AMERICAN LITERATURE

UNIT-I

Annabel Lee

BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

It was many and many a year ago,
  In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
  By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
  Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,
  In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
  I and my Annabel Lee—
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of Heaven
  Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
  In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
  My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
  And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
  In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,
  Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
  In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
  Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
  Of those who were older than we—
  Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in Heaven above
  Nor the demons down under the sea
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
  Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
  Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea—
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

"Annabel Lee" is the last poem composed by Edgar Allan Poe, one of the foremost figures of American literature. It was written in 1849 and published not long after the author's death in the same year. It features a subject that appears frequently in Poe's writing: the death of a young, beautiful woman. The poem is narrated by Annabel Lee's lover, who forcefully rails against the people—and supernatural beings—who tried to get in the way of their love. Ultimately, the speaker claims that his bond with Annabel Lee was so strong that, even after her death, they are still together.

- **"Annabel Lee" Summary**
  - Many years ago, there was a kingdom by the sea. In this kingdom lived a young woman called Annabel Lee, whom the speaker suggests the reader might know. According to the narrator, Annabel Lee's only ever thought about the love between them.

They were both children, but their love went well beyond what love can normally be. In fact, this love was so special that the angels of heaven were jealous and desirous of it.

For that reason, back then, Annabel Lee was killed by wind from a cloud. She was then taken away by people the narrator calls "highborn kinsmen," who could be the angels or Annabel Lee's own family members. They enclosed her in a tomb, still within the same kingdom.

Retrospectively, the speaker believes that the angels, unhappy in heaven and envious of the love between him and Annabel Lee, caused the wind that killed her.

Their love, says the speaker, was more powerful than the love between people older and wiser than them. Furthermore, no angel from heaven or demon under the sea could ever separate his soul from Annabel Lee's.

Every time the moon shines, it brings the speaker dreams of his beloved. When the stars rise, he can sense her sparkling eyes. Every night the speaker lies down alongside Annabel Lee—whom he calls his "life" and "bride"—in her tomb, with the sound of the sea coming from nearby.

When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd

BY WALT WHITMAN

1

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

2
O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd—O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

3
In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard,
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

4
In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life, (for well dear brother I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die.)

5
Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peep'd from the ground, spotting the gray debris,
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless grass,
Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain from its shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin.

6
Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil'd women standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,

With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you journey,
With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

7

(Nor for you, for one alone,
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring,
For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you O sane and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies,
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes,
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you and the coffins all of you O death.)

8

O western orb sailing the heaven,
Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walk'd,
As I walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after night,
As you droop'd from the sky low down as if to my side, (while the other stars all look'd on,)
As we wander'd together the solemn night, (for something I know not what kept me from sleep,)
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west how full you were of woe,
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool transparent night,
As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost in the netherward black of the night,
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where you sad orb,
Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

9

Sing on there in the swamp,
O singer bashful and tender, I hear your notes, I hear your call,
I hear, I come presently, I understand you,
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detain'd me,
The star my departing comrade holds and detains me.

10

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,

Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western sea, till there on the prairies meeting,
These and with these and the breath of my chant,
I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

11
O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes,
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid and bright,
With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air,
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves of the trees prolific,
In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there,
With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows,
And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys,
And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

12
Lo, body and soul—this land,
My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides, and the ships,
The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light, Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri,
And ever the far-spreading prairies cover'd with grass and corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
The gentle soft-born measureless light,
The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfill'd noon,
The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars,
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

13
Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird,
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes,
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender!
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
You only I hear—yet the star holds me, (but will soon depart,)
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

14
Now while I sat in the day and look'd forth,

In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and the farmers preparing their crops,
In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and forests,
In the heavenly aerial beauty, (after the perturb'd winds and the storms,)
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the voices of children and women,
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sail'd,
And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor,
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals and minutia of daily usages,
And the streets how their throbbings throbb'd, and the cities pent—lo, then and there,
Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with the rest,
Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black trail,
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of companions,
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness,
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me,
The gray-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.

15

To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,
With pure deliberate notes spreading filling the night.

Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume,
And I with my comrades there in the night.

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.

And I saw askant the armies,
I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierc'd with missiles I saw them,
And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and bloody,
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs, (and all in silence,)
And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,
I saw the debris and debris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
But I saw they were not as was thought,
They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not,
The living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd,
And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffer'd,
And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.

16
Passing the visions, passing the night,
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands,
Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying song of my soul,
Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying ever-altering song,
As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling, flooding the night,
Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning, and yet again bursting with joy,
Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven,
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses,
Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
I leave thee there in the door-yard, blooming, returning with spring.

I cease from my song for thee,
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,
And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,
With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of woe,
With the holders holding my hand nearing the call of the bird,
Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well,
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands—and this for his dear sake,
Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

"When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" was written by the American poet Walt Whitman. Composed in the wake of President Abraham Lincoln's assassination, the poem takes the form of a **pastoral elegy**, mourning Lincoln's death while praising the beauty of springtime and the natural world. The speaker comes to accept death as part of life and suggests that, just as spring follows winter, the American people will flourish again after this period of grief. Whitman included the poem in his 1865 collection *Drum-Taps*, a sequence of poems based on his experiences working as a nurse during the American Civil War.

- **"When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" Summary**
  - 1

    The last time the lilacs bloomed in the front yard, and the powerful western star set too early, I grieved. And I will grieve again each time spring returns.

    Spring, you always return, and you will always bring me these three things: the lilac that blooms each year, the falling star, and thoughts and memories of the man I love.

    2

Oh, powerful western star that fell out of the sky! Oh, shadows of the night—Oh, temperamental, weeping night! Oh, bright star that vanished from the sky—Oh, the darkness that covers up this star! Oh, brutal hands that hold me back from being able to do anything—Oh, my helpless soul! Oh, the cruel haze that surrounds everything and won't let my soul go.

3

In the front yard of an old farmhouse, near the white fence, a lilac bush stands. It grows tall and its leaves are shaped like hearts made of a deep green color. It has many cone-shaped blossoms rising delicately into the air. The flowers have a strong scent that I love. Every leaf of this lilac bush is miraculous—and from this lilac bush in the front yard, with its ornately colored flowers and its deep green leaves shaped like hearts, I break off a small branch and its flower.

4

In the quiet, sheltered area of a swamp, a shy bird perches out of sight and sings a song.

The bird is alone like a deeply religious person who has withdrawn from society to live only by himself, constantly avoiding people. Alone, he sings a song.

This song sounds like it comes from a wounded throat—it is a song in which death finds a kind of release (for I know, dear bird, that if you couldn't sing you would die).

5

Across the landscape of spring, through the country, through cities, through small streets and old forests (where new violets have recently emerged from the ground to look upon the gray remains of winter), through the fields of grass growing on either side of the streets, past these endless fields, past the wheat that grows like yellow spears and the grains that have sprouted from their husks, past the white and pink apple blossoms in the orchards—through all of this, a dead body is carried to its grave, a coffin traveling night and day.

6

This coffin travels through paths and streets, through day and night as a huge cloud casts a shadow on the land. It travels with cermonious American flags tucked into themselves while the cities remain covered in black to express mourning. The states it passes through are dressed for grief like women standing in black veils. The coffin travels with long, winding lines of mourners and flaming torches in the night. It travels by the light of all of those innumerable torches, the crowd of mourners watching like a quiet ocean of faces and covered heads. Mourners wait at train stations to greet the coffin as it arrives, their faces gloomy as they look at it. It travels with songs of mourning playing through the night, a thousand voices singing powerfully and somberly. It travels with all of the grieving voices of the sorrowful songs—songs that pour like water over the coffin and into half-lit churches that shake with the mighty sound of trembling pipe organs. You travel through all of this with the ongoing clang of ringing bells. Here, coffin that slowly passes me, I give you my small branch from the lilac bush.

7

(And it’s not just for you that I bring this sprig of lilac. I offer flowers and green branches to *all* coffins. I would sing a song as new and crisp as morning air for you, death, since you are so healthy and holy.

There are bunches of roses everywhere; death, I would cover you completely with these roses and with recently blossomed lilies, but most of all with lilac, which is the first flower to bloom in spring. I break off multiple branches from the lilac bushes, and with my arms full of these flowers I come to you, pouring them out for you and for all of the coffins that you, death, have created.)

8

Oh, star in the West moving through the sky, now I understand what you must have meant a month ago, when I walked quietly through the clear dark night and saw that you wanted to tell me something. You seemed to bend toward me from the sky each night, and you dropped from the sky almost to be by my side (while all the other stars watched). We walked together through the somber night because for some reason I couldn’t sleep. As the night got later, I saw you on the western horizon and thought you looked like you were full of sorrow. I stood there on the high ground while a light wind blew through the cool, clear night, and I watched the place you had crossed in the sky; I felt lost in the black depths of the night. When you, sad star, disappeared and dropped into the night, my soul sank into trouble and unease.

9

Bird singing in the swamp, keep singing. Oh, you shy, gentle singer, I hear the notes of your song. I hear you and am coming to you. I understand you, but I'm staying here a moment longer because this beautiful star has held me back; it is the star of my departing friend that keeps me from coming.

10

Oh, how will I sing my own song for the one who has died, the one I loved? How will I prepare and decorate my song for the huge, sweet soul that has left? And what kind of scent will I bring to the grave of the one who died, the person I love?

Winds blow off the sea from the east and west, blowing from the eastern ocean and the western ocean and meeting in prairies in the middle of the country. Here, in the middle of the country, I will bring to his grave the scent of these ocean winds and the breath of my own song.

11

Oh, what will I hang up on the walls of his burial chamber? And what pictures can I put up on these walls to decorate his tomb?

I’ll bring pictures of the new growth in springtime and pictures of farms and houses bathed in an April sunset, clear gray smoke rising from the houses. These pictures will show the gold color pouring from the beautiful, lazy, dropping sun, which is burning and makes the air itself grow larger. These pictures will show the new sweet

grass that we walk on and the new spring leaves of the plentiful trees. In the background, the pictures will show the shining surface of a running river, touched in places by the wind. The pictures will show the many hills on the banks of the river—hills that create silhouettes against the sky and other kinds of shadows. The pictures will also show the nearby city, which is densely populated, and the brick stacks of chimneys. The pictures will show the life in these cities, showing factories and workshops and men coming home from work.

12

Look at this land, which has a body and a soul: Manhattan, where I'm from, with the tall points of its buildings, and the shining, quick-moving ocean tides and ships. Look at the diverse and plentiful land, the southern and northern United States in the sunlight, the shores of the Ohio River and the glistening Missouri River. And look at the expansive prairies which are covered with grass and corn.

Look at the admirable, brilliant sun, which is peaceful and proud. Look at the morning with its different shades of purple in the sky and its barely detectable breezes. Look at the tender and infinite light. Look at how the sun seems like a miracle when it rises, its light covering and washing over everything. Look at the satisfied middle of the day and the delightful feeling of the evening's approach. Look at the long-awaited night and its stars, which shine over all of my cities, blanketing both the people and the land.

13

Keep singing, you grayish-brown bird. Sing from the wetlands and all the hidden places. Pour out your song from the undergrowth. Sing this expansive song in the evening by letting it cry out from the cedar and pine trees.

Keep singing, beloved brother, trill your high song. Your song is loud and human. Keep singing it with your deeply sad voice.

Oh, your song is flowing and gentle! Oh, your song is uninhibited and frees my soul—Oh, amazing singer! I only hear you, but the star holds me back (though soon he, the star, will leave). Still, the powerful scent of the lilac holds me back.

14

I sat in the daytime and looked around. It was the end of the day, so the sunset bathed the fields bursting with spring, lighting the farmers as they planted their crops. I saw the huge landscape of my country with its lakes and woods. There was a sacred beauty in the air after the disturbance of stormy weather. I sat beneath the curved sky, where a bird flew past in the afternoon, and I heard the sound of children and women talking. There were also the shifting ocean tides, and I could see boats sailing on the water. I felt the rich feeling of summer getting closer, and farmers busy working in the fields, and the countless distinct houses, all of them going on in their own way—in each house there were meals and small daily activities. I saw the pulsing movement in the streets and the pent-up cities. While I sat looking out like this, I saw a cloud that covered everything. This cloud appeared like a long black path, and I suddenly felt like I knew death—the thought of it felt familiar and holy.

Then it was as if death itself walked beside me while my own *thoughts* about death walked on the other side. I walked in the middle of them as though walking with friends and holding their hands. But then I escaped into the safety of the silent night. I went to the banks of the swamp and traveled along its dim path. I escaped amongst the somber cedar trees and the pines, which stood so still they seemed like ghosts.

And the singing bird who is so shy to everyone else welcomed me there. This grayish-brown bird welcomed us three friends: me, the knowledge of death itself, and my own thoughts about death. And the bird sang a song of death that included a verse for the one I love who died.

This bird's song came out of the hidden, sheltered depths of the swamp, emerging from the scent of the cedar trees and the ghost-like pine trees.

The song cast a kind of spell over me as I stood there with my friends—the knowledge of death and the thought of death—as though I was holding their hands in the night. My soul's voice sang the same song as the bird:

Come to us, beautiful and calming death. Ripple around the world, peacefully reaching everyone at any time of day or night; gentle death, you'll come to everyone sooner or later.

Let us praise the infinite universe for the gifts of life and happiness; let us praise the universe for all its interesting objects and strange pieces of knowledge. Let us praise it for the existence of sweet love—but above all, let us praise and praise and praise the cool embrace of death, which will surely fold us in its arms.

Death, you are like a shadowy mother who always approaches with quiet footsteps. Has nobody sung a song to welcome you? If not, then I sing it for you. I praise you above everything else. I bring you a song, saying that when you inevitably approach, you should approach without hesitation.

Come closer, powerful death, and deliver us from life. When you finally take people away, I will sing joyfully for them. I will sing for those who have disappeared into your ocean of love; I will sing for those who have been bathed in your heavenly flood.

I offer you happy songs of praise. I think there should be dances for you, along with decorations and festivals. The sights of open land and the expansive sky are appropriate gifts for you. Life itself, large fields, and the enormous, thoughtful night are also appropriate gifts for you.

The night is silent beneath the stars. The beach and the sound of the waves are like the raspy whisper of a voice I've heard many times. My soul turns to face you, oh infinite and well-hidden death, and my body thankfully burrows closer to you.

I send a song over the treetops to you. It travels over the waves, over the many fields, and over vast prairies. It travels over all the densely populated cities and the crowded waterfronts and streets. Over all of this I send this joyous song to you, death.

Keeping up with the song of my own soul, the grayish-brown bird kept singing its own song loudly and strongly. It sang with clean, intentional notes spreading out and filling the entire night.

The song was loud in the dark pine trees and the cedars. It rang clearly through the fresh dampness of the swamp, cutting through the swamp's scent. I stood there with my friends—the knowledge of death and the thought of death—in the night.

My vision was no longer limited to what my eyes could see—instead, I saw huge, sweeping visions.

I caught a glimpse of armies at war. As though I was having a dream without sound, I saw hundreds of flags raised in the battle—flags that were carried through smoky battlefields and sliced by sharp projectiles. The flags were carried back and forth through the smoke until they were ripped and bloody. Finally, only a few shreds of the flags remained on the flagpoles and everything was silent. The flagpoles themselves had broken to pieces.

I saw the bodies of people who died in battle, huge numbers of them. I saw the white bones of young men who had died. I saw the remains of all of the soldiers who had been killed in the war. But I realized that they weren't the way I thought they were; they had finally come to a peaceful rest, and they didn't suffer anymore. But those who were still alive continued to suffer, as did the mothers of the deceased. And the wives and children and bewildered friends of the dead suffered. What remained of the armies suffered, too.

16

Moving through these visions of war in the night, I let go of my friends' hands. I pass through the reclusive bird's song and the song of my own soul—a triumphant song in which death finds a kind of release. But this song is always changing. It is a low cry, but it also has a clear melody that rises and falls and pours into the night. The song falls away in sadness like a warning of some kind, but then bursts out in happiness. It spreads over the entire earth and fills the sky like the powerful song I heard coming from the swamp at the night. I leave you, lilac bush with leaves shaped like hearts. I leave you there in the front yard; I leave you there in bloom, only to return in the spring.

I stop singing my song for you. I stop looking for you in the West. I stop facing the west. I stop gathering you close, oh my bright friend whose face is silver in the night.

But everyone will hold onto the song that emerged in the night. Everyone will remember the amazing song of the grayish-brown bird, which inspired my own soul to sing along with the bright star that went down with its face full of sorrow. And my soul sang along as death held my hand on either side and we approached the singing bird—the knowledge of death and the thought of death were my comrades, and I stood between them, and this memory will sustain my love of the man who died and whom I loved so much. He was the smartest and kindest person in my life. This is for him: the lilac and the star and the bird have united with the song of my soul, surrounded by the scent of the pine trees and the dark cedars.

Success is counted sweetest (112)

BY EMILY DICKINSON

Success is counted sweetest
By those who ne'er succeed.
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple Host
Who took the Flag today
Can tell the definition
So clear of victory

As he defeated – dying –
On whose forbidden ear
The distant strains of triumph
Burst agonized and clear!

summary

"Success is Counted Sweetest" is an early poem written by the American poet Emily Dickinson in 1859. It makes the bold claim that success is best understood by those who fail, and illustrates this claim by contrasting a victorious army with a fallen soldier from the other side. The poem has the rare honor of publication during Dickinson's lifetime (in 1864), though it was published anonymously; of her approximately 1,800 poems, only a few were published during her life.

Introduction to the poem Emily Dickinson is one of the greatest poets of America. She led a life of seclusion, but intensity of her feelings urged her to express her feelings in a metrical composition. As a sensitive person, she was severely affected by the horrors of civil war which broke out in America in and the aftereffects which this war brought such as the tragedy of Lincoln assassination, and the process of Reconstruction. She lived a quite life in her father's house in Amherst Massachusetts where she was born and died (1830-1886). It is a popular myth that she led an isolated life but her poetry reveals that she was not forgetful of the world around her. She was deeply engrossed in the phenomenon of this world. During her life, no volume of her poetry was published. After her death, her sister discovered her diaries and published the content. Now she is considered one of the two finest poets of nineteenth century.

Summary of the poem The poem brings to us the pathetic condition of those soldiers who, in the hope of gaining success in the form of victory over their enemy, fought a battle but now are injured and about to die. At a short distance, there is a crowd of victorious soldiers, celebrating their victory but this crowd is not a company for them. Success has intoxicating effect on victorious ones. Trumpets are being played by their opponents as a sign of their victory but for these soldiers, these trumpets are the symbol of their defeat and this is piercing the dying soldiers' hearts. The poem presents an enthusiastic and heroic atmosphere. The tone

expresses a kind of enlightenment. Themes of the poem The poem addresses the following major questions in the form of themes of the poem. Failure, a kind of success The very first line of the poem is giving us the theme of the poem. The poetess describes a complicated phenomenon of human life that those who succeed in achieving something are not able to relish their success to full extent. The word success is important for those who "never succeed". Need Next is the description of need philosophy. "Sorest need" is required to "comprehend a nector". We have regard for something or someone only when acute need is there. In fact water is taught by thirst so success is also taught by failure. Indifference of man The poet has used parallelism in this poem to brig bout a heightened effect. On one side there are half-dead soldiers who are unable to bear the pain due to wounds they have received in war. On the other, there are the trumpets of victory which are adding to the misery of the dying half-conscious soldiers. Thus the callousness of human nature reveals itself in the behaviour of the victorious soldiers.

Mending Wall

BY ROBERT FROST

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
'Stay where you are until our backs are turned!'
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
'Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down.' I could say 'Elves' to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'

"Mending Wall" is a poem by the American poet Robert Frost. It was published in 1914, as the first entry in Frost's second book of poems, *North of Boston.* The poem is set in rural New England, where Frost lived at the time—and takes its impetus from the rhythms and rituals of life there. The poem describes how the speaker and a neighbor meet to rebuild a stone wall between their properties—a ritual repeated every spring. This ritual raises some important questions over the course of the poem, as the speaker considers the purpose of borders between people and the value of human work.

"Mending Wall" Summary

- There is some force that doesn't like walls. It causes the frozen ground to swell underneath a wall, and the wall's upper stones then topple off in the warmth of the sun. This creates gaps in the wall so big that two people could walk through them side-by-side. And then there are the hunters who take apart the wall—that's something different. I often have to come and fix the spots where hunters haven't left a single stone in place, as they tried to flush out the rabbits that hide in the wall in order to make their barking dogs happy. No one has seen or heard these gaps in the wall being made. We just find them there in the spring, when it comes time to fix the wall. I reach out to my neighbor, who lives over a hill, and we find a day to get together and walk along the wall, fixing these gaps as we go. He walks on his side of the wall and I on mine, and we deal only with whatever rocks have fallen off the wall on our side of it. Some of them look like loaves of bread and some are round like balls, so we pray that they'll stay in place, balanced on top of the wall, saying: "Don't move until we're gone!" Our fingers get chafed from picking up the rocks. It's just another outside activity, each of us on our side of the wall, nothing more.

  There's no need for a wall to be there. On my neighbor's side of the wall, there's nothing but pine trees; my side is an apple orchard. It's not like my apple trees are going to cross the wall and eat his pine cones, I say to him. But he just responds, "Good fences are necessary to have good neighbors." Since it's spring and I feel mischievous, I wonder if I could make my neighbor ask himself: "*Why* are they necessary? Isn't that only true if you're trying to keep your neighbor's cows out of your fields? There aren't

any cows here. If I were to build a wall, I'd want to know what I was keeping in and what I was keeping out, and who was going to be offended by this. There is some force that doesn't love a wall, that wants to pull it down." I could propose that Elves are responsible for the gaps in the wall, but it's not exactly Elves, and, anyway, I want my neighbor to figure it out on his own. I see him, lifting up stones, grasping them firmly by the top, in each hand, like an ancient warrior. He moves in a deep darkness—not just the darkness of the woods or the trees above. He does not want to think beyond his set idea about the world, and he likes having articulated this idea so clearly. So he says it again: "Good fences are necessary to have good neighbors."

UNIT-II

The Bridge: To Brooklyn Bridge

BY HART CRANE

How many dawns, chill from his rippling rest
The seagull's wings shall dip and pivot him,
Shedding white rings of tumult, building high
Over the chained bay waters Liberty—

Then, with inviolate curve, forsake our eyes
As apparitional as sails that cross
Some page of figures to be filed away;
—Till elevators drop us from our day ...

I think of cinemas, panoramic sleights
With multitudes bent toward some flashing scene
Never disclosed, but hastened to again,
Foretold to other eyes on the same screen;

And Thee, across the harbor, silver paced
As though the sun took step of thee yet left
Some motion ever unspent in thy stride,—
Implicitly thy freedom staying thee!

Out of some subway scuttle, cell or loft
A bedlamite speeds to thy parapets,
Tilting there momently, shrill shirt ballooning,
A jest falls from the speechless caravan.

Down Wall, from girder into street noon leaks,
A rip-tooth of the sky's acetylene;

All afternoon the cloud flown derricks turn ...
Thy cables breathe the North Atlantic still.

And obscure as that heaven of the Jews,
Thy guerdon ... Accolade thou dost bestow
Of anonymity time cannot raise:
Vibrant reprieve and pardon thou dost show.

O harp and altar, of the fury fused,
(How could mere toil align thy choiring strings!)
Terrific threshold of the prophet's pledge,
Prayer of pariah, and the lover's cry,

Again the traffic lights that skim thy swift
Unfractioned idiom, immaculate sigh of stars,
Beading thy path—condense eternity:
And we have seen night lifted in thine arms.

Under thy shadow by the piers I waited
Only in darkness is thy shadow clear.
The City's fiery parcels all undone,
Already snow submerges an iron year ...

O Sleepless as the river under thee,
Vaulting the sea, the prairies' dreaming sod,
Unto us lowliest sometime sweep, descend
And of the curveship lend a myth to God.

"To Brooklyn Bridge" is the opening poem in Hart Crane's *The Bridge* (1930), a book-length poetic sequence about American history and modern life. A "Proem" or preface to the longer work, it introduces the subject that ties the sequence together: New York City's Brooklyn Bridge. In ecstatic and worshipful language, Crane presents the bridge as a transcendent work of art, a quintessential **symbol** of modern America, and a gathering place for everyone from lovers to troubled outcasts. Ultimately, Crane imagines the bridge, and the vision of "freedom" it represents, unifying all of America—from the "prairies[]" to the "sea."

- **"To Brooklyn Bridge" Summary**
  - How many mornings, after a cold sleep on rippling water, a seagull will tilt and wheel in flight—shedding white feathers, tracing circles in the air, and creating a grand image of freedom above the confined waters of New York Harbor.

Then, with a perfect turn, the gull will leave our sight, as ghostly as daydreamed ships that seem to sail across the paperwork we're supposed to file. Until office elevators release us from our workdays...

I'm reminded of movie theaters: those wide, illusory screens where crowds lean toward some flickering vision, which is never quite revealed, but which other crowds rush to see, and which is projected for them on the same wall.

And you, Brooklyn Bridge, across New York Harbor, looking as silvery as though you were the sun itself stepping forward, yet always holding your movement slightly in check. Your inherent freedom is what holds you in place!

Emerging from some subway crowd, jail or asylum cell, or loft apartment, a mentally ill person rushes to your high walkway. After swaying there a moment, shirt billowing and whistling in the wind, the person falls, as if in a prank, from the platform with its silent traffic procession.

The noon sun spreads from your girders down Wall Street and other New York streets, bright as a jet of flame from an acetylene torch. Throughout the afternoon, dockside cranes turn in a cloudy sky... Brooklyn Bridge, your cables still bask in the air of the North Atlantic Ocean.

And the reward you give is as mysterious as the Jewish conception of the afterlife... You grant (us city dwellers) the honor of an endless anonymity, which wonderfully seems to absolve us all.

Oh, you string instrument and shrine, welded together by the mythical Furies (since how could labor alone have strung your harp-like cables)! You holy site where the prophet makes his promises, you answer to the outcast's prayers, you expression of romantic bliss!

Once more, the lights of the traffic crossing your fluent, dynamic shape—looking like a string of beads, a pure exhalation of the stars—resemble eternity in miniature. We've watched as you seem to hold up the entire night sky.

Brooklyn Bridge, I've hung out by the docks, in your shadow—only at night can one truly sense your shadow. The New York skyline looks like a set of glowing, unwrapped packages, and winter snow is already burying a hard year.

Oh, Bridge, as timeless as the river you span, arcing over the ocean and the slumbering prairies—please swoop down, descend to the humblest among us, and offer a new kind of sacred vision in the process.

[Buffalo Bill 's]

BY E. E. CUMMINGS

Buffalo Bill ’s
defunct
who used to
ride a watersmooth-silver
stallion
and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat
Jesus

he was a handsome man
and what i want to know is
how do you like your blue-eyed boy
Mister Death

Summary

Lines 1–2
"Buffalo Bill 's" is a short poem with only 11 lines, three of which are just one word. The narrator begins by announcing "Buffalo Bill 's / defunct." The reader notices right away that "defunct" seems like an inappropriate word to use about a human being passing away. Defunct is usually used in relation to inanimate objects that are no longer functioning rather than celebrated and famous individuals like Buffalo Bill. The extra space between "Bill" and the possessive ending "'s" demonstrates E.E. Cummings's refusal to follow the rules of punctuation in his unique, modern poetry. The "'s" could refer to something that belongs to Buffalo Bill such as his famous Wild West show, his activities, his possessions, or his life because Buffalo Bill's life and everything associated with it is now "defunct." Cummings also could be using "'s" in place of the word "is." Cummings's distinctive use of ambiguous phrasing and punctuation leaves much open to the reader's interpretation.

Lines 3–6
Placement and spacing play a large role in the power of the next few lines that describe Buffalo Bill's well-known skill of shooting guns while riding his horse. The three lines jut forward dramatically from the first two: "who used to ride / a watersmooth-silver / stallion." Buffalo Bill is in control of powerful natural forces as his "watersmooth-silver / stallion" surges forward like the words on the page. "Watersmooth-silver" is an example of the new compound words Cummings invents in many of his poems. With this combination of existing words, Cummings creates a new way for the reader to envision the sleek, fast-moving, strong horse from which Buffalo Bill would shoot his gun.

"Stallion," a strong and fast-moving male horse, is the fifth line. Then the poem forces the eyes back to the beginning of the next line with the placement of the next, oddly spaced line. The words "and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat" continues the narrator's awed remembrance of Buffalo Bill's strength and abilities. The fact that the spaces are removed between words creates the effect of thoughts quickly coming into a person's head in a dream-like or perhaps bullet-like fashion.

Lines 7–11
At the furthest point to the right of the rest of the words in the poem the narrator exclaims "Jesus" after reflecting on the death of Buffalo Bill. Cummings interjects the name of Jesus, one of the world's main religious leaders (c. 6–4 BCE–30 CE) and to many Christians the Incarnation of God. The narrator's exclamation of "Jesus" may express his surprise and awe in the face of the vibrant Buffalo Bill's erasure from the earth. Using the name of Jesus as an exclamation in this way can be considered offensive by Christians. The word "Jesus" floats to

the right of the poem, indicating a pause that the narrator takes to consider the philosophical lesson of Buffalo Bill's death before returning to the details: "he was a handsome man."

The poem has thus far depicted Buffalo Bill as an idealized, traditional male figure who projects strength and skill. Cummings uses unexpected word placement again in the ninth line of the poem indicating the narrator's long and thoughtful pause before the startling rhetorical question that ends the poem: "and what i want to know is / how do you like your blue-eyed boy / Mister Death." The fond recollection of the strong, handsome, masterful Buffalo Bill shifts toward the thought that all people die, including celebrities like Buffalo Bill and the narrator himself. Death reduces the once powerful Buffalo Bill to his "blue-eyed boy," a child who is beautiful but helpless.

Anecdote of the Jar

BY WALLACE STEVENS

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.
The jar was round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.
The jar was gray and bare.
It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

"Anecdote of the Jar" was written by Wallace Stevens, an important figure in 20th-century American poetry. In the poem, an unnamed speaker places a jar on a hill in Tennessee. As the natural world continues to grow around the jar, the speaker declares that the object becomes a kind of king of the landscape, forcing the surrounding wilderness to rise to meet it. An ambiguous and enigmatic poem, "Anecdote of the Jar" has been subject to a wide range of interpretations in the decades since its publication. As with much of Stevens's work, it might be **symbolic** of any number of things—from the perils of modern industrialization to the nature of creativity and perspective. And, of course, the poem can also be taken at face value—as simply being about a jar on a hill. "Anecdote of the Jar" was published in Stevens's first book, *Harmonium*, in 1923.

- **"Anecdote of the Jar" Summary**
  - The speaker put a round jar on top of a hill in Tennessee, where, the speaker says, the jar caused the messy wilderness to grow all around the hill.

That wilderness grew toward the jar, sprawling all over the hill—yet now that wilderness was tame and domesticated. The round jar on the ground on top of the hill was tall and empty.

The jar became king of everything. It was gray and empty. The jar wasn't part of nature like the birds and plants nearby, unlike everything else in the state.

- **"Anecdote of the Jar" Themes**

  - **Humanity vs. Nature**

"Anecdote of the Jar" explores the relationship between humanity and the natural world, and in particular humanity's desire to impose order and structure on its environment. By placing a human-made object (one literally designed to contain things, no less) in the middle of the sprawling "wilderness," the poem contrasts two very different creations—that is, this rigid object and the "slovenly" natural world that grows all around it.

The jar clearly seems out of place, but what exactly its presence means is up for debate—and depends a lot on how readers interpret the **symbolism** of the jar itself. Maybe the poem is a commentary on the suffocating rigidity of modern life (which tames the wilderness—perhaps itself representative of creativity and spontaneity), or maybe it's a critique of the human desire to conquer the earth and a takedown of industrialization. In the end, the poem raises enigmatic *questions* about the relationship between humanity and nature, rather than making bold statements about that relationship itself.

The set-up of the poem is straightforward: the speaker places a jar in the middle of rural Tennessee. A jar is a simple object that reflects the way that people seek to categorize, contain, and control the world around them. Jars are solid, human-made containers than can be used to preserve food, for example. Jars also may evoke images of factories and mass production, perhaps suggesting that the jar here is meant to symbolize the stifling convenience and structure of modern life. Above all, the jar seems to represent civilization, and serves as a sort of emissary of the human world.

Nature, meanwhile, seems "slovenly"—messy and careless—in comparison. That the speaker deems it "wilderness" emphasizes the contrast between the neat, orderly jar and untamed world that surrounds it.

The speaker then says the jar is a kind of king that takes hold ("dominion") of the world. The presence of human order, even in the humble figure of a jar, apparently imposes a sense of pattern and purpose on its surroundings, which notably rise *toward* the jar until the wild is "no longer wild" at all.

The jar, then, essentially infects nature, taming or domesticating its wilderness. This might reflect the way that human society literally dominates so much of its environment. Read differently, the "dominion" of the jar perhaps symbolizes the way that modern life stifles the kind of loose creativity represented by nature.

In either interpretation, the orderly human world butts up against the comparative freedom of nature. And at the same time, the fact that the jar is empty might suggest that humanity's supposed orderly dominion over nature is hollow, or a kind of illusion.

To that end, though humankind can invent, design, and make its own objects, the poem suggests that nature is still the ultimate creator. Note how the jar remains "bare" (not even fulfilling its main purpose to contain things!) and indifferent to "bird or bush," both of which are evidence of nature's capacity for creation. Humanity's inventions are useless without their creators (a jar can't fill itself), whereas nature's "bird and bush" flourish all on their own. This might reflect the way that modern life, with all its rigid rules and expectations, is itself hollow, in that it robs life of the kind of genuine creativity and spontaneity seen in nature.

Chicago

BY CARL SANDBURG

Hog Butcher for the World,
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.
And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.
And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:
Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted against the wilderness,
Bareheaded,
Shoveling,
Wrecking,
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding,
Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of the people,
Laughing!

Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

Caged Bird

BY MAYA ANGELOU

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown

but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
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sings of freedom.

- **“Caged Bird” Summary**
  - A free bird flies on the wind, as if floating downstream until the wind current shifts, and the bird dips its wings in the orange sunlight, and he dares to call the sky his own.

But a bird that moves angrily and silently in a small cage can barely see through either the cage bars or his own anger His wings are cut so he cannot fly and his feet are tied together, so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings fearfully of things he does not know, but still wants, and his song can be heard from as far away as distant hills, because the caged bird sings about freedom.

The free bird thinks about another breeze, and about the global winds that blow from east to west and make the trees sound as if they are sighing, and he thinks of the fat worms waiting to be eaten on the lawn in the early morning light, and he says he owns the sky.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of his own dead dreams, and his dream-self screams from the nightmares he has. His wings are trimmed down and his feet are tied, so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings fearfully of things he does not know, but still wants, and his song can be heard from as far away as distant hills, because the caged bird sings about freedom.

- **“Caged Bird” Themes**

Oppression and the African-American Experience

The poem describes a "caged bird"—a bird that is trapped in a “narrow cage” with limited mobility, only able to sing about the freedom it has never had and cannot attain. This caged bird is an **extended metaphor** for the Black community's past and ongoing experience of racism in the United States in particular, and can also be read as portraying the experience of any oppressed group. The metaphor captures the overwhelming agony and cruelty of the oppression of marginalized communities by relating it to the emotional suffering of the caged bird.

The poem uses the metaphor of the bird to capture not just the way that oppression imposes overt physical limitations on the oppressed, but also the way that those limitations emotionally and psychologically impact the oppressed. For instance, in lines 10-11 the poem states that the caged bird "can seldom see through his bars," which seems at first as if the poem is going to explain how being in the cage limits the bird's line of sight. But instead, the poem further describes the bars as being "bars of rage"—

the bird is imprisoned and certainly the physical bars of the cage limit its line of sight, but the bird can "seldom see" because these conditions make the bird *blind with rage*. By fusing the limits imposed by the cage with the emotional impact those limits inspire, the poem makes clear that the environment and the anger can't be separated from one another. The oppression of the cage doesn't just keep the bird captive; the captivity *changes* the bird, and in so doing robs the bird of its very self.

As an extended metaphor used to convey the pain of the oppression faced by Black people throughout (and before) the history of the United States, aspects of the poem can be read as directly related to that particular experience. For instance, the caged bird's song can be seen as an **allusion** to Black spirituals. As abolitionist Frederick Douglass once said, "Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy." Additionally, Angelou's image of the "caged bird" is one borrowed from a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar, "Sympathy," which states, "I know why the caged bird sings, ah me […] / it is not a carol of joy or glee [...]" What both Dunbar and Douglass are saying is that the oppressed sing not because they are happy, but because they are *unhappy*. The cause of the caged bird's song explicitly mirrors Douglass and Dunbar's insights: though the song is full of the hope of freedom, the fact that the caged bird can only hope of freedom makes clear that it *lacks* that freedom. The song may be full of hope, but it is born from a place of deep pain, and the hope can be seen as primarily an attempt to cope with an intolerable situation.

The poem's point about the bird's song springing from sadness is critically important, because, historically, many defenders of slavery and other forms of oppression argued that the song and dance that was a part of Black American culture indicated that Black people were in fact joyful and content with their situation. The idea that such music might be an expression of cultural or emotional pain was ignored (in large part because ignoring it meant that those who benefitted from such oppression could also justify the oppression as not being oppressive at all).

"Caged Bird" actively and explicitly disputes the notion that the musical expression of an oppressed group is a sign of contentment. It is instead an assertion that the *opposite* is true. In making such an assertion, the poem refuses to bend to the convenient and racist interpretation of African-American song by white oppressors and instead asserts that the anguish forced on Black communities by white oppression must be acknowledged.

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Unit-III

Self Reliance and Other Essays Summary and Analysis of Self-Reliance

Ralph Waldo Emerson, (born May 25, 1803, Boston, Mass., U.S.—died April 27, 1882, Concord), U.S. poet, essayist, and lecturer. Emerson graduated from Harvard University and was ordained a Unitarian minister in 1829. His questioning of traditional doctrine led him to resign the ministry three years later. He formulated his philosophy in *Nature* (1836); the book helped initiate New England Transcendentalism, a movement of which he soon became the leading exponent. In 1834 he moved to Concord, Mass., the home of his friend Henry David Thoreau. His lectures on the proper role of the scholar and the waning of the Christian tradition caused considerable controversy. In 1840, with Margaret Fuller, he helped launch *The Dial*, a journal that provided an outlet for Transcendentalist ideas. He became internationally famous with his *Essays* (1841, 1844), including "Self-Reliance." *Representative Men* (1850) consists of biographies of historical figures. *The Conduct of Life* (1860), his most mature work, reveals a developed humanism and a full awareness of human limitations. His *Poems* (1847) and *May-Day* (1867) established his reputation as a major poet.

Self-Reliance was first published in 1841 in his collection, *Essays: First Series*. However, scholars argue the underlying philosophy of his essay emerged in a sermon given in September 1830 - a month after his first marriage to Ellen (who died the following year of tuberculosis) - and in lectures on the philosophy of history given at Boston's Masonic Temple from 1836 to 1837.

The essay, for which Emerson is perhaps the most well known, contains the most thorough statement of Emerson's emphasis on the need for individuals to avoid conformity and false consistency, and instead follow their own instincts and ideas. The essay illustrates Emerson's finesse for synthesizing and translating classical philosophy (e.g., self-rule in Stoicism, the *Bildung* of Goethe, and the revolution of Kant) into accessible language, and for demonstrating its relevance to everyday life.

While Emerson does not formally do so, scholars conventionally organize *Self-Reliance* into three sections: the value of and barriers to self-reliance (paragraph 1-17), self-reliance and the individual (paragraph 18-32), and self-reliance and society (paragraph 33-50).

The Value of and Barriers to Self-Reliance (paragraph 1-17)

Emerson opens his essay with the assertion, "To believe in your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, - that is genius." His statement captures the essence of what he means by "self-reliance," namely the reliance upon one's own thoughts and ideas. He argues individuals, like Moses, Plato, and Milton, are held in the highest regard because they spoke what they thought. They did not rely on the words of others, books, or tradition. Unfortunately, few people today do so; instead, "he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his."

If we do not listen to our own mind, someone else will say what we think and feel, and "we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another." Emerson thus famously counsels his reader to "Trust thyself." In other words, to accept one's destiny, "the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events." If such advice seems easier said than done, Emerson prompts his reader to recall the boldness of youth.

Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look in their faces we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody; all conform to it; so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not be put by, if it will stand by itself.

The difficulty of trusting our own mind lies in the conspiracy of society against the individual, for society valorizes conformity. As a youth, we act with independence and irresponsibility, and issue verdicts based on our genuine thought. We are unencumbered by thoughts about consequences or interests. However, as we grow older, society teaches us to curb our thoughts and actions, seek the approval of others, and concern ourselves with names, reputations, and customs. What some would call "maturity," Emerson would call "conformity."

To be a self-reliant individual then, one must return to the neutrality of youth, and be a nonconformist. For a nonconformist, "No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it." Emerson does not advocate nonconformity for the sake of rebellion per se, but rather so the world may know you for who are, and so you may focus your time and efforts on reinforcing your character in your own terms.

However, the valorization of conformity by society is not the only barrier to self-reliance. According to Emerson, another barrier is the fear for our own consistency: "a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loth to disappoint them." Rather than act with a false consistency to a past memory, we must always live in the present. We must become, rather than simply be. Emerson famously argues, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines." While acting without regard to consistency may lead to us being misunderstood, the self-reliant individual would be in good company. "Pythagoras

was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood."

Self-Reliance and the Individual (paragraph 18-32)

In this section, Emerson expounds on how individuals can achieve self-reliance.

As mentioned earlier, to live self-reliantly with genuine thought and action, one must "trust thyself." In other words, one must trust in the nature and power of our inherent capacity for independence, what Emerson calls, "Spontaneity" or "Instinct" - the "essence of genius, of virtue, and of life." This Spontaneity or Instinct is grounded in our Intuition, our inner knowledge, rather than "tuitions," the secondhand knowledge we learn from others. In turn, Emerson believed our Intuition emerged from the relationship between our soul and the divine spirit (i.e., God). To trust thyself means to also trust in God.

To do so is more difficult than it sounds. It is far easier to follow the footprints of others, to live according to some known or accustomed way. A self-reliant life "shall be wholly strange and new. It shall exclude example and experience. You take the way from man, not to man."As such, one must live as courageously as a rose.

Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say, “I think,” “I am,” but instead quotes some saint or sage. He is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose. These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God today. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence… But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time.

To live in the present with nature and God, one must not worry about the past or future, compare oneself to others, or rely on words and thoughts not one's own.

Self-Reliance and Society (paragraph 33-50)

In the concluding paragraphs of *Self-Reliance,* Emerson argues self-reliance must be applied to all aspects of life, and illustrates how such an application would benefit society. “It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views.”

In regard to religion, Emerson believes a lack of self-reliance has led prayers to become “a disease of the will” and creeds “a disease of the intellect.” People pray to an external source for some foreign addition to their life, whereby prayer acts as a means to a private end, such as for a desired commodity. In this way, prayer has become a form of begging. However, prayer should be a way to contemplate life and unite with God (i.e., to trust thyself and also in God). Self-reliant individuals do not pray for something, but rather embody prayer (i.e., contemplation and unification with God) in all their actions. “The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends.”

Emerson also believes true prayer involves an avoidance of regret and discontent, which indicate a personal “infirmity of will,” as well as of sympathy for the suffering of others, which only prolongs their own infirmity, and instead should be handled with truth and health to return them to their reason.

As for creeds, his critique focuses on how those who cling to creeds obey the beliefs of a powerful mind other than their own, rather than listen to how God speaks through their own

minds. In this way, they disconnect with the universe, with God, because the creed becomes mistaken for the universe.

In regard to education, Emerson asserts the education system fosters a restless mind that causes people to travel away from themselves in hope of finding something greater than what they know or have. Educated Americans desire to travel to foreign places like Italy, England, and Egypt for amusement and culture. They build and decorate their houses with foreign taste, their minds to the Past and the Distant. Artists imitate the Doric or the Gothic model. Yet, Emerson reminds us, "They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination, did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth." One should not yearn for or imitate that which is foreign to oneself, for "Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half possession… Every great man is unique." (Emerson develops these ideas further in his essay, *The American Scholar*, which calls for the creation of a uniquely American cultural identity distinct from European traditions.)
Finally, Emerson addresses the "spirit of society." According to Emerson, "society never advances." Civilization has not led to the improvement of society because with the acquisition of new arts and technologies comes the loss of old instincts. For example, "The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet… He has a fine Geneva watch, but he fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun." Society merely changes and shifts like a wave. While a "wave moves onward… the water which it is composed does not." As such, people are no greater than they ever were, and should not smugly rest on the laurels of past artistic and scientific achievements. They must instead actively work to achieve self-reliance, which entails a return to oneself, and liberation from the shackles of the religious, learned, and civil institutions that create a debilitating reliance on property (i.e., things external from the self).

Emerson concludes, "Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles."

Henry David Thoreau : "Where I Lived and What I Lived for" from Walden Pond

Summary: Where I Lived, and What I Lived For
Thoreau recalls the several places where he nearly settled before selecting Walden Pond, all of them estates on a rather large scale. He quotes the Roman philosopher Cato's warning that it is best to consider buying a farm very carefully before signing the papers. He had been interested in the nearby Hollowell farm, despite the many improvements that needed to be made there, but, before a deed could be drawn, the owner's wife unexpectedly decided she wanted to keep the farm.

Consequently, Thoreau gave up his claim on the property. Even though he had been prepared to farm a large tract, Thoreau realizes that this outcome may have been for the best. Forced to simplify his life, he concludes that it is best "as long as possible" to "live free and uncommitted." Thoreau takes to the woods, dreaming of an existence free of obligations and full of leisure. He proudly announces that he resides far from the post office and all the constraining social relationships the mail system represents. Ironically, this renunciation of legal deeds provides him with true ownership, paraphrasing a poet to the effect that "I am monarch of all I survey."

Thoreau's delight in his new building project at Walden is more than merely the pride of a first-time homeowner; it is a grandly philosophic achievement in his mind, a symbol of his conquest

of being. When Thoreau first moves into his dwelling on Independence Day, it gives him a proud sense of being a god on Olympus, even though the house still lacks a chimney and plastering. He claims that a paradise fit for gods is available everywhere, if one can perceive it: "Olympus is but the outside of the earth every where."

Taking an optimistic view, Thoreau declares that his poorly insulated walls give his interior the benefit of fresh air on summer nights. He justifies its lack of carved ornament by declaring that it is better to carve "the very atmosphere" one thinks and feels in, in an artistry of the soul. It is for him an almost immaterial, heavenly house, "as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers." He prefers to reside here, sitting on his own humble wooden chair, than in some distant corner of the universe, "behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair." He is free from time as well as from matter, announcing grandiosely that time is a river in which he goes fishing. He does not view himself as the slave of time; rather he makes it seem as though he is choosing to participate in the flow of time whenever and however he chooses, like a god living in eternity.

Thoreau concludes on a sermonizing note, urging all of us to sludge through our existence until we hit rock bottom and can gauge truth on what he terms our "Realometer," our means of measuring the reality of things

Analysis: Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

The title of this chapter combines a practical topic of residence ("Where I Lived") with what is probably the deepest philosophical topic of all, the meaning of life ("What I Lived For"). Thoreau thus reminds us again that he is neither practical do-it-yourself aficionado nor erudite philosopher, but a mixture of both at once, attending to matters of everyday existence and to questions of final meaning and purpose. This chapter pulls away from the bookkeeping lists and details about expenditures on nails and door hinges, and opens up onto the more transcendent vista of how it all matters, containing less how-to advice and much more philosophical meditation and grandiose universalizing assertion.

It is here that we see the full influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson on Thoreau's project. Emersonian self-reliance is not just a matter of supporting oneself financially (as many people believe) but a much loftier doctrine about the active role that every soul plays in its experience of reality. Reality for Emerson was not a set of objective facts in which we are plunked down, but rather an emanation of our minds and souls that create the world around ourselves every day.

Thoreau's building of a house on Walden Pond is, for him, a miniature re-enactment of God's creation of the world. He describes its placement in the cosmos, in a region viewed by the astronomers, just as God created a world within the void of space. He says outright that he resides in his home as if on Mount Olympus, home of the gods. He claims a divine freedom from the flow of time, describing himself as fishing in its river. Thoreau's point in all this

divine talk is not to inflate his own personality to godlike heights but rather to insist on everyone's divine ability to create a world. Our capacity to choose reality is evident in his metaphor of the "Realometer," a spin-off of the Nilometer, a device used to measure the depth of the river Nile.

Thoreau urges us to wade through the muck that constitutes our everyday lives until we come to a firm place "which we can call Reality, and say, This is." The stamp of existence we give to our vision of reality—"This is"—evokes God's simple language in the creation story of Genesis: "Let there be. . . ." And the mere fact that Thoreau imagines that one can choose to call one thing reality and another thing not provides the spiritual freedom that was central to Emerson's Transcendentalist thought. When we create and claim this reality, all the other "news" of the world shrinks immediately to insignificance, as Thoreau illustrates in his mocking parody of newspapers reporting a cow run over by the Western Railway. He opines that the last important bit of news to come out of England was about the revolution of 1649, almost two centuries earlier. The only current events that matter to the transcendent mind are itself and its place in the cosmos.

Saul Bellow : "Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech"

December 12, 1976

I was a very contrary undergraduate more than 40 years ago. It was my habit to register for a course and then to do most of my reading in another field of study. So that when I should have been grinding away at "Money and Banking" I was reading the novels of Joseph Conrad. I have never had reason to regret this. Perhaps Conrad appealed to me because he was like an American – he was an uprooted Pole sailing exotic seas, speaking French and writing English with extraordinary power and beauty. Nothing could be more natural to me, the child of immigrants who grew up in one of Chicago's immigrant neighborhoods of course! – a Slav who was a British sea captain and knew his way around Marseilles and wrote an Oriental sort of English. But Conrad's *real* life had little oddity in it. His themes were straightforward – fidelity,

command, the traditions of the sea, hierarchy, the fragile rules sailors follow when they are struck by a typhoon. He believed in the strength of these fragile-seeming rules, and in his art. His views on art were simply stated in the preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. There he said that art was an attempt to render the highest justice to the visible universe: that it tried to find in that universe, in matter as well as in the facts of life, what was fundamental, enduring, essential. The writer's method of attaining the essential was different from that of the thinker or the scientist. These, said Conrad, knew the world by systematic examination. To begin with the artist had only himself; he descended within himself and in the lonely regions to which he descended, he found "the terms of his appeal". He appealed, said Conrad, "to that part of our being which is a gift, not an acquisition, to the capacity for delight and wonder… our sense of pity and pain, to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation – and to the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts… which binds together all humanity – the dead to the living and the living to the unborn."

This fervent statement was written some 80 years ago and we may want to take it with a few grains of contemporary salt. I belong to a generation of readers that knew the long list of noble or noble-sounding words, words like "invincible conviction" or "humanity" rejected by writers like Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway spoke for the soldiers who fought in the First World War under the inspiration of Woodrow Wilson and other rotund statesmen whose big words had to be measured against the frozen corpses of young men paving the trenches. Hemingway's youthful readers were convinced that the horrors of the 20th Century had sickened and killed humanistic beliefs with their deadly radiations. I told myself, therefore, that Conrad's rhetoric must be resisted. But I never thought him mistaken. He spoke directly to me. The feeling individual appeared weak – he felt nothing but his own weakness. But if he accepted his weakness and his separateness and descended into himself intensifying his loneliness, he discovered his solidarity with other isolated creatures.

I feel no need now to sprinkle Conrad's sentences with skeptical salt. But there are writers for whom the Conradian novel – all novels of that sort – are gone forever. Finished. There is, for instance, M. Alain Robbe-Grillet, one of the leaders of French literature, a spokesman for "thingism" – *choseisme*. He writes that in great contemporary works, Sartre's *Nausea*, Camus' *The Stranger*, or Kafka's *The Castle*, there are no characters; you find in such books not individuals but – well, entities. "The novel of characters," he says, "belongs entirely in the past. It describes a period: that which marked the apogee of the individual." This is not necessarily an improvement; that Robbe-Grillet admits. But it is the truth. Individuals have been wiped out. "The present period is rather one of administrative numbers. The world's destiny has ceased, for us, to be identified with the rise and fall of certain men of certain families." He goes on to say that in the days of Balzac's bourgeoisie it was important to have a name and a character; character was a weapon in the struggle for survival and success. In that time, "It was something to have a face in a universe where personality represented both the means and the end of all exploration." But our world, he concludes, is more modest. It has renounced the omnipotence of the person. But it is more ambitious as well, "since it looks beyond. The exclusive cult of the 'human' has given way to a larger consciousness, one that is less anthropocentric." However, he comforts us, a new course and the promise of new discoveries lie before us.

On an occasion like this I have no appetite for polemics. We all know what it is to be tired of "characters". Human types have become false and boring. D.H. Lawrence put it early in this century that we human beings, our instincts damaged by Puritanism, no longer care for, were physically repulsive to one another. "The sympathetic heart is broken," he said. He went further, "We stink in each other's nostrils." Besides, in Europe the power of the classics has for centuries been so great that every country has its "identifiable personalities" derived from Molière, Racine, Dickens or Balzac. An awful phenomenon. Perhaps this is connected with the wonderful French saying. *"Sil y a un caractère, il est mauvais."* It leads one to think that the

unoriginal human race tends to borrow what it needs from convenient sources, much as new cities have often been made out of the rubble of old ones. Then, too, the psychoanalytic conception of character is that it is an ugly rigid formation – something we must resign ourselves to, not a thing we can embrace with joy. Totalitarian ideologies, too, have attacked bourgeois individualism, sometimes identifying character with property. There is a hint of this in M. Robbe-Grillet's argument. Dislike of personality, bad masks, false being have had political results.

But I am interested here in the question of the artist's priorities. Is it necessary, or good, that he should begin with historical analysis, with ideas or systems? Proust speaks in *Time Regained* of a growing preference among young and intelligent readers for works of an elevated analytical, moral or sociological tendency. He says that they prefer to Bergotte (the novelist in *Remembrance of Things Past*) writers who seem to them more profound. "But," says Proust, "from the moment that works of art are judged by reasoning, nothing is stable or certain, one can prove anything one likes."

The message of Robbe-Grillet is not new. It tells us that we must purge ourselves of bourgeois anthropocentricism and do the classy things that our advanced culture requires. Character? "Fifty years of disease, the death notice signed many times over by the serious essayists," says Robbe-Grillet, "yet nothing has managed to knock it off the pedestal on which the 19th century had placed it. It is a mummy now, but one still enthroned with the same phony majesty, among the values revered by traditional criticism."

The title of Robbe-Grillet's essay is *On Several Obsolete Notions.* I myself am tired of obsolete notions and of mummies of all kinds but I never tire of reading the master novelists. And what is one to do about the characters in their books? Is it necessary to discontinue the investigation of character? Can anything so vivid in them now be utterly dead? Can it be that human beings are at a dead end? Is individuality really so dependent on historical and cultural conditions? Can we accept the account of those conditions we are so "authoritatively" given? I suggest that it is not in the intrinsic interest of human beings but in these ideas and accounts that the problem lies. The staleness, the inadequacy of these repels us. To find the source of trouble we must look into our own heads.

The fact that the death notice of character "has been signed by the most serious essayists" means only that another group of mummies, the most respectable leaders of the intellectual community, has laid down the law. It amuses me that these serious essayists should be allowed to sign the death notices of literary forms. Should art follow culture? Something has gone wrong.

There is no reason why a novelist should not drop "character" if the strategy stimulates him. But it is nonsense to do it on the theoretical ground that the period which marked the apogee of the individual, and so on, has ended. We must not make bosses of our intellectuals. And we do them no good by letting them run the arts. Should they, when they read novels, find nothing in them but the endorsement of their own opinions? Are we here on earth to play such games?

Characters, Elizabeth Bowen once said, are not created by writers. They pre-exist and they have to be *found.* If we do not find them, if we fail to represent them, the fault is ours. It must be admitted, however, that finding them is not easy. The condition of human beings has perhaps never been more difficult to define. Those who tell us that we are in an early stage of universal history must be right. We are being lavishly poured together and seem to be experiencing the anguish of new states of consciousness. In America many millions of people have in the last forty years received a "higher education" – in many cases a dubious blessing. In the upheavals of the Sixties we felt for the first time the effects of up-to-date teachings, concepts, sensitivities, the pervasiveness of psychological, pedagogical, political ideas.

Every year we see scores of books and articles which tell the Americans what a state they are in – which make intelligent or simpleminded or extravagant or lurid or demented statements. All reflect the crises we are in while telling us what we must do about them; these analysts are produced by the very disorder and confusion they prescribe for. It is as a writer that I am considering their extreme moral sensitivity, their desire for perfection, their intolerance of the defects of society, the touching, the comical boundlessness of their demands, their anxiety, their irritability, their sensitivity, their tendermindedness, their goodness, their convulsiveness, the recklessness with which they experiment with drugs and touch-therapies and bombs. The ex-Jesuit Malachi Martin in his book on the Church compares the modern American to Michelangelo's sculpture, *The Captive*. He sees "an unfinished struggle to emerge whole" from a block of matter. The American "captive" is beset in his struggle by "interpretations, admonitions, forewarnings and descriptions of himself by the self-appointed prophets, priests, judges and prefabricators of his travail," says Martin.

Let me take a little time to look more closely at this travail. In private life, disorder or near-panic. In families – for husbands, wives, parents, children – confusion; in civic behavior, in personal loyalities, in sexual practices (I will not recite the whole list; we are tired of hearing it) – further confusion. And with this private disorder goes public bewilderment. In the papers we read what used to amuse us in science fiction – *The New York Times* speaks of death rays and of Russian and American satellites at war in space. In the November Encounter so sober and responsible an economist as my colleague, Milton Friedman, declares that Great Britain by its public spending will soon go the way of poor countries like Chile. He is appalled by his own forecast. What – the source of that noble tradition of freedom and democratic rights that began with Magna Carta ending in dictatorship? "It is almost impossible for anyone brought up in that tradition to utter the word that Britain is in danger of losing freedom and democracy; and yet it is a fact!"

It is with these facts that knock us to the ground that we try to live. If I were debating with Professor Friedman I might ask him to take into account the resistance of institutions, the cultural differences between Great Britain and Chile, differences in national character and traditions, but my purpose is not to get into debates I can't win but to direct your attention to the terrible predictions we have to live with, the background of disorder, the visions of ruin.

You would think that one such article would be enough for a single number of a magazine but on another page of *Encounter* Professor Hugh Seton-Watson discusses George Kennan's recent survey of American degeneracy and its dire meaning for the world. Describing America's failure, Kennan speaks of crime, urban decay, drug-addiction, pornography, frivolity, deteriorated educational standards and concludes that our immense power counts for nothing. We cannot lead the world and, undermined by sinfulness, we may not be able to defend ourselves. Professor Seton-Watson writes, "Nothing can defend a society if its upper 100,000 men and women, both the decision-makers and those who help to mould the thinking of the decision-makers, are resolved to capitulate."

So much for the capitalist superpower. Now what about its ideological adversaries? I turn the pages of Encounter to a short study by Mr. George Watson, Lecturer in English at Cambridge, on the racialism of the Left. He tells us that Hyndman, the founder of the Social Democratic Federation, called the South African war the Jews' war; that the Webbs at times expressed racialist views (as did Ruskin, Carlyle and T. H. Huxley before them); he relates that Engels denounced the smaller Slav peoples of Eastern Europe as counter-revolutionary ethnic trash; and Mr. Watson in conclusion cites a public statement by Ulrike Meinhof of the West German "Red Army Faction" made at a judicial hearing in 1972 approving of "revolutionary extermination". For her, German anti-semitism of the Hitler period was essentially anticapitalist. "Auschwitz," she is quoted as saying, "meant that six million Jews were killed and thrown on the waste heap of Europe for what they were: money Jews (Geldjuden)."

I mention these racialists of the Left to show that for us there is no simple choice between the children of light and the children of darkness. Good and evil are not symmetrically distributed along political lines. But I have made my point; we stand open to all anxieties. The decline and fall of everything is our daily dread, we are agitated in private life and tormented by public questions.

And art and literature – what of them? Well, there is a violent uproar but we are not absolutely dominated by it. We are still able to think, to discriminate, and to feel. The purer, subtler, higher activities have not succumbed to fury or to nonsense. Not yet. Books continue to be written and read. It may be more difficult to reach the whirling mind of a modern reader but it is possible to cut through the noise and reach the quiet zone. In the quiet zone we may find that he is devoutly waiting for us. When complications increase, the desire for essentials increases too. The unending cycle of crises that began with the First World War has formed a kind of person, one who has lived through terrible, strange things, and in whom there is an observable shrinkage of prejudices, a casting off of disappointing ideologies, an ability to live with many kinds of madness, an immense desire for certain durable human goods – truth, for instance, or freedom, or wisdom. I don't think I am exaggerating; there is plenty of evidence for this. Disintegration? Well, yes. Much is disintegrating but we are experiencing also an odd kind of refining process. And this has been going on for a long time. Looking into Proust's *Time Regained* I find that he was clearly aware of it. His novel, describing French society during the Great War, tests the strength of his art. Without art, he insists, shirking no personal or collective horrors, we do not know ourselves or anyone else. Only art penetrates what pride, passion, intelligence and habit erect on all sides – the seeming realities of this world. There is another reality, the genuine one, which we lose sight of. This other reality is always sending us hints, which, without art, we can't receive. Proust calls these hints our "true impressions." The true impressions, our persistent intuitions, will, without art, be hidden from us and we will be left with nothing but a "terminology for practical ends which we falsely call life." Tolstoy put the matter in much the same way. A book like his Ivan Ilyitch also describes these same "practical ends" which conceal both life and death from us. In his final sufferings *Ivan Ilyitch* becomes an individual, a "character", by tearing down the concealments, by seeing through the "practical ends."

Proust was still able to keep a balance between art and destruction, insisting that art was a necessity of life, a great independent reality, a magical power. But for a long time art has not been connected, as it was in the past, with the main enterprise. The historian Edgar Wind tells us in *Art and Anarchy* that Hegel long ago observed that art no longer engaged the central energies of man. These energies were now engaged by science – a "relentless spirit of rational inquiry." Art had moved to the margins. There it formed "a wide and splendidly varied horizon." In an age of science people still painted and wrote poetry but, said Hegel, however splendid the gods looked in modern works of art and whatever dignity and perfection we might find "in the images of God the Father and the Virgin Mary" it was of no use: we no longer bent our knees. It is a long time since the knees were bent in piety. Ingenuity, daring exploration, freshness of invention replaced the art of "direct relevance." The most significant achievement of this pure art, in Hegel's view, was that, freed from its former responsibilities, it was no longer "serious." Instead it raised the soul through the "serenity of form above any painful involvement in the limitations of reality." I don't know who would make such a claim today for an art that raises the soul above painful involvements with reality. Nor am I sure that at this moment, it is the spirit of rational inquiry in pure science that engages the central energies of man. The center seems (temporarily perhaps) to be filled up with the crises I have been describing.

There were European writers in the 19th Century who would not give up the connection of literature with the main human enterprise. The very suggestion would have shocked Tolstoy and Dostoevski. But in the West a separation between great artists and the general public took place. They developed a marked contempt for the average reader and the bourgeois mass. The

best of them saw clearly enough what sort of civilization Europe had produced, brilliant but unstable, vulnerable, fated to be overtaken by catastrophe, the historian Erich Auerbach tells us. Some of these writers, he says, produced "strange and vaguely terrifying works, or shocked the public by paradoxical and extreme opinions. Many of them took no trouble to facilitate the understanding of what they wrote – whether out of contempt for the public, the cult of their own inspiration, or a certain tragic weakness which prevented them from being at once simple and true."

In the 20th Century, theirs is still the main influence, for despite a show of radicalism and innovation our contemporaries are really very conservative. They follow their 19th-Century leaders and hold to the old standard, interpreting history and society much as they were interpreted in the last century. What would writers do today if it would occur to them that literature might once again engage those "central energies", if they were to recognize that an immense desire had arisen for a return from the periphery, for what was simple and true?

Of course we can't come back to the center simply because we want to; but the fact that we are wanted might matter to us and the force of the crisis is so great that it may summon us back to such a center. But prescriptions are futile. One can't tell writers what to do. The imagination must find its own path. But one can fervently wish that they – that we – would come back from the periphery. We do not, we writers, represent mankind adequately. What account do Americans give of themselves, what accounts of them are given by psychologists, sociologists, historians, journalists, and writers? In a kind of contractual daylight they see themselves in the ways with which we are so desperately familiar. These images of contractual daylight, so boring to Robbe-Grillet and to me, originate in the contemporary world view: We put into our books the consumer, civil servant, football fan, lover, television viewer. And in the contractual daylight version their life is a kind of death. There is another life coming from an insistent sense of what we are which denies these daylight formulations and the false life – the death in life – they make for us. For it is false, and we know it, and our secret and incoherent resistance to it cannot stop, for that resistance arises from persistent intuitions. Perhaps humankind cannot bear too much reality, but neither can it bear too much unreality, too much abuse of the truth.

We do not think well of ourselves; we do not think amply about what we are. Our collective achievements have so greatly "exceeded" us that we "justify" ourselves by pointing to them. It is the jet plane in which we commonplace human beings have crossed the Atlantic in four hours that embodies such value as we can claim. Then we hear that this is closing time in the gardens of the West, that the end of our capitalist civilization is at hand. Some years ago Cyril Connolly wrote that we were about to undergo "a complete mutation, not merely to be defined as the collapse of the capitalist system, but such a sea-change in the nature of reality as could not have been envisaged by Karl Marx or Sigmund Freud." This means that we are not yet sufficiently shrunken; we must prepare to be smaller still. I am not sure whether this should be called intellectual analysis or analysis by an intellectual. The disasters are disasters. It would be worse than stupid to call them victories as some statesmen have tried to do. But I am drawing attention to the fact that there is in the intellectual community a sizeable inventory of attitudes that have become respectable – notions about society, human nature, class, politics, sex, about mind, about the physical universe, the evolution of life. Few writers, even among the best, have taken the trouble to re-examine these attitudes or orthodoxies. Such attitudes only glow more powerfully in Joyce or D.H. Lawrence than in the books of lesser men; they are everywhere and no one challenges them seriously. Since the Twenties, how many novelists have taken a second look at D.H. Lawrence, or argued a different view of sexual potency or the effects of industrial civilization on the instincts? Literature has for nearly a century used the same stock of ideas, myths, strategies. "The most serious essayists of the last fifty years," says Robbe-Grillet. Yes, indeed. Essay after essay, book after book, confirm the most serious thoughts – Baudelairian, Nietzschean, Marxian, Psychoanalytic, etcetera, etcetera – of these most serious essayists. What Robbe-Grillet says about character can be said also about these ideas, maintaining all the usual

things about mass society, dehumanization and the rest. How weary we are of them. How poorly they represent us. The pictures they offer no more resemble us than we resemble the reconstructed reptiles and other monsters in a museum of paleontology. We are much more limber, versatile, better articulated, there is much more to us, we all feel it.

What is at the center now? At the moment, neither art nor science but mankind determining, in confusion and obscurity, whether it will endure or go under. The whole species – everybody – has gotten into the act. At such a time it is essential to lighten ourselves, to dump encumbrances, including the encumbrances of education and all organized platitudes, to make judgments of our own, to perform acts of our own. Conrad was right to appeal to that part of our being which is a gift. We must hunt for that under the wreckage of many systems. The failure of those systems may bring a blessed and necessary release from formulations, from an over-defined and misleading consciousness. With increasing frequency I dismiss as merely respectable opinions I have long held – or thought I held – and try to discern what I have really lived by, and what others live by. As for Hegel's art freed from "seriousness" and glowing on the margins, raising the soul above painful involvement in the limitations of reality through the serenity of form, that can exist nowhere now, during this struggle for survival. However, it is not as though the people who engaged in this struggle had only a rudimentary humanity, without culture, and knew nothing of art. Our very vices, our mutilations, show how rich we are in thought and culture. How much we know. How much we even feel. The struggle that convulses us makes us want to simplify, to reconsider, to eliminate the tragic weakness which prevented writers – and readers – from being at once simple and true.

Writers are greatly respected. The intelligent public is wonderfully patient with them, continues to read them and endures disappointment after disappointment, waiting to hear from art what it does not hear from theology, philosophy, social theory, and what it cannot hear from pure science. Out of the struggle at the center has come an immense, painful longing for a broader, more flexible, fuller, more coherent, more comprehensive account of what we human beings are, who we are, and what this life is for. At the center humankind struggles with collective powers for its freedom, the individual struggles with dehumanization for the possession of his soul. If writers do not come again into the center it will not be because the center is pre-empted. It is not. They are free to enter. If they so wish.

The essence of our real condition, the complexity, the confusion, the pain of it is shown to us in glimpses, in what Proust and Tolstoy thought of as "true impressions". This essence reveals, and then conceals itself. When it goes away it leaves us again in doubt. But we never seem to lose our connection with the depths from which these glimpses come. The sense of our real powers, powers we seem to derive from the universe itself, also comes and goes. We are reluctant to talk about this because there is nothing we can prove, because our language is inadequate and because few people are willing to risk talking about it. They would have to say, "There is a spirit" and that is taboo. So almost everyone keeps quiet about it, although almost everyone is aware of it.

The value of literature lies in these intermittent "true impressions". A novel moves back and forth between the world of objects, of actions, of appearances, and that other world from which these "true impressions" come and which moves us to believe that the good we hang onto so tenaciously – in the face of evil, so obstinately – is no illusion.

No one who has spent years in the writing of novels can be unaware of this. The novel can't be compared to the epic, or to the monuments of poetic drama. But it is the best we can do just now. It is a sort of latter-day lean-to, a hovel in which the spirit takes shelter. A novel is balanced between a few true impressions and the multitude of false ones that make up most of what we call life. It tells us that for every human being there is a diversity of existences, that the single existence is itself an illusion in part, that these many existences signify something, tend

to something, fulfill something; it promises us meaning, harmony and even justice. What Conrad said was true, art attempts to find in the universe, in matter as well as in the facts of life, what is fundamental, enduring, essential.

Unit-IV

Tennessee Williams' The Glass Menagerie

The Glass Menagerie is a memory play, written by a popular American writer, Tennessee Williams. The play was first staged in 1944 and became an instant hit, bringing fortune and popularity, both for the playwright on account of the autobiographical elements he has inserted in it. The story of the play revolves around a mother, her shy and introverted daughter, Laura, and her artist son, Tom. Originally written as The Gentleman Caller, the play won New York Drama Critic Award for the author in 1945 and became a masterpiece.

The play starts with Tom Wingfield, Amanda Wingfield's son recalling his life. Amanda is a single mother, whose husband had forsaken the family years back in the past before the play begins. The cast shows Laura and Amanda, both daughter and mother, conversing with their only male member in St. Louis in the year 1937.

The play shows Amanda Wingfield living in a middle-class apartment in St. Louis, taking care of her small family. She recalls her glory days when the boys used to chase her due to her beautiful looks and outgoing personality. This future worry and not-so-bright prospectus of her son, who is working in a warehouse, has become another constant worry for her. Despite seemingly being a budding poet, Tom Wingfield does not find enough time due to his constant

worry of everyday preoccupations and penchant for movies that he watches all night. Now her main anxiety is her daughter, Laura, who is crippled and naturally shy, does not seem to win any gentleman's attention. Looking at her daughter's youth, Amanda becomes obsessed with the idea of finding a gentleman for her. At dinner Amanda tells her daughter, Laura, to stay polite and pretty for her gentlemen callers even though she never had any callers and never expected one.

Amanda then proceeds to tell Laura to practice her shorthand and typing. A few days later when Amanda comes home from Laura's school after getting to know that Laura had dropped out several months earlier, she is shocked. Amanda wonders what they will do with their lives since Laura never tried to help her and spends all her time playing with her glass menagerie and her old phonograph records. Amanda decides that to have a gentleman caller for Laura, and Laura reveals that she has liked only one boy in her whole life, a high school boy called Jim.

When Tom goes out to the movies that night, Amanda scolds him and asks him to do something useful other than watching movies. The next morning after Tom apologizes to her, Amanda asks him to find a nice gentleman caller for Laura. A few days later, Tom tells her that he has invited his colleague, Jim O'Connor over dinner. When Amanda comes to know about the arrival of Jim, she becomes jubilant, seeing the prospects of meeting with the future of her daughter. When Jim comes, she starts recalling her own budding youthful period and her own looks. However, Laura senses that she must have been attracted to Jim during her school years. First, she excuses herself to join dinner with them due to her supposed illness but later when she comes into the living room, she sees Jim alone waiting for the electricity.

As they start a conversation, Jim encourages her to think about their past and starts dancing quietly when he accidentally knocks down her menagerie, having her glass animals in it, breaking the unicorn. However, he immediately takes the situation in control by kissing her and paying compliments for keeping such a beautiful menagerie. Following this, he explodes the bombshell about his likely marriage soon. Laura, on the other hand, presents the broken

unicorn to him as a gift after which he departs. Amanda, upon learning this, lashes out at Tom, who expresses his ignorance about such a thing. The play ends on a sad note of Tom leaving the house, asking his sister to extinguish the candles.

Major Themes in The Glass Menagerie

1. **Escape from Responsibilities:** The play demonstrates the theme of escape from the heavy responsibilities of life as Tom desires to avoid family responsibilities like a magician, who shows the ability to escape the box without removing nails from it. The burden of a shy sister and a pestering mother remains heavy on his mind. He wants to remove this burden from his mind and escape to the world of magical fantasy. However, the memory of the family stays with him, reminding him of having family relations with Laura and his mother. On the other hand, both of them could not escape the financial constraints and social pressure due to the well-knit domestic setup. In the end, Tom realizes that this escape from responsibilities does not come without its cost which is loneliness and mental depression.
2. **Family**: The major theme of family and its responsibility is shown through the Wingfield family, Amanda, the mother, Laura, the daughter, and Tom, who's Amanda's son. As the only male member, Tom has to assume the charge of the main breadwinner, though, he shirks taking up the responsibility of the whole family. On the other hand, Amanda constantly feels the stress of finding a suitable match for her daughter, Laura, whose social shyness and isolation are costing the family heavily. In this backdrop, the shadow of the disappearance of Mr. Wingfield is peeping through their mental stress. Tom, therefore, follows suit, but the realization of his being the patriarchal head does not recede.
3. **Abandonment:** The theme of abandonment looms large in the background due to the disappearance of the head, Mr. Wingfield. Amanda has an acute realization of her husband's abandoned presence and on her daughter who suffers from social abandonment. Her son, Tom, too, tries to take this abandonment on him by deciding to leave the family. He tries to hook Jim, but this, too, proves a futile effort on his part. Therefore, his own predicament shows his fear of being abandoned by his dreams and desires in life.
4. **Illusions and Reality:** The play, The Glass Menagerie, shows the theme of illusion and reality through the characters of Amanda and Tom. Her Southern legacy has caused the illusion to Amanda in that she visualizes patriarchy taking up the household responsibility but her son's upbringing in the abandoned household is the stark reality staring in her face. It is because he has a constant reminder of the disappearance of his father, the reality which runs contrary to his presence as the responsible head of the family. Similarly, Amanda feels that the illusion of her being an outgoing girl in her past may be reflected through her daughter Laura, who is, in reality, a socially shy girl, having little prospects of finding a gentleman.
5. **Memory:** The play, The Glass Menagerie, shows the theme of memory and its undertones among all the family members of the Wingfield family. Amanda, the mother of the family, is constantly stuck in her memories of her blissful and pretty youth period, while the memory of her escaping husband makes these memories muddied. Similarly, Tom also recalls his sister by the end, the memory of which haunts him, while Jim is lost in his memories of boyhood, a thrilling period of his life.
6. **Shattering of Dreams:** Despite a broken family, every Wingfield individual dreams about having a good life. Amanda, the mother, dreams of having her daughter married to a gentleman and her son, Tom, taking up the family responsibility. On the other hand,

Tom dreams of having an independent life free from family preoccupations and burdens.

7. **Marriage:** The play also shows the theme of marriage as an institution whose existence and preservation keep the family united and stable. Amanda wants her daughter to have a good gentleman to marry, but she fails, shattering her dreams. It is because Amanda's husband married her but left her, leaving the family in the lurch.
8. **Alcoholism:** The play implicitly shows the theme of alcoholism in that if a person drinks, he is irresponsible as Amanda experiences addiction as she recalls her fleeing husband. Keeping this in mind, she also questions Jim whether he drinks or not, having the point of family responsibility in her consciousness.
9. **Love:** The theme of love in the play is quite implicit through the motherly love of Amanda for her daughter to marry a gentleman and for her son to take up the family responsibility.

Major Characters in The Glass Menagerie

1. **Tom Wingfield:** Tom Wingfield is the representative of patriarchy in the play and shows the memories presented objectively. His direct address to the audience shows his capability of objective evaluation of his situation. At the same time, his duality confuses the audience in understanding his role within the family. His artistic capabilities stand in contrast to his actual achievement for the family in the real world. Although his concerns about his sister, Laura, and mother, Amanda, shows that he takes care of his family, his frequent demonstration of indifference leads to the impressions of the audience about his cruel behavior. His breaking down of the glass menagerie, in the end, shows this cruel behavior, leading to contradictory arguments about him, having no role model in the family to follow.
2. **Amanda Wingfield:** A remnant of the faded Southern beauty, Amanda represents the role of the fading matriarchy after having suffered an economic and social decline. Following her husband's escape from the family responsibilities, she has to take up matters into her own hands despite having little experience of raising a family, the reason that the family is undergoing stress and turbulence. As the extrovert character, she tries to lead her son, Tom, to take up the role of the family head. Yet, she herself stays away from Laura instead of guiding her to mix in the society. Some of the flaws in her character lead to the comic and tragic issues arising in the family. Her failures are apparent from her monologue delivered in response to her children's behavior.
3. **Laura Wingfield:** A very innocent and mentally challenged character, Laura demonstrates compassion when she comes to know the situation of her brother. This behavior stands in stark contrast to the selfish attitude of Amanda, her mother, as well as, her brother, Tom. Her position in the family makes her the center of the play in that her mother and brother, both, are engaged in finding a suitable match for her. Although she is a young girl, her mother's thoughts of her own glamorous past belittle her prospects when Tom brings Jim. Laura, though, seems an introvert and a shy character, shows her will at several moments which defies her real personality built by her mother and brother.
4. **Jim O'Connor:** The character of Jim within the play is interesting and intriguing. He is a gentleman and Amanda encourages him to woo Laura. An ordinary but nice young man, Jim is a hero in Tom's sight since his school days when he used to lead sports and theatrical productions. Having no haunting memories and present stigmas, Jim is a true middle-class young man who does not take fantasies at the face value. Sensing his fall in this abyss,

he extricates himself and returns to his world on the pretext of his being already hooked.

5. **Mr. Wingfield:** The significance of the character of Mr. Wingfield lies in his portrait hanging on the wall in the family apartment despite his shameful flight from the family responsibilities. A symbol of the deceitful patriarchy, he becomes prominent in the play on account of his absence. Amanda's memories of his charm also belittle his patriarchal role due to her wrong choice among the responsible and noble gentlemen of her time.

Writing Style of The Glass Menagerie

As poetic, symbolic, and spontaneous, The Glass Menagerie establishes Tennessee Williams at his best. The characters speak in a lyrical style with spontaneity in their dialogues. The conversation is down-to-earth direct and simple, showing the characters in their true colors. As far as the sentence style and diction are concerned, they are informal and simple. Yet Williams relies heavily on metaphors, similes, and symbols to convey the meanings of the frustration the family members are in after the flight of their family head, Mr. Wingfield.

Analysis of the Literary Devices in The Glass Menagerie

1. **Action:** The main action of the play comprises the life of the Wingfield family, the desires of Tom and Laura, and the wish of Amanda to marry her daughter to a gentleman. The rising action occurs when Laura allows her mother to decide that she should marry. The falling action occurs when Jim states that he has a fiancée waiting for him and leaves the house.
2. **Anaphora:** The play shows the use of anaphora as given in the below examples,
   i. In Spain there was a revolution. Here there was only shouting and confusion. In Spain there was Guernica. Here there were disturbances of labor, sometimes pretty violent, in otherwise peaceful cities such as Chicago, Cleveland, Saint Louis . . . This is the social background of the play. (Scene-I)
   ii. Honey, don't *push* with your *fingers.* If you have to push with something, the thing to push with is a crust of bread. (Scene-I) Both of these examples show the repetitious use of some phrases such as "In Spain there was…" and "have to push."
3. **Allusion:** The play shows amazing use of different allusions as given in the examples below,
   i. You simply couldn't go out if you hadn't read it. All everybody *talked* was Scarlett O'Hara. Well, this is a book that critics already compare to *Gone with the Wind.* It's the *Gone with the Wind* of the post-World-War generation! (Scene-III)
   ii. I'm going to opium dens! Yes, opium dens, dens of vice and criminals' hangouts, Mother. I've joined the Hogan Gang, I'm a hired assassin, I carry a tommy gun in a violin case! (Act-III)
   iii. They were waiting around the corner for all these kids. Suspended in the mist over Berchtesgaden, caught in the folds of Chamberlain's umbrella. In Spain there was Guernica! (Scene-III)
   The first example shows alluding to an author and her books, the second to a gang, and the third to Spanish locations. There are some other lurking allusions such as Pygmalion, a Greek mythical figure, Midas touch of King Midas, Biblical allusions of the Annunciation, and allusion of the Clark Gable.

4. **Antagonist:** Amanda seems to be the antagonist of the play as she seems to have still the charm of her husband and the glamor of her personality having encircled her mind that she does not think about other family members.
5. **Antimetabole:** Antimetabole is the reuse of words in the first and second halves of a sentence. The play shows the use of antimetabole as given in the below example,
   i. Their eyes had failed them, or they had failed their eyes, and so they were having their fingers pressed forcibly down on the fiery Braille alphabet of a dissolving economy. (Act-I)
   The play shows the use of antimetabole as the reversely used phrase "Their eyes" show.
6. **Conflict:** The play shows both external and internal conflicts. The external conflict is going on between Tom and Amanda, while the internal conflict is going on in Tom's mind as he narrates the events of the play.
7. **Characters:** The play, The Glass Menagerie, shows both static as well as dynamic characters. The young man, Tom, is a dynamic character as he shows a considerable transformation in his behavior and conduct by the end of the play. However, all other characters are static as they do not show or witness any transformation such as Laura and Amanda.
8. **Climax:** The climax in the play occurs when Laura comes to know that Jim is the same, her classmate, and faces freezing feelings that she has to get support to sit on the sofa.

Foreshadowing: The play shows many examples of foreshadows as given in below,
i. Tom's departure from the scene foreshadows his escape from familial responsibilities
ii. Music foreshadows the dance of Jim and Laura
iii. Breaking of unicorn foreshadows breaking of Laura's heart

1. **Hyperbole:** The play shows various examples of hyperboles as given below,
   i. Like some archetype of the universal unconscious, the image of the gentleman caller haunted our small apartment… (Scene-III)
   ii. I'm starting to boil inside. I know I seem dreamy, but inside — well, I'm boiling! (Scene-VI)
   Both these examples exaggerate things such as the first one says that the gentleman has become a ghost and in the second Tom says that he is boiling inside which is not possible.
2. **Imagery:** The Glass Menagerie shows excellent use of imagery as given in the below examples,
   i. He had tremendous Irish good nature and vitality with the scrubbed and polished look of white chinaware. He seemed to move in a continual spotlight. He was a star in basketball, captain of the debating club, president of the senior class and the glee club and he sang the male lead in the annual light operas. (Scene-VI)
   ii. I didn't go to the moon, I went much further — for time is the longest distance between two places. Not long after that I was fired for writing a poem on the lid of a shoe-box. I left Saint Louis. I descended the steps of this fire escape for a last time and followed, from then on, in my father's footsteps, attempting to find in motion what was lost in space. (Scene-VII)
   These two examples show images of nature, color, and feelings.

3. **Metaphor:** The Glass Menagerie shows good use of various metaphors as given the examples below,
   i. The play is memory. (Scene-I)
   ii. My devotion has made me a witch and so I make myself hateful to my children!.

(Scene-IV)

These examples show that several things have been compared directly in the play suchas the play itself has been compared to things recalled from memory or the mother compared to a witch.

4. **Mood:** The play, The Glass Menagerie, shows various moods; it starts with a reflective mood but turns out highly ironic and melancholy at times.
5. **Narrator:** The play, The Glass Menagerie, has been narrated by the first person, Tom, who happens to be one of its characters, too. In this sense, it seems a meta-fiction,a narrative within the play but still, it has a dialogue form.
6. **Personification:** The play shows examples of personifications as given below,

   i. A fragile, unearthly prettiness has come out in Laura: she is like a piece of translucent glass touched by light, given a momentary radiance, not actual, not lasting. (Scene-VI)

   ii. Wind blows the white curtains inward in a slow, graceful motion and with a faint, sorrowful sighing.

   (Scene-VI) These examples show as if the glass and the wind have life and emotions of their own.
7. **Protagonist:** Laura Wingfield is the protagonist of the play as it is her fate that Amandaand Tom are going to decide or not decide.
8. **Setting:** The setting of the play, The Glass Menagerie, is the middle-class apartment ofthe Wingfield family located in St. Louis in 1937.
9. **Simile:** The play shows good use of various similes as given in the examples below,

   i. Mother, when you're disappointed, you get that awful suffering look on your face, like the picture of Jesus' mother in the museum! (Scene-I)

   ii. But here there was only hot swing music and liquor, dance halls, bars, and movies, and sex that hung in the gloom like a chandelier and flooded the world with brief, deceptive rainbows.

   (Scene-V)

   iii. Amanda has worked like a Turk in preparation for the gentleman caller. (Scene-VI)

   iv. A fragile, unearthly prettiness has come out in Laura: she is like a piece of translucent glass touched by light. (Scene-VII)The use of the word "like" shows the comparison between different things in the examples. The first example shows this between the mother and Jesus, the second shows between sex with a chandelier, the third between Amanda and a Turk, and the fourth between Laura and glass menagerie.

DUTCHMAN

-Amiri Baraka

Amiri Baraka (born October 7, 1934, Newark, New Jersey, U.S.—died January 9, 2014, Newark) was an American poet and playwright who published provocative works that assiduously presented the experiences and suppressed anger of Black Americans in a white-dominated society.

After attending Rutgers University and then Howard University in the early 1950s, Jones served in the U.S. Air Force but was dishonourably discharged after three years because he was suspected (wrongly at that time) of having communist affiliations. He attended graduate school at Columbia University, New York City, and founded (1958) the poetry magazine *Yugen*, which published the work of Beat writers such as Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac; he edited the publication with his wife, Hettie Cohen. He began writing under the name LeRoi Jones in the late 1950s and produced his first major collection of poetry, *Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note*, in 1961. His first significant play, Dutchman (1964; film 1967), which recounted an explosive confrontation on a train between a Black intellectual and a white woman who murders him, won the 1964 Obie Award for best Off-Broadway American play.

DUTCHMAN

A play by LeRio Jones, later known as Amiri Baraka, in which he presents an image of American society showing an encounter between a black man and a white woman who meet in a train.

Significance of the Title and character

The title and the names Clay & Lula draw connections between black enslavement and original sin or the original American sin of importing slaves from Africa

The title of the play, Dutchman, is chosen to emphasize the major theme in the play racial discrimination.

The title bears mythical & allegorical implications.

PLOT

At the beginning of their journey, Lula tries to seduce Clay, and the two characters engage in a flirtatious conversation. Then Lula insults Clay reminding him of his origin as a black man and a slave and his attempt to be part of the white society (or what is known in America as assimilation or racial integration). Clay, who first accepts these racial insults, passively, violently reacts against Lula when he forces her on her seat, slaps her and threats to kill her. As he bends over to take his books and tries to leave, Lula aggressively stabs him while the other passengers watch the violent scene silently. She orders them to get rid of Clay's dead body and to get off the train at the next stop. The play ends as it begins as Lula approaches another young black man who is obviously her next target of seduction and humiliation

CHARACTERS

Lula
A pretty white woman thirty years of age, she stares flirtatiously at Clay and then sits with him on the subway. She is a mysterious character possessing seemingly supernatural deductive powers, able to make frighteningly accurate deductions concerning Clay’s background and history. Lula is a temptress through and through: physically beautiful, she carries herself with a palpable confidence and is skilled in emotionally manipulating a person. Later on, it is revealed that, beneath all her beauty, she is a predator and possessive

of racist beliefs; she mercilessly breaks down Clay's perception of himself with her insults and insinuations, and then she dispatches him coldly with a knife through the heart.

Clay
An African-American man in his early twenties. He rides along with Lula in the subway car sitting near her. Well dressed, well groomed, and garbed in an expensive three-piece suit, he exudes confidence, responding to Lula's advances with assurance and security, but he also becomes easily disconcerted by her. As the play proceeds, Lula systematically breaks down his veneer of self-assurance and control, revealing Clay to be a diffident character until he gets fed up with her abuse and fights back.

Train Conductor
An aged African-American man who only comes on stage at the end of the play. It is unclear if he knows what happened to Clay.

Historical Context of the Play

➢CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE 19605

The year of Dutchman's debut, 1964, was a tense year in the United States-especially for civil rights issues. Both violent and nonviolent protests occurred daily in contention of these issues. The 1964 Civil Rights Act made provisions for fair voting, use of public facilities, education, and employment practices. Baraka, being a political activist as well as a playwright, consciously used art as a means to achieve social justice. His play Dutchmen participated in the discourse of hatred and violence of the times, taking a strong stand against one segment of the black population.

➢BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT

In the course of defining a new, self-determined black population, blacks eschewed the terms "negro" and "colored that were associated with racism and oppression and demanded to be called "black" or Afro-American (and later, Mrican American). Hoth terms affirmed positive aspects over negative ones intensifying color to the extreme-black-and underscoring the African heritage of former slaves. These two trains of thought merged in the search for a new "black" identity, Styles, language, and values from African cultures were adopted and sometimes freely adapted to formulate the style of the "Afro-American." The phrase "black is beautiful" both acknowledged the aesthetic beauty of the black body and affirmed the value of black culture as the new black aesthetic as well. Along with this dramatic shift in cultural identity came a shift in the assessment of black art.

The Black Arts Movement (BAM) was an African American-led art movement, active during the 1960s and 1970s. Through activism and art, BAM created new cultural Institutions and conveyed a message of black pride.

The beginnings of the Black Arts Movement may be traced to 1965, when Amiri Baraka,

moved uptown to establish the Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School (BARTS) following

the assassination of Malcolm X. The Black Arts Movement grew out of a changing political and cultural climate in which Black artists attempted to create politically engaged work that explored the African American cultural and historical experience.

Black artists and intellectuals such as Baraka made it their project to reject older political, cultural, and artistic traditions.

DUTCHMAN SUMMARY

Dutchman is a one-act play. Nearly all of the conflict and interactions in the play happen between the two main characters, Lula, a white woman, and Clay, a black man. The scene opens up with the pair in a New York subway. The audience finds Clay, sitting alone reading a magazine, seemingly oblivious to the presence of the woman sitting down the seat next to him eating an apple. Lula accuses Clay of ogling her, an act he vehemently denies. She then proceeds to accuse him of a couple of racial stereotypes, managing in the process to correctly deduce where Clay lives and where he's heading. Mysteriously, she even seems to know about Warren—Clay's friend—giving him details like his appearance and manner of speaking; her nearly supernatural comprehension of his past and intimate details of his life shock Clay.

Lula continues to seduce Clay, provoking him sexually. She teasingly places her hand on his leg and suggestively slices her apple, feeding him the portions. Having correctly guessed his destination, she compels Clay to take her along, suggesting that she'd be willing to sleep with him afterward if she were invited. Her constant baiting gets his notice. Although he is receptive to Lula's provocations, he does not initiate any direct propositioning for sex. Lula, however, wants Clay to be even more aggressive; seeing that he doesn't seem to be taking the bait, she grows angry. Her mood and approach shift drastically from seduction to abuse.

Lula insults Clay's accent, saying that he has no right to wear such a fancy suit; then, she proceeds to berate his lineage. Clay's responses to Lula change drastically as well, becoming apologetic and defensive where they were previously self-assured and masculine. She continues to berate him, criticizing him for being black and unresponsive, and then she starts to dance alluringly and toss her possessions into the aisle of the car. Other riders begin to populate the car where once it was empty.

Lula invites Clay to dance with her, teasing him, challenging him to "do the nasty" with her. Clay opposes her provocations, but eventually, he is fed up. He grabs her and throws her to the floor, slapping her twice while maligning her background and life of ease. He then orders her to leave him be.

Clay now begins a soliloquy, telling the audience of the challenges that a black person must go through. He rants, asserting that white people still maintain distinctions of culture, happily allowing black artists to perform "black dances" and produce "black music" but not the other way around. He also alleges that these so-called "artistic pursuits" are exploitative at their core, keeping blacks preoccupied enough so they remain disinterested with trying to break into the "white world." Clay continues his passionate tirade.

All the while, Lula listens, seemingly uninterested. After his monologue, Clay readies himself to leave, but Lula suddenly stands up and dispassionately stabs him in the heart twice. She then commands the other passengers to throw his corpse out at the next stop.

Towards the end of the play, Lula makes eye contact with yet another young black man who has just entered the subway car. A black train conductor passes through, respectfully tipping his hat to Lula.

A Farewell to Arms

-Hemingway

Frederic Henry, the protagonist in *A Farewell to Arms*, is a young American in Italy serving, as Hemingway did, as an ambulance driver during World War I. He meets Catherine Barkly, newly arrived with a group of British nurses who are to set up a hospital near the front. Frederic likes Catherine, whom he visits as often as he can between ambulance trips to evacuate the wounded.

Catherine, who has recently lost her fiancé in combat, is vulnerable. Probablyshe feels more emotion for Frederic than he feels for her. He is about to leave for the front, where an assault is being mounted. She gives him a Saint Anthony medal, but it does not assure him the protection she hopes it will. A mortar shell explodes above Frederic's dugout, and he is wounded, much as Hemingway himself had been. He is evacuated to a hospital in Milan.

Frederic is not the perfect patient. He keeps wine under his bed and drinks as much of it as he can get away with. By the time Catherine comes to the hospital to see him, it is he who is vulnerable, and he finds that he is in love with her. She stays with him through the surgery that his wounds necessitate; he has a happy recuperation, which Catherine nurses him through. They find restaurants that are off Milan's beaten path and take carriage rides into the surrounding countryside. Catherine often comes to Frederic's hospital room at night. He already knowsthat she is pregnant from a hotel-room encounter before he left for the front.

Frederic recovers quickly, and by October, a few months after he was first injured, he is ready to go on convalescent leave with Catherine in tow. His plans are scuttled, however, when he develops jaundice, a condition the head nurse blames on his surreptitious drinking, accusing him of doing this to avoid further service at the front. When Frederic returns to his post, his unit is ordered to take its ambulances and equipment south to the Po Valley. The Allies, hard pressed by Austrian shelling and by the knowledge that German reinforcements are joining the Austrians, are pessimistic and disheartened. Hemingway shows the unglorious aspects of war in realistic detail.

Hard-pressed by the enemy, the Americans retreat, Frederic driving an ambulance south along roads cluttered with evacuees. Rain is falling, and the whole plain along which the retreat is driving becomes a quagmire. Frederic, with two Italian sergeants he has picked up, begins to drive across opencountry, hoping to reach Udine at the Austrian border by that route. When his ambulance becomes stuck in the mud, Frederic tries to get the Italians to help him extricate it, but they want to flee. Frederic shoots one of them, wounding him. An Italian corpsman finishes the sergeant off, putting a bullet into his head; life is cheap when people are under this sort of pressure.

When Frederic and his friends set out on foot for Udine, they see German motorcycles ahead of them. Chaos reigns as officers pull off their insignias and people try to flee in every direction. Those whom the Germans capture are given kangaroo trials and are summarily executed. Frederic is detained, and his fate seems sealed. Under cover of night, however, he escapes and jumps into ariver, where he holds onto a log. He crosses the plain on foot until he can hop a freight train for Milan, where he tries to find Catherine. Learning that the contingent of British nurses has been sent to Stresa, he makes his way there, now dressed in civilian clothing. He and Catherine reunite. Learning that the authorities plan to arrest him for desertion, Frederic borrows a rowboat, and he and Catherine use it to row all night to neutral Switzerland, where they are arrested but soon released, their passports in order and Frederic's pockets bulging with money.

They wait out the fall in Montreux in the Swiss mountains, living happily in asmall inn as Catherine's pregnancy advances. Their situation is idyllic. When it is finally time for Catherine to deliver the baby, she has a difficult time. The child is stillborn. Frederic, exhausted, goes out to get them something to eat; when he returns, he learns that Catherine has suffered a hemorrhage. He rushes to her and stays at her side, but she dies. He walks back to his hotel room in the rain.

The love story around which the book revolves has been compared with that of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1595-1596), to which it bears the affinity of having an unhappy outcome that results not from any weakness within the characters themselves but from circumstances over which they have no control. They are pawns in a large chess game that they neither understand nor can control.

Jazz

-Toni Morrison

TONI MORRISON

Toni Morrison was an American novelist, essayist, editor, and professor. Her contributions to literature were recognized worldwide when she received the 1993 Nobel Prize in Literature. Born Chloe Ardelia Wofford in Lorain, Ohio, Morrison attended Howard University and Cornell University in the 1950s before becoming the first Black woman fiction editor at the publishing giant Random House. In 1970 she published her first novel, *The* Bluest Eye, and proceeded to publish a string of novels that garnered critical acclaim, along with the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize. In 2012, President Barack Obama presented her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

On August 5, 2019, Toni Morrison died at the age of 88 in the Bronx, New York City.

CHARACTERS

Violet-Violet is a fifty-six year old woman living in Harlem with her husband Joe.

Joe Trace-Violet's husband

Dorcas- With her acne, light skin, straight hair and womanish figure

Alice Manfred- A widow in her late fifties, Alice is Dorcas's aunt and legal guardian

Felice-Dorcas's best friend from school

Golden Gray- son of Vera Louise Gray and Henry LesTroy, Golden Gray is half-black and half-white

Malvonne Edwards- An upstairs neighbor to Joe and Violet,

True Belle-Violet's grandmother

Vera Louise Gray-The white daughter of wealthy plantation owners **Henry LesTroy**-Vera Louise Gray's black lover,

Rose Dear-Rose Dear is Violet's mother and True Belle's daughter.

SUMMARY

It's winter 1926 in Harlem, and un unnamed narrator is gossiping about her neighbors, a married couple named Joe and Violet Trace. Joe has been having an affair with a much younger woman named Dorcas, until, in a moment of jealousy, he shoots and kills her. A few weeks later, Violet shows up—uninvited—to Dorcas' funeral, and tries to stab the dead girl in the face. After the funeral, Violet returns home, where she lets all of her birds out of their cages. Every night, she and Joe sneak out of bed to look at the framed photo of Dorcas on their mantel. The narrator predicts that soon, another murder will occur.

The narrator jumps back to before the murder. Violet, a hairdresser, had been behaving strangely. One time, she sat down, inexplicably, in the middle of the street; another time, she held someone else's baby for so long that people accused her of kidnapping. Joe, unaware of this strange behavior, was busy renting a room from his neighbor Malvonne. Joe and Dorcas would meet often in this room to talk and have sex. Joe, who sells Cleopatra beauty products, would use this time to shower Dorcas with presents.

Now, the story rewinds to 1917, when a group of Black protestors march up Fifth Avenue to oppose the horrific racial violence of the East St. Louis massacre. Alice Manfred has lost her sister and brother-in-law in the massacre, making her responsible for her orphaned young niece, Dorcas. Alice is terrified by the constant racism she experiences, even in the relatively prosperous Black enclave of Harlem; she hopes to protect her niece with strict rules, banning the makeup and jazz that she thinks makes people do "unwise disorderly things." Privately, though, Alice admires jazz's "appetite" and "complicated anger."

Dorcas, having seen her childhood home set on fire with her mother inside of it, ignores her aunt's rules, wanting to be "bold." Dorcas craves sex above all, and by the time she is a teenager, she is often sneaking out to parties with her best friend Felice. At one of these house parties, Dorcas sees two handsome brothers dancing in the center of the living room. Dorcas is excited to dance with the brothers, but they wrinkle their nose at her.

Back in 1926, Violet keeps trying to talk to Alice Manfred. Alice initially refuses to let Violet in, but eventually her curiosity gets the better of her, and the two women strike up a strange friendship. Alice makes tea and patches Violet's clothes, and Violet talks about her complicated feelings towards Joe. Alice keeps quiet about her own painful experience, many years ago, with an unfaithful husband.

Violet thinks back to her youth in Vesper County, Virginia. When Violet was a little girl, all of her family's belongings (including their home) were seized, prompting her mother Rose

Dear to lose her grip on sanity. The only way Violet survived was because her grandmother True Belle returned from Baltimore to care for the children. Four years after True Belle arrived, Rose Dear threw herself down a well.

Hoping to escape the painful memories of her mother, Violet went to the nearby town of Palestine, where she met Joe Trace. From the first moment she met Joe, Violet wanted this man to be her husband. Eventually, Joe and Violet headed to New York City, falling in love with the big buildings and bustling energy. They had agreed on not wanting children, but as she got older, Violet started falling asleep with a doll in her arms, a sign to Joe that maybe she wanted a baby after all.

Back in the present, winter turns into spring, but Joe still does nothing except cry over Dorcas. The narrator muses that Joe seems nice, but in reality, he is lecherous and resentful; she thinks his affair with Dorcas was inevitable, and that Joe is a broken record "bound to the track."

Joe takes over the narrative, describing his childhood in Vesper County. Joe never knew his parents, though he found a surrogate family and a best friend named Victory. As children, Joe and Victory worked with the best hunter in their town, a tracker named Henry Lestory (whom everyone called Hunter's Hunter). In 1906, Joe moved to New York with Violet, and eventually they found their way to Harlem. Their life there was mostly peaceful, though in 1917, Joe was randomly attacked by a vicious group of white people. A few years later, Joe fell for Dorcas, cherishing her acne and trying to overlook her interest in younger men. Dorcas felt like the first real decision Joe had ever made.

The narrator now imagines herself into True Belle's life. True Belle worked for a white woman named Vera Louise. As a teenager, Vera got pregnant with an enslaved Black man (later revealed to be Henry Lestory); her family kicked her out, and Vera went to live in Baltimore, forcing True Belle to come with her. Vera had her baby, naming him Golden Gray because of his golden hair color and bronze skin. In Golden's youth, Vera and True Belle spent all their time doting on the young child.

After years of believing he was white, Golden eventually learned the truth about his father and set out to meet Henry in the flesh. While on the way, Golden stumbled upon an injured pregnant woman. At first, he hesitated to help the woman (largely because she is Black), but Golden finally decided to bring her back to Henry's small cabin, where he covered her with a green dress. Henry came home, and Golden explained who he is. The woman, known only as Wild, then went into labor.

As a child, Hunter hinted to Joe that Wild, now a haunting legend for the townspeople, is his true mother. Joe searched for Wild several times, even after white people burn his village to the ground, but Wild never identifies herself as his mother. Joe then recalls the day he hunted Dorcas down, holding a gun not because he meant to harm her but because that is how Hunter had taught him to "track" people down.

The narrative shifts perspective once again, as Dorcas describes dancing at a party with her arrogant new lover Acton. Hazily, Dorcas recalls Joe's arrival at the party. Before she

understands what is happening, Dorcas is on the floor, mumbling something to Felice. Music plays in the background as Dorcas, having been shot, loses consciousness and dies.

Now, Felice tells her story. She was raised by her grandmother while her parents worked far away; her friendship with Dorcas was the most exciting part of her life. Several months after the funeral, while trying to retrieve a ring Dorcas had borrowed, Felice ends up at the Trace household. To her surprise, Felice likes Violet and Joe, and she respects how tender they are to each other. The strange trio starts spending time together, making dinners and dancing. Violet gets another bird, and she brings it to the roof to hear jazz.

The narrator is frustrated with herself for being so wrong about Joe and Violet. She had thought "that the past was an abused record with no choice but to repeat itself," but now she realizes that people are "original, complicated, changeable—human." The narrator watches Joe and Violet visit locations around New York City together, and she wishes she had left her house more often. Maybe then, she too could have this kind of "public love."