new prose and verse forms and the use of colloquial language into [Bengali literature](#), thereby freeing it from traditional models based on classical [Sanskrit](#). He was highly influential in introducing the best of Indian culture to the West and vice versa, and he is generally regarded as the outstanding creative artist of modern South Asia.

Rabindranath Tagore is the first writer who brought the Nobel Prize for literature to India. He was born as the youngest son of Maharshi Debendranath. Even though he belonged to an aristocratic family, he did not do regular schooling. His visit to England helped him to improve his talent. His writings were influenced by the works of Shelly, Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson, Browning and Shakespeare. In 1913 he received Nobel Prize for *Gitanjali*.

A [Pirali Brahmin](#) from [Calcutta](#), Tagore wrote poetry when he was eight-year-old. At age sixteen, he released [his first substantial poems](#) under the pseudonym *Bhanusimha* ("Sun Lion"), which were seized upon by literary authorities as long-lost classics. As a humanist and Universalist, he denounced the [Raj](#) and advocated independence from Britain. As an exponent of the [Bengal Renaissance](#), he advanced a vast canon that comprised paintings, sketches and doodles, hundreds of texts, and some two thousand songs; his legacy endures also in the institution he founded, [Visva-Bharati University](#).

Tagore modernized Bengali art by spurning rigid classical forms and resisting linguistic structures. *Gitanjali* (*Song Offerings*), *Gora* (*Fair-Faced*) and *Ghare-Baire* (*The Home and the World*) are his best-known works, and his verse, short stories, and novels were acclaimed—or panned—for their lyricism, colloquialism, naturalism, and unnatural contemplation. His compositions were chosen by two nations as national anthems: [India's](#) *Jana Gana Mana* and [Bangladesh's](#) *Amar Shonar Bangla*.

#### Paraphrase

The poem is addressed to the month April. The speaker in the poem makes a request to the month to rock him with its music. By the touch of the breeze, he gets thrilled. The breeze awakens him from his sleep. The mood of the breeze is fantastic. But the same time it courts and teases him.

The poet says that he knows the whole fancies of breezy April. The language of the breeze using the movements of the leaves and the footsteps are familiar to the poet. With the blowing of the breeze, all the branches are filled with blossoms. They enjoy the breath and whisper of the breeze. The leaves surrender in front of the breeze with its kiss.

### **Word meanings and explanations**

Vagrant	: wandering
Enchantment	: magical spell
Startling	: frightening
Slumber	: sleep
Willful	: deliberate
Courting	: trying to gain love
Teasing	: making fun of
Inconstant	: not steady
Leafy	: leaf like
Boughs	: branches
Tumult	: confusion

### **Short questions**

1. What is the request of the narrator to the breeze?

Ans: The narrator requests the breeze to thrill its branches with its surprising touch. He assumes that the touch of the breeze in the month of April has some magical power to rejuvenate branches.

2. To what is the poem addressed to?

Ans: The poem is an ode addressed to the breeze of the month April.

3. Describe *Leafy Language*?

Ans: The phrase refers to the sound made by the leaves when they are moved by the breeze. Poet brings the effect of personification by giving the right of communication to the leaves and wind.

4. “All my boughs break into blossom” explain?

Ans: With the gentle touch of the breeze, the entire boughs of the trees will have blossoms. It shows the power of the breeze to bring about changes in nature.

5. How does the breeze treat the narrator in the poem?

Ans: The breeze awakens him from the sleep. It courts and teases him at the same time.

6. How does the Breezy April make the leaves to surrender before it?

Ans: The leaves surrender in front of the Breezy April when it kisses them.

7. For which work did Tagore receive Nobel Prize?

Ans: Tagore received Nobel Prize for the work *Gitanjali*.

### Paragraph Questions

1. Explain *Breezy April* as a romantic poem?

Ans: Rabindranath Tagore, one of the most known Indian poets in English is well influenced by the romantic poets like Shelly, Keats and Wordsworth. *Breezy April* clearly shows this influence in its theme, structure and treatment. The poem is an ode addressed to the breeze of the month April which is a feature we can see in the romantic poetry of Britain. The poem describes the magical power of the season and the breeze. He personifies the breeze as the breeze aspire the qualities of rejuvenation and communication. Apart from these factors, the poem is written in simple language which can be easily understood.

2. Describe the theme of *Breezy April*?

Ans: Tagore's poem *Breezy April* is about the pompous effect of April on nature. The month April is accompanied by its breeze and the poet cannot imagine the month without the breeze. Nature receives the month by spreading its two hands. Nature entirely changes when April reaches on earth. April's music has an enchanting power to create a new era. It awakes not only the narrator but also the entire things which have been touched by the wind. Nature courts and teases the narrator. The branches of the trees bloom with the coming of April. Leaves whisper each other by making gentle sound when they are moved in the breeze. The nature surrenders when the breeze touches it.

3. Describe the structure and rhythm of the poem?

Ans: *Breezy April* is an ode addressed to the breeze in the April. Ode is a lyric poem which is addressed to someone or something. It is a short poem consisting of love for nature. Tagore skillfully coordinates romanticism and April using symbolic and metaphoric language. The effect of winter upon North India is removed with healing touch of April. He uses pliant rhythm and free verse in this poem. The poem contains four quatrains which describes the nature of the poem. Along with that, the poem is written in the romantic style with the help of simple words which will catch the

attention of the readers. The rejuvenating April is personified in the poem as a powerful being which can provide rebirth to the entire things upon the earth.

### Essay

1. Explain *Breezy April* as an ode which is written for glorifying the power of nature.

Ans: *Breezy April* is an ode addressed to the breeze in the April. This ode portrays the power of the breeze in the month of April which can rejuvenate the entire nature. This short poem explains the love in the heart of Tagore for nature. Tagore combines romanticism and April using symbolic and metaphoric language. All the destructions made by the winter are reconstructed by the magical power of April. This romantic poem written in very simple language captures the attention of the readers. The rejuvenating April is personified in the poem as a powerful being which can provide rebirth to the entire things upon the earth.

The poem is addressed to the month April. The speaker in the poem makes a request to the month to rock him with its music. By the touch of the breeze, he gets thrilled. The breeze awakens him from his sleep. The mood of the breeze is fantastic. But the same time it courts and teases him. The poet says that he knows the whole fancies of breezy April. The language of the breeze using the movements of the leaves and the footsteps are familiar to the poet. With the blowing of the breeze, all the branches are filled with blossoms. They enjoy the breath and whisper of the breeze. The leaves surrender in front of the breeze with its kiss.

The poem describes the power of curing the wounds that nature itself possesses. The breeze has the ability to give the sweet surprise with the enchanted touch. That means the breeze absorbs all the destructions made by the cold weather. Like the romantic poets, Tagore loves the appearance of nature and its beauty along with the entire features. He incorporates all the sensual enjoyments the nature can provide at that time. Nature is provided a kind of spiritual power in this poem. He finds out harmony between the minds of human and nature.

Tagore's poem *Breezy April* is about the pompous effect of April on nature. The month April is accompanied by its breeze and the poet cannot imagine the month without the breeze. Nature receives the month by spreading its two hands. Nature entirely changes when April reaches on earth. April's music has an enchanting power to create a new era. It awakes not only the narrator but also the entire things which have been touched by the wind. Nature courts and teases the narrator. The branches of the trees bloom with the coming of April. Leaves whisper each other by making gentle sound when they are moved in the breeze. The nature surrenders when the breeze touches it.

Rabindranath Tagore, one of the most known Indian poets in English is well influenced by the romantic poets like Shelly, Keats and Wordsworth. *Breezy April* clearly shows this influence in its theme, structure and treatment. The poem is an ode addressed to the breeze of the month April which is a feature we can see in the romantic poetry of Britain. The poem describes the magical power of the season and the breeze. He personifies the breeze as the breeze aspires the qualities of rejuvenation and communication. Apart from these factors, the poem is written in simple language which can be easily understood.

### *In Love*

#### **Kamala Das**

Kamala Suraiyya (born Kamala Das; 31 March 1934 – 31 May 2009), also known by her one-time [pen name](#) Madhavikutty, was a major [Indian English](#) poet and litterateur and at the same time a leading [Malayalam](#) author from [Kerala, India](#). Her popularity in [Kerala](#) is based chiefly on her short stories and autobiography, while her oeuvre in English, written under the name Kamala Das, is noted for the fiery poems and explicit autobiography.

Her open and honest treatment of female sexuality, free from any sense of guilt, infused her writings with power, but also marked her as an [iconoclast](#) in her generation. On 31 May 2009, aged 75, she died.

Kamala Das was born in [Punnayurkulam, Thrissur District](#) in [Kerala](#), on March 31, 1934, to V. M. Nair, a former managing [editor](#) of the widely circulated Malayalam daily [Mathrubhumi](#), and [Nalapat Balamani Amma](#), a renowned [Malayali](#) poetess. She spent her childhood between [Calcutta](#), where her father was employed as a senior officer in the Walford Transport Company that sold [Bentley](#) and [Rolls Royce](#) automobiles and the [Nalapat](#) ancestral home in [Punnayurkulam](#).

Like her mother, Balamani Amma, Kamala Das also excelled in writing. Her love of poetry began at an early age through the influence of her great uncle, [Nalapat Narayana Menon](#), a prominent writer. At the age of 15, she got married to bank officer Madhava Das, who encouraged her writing interests, and she started writing and publishing both in English and in Malayalam. Calcutta in the 1960s was a tumultuous time for the arts, and Kamala Das was one of the many voices that came up and started appearing in cult anthologies along with a generation of Indian English poets.

She was noted for her many Malayalam short stories as well as many poems written in English. Das was also a [syndicated columnist](#). She once claimed that "poetry does not sell in this country [India]," but her forthright columns, which sounded off on everything from women's issues and child care to politics, were popular. Das' first book of poetry, *Summer in Calcutta* was a breath of fresh air in Indian English poetry. She wrote chiefly of love, its betrayal, and the consequent anguish.

Kamala Das has received many awards for her literary contribution, including:

- Nominated and shortlisted for [Nobel Prize for Literature](#) in 1984.
- Award of Asian PEN anthology - 1964
- [Kerala Sahitya Academy Award](#) - 1969 (for Cold)
- [Sahitya Academy Award](#) - 1985
- Asian Poetry Prize - 1998
- Kent Award for English Writing from Asian Countries - 1999
- [Vayalar Award](#) - 2001
- Honorary [D.Litt](#) by [University of Calicut](#) - 2006
- [Muttathu Varkey Award](#) - 2006
- [Ezhuthachan Puraskaram](#) - 2009

### Summary

In the poem *In Love* Kamala Das shares the sexual experience of a woman. She begins the poem by referring to the sun and the atmosphere. The sky on which the sun burns reminds her about her lover. She says that his mouth and pale limbs are approaching her as a carnivorous plant with unending sexual desire. In the room or anywhere he reaches her in his need for his love; i.e to make love to her. He does not embrace her as a complete thing. She describes their meeting as a mechanical one. He neglects her feelings whenever they are meeting. She is silent while he enjoys her as a triumphant. At noon time she is used to watch the crows flying like they are carrying poison in their wings. At night she listens to the sounds of the corpse carriers calling 'Bol Hari Bol'. She loses her sleep and she walks through the veranda at night sleepless. Millions of questions comes to her mind at that time. All the questions are about him. She never can call his presence love since he is a 'skin-communicated thing' for her. She finds that he is a person whose actions are merely based on lust.

### Word meanings and explanations

Carnivorous plant: a plant which feeds upon insects by trapping them

Lust: sexual desire

Jigsaw: a mechanical saw

Moody: gloomy

Gaiety: enjoyment

Sleek: shining

Corpse: dead body

Lacing: decoration

Skin-communicated thing: lust

### Short answer questions

1. When does she remember him?

Ans: Whenever she sees the sky on which the sun is burning she thinks about him and his features.

2. Explain the figure of speech in 'carnivorous plant'.

Ans: With a beautiful simile, Kamala Das explains the attitude of her lover towards her. The limbs of her lover are compared to the carnivorous plants reaching out for her.

3. 'I lie, ignoring my poor/ Moody mind' Explain.

Ans: Kamala Das suggests that though the lover is in his high spirits, she is plunged in to gloom. For him, it is enjoyment, but she never enjoys it.

4. How does the poet evaluate her lover?

Ans: She describes her lover as person whose feeling cannot be called love. He is a person who can find pleasure related to lust.

### Paragraph questions

1. The theme of *In Love*.

Ans: The poem *In Love* revolves around carnal love. Kamala Das describes her lover who fails to show love but only seeks sexual gratification out of her. She compares his appearance to a burning sun. The burning sun reminds her about him. She also is a person who indulges in sexual act without any love towards the person. He approaches her in order to quench his desire. He never finds time to spend with her and do not share his feelings with her. She is left alone in the city life where she gets the company of the sounds of the crows and the corpse carriers. She spends sleepless nights in the veranda. From the beginning to the end of the poem, poet speaks about the lack of love in her life. She describes love as a skin-communicated thing in their life.

2. The diction and images in *In Love*.

Ans: Like the other poems of Kamala Das, *In love* too uses a lot of similes, metaphors and images. Without any musical effect, she arranges the poem in the manner of a prose. She effectively arranges the words to bring the ideas in the correct sequence. In the beginning of the poem, she brings the image of the burning sun which mentions the nature of her lover. She uses the simile of the carnivorous plant to show how much

desire her lover shows towards her. She compares the limbs of her lover to the carnivorous plant which shows the same nature. The description of his embrace with a finished jigsaw is a metaphorical usage. The sound created by her lover is compared with trumpets since it shows his victory over her. She again uses simile when she portrays the crows as they are carrying poison in their wings. The most brilliant use of diction appears towards the end of the poem when she states his love merely as a skin-communicated thing.

### Essay

1. *In love* as poem as a disenchantment in love.

## Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T S

Nissim Ezekiel

### Introduction

Nissim Ezekiel, one of the major poets in Indian English Literature was born in Bombay in 1924. He had his education from Bombay and London. Most of Ezekiel's poetry is for adults, as it is serious and quite difficult to understand. Ezekiel has the place in Indian English literature as one of the writers who had made a deviation from the inflated style of writing. As being a reader in American Literature, he was well versed in English and could use the language to express feelings in a better manner. His poetry collections are *Hymns in Darkness*, *Sixty Poems*, *A Time to Change*, *The Exact Time* etc.

Ezekiel's first book, *The Bad Day*, appeared in 1952. He published another volume of poems, *The Deadly Man* in 1960. After working as an advertising copywriter and general manager of a picture frame company (1954–59), he co-founded the literary monthly *Jumpo*, in 1961. He became [art critic](#) of *The Names of India* (1964–66) and edited *Poetry India* (1966–67). From 1961 to 1972, he headed the English department of [Mithibai College, Bombay](#). *The Exact Name*, his fifth book of poetry was published in 1965. During this period he held short-term tenure as visiting professor at [University of Leeds](#) (1964) and University of Pondicherry (1967). In 1967, while in [America](#), he experimented with LSD. In 1969, [Writers Workshop](#), Ezekiel published his *The Damn Plays*. A year later, he presented an art series of ten programmes for Indian television. In 1976, he translated Jawarharlal Nehru poetry from English to [Marathi](#), in collaboration with Vrinda Nabar, and co-edited a fiction and poetry anthology. His poem *The Night of the Scorpion* is used as study material in Indian and Columbian schools. Ezekiel also penned poems in 'Indian English' like the one based on instruction boards in his favourite [Irani café](#). His poems are used in [NCERT](#) and [ICSE](#) English textbooks. He got Padmashri award in 1988 and the Sahitya Academy cultural award in 1983.

The poem *Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T S* is a representation of the influence of mother tongue over English language used by the Indian speakers. He explains the idiomatic expressions introduced by the Gujarati people as an example of the whole Indians. He portrays the way in which the tenses and words are used in wrong places.

### **Paraphrase**

The poem deals with a farewell function of Miss Pushpa organized by her nearer ones. The poem is written in the first person narrative in which a person gives the description of Miss Pushpa. The poem starts with the speaker addressing all his friends. He tells them that Miss Pushpa is going abroad in two or three days. He states that they have gathered there to wish her bon voyage.

After these statements the speaker explains the character of Miss Pushpa. It is known to all of them that she is a very sweet personality. She always smiles for no reason, which shows her cheerful nature. Her nature can induce the same feeling in others too. The speaker describes that she smiles because she feels to smile.

His next reference is to her family. She hails from a well known family. Her father is a renowned advocate. But the speaker at first could not recall the place where her father used to work. He has a confusion that whether it was at Surat or Bulsar. But within seconds he recollects it and says that her father used to practise at Surat. Eventually the speaker's memories travel in its own path and he shares his experience of staying at his uncle's friend's home many years before. The wife of uncle's friend was an excellent cook.

After this deviation from the actual matter, the speaker returns to the description of Miss Pushpa. Now he states how much nice she is in her interaction. She is popular among women as well as men. From this line speaker begins to shower the wrong usages of English. But what he is trying to say is that Miss Pushpa is a good spirited girl. She is ready to do any kind of duties.

Along with that she is always ready to help anyone at anytime. She does not have the habit of saying 'no' to anyone who asks for help. Today she is going to improve her potentials. He wishes her bon voyage. The poem ends in the usual way of putting an end to a meeting. The speaker asks others to share their memories with Miss Pushpa and also asks her to sum up with her remarks.

### **Word meanings and explanations.**

Good bye party : farewell party  
Departing : leaving

Foreign	: abroad
Two three days	: two or three days ( as used in Indian languages)
Bon voyage	: French term which means Happy Journey
You are all knowing	: all of you know
What sweetness is in	: how sweet she is
External sweetness	: external beauty, beautiful appearance
Internal	: here her internal beauty
Smiling and smiling	: keep smiling
For no reason....	: the line actually gives the idea of a person who is insane, but the speaker refers to the ability to keep smiling
Is coming	: belongs to
Renowned	: famous
'Just now....it'	: I will do it right now
Prospect	: potential

### Short Questions

1. Comment on the title of the poem *Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T S?*

Ans: The poem is sarcasm against some Indian users of English who do not follow the grammatical rules properly. The title proclaims the same idea since the term Goodbye party is used instead of farewell party.

2. Why have people gathered in this meeting?

Ans: The people have gathered for wishing a happy journey to Miss Pushpa who is going abroad.

3. Comment on the character of Miss Pushpa as described by the Speaker in the poem?

Ans: According to the speaker, Miss Pushpa is a beautiful girl with good qualities. Her heart is too attractive as herself.

4. To which kind of family does Miss Pushpa belong to?

Ans: Miss Pushpa belongs to an upper class family. Her father was well known advocate of Surat.

5. Explain the speaker's experience at Surat?

Ans: At Surat, the speaker stayed at his uncle's friend's family. The wife of that house owner was a good cook.

6. What is the confusion of the speaker?

Ans: The confusion of the speaker is that whether Miss Pushpa's father practised at Bular or Surat.

7. Explain the 'good spirit' of Pushpa?

Ans: Miss Pushpa is ready to do the job which she is asked to do. She shows an attitude of 'I am ready to do it right now'.

8. Why does Miss Pushpa leave the country?

Ans: Miss Pushpa wants to improve her prospects.

9. How does the speaker conclude his speech?

Ans: The speaker concludes his speech by asking the other friends to speak and Miss Pushpa to sum up. He asks Miss Pushpa to sum up instead of asking her to give vote of thanks.

### **Paragraph Questions.**

1. Explain the influence of Indian language on English as seen in the poem *Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T S*?

Ans: From the title itself, this poem shows the influence of Indian languages over English. The title is given as goodbye party instead of farewell party. The main problem lies in the use of the idiomatic expressions. The speaker in the poem uses the expressions as in the native language, such as smiling and smiling, two three days, just now only I will do it etc. Another problem relies in the use of the tenses. In many occasions he uses present continuous tense instead of simple present tense. The lines like 'we are meeting today', 'you are all knowing', 'Miss Pushpa is coming' etc are some examples for that. There are many words used in this poem which are not correct according to English language. The phrase 'departing for' should be replaced by 'leaving to', the co-ordination of 'internal sweetness' and 'external sweetness' is an ambiguous construction, 'most popular lady', 'renowned advocate', etc are some examples which are used by the poet to show how Indians are using English language.

2. Mention the elements of Indian culture in the poem?

Ans: *Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T S* is one of the interesting poems of Nissim Ezekiel. In this poem, the poet describes the farewell party organized in the name of Miss Pushpa. The friend who speaks about Miss Pushpa addresses her as 'our dear sister' which is a part of Indian culture. In India, women are given respect by

addressing as sister. The poem is filled with full of emotions which shows the intensity of relations among them. This also forms a part of Indian culture.

3. Describe the speaker in the poem?

Ans: *Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T S* is a poem written as a satire of Indian English. In the poem, the speaker is a typical example of the Indian speaker of English. His treatment of language is highly different from that of native English speakers. He makes many mistakes while he speaks. Moreover we can say that he is a person who is interested in speaking. He addresses Miss Pushpa as dear sister, which shows his manners. But from the digressions he makes during his speech, we can understand that he is a part of the upper class morality.

4. Explain the character of Miss Pushpa?

Ans: The party is arranged in the name of Miss Pushpa. She is going abroad. As the speaker progresses his speech, he makes many opinions about Miss Pushpa. According to him, she is a person who is attractive by her features and her nature. She is a broad minded person. She is very energetic and ready to do any work with pleasure. She can never say no to her friends. She always helps them. She keeps energetic relations among her friends irrespective of their gender. Moreover she is seen as a girl who always smiles.

### Essay

1. The poem *Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T S* as a satire.

### *Looking for a Cousin on a Swing*

A K Ramanujan

### Introduction

Attipate Krishnaswami Ramanujan (March 16, 1929 – July 13, 1993) also known as A. K. Ramanujan was a scholar of [Indian literature](#) who wrote in both English and [Kannada](#). Ramanujan was an Indian poet, scholar and author, a philologist, folklorist, [translator](#), [poet](#) and [playwright](#). His academic research ranged across five languages: [Tamil](#), [Kannada](#), [Telugu](#), [Sanskrit](#), and [English](#). He was educated at Marimallappa's High School and [Maharaja College of Mysore](#). In college, Ramanujan majored in science in his first year, but his father, who thought him 'not mathematically minded', literally took him by hand to the Registrar's office and changed his major from science to English. He was a Fellow of [Deccan College, Pune](#) in 1958 - 59 and [Fulbright Scholar](#) at [Indiana University](#) in 1959 - 62. He received his Ph.D. in [Linguistics](#) from [Indiana University](#). His famous works are *The Interior Landscape: Love Poems from a Classical [Tamil Anthology](#)*, *Speaking of Siva*, *The Literatures of India*, *Hymns for the Drowning*, *Poems of Love and War*, *Folktales from India*, *Oral Tales from Twenty*

Indian Languages, "Is There an Indian Way of Thinking?", [When God Is a Customer: Telugu Courtesan Songs by Ksetrayya and Others](#) and [A Flowering Tree and Other Oral Tales from India](#). A.K. Ramanujan died in Chicago, on July 13, 1993.

## A. Summary

The poem starts with the reference to the village life of the narrator in his childhood. He says that he and his girlfriend sat together on a village swing when she was four or five years old. He was her cousin. He was six or seven years old. She felt him with every movement of swing. After swinging they climbed on a tree. The tree was not tall at all. It was full of leaves like a fig tree, but they were unaware about it.

Now the poet narrates their experience of being adults. She is looking for swings in the cities and its fifteen suburbs. She is longing for a life like the childhood, but tries to be unaware about it. The swing has been tied to the branches of the tree which is full of red coloured figs. It seems that the tree will shed a large number of figs at a single shaking.

## Word meanings and explanations

Lunge	: thrust
Lunging pits	: pits made out of lunging on the ground
Suburbs	: nearby places
Crotch	: junction of two branches
Brood	: group
Scarlet	: red
Sneeze	: expel air through nose

## Short Questions

1. What was the age of the cousins when they used to swing?

Ans: At the time of swinging, the girl was four or five years and the boy was six or seven years old.

2. What does the poet mean by 'she felt him in the lunging pits'?

Ans: The poet refers to the physical contact of the boy and the girl. This closeness of the bodies brings their minds closer and thrills them to keep the memories in mind for a long time.

3. Comment on the swing?

Ans: The memories of the days spent with cousin remains in the mind of the girl. Here swing stands as the symbol of the sexual desire in the mind of the women for her

cousin. She recalls the pleasures that she experienced due to the touch of her male cousin.

### Paragraph questions

1. Comment on the effectiveness of the image of swing to establish the poet's relationship with the past.

Ans: The poem is in the form of memories and thoughts narrated by a woman. She describes her unforgettable days in a village during her childhood. She narrates her childhood experience of swinging with her male cousin when she was four or five years old. Both of them enjoyed swinging and also felt each other when their bodies touched while swinging. When they pushed the swing, their bodies came into contact and she felt his closeness. That feeling remains in her even after growing up. About the end of the poem, the girl has grown up and recaptures the feelings she had at her childhood. She remembers the swinging and the movements which made her happy. She openly speaks that she is looking for a cousin who can bring the same feeling to her mind. But she fails to find out a single swing in the city where she lives. Probably the poet refers to her sexual desire for her childhood friend.

2. What are the differences between the two parts of the poem?

Ans: The first part of the poem is entirely about the memories of the woman about her childhood spent in the village. It is the recollection of the past upon which her present life depends. It describes the activities of the children when they are at the age of playing. They swing on the same swing and also climb up on the trees. They physically get attached at that time. From that time onwards she begins to feel his presence. But the second part of the poem is about the grown up one who remembers her cousin who was her playmate of childhood days. Now her life has been dried up and she is searching for a cousin who can provide her the same feeling. But she fails to find out any swing in the city. This shows the difference between the life of a village and a city. In the city, relationship and the time are two rare things which we cannot find.

3. Comment on nostalgia in the poem.

Ans: *Looking for a Cousin on Swing* is a reminiscent poem. The poem recollects the innocent incidents of childhood. Nostalgia refers to the wistfulness for the past experiences. In the poem, narration is in third person, the narration from the angle of a woman. Beginning of the poem is nostalgic and is filled with the memories of childhood. As in many literary works, the village atmosphere and the children who spend their time with the nature form the theme of this earlier section. Then the grown up girl unfolds her wish to gain a cousin or a person who can take her to the old days. She wants to keep the company of such a person. She says that she was innocent

about the feelings she had to her cousin when she was a child. But now, as a grown up person she realizes what she feels towards her cousin.

## Essay

1. Critically evaluate the theme of the poem *Looking for a Cousin on Swing*.

### *Postcard from Kashmir*

**Agha Shahid Ali**

#### **Introduction**

Agha Shahid Ali's collections include *A Walk Through the Yellow Pages*, *The Half-Inch Himalayas*, *A Nostalgist's Map of America*, *The Country Without a Post Office*, *Rooms Are Never Finished*. Agha Shahid Ali was educated at the [University of Kashmir](#) and the [Hindu College, University of Delhi](#). He earned a Ph.D. in English from [Pennsylvania State University](#) in 1984, and an M.F.A. from the [University of Arizona](#) in 1985. He held teaching positions at nine universities and colleges in India and the United States. Ali expressed his love and concern for his people in *The Country without a Post Office*, written with the [Kashmir conflict](#) as backdrop. He was a translator of the Urdu poet [Faiz Ahmed Faiz](#).

He compiled the volume *Ravishing DisUnities: Real Ghazals in English*. His last book was *Call Me Ishmael Tonight*, a collection of English [ghazals](#), and his poems are featured in *American Alphabets: 25 Contemporary Poets* (2006) and other anthologies. He died of brain cancer in December 2001 and was buried in [Northampton, Massachusetts](#).

#### **Summary**

The poem is in the first person narration. Here the poet describes his nostalgia of his home land. He says that entire Kashmir shrinks into the mailbox within a four by six inch sized post card. It brings his home close to him. He can hold his homeland into his hands. He always loved neatness. Now he can hold the great Himalaya in his hand as the background in the postcard.

He says that this is his home. By the line he is referring to his home land which appears in front of his eyes. To him, the water of Jhelum is so clean and blue in colour. He is so overexposed towards his homeland now. His memory of the place is still not clear. It is like a large, negative, black and white, with the picture not developed on paper.

#### **Word meanings and explanations**

Shrinks:            reduced in size

Jhelum: a river in Kashmir

Ultramarine: deep blue in colour

Overexposed: to expose a film or photographic for too long period

Undeveloped: a picture not properly developed on paper

### Questions with short answers

1. 'I always loved neatness.' What is the relevance of this statement in the poem?

Ans: The poem is about Kashmir and its beauty depicted in the postcard.

2. 'My love so overexposed.' Bring about the beauty in the image.

Ans: In general, the term *overexposed* usually refers to films and photographic paper. But here, the poet uses this image to explain his nostalgic feeling which flows outside on watching the picture of Kashmir.

3. Comment on the last stanza of the poem.

Ans: In the concluding stanza, he mentions his memories about Kashmir. The picture of Kashmir in his mind is in black and white and blurred; it is in contrast with the picture in the postcard.

4. How does the poet describe Jhelum?

Ans: According to the poet, the water of Jhelum is clear and neat. It is deep blue in colour.

### Paragraph questions

1. Comment on the imagery in *Postcard from Kashmir*.

Ans: There was a period in the world history, when the people used letters as a means to exchange their idea, news and wishes. Technology has almost replaced letters sent through the post offices. Here the poet describes the nostalgia about his homeland. A four by six inched postcard brings the warmth of their land and dear ones. Postcard in this poem is a powerful image used by the poet to portray what a person who lives in Diaspora feels. The postcard raises memories in him about the time he had spent in his native land. Now the poet is in self imposed exile to U S. The background of Kashmir printed in the postcard and the Himalaya in the box make an automatic leap in his mind about the black and white pictures he keeps in his memory.

### Essay

1. *Postcard from Kashmir* is a nostalgic poem containing the elements of Diaspora. Explain?

## SECTION TWO

### PROSE AND SHORT FICTION

#### *The Weed*

**Amrita Pritam**

#### **Introduction**

Amrita Pritam (31 August 1919 – 31 October 2005) was a [Punjabi](#) writer and poet, considered as the first prominent woman [Punjabi](#) poet, novelist, and essayist, and the leading 20th-century poet of the [Punjabi language](#), who is equally loved on both the sides of the India-Pakistan border. With a career spanning over six decades, she produced over 100 books, of poetry, fiction, biographies, essays, a collection of Punjabi folk songs and an autobiography that were translated into several Indian and foreign languages.

She is most remembered for her poignant poem, *Aj Aakhaan Waris Shah Nu* (Today I invoke Waris Shah – "Ode to Waris Shah"), an [elegy](#) to the 18th-century Punjabi poet, an expression of her anguish over massacres during the [partition of India](#). As a novelist, her most noted work was *Pinjar* (The Skeleton) in which she created her memorable character, *Puro*, an [epitome](#) of violence against women, loss of humanity and ultimate surrender to [existential](#) fate; the novel was made into an award-winning film, *Pinjar* in 2003.

When the former [British India](#) was partitioned into the independent states of India and Pakistan in 1947, she migrated from [Lahore](#), to India, though she remained equally popular in Pakistan throughout her life. Known as the most important voice of the women in [Punjabi literature](#), in 1956, she became the first woman to win the [Sahitya Academy Award](#) for her [magnum opus](#), a long poem, *Sunehe* (Messages). Later she received the [Bhartiya Jnanpith](#), one of India's highest literary awards, in 1982 for *Kagaz Te Canvas* (The Paper and the Canvas). The [Padma Shri](#) came her way in 1969 and finally, [Padma Vibhushan](#), India's second highest civilian award, in 2004, and in the same year she was honoured with India's highest literary award, given by the [Sahitya Academy](#) (India's Academy of Letters), the [Sahitya Academy Fellowship](#) given to the "immortals of literature" for lifetime achievement.

#### **Summary**

Angoori was a rustic girl living in an Indian village. She was dark in complexion but beautiful. Simple, uneducated and superstitious, she was married to Prabhati whose first wife died six years ago. The marriage was postponed after the engagement for five years on account of her tender age and her mother's paralytic attack.

Angoori used to wear purdah, but a few days later she started covering only her hair. She was proud of her silver jewellery in her hand. During the hot weather, she used to spend most of the time outside her hut. She used to sit under the neem tree in front of the speaker's house. She was curious to know what the speaker was reading. She confessed that she was illiterate. She did not want to learn because she believed that it was sin for women to read. According to Angoori, it was not a sin for the speaker to read because she was a city woman.

Angoori's body was like rightly kneaded dough in a bakery. Her husband, Prabhati, was old and short. The speaker asked her how marriages are arranged in her village. She explained that when a girl was around five years old she adored someone's feet and that was her husband. Her father used to take money and flowers and put them at the son-in-law's feet. The girls never saw their future husbands at all unless they were in love with someone. She described how love affairs crop up in the village. A man would give the wild weed to a girl who would then turn crazy and elope with him. The weed, according to her was concealed in paan or so. So Angoori's mother advised her in her childhood itself not to accept paan from anyone. A friend of Angoori had the experience, and Angoori recalls it with sorrow. She used to sing day and night since then.

One day the narrator found Angoori sitting under the neem tree in a sad mood. She told the speaker that she wants to learn how to read and write her name. Sitting in a pitiable mood, she sang the song of her friend. The narrator found her in a trance. She understood that Angoori had not eaten anything, and did not have even a cup of tea. The reason for her present state was the night watch man who used to bring milk for them. His name was Ram- Tara. Ram-Tara, Angoori and her husband Prabhati used to have tea together. Now he had gone to his village. Ram Tara was good-looking, and full of jokes. The narrator asked Angoori if her mood was caused by the weed. On hearing it tears welled up in Angoori's eyes. In trembling voice she said that she never took sweets or even betel from Ram Tara, but used to take tea from him. Her words sank in tears.

### Glossary

Weed (title)	: tobacco; marijuana
Drunk once at the conjugal well	: enjoyed married life once
Conjugal	: of marriage

Prerogative	: privilege; right
Accentuated	: emphasized; strengthened
Consummated	: complete the marriage with sexual union
Wring	: twist
Gesture	: deed
Calico	: a printed cotton cloth
A yard-and-a-half of calico.....the towel mentioned nubile : of marriageable age	
Reluctant (noun: reluctance)	: unwilling
Tinkling	: ringing
Ankle-bells	: bells on the ornament worn on lower part of the legs
Clasp	: hook
Elated	: happy
Trinkets	: worthless ornaments
Neem	: margosa
Spilt	: over flown
Puddles	: small pools of muddy water
Redeem	: compensated for
Ecstasy	: extreme joy
Radiating	: spreading
Resilient	: rebounding
Lump	: mass
Dough	: paste of bread
Kneaded	: flour mixed with water and pressed
Clinging	: holding tight
Plasticity	: quality of plastic
Leavened	: fermented
Rippling	: wavy
Impregnated	: saturated
Profound (noun: profundity)	: great

Languor (adj.: languid)	: dreaminess
Angularity	: forming angles
Euclid	: a Greek mathematician
Pensive	: thoughtful
Sternly	: strictly
Abstracted	: absent-minded
Respond (noun: response)	: react
Abruptly	: suddenly
Hunched	: thrust out
Chill	: cold
Reign	: rule
Shiver	: tremble
Shimmer	: shine
Trance	: daze; partial unconsciousness
Apparently	: clearly
Quick-limbed	: smart
Rivulets	: small rivers
Betel	: a kind of leaf

### **Short questions and answers**

1. Why was Angoori's union with Prabhathi postponed for five years?

Ans. Angoori's union with Prabhathi was postponed for five years because of her tender age and her mother's paralytic attack.

2. "But the veil soon started to shrink until it covered only her hair." What does it suggest?

Ans. It suggests that she was gradually rejecting the patriarchal manacles imposed on women by society.

3. Cite two instances suggestive of her gradual unconscious rejection of the patriarchal norms.

Ans. Angoori kept purdah in accordance with the patriarchal manners, but by degrees, it shrank until it covered only her hair. She considered it a sin for

women to be educated, but subsequently she requested the narrator to teach her to read and write.

4. Comment on the following:

- a) Angoori's ideas on women's education
- b) Angoori's ideas on marriages in her village
- c) Angoori's concept of love marriage

Ans. a) Angoori considered it a sin for women to be educated.

b) Marriages of girls in the village were decided by the girl's parents, and the girl never saw her husband before the marriage.

c) Angoori considered love marriages being caused by the weed given to a girl by the man. When she ate it, she was tempted to leave her parents and elope with him.

5. What, do you think, turned Angoori towards education?

Ans. Angoori's attention turned towards education on account of her wish to see Ram Tara, the smart, handsome, jocular man, who used to bring milk for her. He had gone to his village.

6. Why did Angoori start singing?

Ans. Angoori started singing when she started loving Ram Tara.

7. The theme of the song and its significance in the story.

Ans. The theme of the song portray the changes wrought in nature by the different seasons. Symbolically it refers to the changes wrought in Angoori's heart because of her love for Ram Tara, the night-watchman. Just like seasons bring about changes in nature, love can bring changes in human nature.

8. Why did Angoori curse herself in a fast stream of tears at the end of the story?

Ans. Angoori cursed herself at the end of the story because her heart brimmed over with a sudden gush of affection for Ram Tara with whom she and her husband used to have tea sitting around fire. She believed that the tea contained the weed that would induce love.

### **Paragraph questions**

1. The appropriateness of the title, "The weed"

Amrita Pritam's story "The Weed" is about the superstition attached to the wild plant known as weed. The protagonist of the story, Angoori, believes that the weed can induce love for the person who has given it. In order to substantiate this superstition, she introduces the example of one of her friend who has given paan and eloped with

the person who gave it to her. Angoori's mother, therefore, prohibited her from taking paan or sweets offered by anyone. At the end of the story, Angoori falls in love for Ram Tara, the man who was used to bring milk for them and drank tea with her and her husband. When he leaves for his village, she cannot help a tug at her heart-strings. She attributes it to the weed she might have received unknowingly from him. The weed thus plays a major role in the story.

## 2. Social criticism in "The weed"

In *The Weed*, Amrita Pritam criticizes the male dominated society which discriminates women by denying them the right to get educated. They do not allow women to be free even in their own matters. Girls are forced to marry the men chosen by their fathers and even the custom of marriage is steeped in superstitions. The girl's father takes the young man's wet towel, wrings it dry symbolizing that he is wiping away the tears of grief that wet the towel. The writer humorously comments that no man can cry enough to wet a towel. Angoori had never seen Prabhati before their marriage. The marriage was postponed for five years because of her tender age. She is beguiled by superstitions of various types. According to her beliefs rooted in superstitions, it was a sin for a woman to get educated. Moreover a woman can be enchanted towards a man by a paan. A woman is thus undermined by superstitions and everything is in favour of men who can thus rule women.

## 3. Angoori.

Angoori is the heroine of Amrita Pritam's short story entitled "The weed". Steeped in superstitions, she is unaware of her inborn talents. She can sing like an angel and she has attractive features. She is married to an old, short, loose-jawed man, and she submits to it passively. She is uneducated. She believes that it is a sin for a village girl to be educated. One of her friends fell in love with a man, and this is also regarded as a sin and attributed to the weed she might have taken. Things began to go awry when she herself was swept off her feet by Ram Tara, a watchman who used to bring milk and have tea with her husband and herself. His jocular manners and handsome appearance cast a spell on her. She attributed it to the weed he might have given to her mixed in the milk. The writer shows how the life of a young girl thus falls to abysmal depths on account of patriarchal manners and superstitions.

## Essay

1. Evaluate Amrita Pritam's *Angoori* as a short story which represents the miserable life of ordinary women compelled to get married at a tender age?

Ans: Originally written in Punjabi, 'The Weed' is a short story by Amrita Pritam. It mainly deals with the superstition associated with the weed in a rural Indian society. While dealing with the popular superstition attached to the weed, the writer brings out the issue of gender discrimination rooted deep in that society. The leading character of this story, Angoori is known to the writer as a newlywed bride. The writer happens to know the different aspects of the society through Angoori's conversations.

Angoori is an Indian village girl. She is dark in complexion but beautiful. Simple, uneducated and superstitious, she is married to Prabhati whose first wife died six years ago. After the engagement, the marriage has to be postponed for five years on account of her tender age and her mother's paralytic attack.

Angoori is used to wearing purdah, but a few days later she starts covering only her hair. She is proud of her silver jewellery. When the weather became hot Angoori starts spending most of her time out of the hut. She sits under the neem tree in front of the speaker's house. She is very curious to know what the speaker is reading, but she confesses that she is illiterate. Even then she does not want to learn, for she believed that it was a sin for women to read. According to Angoori a city woman can read and it was not considered a sin.

Angoori's husband, Prabhati, is old and short. The speaker enquires her how marriages are arranged in her village. She explains that when a girl is around five years old she adores someone's feet and that is her husband. Her father takes money and flowers and put them at the son-in-law's feet. The girls of the village can never see their future husbands. Apart from these strange incidents, she explains the way in which girls fall in love. A man will give a paan to a girl in which the weed is hidden, and that girl will elope with him. So Angoori's mother advised her in her childhood itself not to accept paan from anyone. A friend of Angoori had the experience, and Angoori recalls it with sorrow. She used to sing day and night since then.

One day the narrator finds Angoori sitting under the neem tree in a sad mood. She tells the speaker that she wants to learn how to read, to write her name. Then she sings a song. It is the song that her friend in love used to sing. The narrator feels that she is gloomy. She learns that Angoori had not eaten anything, and did not have even a cup of tea. Angoori thinks about Ram-Tara who is good looking and has a nice behaviour. The narrator asks Angoori whether she has taken the weed. On hearing it tears fall down from Angoori's eyes. In trembling voice she says that she never took sweets or even betel from Ram Tara, but used to take tea from him. Her words are drowned in tears.

Angoori lives in a society where child marriage is still a painful reality. Without her consent, she herself had to enter her marital life at a very tender age. She had no

chance at all to see her would-be husband since hers was an arranged marriage. The society does not allow the girls to select a man whom they prefer to be their life partners. Angoori comes from a society where education is the exclusive prerogative of the men folk. As a member of her own community, Angoori had no opportunity to read and write.

Towards the end of the story, Angoori is also seen vulnerable to the charm of the weed. But her natural affection for Ram Tara is in truth her instinctive protest against the prevailing marriage system of her society. She was compelled to marry the aged widower Prabhati. To conclude, the title of the story 'The Weed' as such means a plant of no utility growing lavishly in an unwanted place. But, in Amrita Pritam's story, it is something that suppresses the rational faculty of the naïve villagers. The weed that charms Angoori appears to be the magical figment of her imagination. To our mind, however, it is only a misnomer for her flesh and blood – her basic human weaknesses.

### ***A Tryst with Destiny***

**Jawaharlal Nehru**

#### **Introduction**

Jawaharlal Nehru, born on 14 November 1889, was the [first Prime Minister](#) of [India](#) and a central figure in Indian politics for much of the 20th century. He emerged as the paramount leader of the [Indian Independence Movement](#) under the tutelage of [Mahatma Gandhi](#) and ruled India from its establishment as an independent nation in 1947 until his death in office in 1964. Nehru is considered to be the architect of the modern Indian nation-state; a [sovereign](#), socialist, secular, and democratic republic. He passed away on 27 May 1964.

The son of a prominent lawyer and nationalist statesman, Nehru was a graduate of [Trinity College, Cambridge](#) and the [Inner Temple](#), where he was trained to be a barrister. Under Nehru's leadership, the Congress emerged as a catch-all party, dominating national politics and winning consecutive elections in [1951](#), [1957](#), and [1962](#). He remained popular with the people of India in spite of political troubles in his final years as exemplified by the defeat in the [Sino-Indian War](#). [Guha](#) writes, "[had] Nehru retired in 1958 he would be remembered as not just India's best prime minister, but as one of the great statesmen of the modern world." Nehru, thus, left behind a disputed legacy, being "either adored or reviled for India's progress or lack of it".

#### **Summary**

Long ago we made an appointment to meet our destiny, and now the time comes to keep our promise. When the clock strikes twelve at night, India will become free. We step from an old world to a new one, when the soul of the nation, suppressed so far,

will be free. We should then take a promise that we shall serve not only India and her people but the whole mankind...

India started her quest for freedom long ago and since then the country has seen success and failures. But we have never lost sight of the ideals that inspired us. Now the period of misfortunes has come to an end, and India discovers herself. The achievement we celebrate is only a step to greater opportunities, for freedom and power are accompanied with many responsibilities. The responsibility lies mainly on the assembly representing the people of India. The past is over, and the future is not one for resting but for continuous striving so that we can fulfil the promises we have taken. Poverty, ignorance, disease and inequality of opportunity should come to an end in India.

We have to strive to make our dreams true. We have to be engaged in endless labour to release our dreams about our nation. We must write in our heart that India is a part of the world. Peace, freedom, prosperity and disaster are common in the world. Nehru requests the entire people of India to join the members of the assembly with confidence instead of indulging in pretty criticism.

The day which is appointed by destiny has come, and after a long struggle, India is free and ready to fulfil the promises the people have taken. A new history is taking birth which will decide the fate of not only India, but the entire Asian continent. The star of freedom has risen and the long-cherished dream is going to materialize. Freedom brings new responsibilities which must be faced with discipline. On this day we must remember the father of our nation. After him, we must remember the entire unknown soldiers and volunteers who served India till their death. We must also remember the Indians who stay abroad. We cannot rest until we throw away poverty, ignorance and disease reigning supreme in our nation. It is our responsibility to build a prosperous, democratic and progressive nation. Now that we are citizens of a free nation we have hard work ahead.

### **Glossary**

Trust	: agreement to meet
Destiny	: fate
Redeem	: perform
Pledge	: promise
Substantially	: ready
Suppressed	: controlled
Utterance	: give expression to
Solemn	: serious

Dedication	: sacrifice
Quest	: search
Trackless	: without any path
Striving	: efforts
Triumph	: success
To group	: to seize
Endured	: suffered
Nevertheless	: inspite of that; yet
Beckon	: call
Incessant	: continuous; non-stop
Beyond us	: more than what we can
Knit	: joined
Disaster	: danger
Isolated	: separate
Fragments	: pieces
Petty	: silly; unimportance
Ill will	: hostility; enmity
Mansion	: building
Dwell	: live
Slumber	: sleep
Vital	: strong
Cling	: hold tight
Anew	: once more; again
Comes into being	: exists
Vision	: dream
Cherished	: considered valuable
Materialize	: fulfill
Betray	: deceive
Encompass	: surround

Embody	: personify
Aloft	: high
Stray	: wander; go away from
Imprint	: mark
Magnificent	: grand
Tempest	: strong wind
Boundary	: border
Whither	: where
Endeavour	: attempt
Ensure	: make sure of
Ahead	: in front
On the verge of	: bordering on
Communalism	: partiality towards a particular group
Furthering	: promoting
Reverent	: respectable
Afresh	: new

### Short questions and answers

1. “Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny”. What does Nehru mean by this?

Ans. Nehru means that we, the people of India, made an appointment with destiny to meet National Freedom.

2. What does Nehru mean by “the service of India”?

Ans. By the “service of India” Nehru means the service of the millions who suffer. It implies the ending of poverty, ignorance, disease and inequality of opportunity.

3. What was the ambition of “the greatest man of our generation”? Was the ambition realized? If not, why?

Ans. The ambition of the greatest man of our generation was to wipe the tears from every eye. It is not yet realized because it is something beyond our capacity.

4. “On this day our first thoughts go to the architect of his freedom, the father of our nation.” Where was the father of our nation when Nehru was saying this? What was he doing?

Ans. When Nehru was saying these words, Gandhi, the father of our nation, was in Calcutta carrying on his mission of good will to establish communal peace in Bengal. While there was mass murder and outrage in Punjab on account of the partition of the state, none of these things happened in Bengal, which also had to witness partition. The presence of one man, Gandhiji, in Bengal prevented them.

### Paragraph questions

According to Nehru, Gandhi is the greatest man of our generation, who longed to wipe out tears from the eyes of every Indian. This act is something beyond our power and capacity, but it is disgraceful that the present generation is utterly blind to the tears of others. Day after day, men become more selfish and self-centred. Human beings utilize everyone for themselves. To add to it, communal feelings and political bigotry reign supreme in society. There are some political leaders who try to pile up fortunes for themselves. In order to achieve their aims, they exploit the people who suffer. Therefore Gandhi's ambition of wiping the tears of all is a distant dream. The goal is nowhere near being met. Casteism, against which Gandhi fought persistently is still not wiped out of the society. Gandhi's ambition is, therefore, still not realized.

1. "Freedom and power bring responsibility". What were the urgent responsibilities of the new rulers?

The urgent responsibilities of the new rulers were to put an end to communal struggles. In the two states of Punjab and Bengal, there were scenes of mass murder and outrage. A large number of people were brutally murdered, and several homes were wrecked. Migration and counter-immigration were going on a large scale. It was the duty of both the Indian and Pakistan governments to protect the minorities. Violence, veiled or unveiled, must be declared taboo. Strikes had to be deprecated and the control on essential commodities had to be withdrawn. Above all, the evil of corruption was on the rise and the new rulers should be vigilant and active against it. Caste distinction was striding in society and unless this evil was wiped out, the nation could never progress. The problems of the Harijans were considered beneath notice. All these had to be dealt immediately.

### Essay

1. Discuss the relevance of Nehru's speech in Indian history.

Ans: Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India. He was a great statesman who is responsible for all the progress of India. As the Prime Minister of India, Nehru shaped the foreign policy of the country. He gave support for the development of science and technology which in turn helped India to become one among the countries which hold the advanced technologies. Nehru was originally a lawyer but he was also an expert in most other subjects. *Pandit Nehru* was the name people used to address him in order to show their reverence towards his knowledge.

India won Independence from England on the 15th August, 1947. Nehru announced the happiest news to the entire world. During the colourful ceremony held at New Delhi, the flag of England was pulled down and the new tricolor national flag was hoisted. It was after that historical moment; Nehru delivered a speech which is known as "Tryst with Destiny".

Nehru began his speech by referring to the pledge made by Indians long years ago to win the freedom for the homeland. Finally freedom has reached in our hands and the long suppressed soul of the nation is liberated. Nehru asks the people of India to dedicate themselves to the service of India and to the service of the whole mankind.

Nehru recalls the memory of the great warriors of freedom struggle which resulted in the emerging of India as a new nation in the early hours of 15th August, 1947. Behind this success lies the long and great sacrifice done by the freedom fighters of many generations. According to Nehru, the people in India will collect their courage from the principles of the past. The success celebrated on the 15th August is only an opportunity for great successes in future. He asks the people of India to accept this challenge of making a new nation and serve the future generation of India.

Nehru reminds the people of India that freedom and power bring much responsibility. Before 1947, India depended upon England for leadership and guidance. But this day onwards, India is her own master and had to take her own responsibility. The new country has to take its own decisions, learn from mistakes and move forward. India has to grow into a mature and wise nation and be a model to other nations.

According to Nehru, all Indians should work hard for the development of their dear nation. Doing service to India actually means doing service to millions of poor people who suffer all over the country. Nehru feels that the past is over and it is the future that has to be taken care of. We have to dedicate ourselves for the future generations. Nehru urges the people to labor and to work hard to give reality to the dreams of the nation. Those dreams are not only for India but for the entire world. According to Nehru, all the countries in the world are closely connected. No one can live in isolation. Peace, freedom and prosperity are the common property of all humanity. Nehru warns the people that disaster in one part of the world can affect everyone else, because the world cannot be divided into small isolated pieces.

Gandhiji, who, according to Nehru, is the greatest man of our generation, longed to wipe every tear from every eye. Needless to say, this is something beyond our power and capacity, but it is disgraceful that the present generation is utterly blind to the tears of others. Day after day, men are growing more selfish and self-centered. "Everyone for oneself" is the policy adopted by man. To add to it, communal feelings and political bigotry reign supreme in society. Even several political leaders are now

interested in piling up a fortune. With their “power-inebriated” ways, they trample on the poor and the suffering people. Gandhi’s ambition of wiping the tears of all is therefore a distance dream. Casteism against which Gandhi fought persistently is still not wiped out of the society. Gandhi’s ambition is, therefore, still not realized.

The urgent responsibilities of the new rulers were to put an end to communal strife. The two states of Bengal and the Punjab were scenes of mass murder and outrage. A large number of people were brutally murdered, and several homes were wrecked. Migration and counter-immigration were going on a large scale. It was the duty of both the governments, Indian and Pakistan, to protect the minorities. Violence, veiled or unveiled, must be declared taboo. Strikes had to be deprecated and the control on essential commodities had to be withdrawn. Above all, the evil of corruption was on the rise and the new rulers had to be vigilant and active against it. Caste distinction was striding like a Colossus in society and unless this evil was exterminated the nation could never progress. The problems of the Harijans were considered beneath notice. All these had to be dealt with immediately. In all these respects, Nehru’s speech becomes relevant for India.

### *Mars in the Seventh House*

#### **R K Narayan**

R. K. Narayan (10 October 1906 – 13 May 2001), full name Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami, was an Indian writer, best known for his works set in the fictional South Indian town of [Malgudi](#). R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao were the three leading figures of early [Indian literature in English](#). Narayan’s works include the semi-autobiographical trilogy: [Swami and Friends](#), [The Bachelor of Arts](#) and [The English Teacher](#). Narayan’s works also include [The Financial Expert](#), hailed as one of the most original works of 1951, and [The Guide](#) for which he won the [Sahitya Academy Award](#).

The setting for most of Narayan's stories is the fictional town of Malgudi, first introduced in *Swami and Friends*. His narratives highlight social context and provide a feel for his characters through everyday life. He has been compared to [William Faulkner](#), who also created a fictional town that stood for reality, brought out the humour and energy of ordinary life, and displayed compassionate [humanism](#) in his writing. Narayan's short story writing style has been compared to that of [Guy de Maupassant](#), as they both have an ability to compress the narrative without losing out elements of the story. In a writing career that spanned over sixty years, Narayan received many awards and honours. These include the [AC Benson Medal](#) from the Royal Society of Literature and the [Padma Vibhushan](#), India's second-highest civilian

award. He was also nominated to the [Rajya Sabha](#), the upper house of [India's parliament](#).

### Summary

R K Narayan was born in an orthodox Brahmin family. He grew up in a society where the girls and the boys were not allowed to mingle each other. When he became a young man, he began to search for a lover who will match him. But he never could talk to any girl in the society. He found the girls unapproachable. He could watch them among the crowd, in the balcony, on the opposite side of the road etc, but never could talk with them. But his reading habit made him fall in love with girls. A single look of a beautiful girl made him fall in love with her and she made him awaken for so many nights. But on seeing another one, his love was transferred to the other one.

At a time he fell in love with girl in green sari who had an oval face. He used to eagerly wait for her and never missed her sight. He found chances to meet and talk to her. Once he proposed her. But his love for her disappeared very soon when he could not meet her for some days. Then he found a stout girl who was drying her hair on the terrace. She too could not keep his interest for a long time because a student of Maharani's college had stolen his attention from him with a single smile.

The last one in the serial love stories of R K Narayan was an English girl. They used to exchange letters and photographs. He wrote letters filled with his love and feelings for her. But he got the replies which never spoke about love. He continued writing letters until his marriage was fixed. Then he threw the letters and the photographs into the well.

Apart from the infatuations, he fell really in love with the girl in the year 1933, whom he married. Then he was staying with his sister at Coimbatore. He used to see to see the girl who would be fetching water from the street tap. He watched her when she was passing through the street. Later he happened to know that she was the daughter of the headmaster who occasionally visited their house. Narayan made a comradeship with him and sometimes visited him at the school. After establishing a good friendship with him, one day Narayan proposed his daughter. He could not reply at the moment as the consent from both the families was necessary. Moreover the horoscope must agree.

Unfortunately, the horoscopes did not match. According to the astrologers, the horoscopes were incompatible. So the proposal was rejected. Narayan became a tragic hero and left taking food. He avoided the girl and school. This continued for weeks. His sister was terrified by his nature. It was by this time he wrote the play *The Home of Thunder*. The astrologers did not change their calculations. Then, the headmaster who was considerate to him sent him to 'Chellappa Sir'. On hearing his story,

Chellappa Sir laughed and asked headmaster to carry on the idea of marrying off his daughter to Narayan because the horoscopes were not harmful.

The marriage was arranged with great pomp and splendour. They had a marriage function according to the wish of their parents. Soon after the marriage, Narayan's father was bed-ridden because of stroke. Hence his wife Rajam had to take the charge of the kitchen. She had to take care of his younger brothers and also had to keep an eye on the cook who had the habit stealing things. Even then she found time to spend with him.

Narayan started working for a newspaper, *The Justice*, published from Madras. The propaganda of this newspaper was against the Brahmins. Even then they appointed Narayan. The work was hectic at the newspaper as he had to go on foot for news hunting. The newspaper had to compete with the other newspapers. Most of the news collected by Narayan was unimportant and was not published. At home he used to share news to his wife while relaxing. After tea, he had to rush to magistrate court. On Saturday afternoons he had to attend the municipal meeting and academic meeting on some days. One day a professor in history insisted that the news should be scrutinized by him before publication. Narayan insisted that it was an act which violated the freedom of press. He protested against it with the support of some journalists.

Narayan was interested in reporting murders and he use the word alleged to mention that. He was familiar to the police officers and prominent figures in the society. He was able to earn thirty rupees a month. He enjoyed his work but had to leave the job since he was kicked off from the payment for three months. Financial crisis began and he had to manage family expenses along with the needs of his wife.

When Narayan received a cable from his friend Purna who was at Oxford, his work with *The Justice* came to an end. The cable had the message that his novel was selected for publication with the influence of Graham Greene. At first, his novel *Swami and Friends* was rejected by many publishers. Purna searched for publishers and at last he reached Hamish Hamilton with a recommendation from Graham Greene. But he rejected Narayan's second novel *The Bachelor of Arts* since *Swami and Friends* was not a financially successful one. It was Nelson who published *The Bachelor of Arts*.

Narayan's father passed away in 1937. He had not saved much money then. But with the birth of his daughter his second novel was published and he was pleased with his life. His short stories were accepted all over India and worldwide. He and his elder brother lived in the same house which had the name 'Rama vilas'. Both of them shared the expenses. By that time he wrote humorous articles in "Merry Magazine" and started his works for his third novel *The Dark Room*. Every morning, he used to leave home for three hours. At his home writing was not easy and he was provided

with room by the secretary of college union. *The Dark Room* dealt with the story of woman in an orthodox Indian society. It was published by Macmillan in 1938 with the approval of Graham Greene.

### Glossary

All and sundry: all the various people

Bestow: to present or gift

A la Victoria Cross: an early 10<sup>th</sup> century Austrian Christian ornamental cross covered with gold and precious stones.

Marie Corelli: (1855-1924) a British novelist, who shot into instantaneous fame with the publication of her first novel, *A Romance of Two Worlds* in 1886

Ogle: look someone amorously

Lewd: obscene

Infatuation: foolish passion

P&O: the Peninsular Oriental Navigation company, a British shipping and logistics company started in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century

Unmitigated: not diminished in intensity

Pyol: a front stoop or platform; porch; verandah

Off and on: occasionally

Pensive: sad

Snapped: spoke sharply

Inexplicable: unexplainable

Replenishing: making full again

Squandered: spend wastefully

Idyllic: picturesque

Grist for my mill: (phr.) anything that can be turned to profit or advantage

Siesta: a rest in the early afternoon

Wrangle: argue noisily

Nanjangud or Chamarajnar: towns on the outskirts of Mysore

Informer: a person who informs against a criminal

Mutilate: damage a limb

Decimate:	destroy
Eke out:	support with difficulty
My elder brother:	Pattabhi
Seenu:	Srinivasan, his younger brother
Micawberish:	like Micawber (character in Charles Dickens' novel, David Copperfield); one who idles and trusts to fortune
Scrappy:	fragmentary
Fitful:	irregular

### Short questions and answers

1. Why did Narayan long for some engineering works?

Ans: The first girl whom Narayan admired was the sister-in-law of the engineer in the next street. In order to visit him at home and see the girl, he longed for some engineering business.

2. Who was the second lover of Narayan?

Ans: The second lover of Narayan was the stout girl who lived in the house on the way to his college. He first noticed her when she was drying her hair in the terrace.

3. Why did he befriend the headmaster?

Ans: Narayan became a friend of the headmaster only because he loved headmaster's daughter deeply.

4. What according to you should be the theme of *The Home of Thunder*?

Ans: The theme of *The Home of Thunder* could be love, resignation and death.

5. "but those correspondent of *The Mail* and *The Hindu* were lofty and did not care for the items I valued " What do you infer?

Ans: The meaning of this sentence is that the news which Narayan valued more was not significant for the correspondents of *The Mail* and *The Hindu*.

6. Why did Narayan work for a newspaper which had an agenda against the Brahmins?

Ans: Narayan worked for a newspaper which was against the Brahmins since he needed money for his daily life.

7. What was the word used by Narayan to report murder cases?

Ans: Narayan used the word 'alleged' to escape from the contempt of court.

8. What was the financial condition of Narayan and why?

Ans: Narayan had to face some financial crisis because the newspaper authorities never paid proper remuneration for his work. He had to meet the expenses of his house along with his brother and he faced financial crisis.

9. Who was the publisher of Narayan's first novel and how?

Ans: Hamish Hamilton was the publisher of his first novel. It was under the influence of Graham Greene Hamilton agreed to publish the novel.

10. Mention the nature of Narayan's love when he was at Coimbatore?

Ans: Apart from the earlier days' infatuations, Narayan deeply fell for the girl whom he met at Coimbatore.

11. Which was the most impossible infatuation of Narayan?

Ans: Narayan's the most impossible infatuation was his pen friend who lived in England.

12. What was the reply Narayan received from his girl friend?

Ans: As a reply for the long romantic letters of Narayan, his girl friend always wrote impersonal letters which described her hobbies and the holidays spent in Brighton.

13. How did Narayan manage to get connected with the girl whom he loved?

Ans: He became successful in making a relationship with the girl's father who was the head master of the school.

Why did Rajam's father reject the proposal?

Ans: The astrologers stated that the horoscopes of Narayan and Rajam cannot be joined together. Hence the headmaster rejected his proposal.

### **Paragraph questions**

1. Narayan's infatuation for a pen friend in England.

Ans: In his youth, Narayan used to be a boy who roamed around girls. His infatuations ended within a very short term and it lead towards other girls. One of his girlfriends was a girl to whom he used to write letters. He exchanged letters and photographs with this pen friend. He always kept her photo in his pocket and thought that she also will be doing the same thing with his photo. He wrote very long letters to her describing his intense love for her and also his dreams. He expected the same feeling in the replies, but his hopes were in vain. She replied in another manner. For her, he was a mere friend. Her letters described her life in England. She explained how she spent her holidays in Brighton, and her hobbies. He was thinking about the steamer which would be taking the letters for such a distance. He continued the relation up to the time of his marriage with intense care and love. But when his marriage was decided, he threw them away.

2. Rajam's competence in housekeeping.

Ans: Rajam was an ordinary woman brought up in a traditional society. Hence she had enough knowledge in housekeeping. Immediately after their marriage, Narayan's father was bed-ridden because of a paralytic stroke. So Rajam had to take the charge of the entire house. Narayan's younger brothers were young and her mother-in-law had to take care of the paralysed man. Rajam had great responsibility. Even then she found out time to spend with her husband. Hence she could win the prizes of both her husband and her mother-in-law. Within six months she learned the entire things related to that house.

3. Describe Narayan as a reporter.

Ans: At the time of his marriage, Narayan started his career as a reporter in *The Justice* published from Madras. Narayan's duty was to collect news from Mysore, type them with headings and send them to the head office in a sealed envelope. He had to send them before 2.20 pm. After this work, he had to rush to the magistrate's court after a short rest. On Saturday evenings, he had to attend the municipal meetings. Once he had collided with a history professor who insisted for the scrutiny of the news by himself. Narayan considered this act as interference in the freedom of the press. Narayan led a protest against him with the help of some other journalists. Even though he faced many difficulties in his career, he enjoyed it. But once he had to face the most serious issue related to his job. The management of *The justice* did not pay him salary.

## SECTION THREE

### DRAMA

*Naga-Mandala*

Girish Karnad

#### Introduction

Girish Raghunath Karnad (born 19 May 1938) is a contemporary [writer](#), [playwright](#), screenwriter, [actor](#) and [movie director](#) in [Kannada language](#). He is a recipient of the 1998 [Jnanpith Award](#), the highest literary honour conferred in [India](#).

For four decades Karnad has been composing [plays](#), often using [history](#) and [mythology](#) to tackle contemporary issues. He has translated his plays into English and has received acclaim. His plays have been translated into some Indian languages and directed by famous directors. He is active in the world of [Indian cinema](#) as an [actor](#), [director](#), and [screenwriter](#), in Hindi and Kannada flicks, earning awards along the

way. He was conferred [Padma Shri](#) and [Padma Bhushan](#) by the Government of India and also has won four [Filmfare Awards](#).

## Summary

Naga-Mandala is a play arranged in two acts. The story begins within a ruined temple. The playwright is seen in the ruined temple. The plot of the drama is double layered structure where the playwright himself indulges in conversation with the flames assembled in the ruined temple and the other part consisting of the characters which appear in the story told by the character 'story'. The major characters appearing in the drama are Rani, Naga, Appanna, Kurudavva and Kappanna.

When the drama begins, the playwright is sitting in the ruined temple. Through the monologue of the playwright the audience is informed about his plight. He is a person who is awaiting death. He can escape from the hands of death if he could keep himself awake for a single whole night of that month. It is the last day of the month and he is sitting in the temple. Then the flames of the village, retired after their day's work in the homes assemble there for gossiping. They share the spicy issues related to the families where they burn up to the late night. Then one of the flames shares the news of the story and the song which had escaped from the mouth of a house wife. Due to the compulsion of the playwright the story reveals her own plot before them. It is the story of a young woman Rani whose life has passed through unnatural circumstances.

The story revolves around Rani who was the single daughter of her parents. She has been married to Appanna at a younger age but lived with her parents until she reached puberty. At that time Appanna reaches her village and takes her with him. After bringing her home, he locks her up in the house and joins his concubine. He reaches home only for the lunch. One day, Kurudavva, the friend of Appanna's mother finds her locked inside the home and she advises Rani to give the magical roots to Appanna. It is the root which Kurudavva used to ensnarl her husband. At first she tries the small root, but she could not win him. Next day Kurudavva advises her to use the bigger root. She prepares curry with that root, but it turned bloody reddish. So she pours the curry on the ant-hill. The King Cobra lives in the ant-hill. The charmed snake takes the figure of Appanna and visits her every night. At first she cannot accept the behavior of her husband who behaves differently at noon time and night. But she adores Naga and becomes pregnant. Appanna who had never touched his wife has doubts about her and complained in the panchayath. Naga advises her to take the snake ordeal to prove her chastity and to escape from the punishment. In front of the panchayath she declares that instead of the hot-iron ordeal, she is ready to take the snake ordeal. She fears to undergo snake ordeal, but to escape from the punishment and harassment from Appanna, she goes to the ant-hill and took the King Cobra in her hand. She states that she had never touched a male except two, her husband and the

Cobra. Then cobra climbs on the shoulder of Rani and after that it returns to ant-hill. Then after her victory, she is adored by the villagers as a deity and Appanna leads a happy life with her.

However the playwright is not at all happy with the ends of the narrated story. Hence he suggests alternative ends. The first end portrays the snake which is entangled in Rani's hair and is dead. In the second end, Rani protects Naga as a token of her gratitude.

### **Word meanings and explanations**

Sanctum	: holy place
Deity	: a god or goddess
Seep	: percolate slowly
Pry open	: open with force
Morose	: sullen and ill-tempered
Abjure	: renounce on oath
Skinflint	: miser
Bloated	: swollen
Rumpus	: uproar
Gag	: silence
Glisten	: shine
Nonplussed	: completely perplexed
Antler	: each of the branched horns of a stag
Insomnia	: inability to sleep
Gallivant	: go about in search of pleasure
Entranced	: enchanted
Distraught	: extremely agitated
Groggily	: in an unsteady manner, semi-consciously
Vicious	: spiteful
Heinous	: utterly wicked
Dazed	: bewildered
Racket	: a disturbance, a din
Slither	: slide unsteadily

Figment	: a thing existing only in imagination
Shudder	: shiver from fear
Pelt	: fall quickly and torrentially
Ogress	: a man-eating giant in folk-lore
Carcass	: the dead body of an animal
Pine for	: long eagerly
Scowl look on a	: frown producing a threatening, bad-tempered person's face
Charade	: a game of guessing a word from an acted clue
Glumly	: dejectedly
Jeopardy	: danger
Surge	: move suddenly and powerfully forwards in large numbers
Vituperate	: abuse
Mesmerized	: spellbound
Restive	: restless
Docile	: submissive, easily managed
Hosanna	: shout of adoration
Prostrate	: lying face downwards
Mortified	: humiliated
Conundrum	: a hard or puzzling question
Besotted	: infatuated
Slough off	: drop off

### Short questions and answers

1. Where is the beginning of the play set?

Ans: The beginning of the play is set in an old ruined temple.

2. Discuss the meaning of the names of the characters.

Ans: In Naga-Mandala Rani is the queen of her parents, Appanna is a common man, Naga means king of snakes and Kurudavva means the blind woman. The name Kappanna denotes the darkness in the eyes of Kurudavva.

3. Describe the meeting of the flames.

Ans: The meeting of the flames is drawn to set an atmosphere for the main plot. Here it is described as they are meeting there to gossip about the families in the village.

4. How does Appanna treat Rani after bringing her home?

Ans: Appanna brings his wife when she attains puberty. After bringing her home, he locks her in the house and goes out.

5. How does the Cobra get attracted to Rani?

Ans. Rani pours the curry she had made using the magical roots on the ant-hill. Cobra drinks it and eventually it gets attracted to Rani.

6. Bring out the relevance of Kurudavva and Kappanna in the play.

Ans: Kurudavva, the friend of Appanna's mother and her son Kappanna make the twist in the play. Kurudavva gifts the magical root to Rani and because of that root Naga gets attracted towards Rani.

7. Describe the snake ordeal that Rani has undergone?

Ans: In order to prove her innocence and chastity, Rani takes the snake ordeal. During that she takes the Cobra in her hand and pledges that she had never touched a male except her husband and the Cobra. Cobra does not bite her and thus her innocence has been proven.

8. Why was the playwright not satisfied with the end?

Ans: The playwright considered that the story has a loose ending and it remained unfinished because of the disappearance of Kappanna. Moreover it had a happy ending.

9. Why did not Rani serve the curry made of magical root to Appanna?

Ans: Rani did not serve the curry to Appanna because it turned red in colour like blood. She feared that it may cause any problem to Appanna.

10. How did Kurudavva manage to get a husband?

Ans: Kurudavva mixed the medium sized magical root in tea and served it to the boy who was at her home. He never left her until his death.

11. How does Naga reach Rani's room?

Ans: Naga reaches Rani's room through the drain of bathroom. After entering the house, it takes the figure of Appanna and approaches Rani.

12. What was the playwright doing in the temple?

Ans: The playwright was trying to remain awake in the temple in order to keep himself alive.

13. Why did Appanna beat Rani?

Ans: Appanna beat Rani for going outside of the house.

14. What happened to the dog and the mongoose?

Ans: The dog and the mongoose were killed in the attack of Naga.

15. Why did Appanna bring dog and mongoose home?

Ans: Appanna brought the dog and mongoose to keep Kurudavva and Kappanna away from Rani.

16. What was the image Rani saw in the mirror?

Ans: Rani saw a cobra instead of the reflection Naga.

17. Where was Appanna going after locking Rani at home?

Ans: Appanna visited his concubine after locking her at home.

18. Why does he call Rani harlot?

Ans: Appanna calls Rani a harlot because she became pregnant. Appanna has never touched her and because of that he believes that she had committed adultery.

### **Paragraph questions**

1. The structure and the theatrical technique used in the play.

Ans: Girish Karnad has woven two famous Kannada folk tales together in Naga-Mandala. The first tale narrates the typical features of Kannada folk theatre and the second one narrates the features of the plot. The first section deals with the paradoxical nature of the oral tales and the independent nature of the story teller. The story has independent nature in the oral culture. Two stories are interwoven in such a way that the characters mingle each other. This problem play starts in the ruined temple and ends in the same place. But the rest of the play is situated in the house of Appanna. It has utilized the entire possibilities of the oral performances.

2. Even though the play is universal in theme, it is essentially Indian. Bring-out the Indian-ness in Naga-Mandala.

Ans: : Girish Karnad always packs the stories which hold themes with a universal nature in the atmosphere of typical Indian village. In Naga-Mandala, he deals the common issue of man-woman relationship. Extra marital affairs and the related issues are seen all over the world. He wraps such a story in the background of an Indian village. The story of Rani and Appanna happens in a village which is filled with superstitions. In the speeches of Rani and Kurudavva, we can see many examples for

such superstitions. The Panchayath is again an Indian element seen in the play. Rani has to leave her home after her marriage and that is certainly a part of the married life in Indian culture. Treatment of the saints and the boon provided by them are the typical scenes in Indian mythology and the same thing happens in the case of Kurudavva. Snake worshipping is also seen in this play. In so many ways Naga-Mandala shows Indian-ness.

3. The character of Naga.

Ans: According to the myths of Indian culture, Cobra is a creature which keeps vengeance against the people. It is also depicted as the symbol of sexuality. Here in the play, apart from the norms of vengeance and sexuality, Naga is pictured as a person who deeply falls in love with a woman. The desire for a human being is created in the mind of the cobra as a result of the biggest magical root used by Rani. But Naga appears as a lover who falls for his lover in tense. What he wants from her is her love and care. He rescues her and revenges upon the other creatures that Appanna had brought to keep her locked. He behaves indifferently when he happens to know that she is pregnant. He keeps silence even when Rani blames him for it. The whole thing which disturbs him is about her security from the society which is going to punish her for adultery. Thus, in the drama, snake that appears in front of us is not that of a revenging character, but that of a lover who deeply loves his lover.

**Essay**

1. Describe Naga-Mandala as a feminist play

Nagamandala is a folktale transformed into the metaphor of the married woman. It is a Chinese box story with two folktales transformed into one fabric where myth and superstition, fact and fantasy, instinct and reason, the particular and the general blend to produce a drama with universal evocations. The predicament of Rani as opposed to the name is deplorable than that of a maid. The name 'Rani' ridicules at the Indian ideal of womanhood as the Rani or Lakshmi of the household. As Virginia Woolf asserts in *A Room of One's Own*, "Imaginatively, she's of the highest importance, practically insignificant. She pervades [poetry](#) from cover to cover, is all but absent from history."

The woman is portrayed as dependant in all three phases of her life-as a daughter (Rani's dependence on her parents), as a wife (Rani's reliance on Appanna) and, as a mother (Kurudavva's handicap without Kappanna). In Indian society, the woman is said to be complete only after marriage. However, paradoxically she neither belongs to this world or that: her parental home or her husband's abode. For the woman, the home is said to be an expression of her freedom: it is her domain. However, Rani is imprisoned in her own house by her spouse in a routine manner that baffles others with the door locked from the outside. She does not shut the door behind her like Nora does in "A Doll's House", but God opens a door for her in the form of a King Cobra. The king cobra gets seduced by the love potion provided by Kurudavva to Rani to lure,

pathetically, her own husband who turns a blind eye to her. The snake assumes the form of a loving Appanna in contrast to the atrocious husband at day. The climax is reached when Rani becomes pregnant and Appanna questions her chastity. Her innocence is proved by virtue of the snake ordeal that the village elders put before her, and she is eventually proclaimed a goddess incarnate.

Appanna literally means "any man" and points to the metaphor of man in general, his chauvinistic stance and towering dominance to the extent of suppressing a woman's individuality. Rani endeavours to discover her individuality by seeking refuge in dreams, fairy tales and fantasies to escape the sordid reality of her existence. At an age where the typical fantasy would be a Sultan or prince coming on horseback, Rani's flight of the imagination transports her to a seventh heaven where her parents wait for her. So much for her aversion to the institution of marriage. Critics show her body as a site of "confinement, violence, regulation and communication of the victimized gender-self". And they also point out how she later uses the same body to rebel, to subvert and to negotiate her space in society. Appanna poses her as an adulterous woman whereas he himself has an illicit relationship with a concubine. He and his hypocritical society questions Rani's chastity and side-steps the validity of Appanna's principles. This is just a miniscule cross-section of the patriarchal society that we live in. In Indian myth, a miracle has been mandatory to establish the purity of a woman, while a man's mere word is taken for the truth; whether it be Sita, Shakuntala or Rani in this instance.

Again the playwright is a man, and the story is personified as a woman. So does Man create Woman? However the playwright echoes that the story has an autonomous existence and lives by virtue of interpretation and re-interpretation. Likewise, a woman has her own existence and lives by virtue of meaningful procreation. Thus, the gist of the framework of the story runs parallel to the theme of the main story. As Rani's role gets inverted at the end of the story and Appanna turns into a mere "instrument to prove her divinity", likewise roles get reversed as the playwright (a man who tells stories) "listens" to the Story (a woman).

## SECTION FOUR

### NOVEL

#### Roots and Shadows

#### Shashi Deshpande

#### Introduction

Shashi Deshpande was born in 1938 in [Dharwad](#), [Karnataka](#), India. She is an award-winning [Indian](#) novelist. She is the second daughter of famous Kannada dramatist and writer Sriranga. She was born in [Karnataka](#) and educated in [Bombay](#) (now Mumbai) and [Bangalore](#). Deshpande has degrees in [Economics](#) and [Law](#). When she was living

in Mumbai with his husband and two sons, she did a course on [journalism](#) at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and worked for a couple of months as a journalist for the magazine 'Onlooker'.

She has won two gold medals for academic achievements while she was a student. She published her first collection of short stories in 1978, and her first novel, 'The Dark Holds No Terror', in 1980. Her short articles were published in *Deccan Herald*. She won the [Sahitya Academy](#) Award for the novel 'That Long Silence' in 1990 and the [Padma Shri](#) award in 2009.

Deshpande's earlier works include simple stories on adventure and crime. Shashi Deshpande has written four [children's books](#), a number of short stories, and nine [novels](#), besides several perceptive [essays](#), now available in a volume entitled *Writing from the Margin and Other Essays*.

### Summary

*Roots and Shadows* narrates the complicated plot which is based on a joint family. The story is narrated through the eyes of Indu, who is the leading character of the story. Her life runs through the presence of the dominating character 'Akka'- the younger sister of her grandfather. Akka is a childless widow. Indu leaves the ancestral home at a time. After several years she returns and Akka is on death-bed at the time of her return. She is married to a person named Jayant who belongs to another caste and speaks a different language. Akka does not know about that alliance when Indu is making her visit with him after three years of their marriage.

The ancestral home has many members. Indu's uncle, his wife (who were called as kaka and Kaki respectively) and their children. Indu's widowed aunt, Atya, also lives there. Apart from them an uncle and his grandson Naren also live there. Akka dominates all of them even though they are very powerful male members of the family. Kaka brings Indu to that home immediately after the death of her mother. From childhood onwards, Indu shows a rebellious nature. She questions the priority of things and breaks the rules destined for women. She enjoys each moment she breaks the rules of Akka, a quality she acquired from her father Govind. In the busy life of a photojournalist, he cannot visit the ancestral home and his daughter. She leaves home when Akka insults her dead mother.

Up to the completion of her education Indu stays in hostel and after her studies she acquires the job of a journalist. She marries Jayant with the blessings of father and Kaka. In the beginning she feels that she want nothing else in life. But soon she realizes that she is also a woman like the others who had to give up their wishes to please others. She becomes much depressed at that time period and then she receives the call of Akka to reach at the ancestral home.

It is ten years after Indu reaches her ancestral home. There is Akka, holding the key which is intended to be handed over to Indu. Before her death, Akka informs Indu that she is going to inherit Akka's whole wealth. Along with choosing her hair, Akka has decided to marry off Mini to an uneducated man. Akka bestows lots of property in the name of Mini. Akka also promises to finance for her marriage.

With claiming of Akka's wealth to Indu, big crisis arises in the ancestral home. Throughout the three weeks which Indu spends at the ancestral home, the family members quarrel with each other and find mistakes of the others. Some of the family members want to retain the house and some others do not want to. All of them want money. Indu makes preparations for the marriage of Mini after confirming that she does not have any objection for such a marriage. After reuniting with her old uncle and Naren, she makes a rethinking and removes all dissatisfaction about life. She decides to live a life of her own after the death of Naren. After resigning from the job of journalist, she turns to be a creative writer. The old house is sold to a business man who has the intension of making a hotel. Old uncle dies before it was pulled down.

### Short questions and answers

1. Describe the theme of *Roots and Shadows*.

Ans: *Roots and Shadows* is about the educated women who are living in a patriarchal society. Here we can see Indu who struggles between the traditional rules and her self-respect and identity.

2. Who is the most dominating character in the novel?

Ans: The most dominating character in the novel is Akka; Indu's grandfather's sister. Every person in the ancestral home was controlled by her;

3. Why did Kaka and Kaki bring up Indu?

Ans: Indu's mother passed away after her birth and her father was busy with work. So Kaka brought her with him.

4. Discuss the character of Indu when she was at the ancestral home?

Ans: She showed rebellious nature in the ancestral home. She had a secret pleasure in breaking the rules of Akka.

5. What is Indu?

Ans: Indu is a journalist working for a magazine.

6. What was Akka's decision at death-bed?

Ans: Akka decides Indu as her heir. She also decides to marry off Mini with her money.

7. What was the reason for the distress raised at the home?

Ans: Akka's decision to make Indu her heir was the reason behind the distress raised at the ancestral home.

### Paragraph questions

1. Discuss the major issues described in the novel.

Ans: This novel is often regarded as a feminist novel. However, it is something more which reveals the meaningful terms of women's emancipation. Shashi Deshpande's major concern is to depict the anguish and conflict of the modern educated Indian women caught between patriarchy and tradition on the one hand and self expression, individuality and independence for the women on the other. Her fiction explores the search of the woman to fulfil herself as a human being, independent of her traditional role as daughter, wife and mother. She has examined a variety of common domestic crisis which triggers off the search for peace and stability. Deshpande's concern and sympathy are primarily for the woman. While revealing the woman's struggle to secure self respect and self identity for herself, the author subtly bares the multiple levels of oppression, including sexual oppression, experienced by women in our society. This novel is an account of a woman's journey for fetching out answers to some questions that are almost universal in nature. The novel deals with a woman's attempt to assert her individuality and to realize her freedom.

2. Sketch the character of Indu.

Ans: *Roots and Shadows* is a novel which portrays the picture of an educated woman trapped in the patriarchal society. Indu, who had lost her mother at the stage of a newborn baby, was brought up by her relatives. She lacked the care of her father too. From the childhood onwards she shows rebellious nature and questions the rules imposed on her as a girl. She grows up in a hostel and acquired a job soon after the completion of her studies. When she marries the person whom she loved deeply, she thinks that she is satisfied with her life. But later she realizes that her life is nothing but the adjustments made for the pleasure of others. She wants to live her own life. Hence in the last of the novel she leaves the job and accepts the career of a writer which could satisfy her. There are certain resemblances of Deshpande herself in this character.

### Essay

1. Critically evaluate *Roots and Shadows*.

Ans: *Roots and Shadows* is often regarded as a feminist novel. However, it is something more which reveals the meaningful terms of women's emancipation. Shashi Deshpande's major concern is to depict the anguish and conflict of the modern educated Indian women caught between patriarchy and tradition on the one hand and

self expression, individuality and independence for the women on the other. Her fiction explores the search of the woman to fulfil herself as a human being, independent of her traditional role as daughter, wife and mother. She has examined a variety of common domestic crisis which triggers off the search for peace and stability.

The novel deals with a woman's attempt to assert her individuality and to realize her freedom. At this point it is important to determine the nature and context of the questions and issues Deshpande raised in the novel, primarily by means of the introspective analysis through which the main protagonist, Indu, passes. The relationship, family structure and the social background of the novel provide an appropriate and very credible stage upon which the action unfolds.

Indu, the protagonist, is caught up in a conflict between her family and the professional roles, between individual aspiration and social demands. Indu, the journalist, is torn between self expression and social stigma. The majority of characters in the novel have restricted notions of cultural identity with which their vision of political changes is burdened. In this novel we come to learn how Indu is able to free herself from the stultifying traditional constraints and achieve her individuality. For Indu it is difficult to move towards emotional growth, peace and fulfilment; she must necessarily seek within and without herself not only to look for answers but also as a first step to identify the source of her disappointment and mental turmoil. Only then can she hope to be at peace with herself and with her world.

We do get from this novel a strong sense of the ambivalence that Indu feels towards both her family and the house which has sheltered her. This brings us to the other main issues confronting her. Where does her home lie? When she was young, she left the house full of resentment and rebellion, determined to prove for herself and the family that this was not her home. It is a rejection of the family in the most emphatic terms possible. This particular phase of her life gives her enough experience to know the world which exists outside the four walls. However, in the course of introspection and self analysis she comes to realize that there is indeed a comfort in living as part of the family, whatever its level or quality, and that the house she ran away from is still the one she thinks of everyday for the first few moments. It takes her no efforts to fall into the rhythm of life at her family's house despite the number of years she has been away from it. She does also realize that her efforts at making a family, a home consisting of just Jayant and herself, are not really succeeding. Her endeavor to draw a magic circle around the two of them is meaningless because she can neither keep the world away nor can she find the happiness and contentment in just this one relationship.

Yet another theme that frequently recurs in this novel is that of freedom, independence and detachment. Since her childhood Indu has rebelled against the rigid dictates of the

family matriarch, Akka. She gets a taste of what society expects from a woman through the way the various people in the family try to mould her to the well established cast of traditional household. She is made to feel like a criminal for being inquisitive and intelligent, for being willful, passionate about things and a non-conformist. Her only support is her old uncle, kaka and her aunt, Atya. However, she is too young to value their advice at that time, and so yearns for freedom.

In an effort to counter the pain of disillusionment, she tries to take the path of independence and detachment. However, these paths do not provide her with happiness either. She eventually realizes that what Old uncle has been trying to tell her all these years is the only solution. To find happiness in little things, finding a measure of freedom within the obligations of duty, and finding that there is no shame in being dependent on people, these are the only possible solutions to this eternal cycle.

Indu realizes that her home, her destination, her point of final arrival is Jayant and Jayant alone. She needs to shed off her complexes and not let her love for him. She also needs to do away with a large part of the façade she has built up around Jayant and to inject honesty and authenticity into their relationship. She comes away with a better understanding of her family and of what is really important for a meaningful domestic life. She is on a way to forgiving or at least understanding what has actually driven Akka to be the kind of woman she has been. Indu understands herself better during this period of introspection and self analysis. She has recognized that her morals would not suffer on the altar of her profession and that she would devote herself to the kind of writing she has always dreamed of doing. Looking from a broader perspective, in the end the realization comes that freedom lies in having the courage to do what one believes is the right thing to do and the determination and the tenacity to adhere to it, which alone can bring harmony in life.

-----