

## Appreciation of English Literary Texts

### Grade 11

#### Poetry

##### **The Earthen Goblet**

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya was an Indian poet who was born in Hyderabad state. His other interests were politics, music, theatre and cinema.

In this imaginative poem, the poet presents the feelings of the protagonist, the earthen goblet during the process he had undergone from the natural form as a fertile lump of 'clay' to the artificial state as a 'sterile goblet'. The latter is personified in order to elicit the feelings the goblet had during the torturous transformation. He reveals his experiences sadly to respond the sympathetic question asked by the poet.

The goblet resents bitterly being taken from its former life as clay in the earth and being put into what it has become now, its present form. Though it now has form, colour and recognition yet it is silent, un-living and rigid. The goblet expresses his nostalgia about the 'past unshapely natural stage' and the beautiful relationship it had with the flower. The natural way of life is seen to be more satisfying and fulfilling than an artificial and sophisticated one.

#### Questions

1. Between whom is the conversation taking place?
2. What was the feeling of the goblet in the second stanza?
3. What was goblet's feeling when it was cast into the present form?
4. What is the fatal hour he is referring to?
5. How did the goblet feel before he was made into a goblet?
6. Explain "the Potter has drawn out the living breath of me".
7. What was symbolized by "the fragrant friendship of a little flower whose root was in my bosom buried deep"?
8. Apart from symbolism what are the other techniques used by the poet to realize the theme?
9. What differences do you find between the two forms, clay and the goblet?
10. Do you think this is a nature poem? Give reasons.

## Father and Son

Cat Stevens is a professional name of Steven Demetre Georgiou. He is a British singer, song writer and instrumentalist who was born in 1948.

The poem is written in very simple conversational language but it is very moving because it conveys the genuine feelings that the father and son have for each other. The theme is the timeless and universal clash of attitudes between the old generation and the young. Though it seems like a dialogue between a father and son it really is not. The father is speaking to his son advising him but the son is not replying to the father but is commenting perhaps to himself on what his father says. The father's voice is depicted in the poem as being a little authoritative but yet caring and concerned. He thinks that the son lacks the wisdom gained from experience. He's afraid that his son will be disappointed and hurt by life if he rushes into action. The father tries to sound he is neither possessive no jealous of the son, but he is. By providing a solution to his son's biological needs the father thinks he can settle the latter's intellectual needs as well. Further the father recommends himself to his son as a role model. He distrusts his son as an individual and underestimates the son's dreams.

So the son in this poem is depicting the timeless and tragic situation of the conflict between two generations: each generation has so much to offer the other and each has care and love for the other: but each is convinced that it is right that neither is able to understand the other's point of view and benefit by it.

### Questions

1. What kind of interaction takes place between this father and son?
2. According to father, why do you think the father is happy?
3. What is the advice given by father to his son?
4. How did the son respond his father?
5. What is the '**way**' that the son is thinking of?
6. What is the fault of the son the father is referring to?
7. According to the son, what is hard and what is harder?
8. What differences do you find between the father and the son?
9. What features of a song do you find in this poem?
10. What are the poetic devices used by the poet to bring the theme to light?

## **Upside-Down**

Alexander Kushner was born in Leningrad, Russia in 1931. First he was a teacher of Russian Literature and then he became a fulltime writer and poet.

The central character in this poem is called an 'Upside-Down'. This suggests that he stood out to everybody in society as someone who doesn't fit in with its accepted ideas. The poem lists a number of things he did wrongly. Although this seems a humourous poem which creates laughter at upside-Down's foolish mistakes, it is clear that in some ways he is unable to help being what he was. He was unsure of himself and his abilities. He seems as a terrible social misfit. He is a joke and a laughing stock in his society.

This poem carries a social criticism because it shows not only the ridiculous side of a social misfit but also the pathos of him.

### **Questions**

1. Who is the narrator of the poem?
2. What is this poem about?
3. Who is an Upside-Down?
4. List out the actions he did wrongly.
5. Who is a dunder-head?
6. What did he want to buy at a restaurant?
7. Who was clever, the clown at the circus or the Upside- Down? Why?
8. Who sent him a letter? What did he do with the letter?
9. What does the aunt expect from him?
10. What is the attitude of the poet towards people like upside down?
11. What is the significance of the last stanza? What effect does it have on the rest of the poem?
12. What do you think of the narrative style of the poet?

## **Vendor of Sweets**

1. "The American experience of Mali becomes a challenge to Jagan's conventional lifestyle"  
Discuss.
2. How far is the writer successful in bringing out the conflict of the relationship between father and a son in "Vendor of Sweets"

## **Context questions**

1. Jagan, at the earliest opportunity, applied his eye to the key hole of Mali's door which remained shut most hours of the day. The boy seemed to be avoiding him. Jagan prepared the breakfast and left it on the hall table and also tucked a five-rupee note under the plate so that the boy might eat wherever he liked the rest of the day. Mali went out and returned home at some hour of the night and shut himself in. Jagan went about his sweet shop making without any outward sign of agitation, but inside, he was all torn up. He could not understand where his son spent the day or what he ate. He had never suspected that his zeal for education was going to ruin their relationship. He wanted to make it up with his son.
  - a) What do you feel about the relationship between Jagan and Mali?
  - b) Give evidence from the extract to prove that there was no close understanding or association between them. Give examples.
  - c) Why did Jagan leave money under the plate?
  - d) Copy the sentence which shows the unrest of Jagan's mind.
2. "Oh yes, I know once you take it up you will get on with it. As you know it's a contribution and a service and not written for profit'. After this statement he switched over to America. It's a place of enormous buildings and lots of motor cars. I hope the boy will have a room on the ground floor and not very high up."
  - a) Who speaks here? Who is the listener?
  - b) What is the context of this situation?
  - c) Write the meanings.  
Contribution-  
Enormous -
  - d) What characteristics of the speaker are brought out in the passage?