

Dr. Hanan Muzaffar

Mon 21/2	Intro & Course Information	Wed 23/2	Syllabus & Writing Techniques
Mon 28/2	Vacation	Wed 2/3	Bassnett: Ch 1 (beginnings)
Mon 7/3	Hawthorne & Jackson	Wed 9/3	
Mon 14/3	Li & Plath	Wed 16/3	Bassnett Ch. 2 (alternatives)
Mon 21/3	Kincaid & Milanes	Wed 23/3	
Mon 28/3	Soyinka & Hughes	Wed 30/3	Bassnett Ch. 4 (postcolonial)
Mon 4/4	Marques & Allende	Wed 6/4	
Mon 11/4	Midterm Exam	Wed 13/4	Research paper discussion
Mon 18/4	Piercy & Mirikitani	Wed 20/4	Bassnett Ch. 5 (travel)
Mon 25/4	Soueif	Wed 27/4	
Mon 2/5	Gilbert, Ali & Divakaruni	Wed 4/5	Bassnett Ch. 7 (translation)
Mon 9/5	Tagore	Wed 11/5	
Mon 16/5	Virgil & Ferdowsi	Wed 18/5	Bassnett: Introduction
Mon 23/5	Revision	Wed 25/5	Visit the Library
Mon 30/5	Work on your paper	Wed 1/6	Final paper due

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Office Hours: MW 12:30-1:30

193/53 Introduction to Comparative Literature Spring 2010-2011

MW 8:00-9:15

Keifan 208

Final 5 June, 3:30-5:30

Textbooks:

Bassnett, Susan. *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*. UK: Blackwell, 1998.

Course Packet

Course Requirements/Grades:

10% In-Class Participation

10% Presentation (10 minute presentation, 1 page handout in note form, 5 minute discussion)

20% Responses (6 responses of 600-800 words each for the texts in this packet)

10% Final Paper (1200-1600 words comparative study, due 1 Jun)

20% Midterm Exam (11 April)

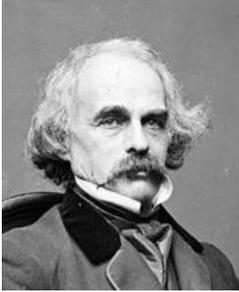
30% Final Exam (5 June, 3:30-5:30)

Avoid Plagiarism: You plagiarize when you present any information in your paper that is not yours without properly referencing it. Whether that information is quoted directly, paraphrased, or summarized, you have to follow it with parenthetical references immediately, not just list the source at the end of the paper. Your first attempt at plagiarizing will earn you a zero for that assignment. If you plagiarize again, you will earn an F for the course.

Disclaimer: The teacher reserves the right to make changes in the division of grades and syllabus. You will be notified of such changes in due time.

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Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)
Young Goodman Brown (1835)

Young Goodman Brown came forth at sunset into the street at Salem village; but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife. And Faith, as the wife was aptly named, thrust her own pretty head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons of her cap while she called to Goodman Brown. "Dearest heart," whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, "prithree put off your journey until sunrise and sleep in your own bed to-night. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that she's afeard of herself sometimes. Pray tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year." "My love and my Faith," replied young Goodman Brown, "of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done 'twixt now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married?" "Then God bless you!" said Faith, with the pink ribbons; "and may you find all well when you come back." "Amen!" cried Goodman Brown. "Say thy prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to thee." So they parted; and the young man pursued his way until, being about to turn the corner by the meeting-house, he looked back and saw the head of Faith still peeping after him with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons.

"Poor little Faith!" thought he, for his heart smote him. "What a wretch am I to leave her on such an errand! She talks of dreams, too. Methought as she spoke there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done tonight. But no, no; 't would kill her to think it. Well, she's a blessed angel on earth; and after this one night I'll cling to her skirts and follow her to heaven." With this excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown felt himself justified in making more haste on his present evil purpose. He had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind. It was all as lonely as could be; and there is this peculiarity in such a solitude, that the traveller knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead; so that with lonely footsteps he may yet be passing through an unseen multitude. "There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree," said Goodman Brown to himself; and he glanced fearfully behind him as he added, "What if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!" His head being turned back, he passed a crook of the road, and, looking forward again, beheld the figure of a man, in grave and decent attire, seated at the foot of an old tree. He arose at Goodman Brown's approach and walked onward side by side with him. "You are late, Goodman Brown," said he. "The clock of the Old South was striking as I came through Boston, and that is full fifteen minutes ago." "Faith kept me back a while," replied the young man, with a tremor in his voice, caused by the sudden appearance of his companion, though not wholly unexpected. It was now deep dusk in the forest, and deepest in that part of it where these two were journeying. As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveller was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, and bearing a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in expression than features. Still they might have been taken for father and son. And yet, though the elder person

was as simply clad as the younger, and as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable air of one who knew the world, and who would not have felt abashed at the governor's dinner table or in King William's court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither. But the only thing about him that could be fixed upon as remarkable was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. This, of course, must have been an ocular deception, assisted by the uncertain light. "Come, Goodman Brown," cried his fellow-traveller, "this is a dull pace for the beginning of a journey. Take my staff, if you are so soon weary." "Friend," said the other, exchanging his slow pace for a full stop, "having kept covenant by meeting thee here, it is my purpose now to return whence I came. I have scruples touching the matter thou wot'st of." "Sayest thou so?" replied he of the serpent, smiling apart. "Let us walk on, nevertheless, reasoning as we go; and if I convince thee not thou shalt turn back. We are but a little way in the forest yet." "Too far! too far!" exclaimed the goodman, unconsciously resuming his walk. "My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good Christians since the days of the martyrs; and shall I be the first of the name of Brown that ever took this path and kept?" "Such company, thou wouldst say," observed the elder person, interpreting his pause. "Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that's no trifle to say. I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem; and it was I that brought your father a pitch-pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Philip's war. They were my good friends, both; and many a pleasant walk have we had along this path, and returned merrily after midnight. I would fain be friends with you for their sake."

"If it be as thou sayest," replied Goodman Brown, "I marvel they never spoke of these matters; or, verily, I marvel not, seeing that the least rumor of the sort would have driven them from New England. We are a people of prayer, and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness."

"Wickedness or not," said the traveller with the twisted staff, "I have a very general acquaintance here in New England. The deacons of many a church have drunk the communion wine with me; the selectmen of divers towns make me their chairman; and a majority of the Great and General Court are firm supporters of my interest. The governor and I, too--But these are state secrets."

"Can this be so?" cried Goodman Brown, with a stare of amazement at his undisturbed companion. "Howbeit, I have nothing to do with the governor and council; they have their own ways, and are no rule for a simple husbandman like me. But, were I to go on with thee, how should I meet the eye of that good old man, our minister, at Salem village? Oh, his voice would make me tremble both Sabbath day and lecture day."

Thus far the elder traveller had listened with due gravity; but now burst into a fit of irrepressible mirth, shaking himself so violently that his snake-like staff actually seemed to wriggle in sympathy.

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted he again and again; then composing himself, "Well, go on, Goodman Brown, go on; but, prithee, don't kill me with laughing."

"Well, then, to end the matter at once," said Goodman Brown, considerably nettled, "there is my wife, Faith. It would break her dear little heart; and I'd rather break my own."

"Nay, if that be the case," answered the other, "e'en go thy ways, Goodman Brown. I would not for twenty old women like the one hobbling before us that Faith should come to any harm."

As he spoke he pointed his staff at a female figure on the path, in whom Goodman Brown recognized a very pious and exemplary dame, who had taught him his catechism in youth,

and was still his moral and spiritual adviser, jointly with the minister and Deacon Gookin.

"A marvel, truly, that Goody Cloyse should be so far in the wilderness at nightfall," said he. "But with your leave, friend, I shall take a cut through the woods until we have left this Christian woman behind. Being a stranger to you, she might ask whom I was consorting with and whither I was going."

"Be it so," said his fellow-traveller. "Betake you to the woods, and let me keep the path."

Accordingly the young man turned aside, but took care to watch his companion, who advanced softly along the road until he had come within a staff's length of the old dame. She, meanwhile, was making the best of her way, with singular speed for so aged a woman, and mumbling some indistinct words--a prayer, doubtless--as she went. The traveller put forth his staff and touched her withered neck with what seemed the serpent's tail.

"The devil!" screamed the pious old lady.

"Then Goody Cloyse knows her old friend?" observed the traveller, confronting her and leaning on his writhing stick.

"Ah, forsooth, and is it your worship indeed?" cried the good dame. "Yea, truly is it, and in the very image of my old gossip, Goodman Brown, the grandfather of the silly fellow that now is. But--would your worship believe it?--my broomstick hath strangely disappeared, stolen, as I suspect, by that unchanced witch, Goody Cory, and that, too, when I was all anointed with the juice of smallage, and cinquefoil, and wolf's bane"

"Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a new-born babe," said the shape of old Goodman Brown.

"Ah, your worship knows the recipe," cried the old lady, cackling aloud. "So, as I was saying, being all ready for the meeting, and no horse to ride on, I made up my mind to foot it; for they tell me there is a nice young man to be taken into communion to-night. But now your good worship will lend me your arm, and we shall be there in a twinkling."

"That can hardly be," answered her friend. "I may not spare you my arm, Goody Cloyse; but here is my staff, if you will."

So saying, he threw it down at her feet, where, perhaps, it assumed life, being one of the rods which its owner had formerly lent to the Egyptian magi. Of this fact, however, Goodman Brown could not take cognizance. He had cast up his eyes in astonishment, and, looking down again, beheld neither Goody Cloyse nor the serpentine staff, but his fellow-traveller alone, who waited for him as calmly as if nothing had happened.

"That old woman taught me my catechism," said the young man; and there was a world of meaning in this simple comment.

They continued to walk onward, while the elder traveller exhorted his companion to make good speed and persevere in the path, discoursing so aptly that his arguments seemed rather to spring up in the bosom of his auditor than to be suggested by himself. As they went, he plucked a branch of maple to serve for a walking stick, and began to strip it of the twigs and little boughs, which were wet with evening dew. The moment his fingers touched them they became strangely withered and dried up as with a week's sunshine. Thus the pair proceeded, at a good free pace, until suddenly, in a gloomy hollow of the road, Goodman Brown sat himself down on the stump of a tree and refused to go any farther. "Friend," said he, stubbornly, "my mind is made up. Not another step will I budge on this errand. What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to the devil when I thought she was going to heaven: is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith and go after her?"

"You will think better of this by and by," said his acquaintance, composedly. "Sit here and rest yourself a while; and when you feel like moving again, there is my staff to help you along."

Without more words, he threw his companion the maple stick, and was as speedily out of sight as if he had vanished into the deepening gloom. The young man sat a few moments by the roadside, applauding himself greatly, and thinking with how clear a conscience he should meet the minister in his morning walk, nor shrink from the eye of good old Deacon Gookin. And what calm sleep would be his that very

night, which was to have been spent so wickedly, but so purely and sweetly now, in the arms of Faith! Amidst these pleasant and praiseworthy meditations, Goodman Brown heard the tramp of horses along the road, and deemed it advisable to conceal himself within the verge of the forest, conscious of the guilty purpose that had brought him thither, though now so happily turned from it.

On came the hoof tramps and the voices of the riders, two grave old voices, conversing soberly as they drew near. These mingled sounds appeared to pass along the road, within a few yards of the young man's hiding-place; but, owing doubtless to the depth of the gloom at that particular spot, neither the travellers nor their steeds were visible. Though their figures brushed the small boughs by the wayside, it could not be seen that they intercepted, even for a moment, the faint gleam from the strip of bright sky athwart which they must have passed. Goodman Brown alternately crouched and stood on tiptoe, pulling aside the branches and thrusting forth his head as far as he durst without discerning so much as a shadow. It vexed him the more, because he could have sworn, were such a thing possible, that he recognized the voices of the minister and Deacon Gookin, jogging along quietly, as they were wont to do, when bound to some ordination or ecclesiastical council. While yet within hearing, one of the riders stopped to pluck a switch.

"Of the two, reverend sir," said the voice like the deacon's, "I had rather miss an ordination dinner than to-night's meeting. They tell me that some of our community are to be here from Falmouth and beyond, and others from Connecticut and Rhode Island, besides several of the Indian powwows, who, after their fashion, know almost as much devilry as the best of us. Moreover, there is a goodly young woman to be taken into communion."

"Mighty well, Deacon Gookin!" replied the solemn old tones of the minister. "Spur up, or we shall be late. Nothing can be done, you know, until I get on the ground."

The hoofs clattered again; and the voices, talking so strangely in the empty air, passed on through the forest, where no church had ever been gathered or solitary Christian prayed.

Whither, then, could these holy men be journeying so deep into the heathen wilderness? Young Goodman Brown caught hold of a tree for support, being ready to sink down on the ground, faint and overburdened with the heavy sickness of his heart. He looked up to the sky, doubting whether there really was a heaven above him. Yet there was the blue arch, and the stars brightening in it.

"With heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!" cried Goodman Brown.

While he still gazed upward into the deep arch of the firmament and had lifted his hands to pray, a cloud, though no wind was stirring, hurried across the zenith and hid the brightening stars. The blue sky was still visible, except directly overhead, where this black mass of cloud was sweeping swiftly northward. Aloft in the air, as if from the depths of the cloud, came a confused and doubtful sound of voices. Once the listener fancied that he could distinguish the accents of towns-people of his own, men and women, both pious and ungodly, many of whom he had met at the communion table, and had seen others rioting at the tavern. The next moment, so indistinct were the sounds, he doubted whether he had heard aught but the murmur of the old forest, whispering without a wind. Then came a stronger swell of those familiar tones, heard daily in the sunshine at Salem village, but never until now from a cloud of night. There was one voice of a young woman, uttering lamentations, yet with an uncertain sorrow, and entreating for some favor, which, perhaps, it would grieve her to obtain; and all the unseen multitude, both saints and sinners, seemed to encourage her onward.

"Faith!" shouted Goodman Brown, in a voice of agony and desperation; and the echoes of the forest mocked him, crying, "Faith! Faith!" as if bewildered wretches were seeking her all through the wilderness.

The cry of grief, rage, and terror was yet piercing the night, when the unhappy husband held his breath for a response. There was a scream, drowned immediately in a louder murmur of voices, fading into far-off laughter, as the dark cloud swept away, leaving the clear and silent sky above

Goodman Brown. But something fluttered lightly down through the air and caught on the branch of a tree. The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon.

"My Faith is gone!" cried he, after one stupefied moment.

"There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil; for to thee is this world given."

And, maddened with despair, so that he laughed loud and long, did Goodman Brown grasp his staff and set forth again, at such a rate that he seemed to fly along the forest path rather than to walk or run. The road grew wilder and drearier and more faintly traced, and vanished at length, leaving him in the heart of the dark wilderness, still rushing onward with the instinct that guides mortal man to evil. The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds--the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of Indians; while sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church bell, and sometimes gave a broad roar around the traveller, as if all Nature were laughing him to scorn. But he was himself the chief horror of the scene, and shrank not from its other horrors.

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Goodman Brown when the wind laughed at him.

"Let us hear which will laugh loudest. Think not to frighten me with your devilry. Come witch, come wizard, come Indian powwow, come devil himself, and here comes Goodman Brown. You may as well fear him as he fear you." In truth, all through the haunted forest there could be nothing more frightful than the figure of Goodman Brown. On he flew among the black pines, brandishing his staff with frenzied gestures, now giving vent to an inspiration of horrid blasphemy, and now shouting forth such laughter as set all the echoes of the forest laughing like demons around him. The fiend in his own shape is less hideous than when he rages in the breast of man. Thus sped the demoniac on his course, until, quivering among the trees, he saw a red light before him, as when the felled trunks and branches of a clearing have been set on fire, and throw up their lurid blaze against the sky, at the hour of midnight. He paused, in a lull of the tempest that had driven him onward, and heard the

swell of what seemed a hymn, rolling solemnly from a distance with the weight of many voices. He knew the tune; it was a familiar one in the choir of the village meeting-house. The verse died heavily away, and was lengthened by a chorus, not of human voices, but of all the sounds of the benighted wilderness pealing in awful harmony together. Goodman Brown cried out, and his cry was lost to his own ear by its unison with the cry of the desert. In the interval of silence he stole forward until the light glared full upon his eyes. At one extremity of an open space, hemmed in by the dark wall of the forest, arose a rock, bearing some rude, natural resemblance either to an altar or a pulpit, and surrounded by four blazing pines, their tops aflame, their stems untouched, like candles at an evening meeting. The mass of foliage that had overgrown the summit of the rock was all on fire, blazing high into the night and fitfully illuminating the whole field. Each pendent twig and leafy festoon was in a blaze. As the red light arose and fell, a numerous congregation alternately shone forth, then disappeared in shadow, and again grew, as it were, out of the darkness, peopling the heart of the solitary woods at once. "A grave and dark-clad company," quoth Goodman Brown. In truth they were such. Among them, quivering to and fro between gloom and splendor, appeared faces that would be seen next day at the council board of the province, and others which, Sabbath after Sabbath, looked devoutly heavenward, and benignantly over the crowded pews, from the holiest pulpits in the land. Some affirm that the lady of the governor was there. At least there were high dames well known to her, and wives of honored husbands, and widows, a great multitude, and ancient maidens, all of excellent repute, and fair young girls, who trembled lest their mothers should espy them. Either the sudden gleams of light flashing over the obscure field bedazzled Goodman Brown, or he recognized a score of the church members of Salem village famous for their especial sanctity. Good old Deacon Gookin had arrived, and waited at the skirts of that venerable saint, his revered pastor. But, irreverently consorting with these grave, reputable, and pious people, these elders of the church, these

chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of dissolute lives and women of spotted fame, wretches given over to all mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes. It was strange to see that the good shrank not from the wicked, nor were the sinners abashed by the saints. Scattered also among their pale-faced enemies were the Indian priests, or powwows, who had often scared their native forest with more hideous incantations than any known to English witchcraft. "But where is Faith?" thought Goodman Brown; and, as hope came into his heart, he trembled. Another verse of the hymn arose, a slow and mournful strain, such as the pious love, but joined to words which expressed all that our nature can conceive of sin, and darkly hinted at far more. Unfathomable to mere mortals is the lore of fiends. Verse after verse was sung; and still the chorus of the desert swelled between like the deepest tone of a mighty organ; and with the final peal of that dreadful anthem there came a sound, as if the roaring wind, the rushing streams, the howling beasts, and every other voice of the unconcerted wilderness were mingling and according with the voice of guilty man in homage to the prince of all. The four blazing pines threw up a loftier flame, and obscurely discovered shapes and visages of horror on the smoke wreaths above the impious assembly. At the same moment the fire on the rock shot redly forth and formed a glowing arch above its base, where now appeared a figure. With reverence be it spoken, the figure bore no slight similitude, both in garb and manner, to some grave divine of the New England churches. "Bring forth the converts!" cried a voice that echoed through the field and rolled into the forest. At the word, Goodman Brown stepped forth from the shadow of the trees and approached the congregation, with whom he felt a loathful brotherhood by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart. He could have well-nigh sworn that the shape of his own dead father beckoned him to advance, looking downward from a smoke wreath, while a woman, with dim features of despair, threw out her hand to warn him back. Was it his mother? But he had no power to retreat one step, nor to resist, even in thought, when the minister and

good old Deacon Gookin seized his arms and led him to the blazing rock. Thither came also the slender form of a veiled female, led between Goody Cloyse, that pious teacher of the catechism, and Martha Carrier, who had received the devil's promise to be queen of hell. A rampant hag was she. And there stood the proselytes beneath the canopy of fire. "Welcome, my children," said the dark figure, "to the communion of your race. Ye have found thus young your nature and your destiny. My children, look behind you!" They turned; and flashing forth, as it were, in a sheet of flame, the fiend worshippers were seen; the smile of welcome gleamed darkly on every visage. "There," resumed the sable form, "are all whom ye have revered from youth. Ye deemed them holier than yourselves, and shrank from your own sin, contrasting it with their lives of righteousness and prayerful aspirations heavenward. Yet here are they all in my worshipping assembly. This night it shall be granted you to know their secret deeds: how hoary-bearded elders of the church have whispered wanton words to the young maids of their households; how many a woman, eager for widows' weeds, has given her husband a drink at bedtime and let him sleep his last sleep in her bosom; how beardless youths have made haste to inherit their fathers' wealth; and how fair damsels--blush not, sweet ones--have dug little graves in the garden, and bidden me, the sole guest to an infant's funeral. By the sympathy of your human hearts for sin ye shall scent out all the places--whether in church, bedchamber, street, field, or forest--where crime has been committed, and shall exult to behold the whole earth one stain of guilt, one mighty blood spot. Far more than this. It shall be yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin, the fountain of all wicked arts, and which inexhaustibly supplies more evil impulses than human power--than my power at its utmost--can make manifest in deeds. And now, my children, look upon each other." They did so; and, by the blaze of the hell-kindled torches, the wretched man beheld his Faith, and the wife her husband, trembling before that unhallowed altar.

"Lo, there ye stand, my children," said the figure, in a deep and solemn tone, almost sad with its despairing awfulness, as if his once angelic nature could yet mourn for our miserable race. "Depending upon one another's hearts, ye had still hoped that virtue were not all a dream. Now are ye undeceived. Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome again, my children, to the communion of your race."

"Welcome," repeated the fiend worshippers, in one cry of despair and triumph.

And there they stood, the only pair, as it seemed, who were yet hesitating on the verge of wickedness in this dark world. A basin was hollowed, naturally, in the rock. Did it contain water, reddened by the lurid light? or was it blood? or, perchance, a liquid flame? Herein did the shape of evil dip his hand and prepare to lay the mark of baptism upon their foreheads, that they might be partakers of the mystery of sin, more conscious of the secret guilt of others, both in deed and thought, than they could now be of their own. The husband cast one look at his pale wife, and Faith at him. What polluted wretches would the next glance show them to each other, shuddering alike at what they disclosed and what they saw!

"Faith! Faith!" cried the husband, "look up to heaven, and resist the wicked one."

Whether Faith obeyed he knew not. Hardly had he spoken when he found himself amid calm night and solitude, listening to a roar of the wind which died heavily away through the forest. He staggered against the rock, and felt it chill and damp; while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew.

The next morning young Goodman Brown came slowly into the street of Salem village, staring around him like a bewildered man. The good old minister was taking a walk along the graveyard to get an appetite for breakfast and meditate his sermon, and bestowed a blessing, as he passed, on Goodman Brown. He shrank from the venerable saint as if to avoid an anathema. Old Deacon Gookin was at domestic worship, and the holy words of his prayer were heard through

the open window. "What God doth the wizard pray to?" quoth Goodman Brown. Goody Cloyse, that excellent old Christian, stood in the early sunshine at her own lattice, catechizing a little girl who had brought her a pint of morning's milk. Goodman Brown snatched away the child as from the grasp of the fiend himself. Turning the corner by the meeting-house, he spied the head of Faith, with the pink ribbons, gazing anxiously forth, and bursting into such joy at sight of him that she skipped along the street and almost kissed her husband before the whole village. But Goodman Brown looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting.

Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?

Be it so if you will; but, alas! it was a dream of evil omen for young Goodman Brown. A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man did he become from the night of that fearful dream. On the Sabbath day, when the congregation were singing a holy psalm, he could not listen because an anthem of sin rushed loudly upon his ear and drowned all the blessed strain. When the minister spoke from the pulpit with power and fervid eloquence, and, with his hand on the open Bible, of the sacred truths of our religion, and of saint-like lives and triumphant deaths, and of future bliss or misery unutterable, then did Goodman Brown turn pale, dreading lest the roof should thunder down upon the gray blasphemer and his hearers. Often, waking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of Faith; and at morning or eventide, when the family knelt down at prayer, he scowled and muttered to himself, and gazed sternly at his wife, and turned away. And when he had lived long, and was borne to his grave a hoary corpse, followed by Faith, an aged woman, and children and grandchildren, a goodly procession, besides neighbors not a few, they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom.



Shirley Jackson (1916-1965)
The Lottery (1948)

The morning of June 27th was clear and sunny, with the fresh warmth of a full-summer day; the flowers were blossoming profusely and the grass was richly green. The people of the village began to gather in the square, between the post office and the bank, around ten o'clock; in some towns there were so many people that the lottery took two days and had to be started on June 2th. but in this village, where there were only about three hundred people, the whole lottery took less than two hours, so it could begin at ten o'clock in the morning and still be through in time to allow the villagers to get home for noon dinner.

The children assembled first, of course. School was recently over for the summer, and the feeling of liberty sat uneasily on most of them; they tended to gather together quietly for a while before they broke into boisterous play. and their talk was still of the classroom and the teacher, of books and reprimands. Bobby Martin had already stuffed his pockets full of stones, and the other boys soon followed his example, selecting the smoothest and roundest stones; Bobby and Harry Jones and Dickie Delacroix-- the villagers pronounced this name "Dellacroy"--eventually made a great pile of stones in one corner of the square and guarded it against the raids of the other boys. The girls stood aside, talking among themselves, looking over their shoulders at the boys. and the very small children rolled in the dust or clung to the hands of their older brothers or sisters.

Soon the men began to gather, surveying their own children, speaking of planting and rain, tractors and taxes. They stood together, away from the pile of stones in the corner, and their jokes were quiet and they smiled rather than laughed. The women, wearing faded house dresses and sweaters, came shortly after their menfolk. They greeted one another and exchanged bits of gossip as they went to join their husbands. Soon the women, standing by their husbands, began to call to their children, and the children came reluctantly, having to be called four or five times. Bobby Martin ducked under his mother's grasping hand and ran, laughing, back to the pile of stones. His father spoke up sharply, and Bobby came quickly and took his place between his father and his oldest brother. The lottery was conducted--as were the square dances, the teen club, the Halloween program--by Mr. Summers. who had time and energy to devote to civic activities. He was a round-faced, jovial man and he ran the coal business, and people were sorry for him. because he had no children and his wife was a scold. When he arrived in the square, carrying the black wooden box, there was a murmur of conversation among the villagers, and he waved and called. "Little late today, folks." The postmaster, Mr. Graves, followed him, carrying a three- legged stool, and the stool was put in the center of the square and Mr. Summers set the black box down on it. The villagers kept their distance, leaving a space between themselves and the stool. and when Mr. Summers said, "Some of you fellows want to give me a hand?" there was a hesitation before two men. Mr. Martin and his oldest son, Baxter. came forward to hold the box steady on the stool while Mr. Summers stirred up the papers inside it. The original paraphernalia for the lottery had been lost long ago, and the black box now resting on the stool had been put into use even before Old Man Warner, the oldest man in town, was born. Mr. Summers spoke frequently to the villagers about making a new box, but no one liked to upset even as much tradition as was represented by the black box. There was a story that the present box had been made with some pieces of the box that had preceded it, the one that had been constructed when the first people settled down to make

a village here. Every year, after the lottery, Mr. Summers began talking again about a new box, but every year the subject was allowed to fade off without anything's being done. The black box grew shabbier each year: by now it was no longer completely black but splintered badly along one side to show the original wood color, and in some places faded or stained.

Mr. Martin and his oldest son, Baxter, held the black box securely on the stool until Mr. Summers had stirred the papers thoroughly with his hand. Because so much of the ritual had been forgotten or discarded, Mr. Summers had been successful in having slips of paper substituted for the chips of wood that had been used for generations. Chips of wood, Mr. Summers had argued. had been all very well when the village was tiny, but now that the population was more than three hundred and likely to keep on growing, it was necessary to use something that would fit more easily into he black box. The night before the lottery, Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves made up the slips of paper and put them in the box, and it was then taken to the safe of Mr. Summers' coal company and locked up until Mr. Summers was ready to take it to the square next morning. The rest of the year, the box was put way, sometimes one place, sometimes another; it had spent one year in Mr. Graves's barn and another year underfoot in the post office. and sometimes it was set on a shelf in the Martin grocery and left there.

There was a great deal of fussing to be done before Mr. Summers declared the lottery open. There were the lists to make up--of heads of families. heads of households in each family. members of each household in each family. There was the proper swearing-in of Mr. Summers by the postmaster, as the official of the lottery; at one time, some people remembered, there had been a recital of some sort, performed by the official of the lottery, a perfunctory. tuneless chant that had been rattled off duly each year; some people believed that the official of the lottery used to stand just so when he said or sang it, others believed that he was supposed to walk among the people, but years and years ago this part of the ritual had been allowed to lapse. There had

been, also, a ritual salute, which the official of the lottery had had to use in addressing each person who came up to draw from the box, but this also had changed with time, until now it was felt necessary only for the official to speak to each person approaching. Mr. Summers was very good at all this; in his clean white shirt and blue jeans. with one hand resting carelessly on the black box. he seemed very proper and important as he talked interminably to Mr. Graves and the Martins.

Just as Mr. Summers finally left off talking and turned to the assembled villagers, Mrs. Hutchinson came hurriedly along the path to the square, her sweater thrown over her shoulders, and slid into place in the back of the crowd. "Clean forgot what day it was," she said to Mrs. Delacroix, who stood next to her, and they both laughed softly. "Thought my old man was out back stacking wood," Mrs. Hutchinson went on. "and then I looked out the window and the kids was gone, and then I remembered it was the twenty-seventh and came a-running." She dried her hands on her apron, and Mrs. Delacroix said, "You're in time, though. They're still talking away up there."

Mrs. Hutchinson craned her neck to see through the crowd and found her husband and children standing near the front. She tapped Mrs. Delacroix on the arm as a farewell and began to make her way through the crowd. The people separated good-humoredly to let her through: two or three people said. in voices just loud enough to be heard across the crowd, "Here comes your, Missus, Hutchinson," and "Bill, she made it after all." Mrs. Hutchinson reached her husband, and Mr. Summers, who had been waiting, said cheerfully. "Thought we were going to have to get on without you, Tessie." Mrs. Hutchinson said. grinning, "Wouldn't have me leave m'dishes in the sink, now, would you. Joe?," and soft laughter ran through the crowd as the people stirred back into position after Mrs. Hutchinson's arrival.

"Well, now." Mr. Summers said soberly, "guess we better get started, get this over with, so's we can go back to work.

Anybody ain't here?"

"Dunbar." several people said. "Dunbar. Dunbar."

Mr. Summers consulted his list. "Clyde Dunbar," he said. "That's right. He's broke his leg, hasn't he? Who's drawing for him?"

"Me. I guess," a woman said. and Mr. Summers turned to look at her. "Wife draws for her husband." Mr. Summers said. "Don't you have a grown boy to do it for you, Janey?" Although Mr. Summers and everyone else in the village knew the answer perfectly well, it was the business of the official of the lottery to ask such questions formally. Mr. Summers waited with an expression of polite interest while Mrs. Dunbar answered.

"Horace's not but sixteen vet." Mrs. Dunbar said regretfully. "Guess I gotta fill in for the old man this year."

"Right." Sr. Summers said. He made a note on the list he was holding. Then he asked, "Watson boy drawing this year?" A tall boy in the crowd raised his hand. "Here," he said. "I m drawing for my mother and me." He blinked his eyes nervously and ducked his head as several voices in the crowd said thin#s like "Good fellow, lack." and "Glad to see your mother's got a man to do it."

"Well," Mr. Summers said, "guess that's everyone. Old Man Warner make it?"

"Here," a voice said. and Mr. Summers nodded.

A sudden hush fell on the crowd as Mr. Summers cleared his throat and looked at the list. "All ready?" he called. "Now, I'll read the names--heads of families first--and the men come up and take a paper out of the box. Keep the paper folded in your hand without looking at it until everyone has had a turn. Everything clear?"

The people had done it so many times that they only half listened to the directions: most of them were quiet. wetting their lips. not looking around. Then Mr. Summers raised one hand high and said, "Adams." A man disengaged himself from the crowd and came forward. "Hi. Steve." Mr. Summers said. and Mr. Adams said. "Hi. Joe." They grinned at one another humorlessly and nervously. Then Mr. Adams reached into the black box and took out a folded paper. He held it firmly by one corner as he turned and went hastily back to his

place in the crowd. where he stood a little apart from his family. not looking down at his hand.

"Allen." Mr. Summers said. "Anderson.... Bentham."

"Seems like there's no time at all between lotteries any more." Mrs. Delacroix said to Mrs. Graves in the back row.

"Seems like we got through with the last one only last week."

"Time sure goes fast.-- Mrs. Graves said.

"Clark.... Delacroix"

"There goes my old man." Mrs. Delacroix said. She held her breath while her husband went forward.

"Dunbar," Mr. Summers said, and Mrs. Dunbar went steadily to the box while one of the women said. "Go on. Janey," and another said, "There she goes."

"We're next." Mrs. Graves said. She watched while Mr. Graves came around from the side of the box, greeted Mr. Summers gravely and selected a slip of paper from the box. By now, all through the crowd there were men holding the small folded papers in their large hand. turning them over and over nervously Mrs. Dunbar and her two sons stood together, Mrs. Dunbar holding the slip of paper.

"Harburt.... Hutchinson."

"Get up there, Bill," Mrs. Hutchinson said. and the people near her laughed.

"Jones."

"They do say," Mr. Adams said to Old Man Warner, who stood next to him, "that over in the north village they're talking of giving up the lottery."

Old Man Warner snorted. "Pack of crazy fools," he said.

"Listening to the young folks, nothing's good enough for them. Next thing you know, they'll be wanting to go back to living in caves, nobody work any more, live hat way for a while. Used to be a saying about 'Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon.' First thing you know, we'd all be eating stewed chickweed and acorns. There's always been a lottery," he added petulantly. "Bad enough to see young Joe Summers up there joking with everybody."

"Some places have already quit lotteries." Mrs. Adams said.

"Nothing but trouble in that," Old Man Warner said stoutly.

"Pack of young fools."

"Martin." And Bobby Martin watched his father go forward. "Overdyke.... Percy."

"I wish they'd hurry," Mrs. Dunbar said to her older son. "I wish they'd hurry."

"They're almost through," her son said.

"You get ready to run tell Dad," Mrs. Dunbar said.

Mr. Summers called his own name and then stepped forward precisely and selected a slip from the box. Then he called, "Warner."

"Seventy-seventh year I been in the lottery," Old Man Warner said as he went through the crowd. "Seventy-seventh time."

"Watson" The tall boy came awkwardly through the crowd. Someone said, "Don't be nervous, Jack," and Mr. Summers said, "Take your time, son."

"Zanini."

After that, there was a long pause, a breathless pause, until Mr. Summers. holding his slip of paper in the air, said, "All right, fellows." For a minute, no one moved, and then all the slips of paper were opened. Suddenly, all the women began to speak at once, saving. "Who is it?," "Who's got it?," "Is it the Dunbars?," "Is it the Watsons?" Then the voices began to say, "It's Hutchinson. It's Bill," "Bill Hutchinson's got it."

"Go tell your father," Mrs. Dunbar said to her older son. People began to look around to see the Hutchinsons. Bill Hutchinson was standing quiet, staring down at the paper in his hand. Suddenly. Tessie Hutchinson shouted to Mr. Summers. "You didn't give him time enough to take any paper he wanted. I saw you. It wasn't fair!"

"Be a good sport, Tessie." Mrs. Delacroix called, and Mrs. Graves said, "All of us took the same chance."

"Shut up, Tessie," Bill Hutchinson said.

"Well, everyone," Mr. Summers said, "that was done pretty fast, and now we've got to be hurrying a little more to get done in time." He consulted his next list. "Bill," he said, "you draw for the Hutchinson family. You got any other households in the Hutchinsons?"

"There's Don and Eva," Mrs. Hutchinson yelled. "Make them take their chance!"

"Daughters draw with their husbands' families, Tessie," Mr. Summers said gently. "You know that as well as anyone else."

"It wasn't fair," Tessie said.

"I guess not, Joe." Bill Hutchinson said regretfully. "My daughter draws with her husband's family; that's only fair. And I've got no other family except the kids."

"Then, as far as drawing for families is concerned, it's you," Mr. Summers said in explanation, "and as far as drawing for households is concerned, that's you, too. Right?"

"Right," Bill Hutchinson said.

"How many kids, Bill?" Mr. Summers asked formally.

"Three," Bill Hutchinson said.

"There's Bill, Jr., and Nancy, and little Dave. And Tessie and me."

"All right, then," Mr. Summers said. "Harry, you got their tickets back?"

Mr. Graves nodded and held up the slips of paper. "Put them in the box, then," Mr. Summers directed. "Take Bill's and put it in."

"I think we ought to start over," Mrs. Hutchinson said, as quietly as she could. "I tell you it wasn't fair. You didn't give him time enough to choose. Everybody saw that."

Mr. Graves had selected the five slips and put them in the box. and he dropped all the papers but those onto the ground. where the breeze caught them and lifted them off.

"Listen, everybody," Mrs. Hutchinson was saying to the people around her.

"Ready, Bill?" Mr. Summers asked. and Bill Hutchinson, with one quick glance around at his wife and children. nodded.

"Remember," Mr. Summers said. "take the slips and keep them folded until each person has taken one. Harry, you help little Dave." Mr. Graves took the hand of the little boy, who came willingly with him up to the box. "Take a paper out of the box, Davy." Mr. Summers said. Davy put his hand into the box and laughed. "Take just one paper." Mr. Summers said. "Harry, you hold it for him." Mr. Graves took the child's hand and removed the folded paper from the tight fist and

held it while little Dave stood next to him and looked up at him wonderingly.

"Nancy next," Mr. Summers said. Nancy was twelve, and her school friends breathed heavily as she went forward switching her skirt, and took a slip daintily from the box "Bill, Jr.," Mr. Summers said, and Billy, his face red and his feet overlarge, near knocked the box over as he got a paper out. "Tessie," Mr. Summers said. She hesitated for a minute, looking around defiantly. and then set her lips and went up to the box. She snatched a paper out and held it behind her.

"Bill," Mr. Summers said, and Bill Hutchinson reached into the box and felt around, bringing his hand out at last with the slip of paper in it.

The crowd was quiet. A girl whispered, "I hope it's not Nancy," and the sound of the whisper reached the edges of the crowd.

"It's not the way it used to be." Old Man Warner said clearly. "People ain't the way they used to be."

"All right," Mr. Summers said. "Open the papers. Harry, you open little Dave's."

Mr. Graves opened the slip of paper and there was a general sigh through the crowd as he held it up and everyone could see that it was blank. Nancy and Bill. Jr.. opened theirs at the same time. and both beamed and laughed. turning around to the crowd and holding their slips of paper above their heads.

"Tessie," Mr. Summers said. There was a pause, and then Mr. Summers looked at Bill Hutchinson, and Bill unfolded his paper and showed it. It was blank.

"It's Tessie," Mr. Summers said, and his voice was hushed.

"Show us her paper. Bill."

Bill Hutchinson went over to his wife and forced the slip of paper out of her hand. It had a black spot on it, the black spot Mr. Summers had made the night before with the heavy pencil in the coal company office. Bill Hutchinson held it up, and there was a stir in the crowd.

"All right, folks." Mr. Summers said. "Let's finish quickly."

Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, they still remembered to use stones. The pile of stones the boys had made earlier was ready; there

were stones on the ground with the blowing scraps of paper that had come out of the box Delacroix selected a stone so large she had to pick it up with both hands and turned to Mrs. Dunbar. "Come on," she said. "Hurry up."

Mr. Dunbar had small stones in both hands, and she said. gasping for breath. "I can't run at all. You'll have to go ahead and I'll catch up with you."

The children had stones already. And someone gave little Davy Hutchinson few pebbles.

Tessie Hutchinson was in the center of a cleared space by now, and she held her hands out desperately as the villagers moved in on her. "It isn't fair," she said. A stone hit her on the side of the head. Old Man Warner was saying, "Come on, come on, everyone." Steve Adams was in the front of the crowd of villagers, with Mrs. Graves beside him.

"It isn't fair, it isn't right," Mrs. Hutchinson screamed, and then they were upon her.

Li Ho (791-817)

A Beautiful Girl Combs Her Hair

Translated from Chinese by David Hart

Awake at dawn
she's dreaming
by cool silk curtains

fragrance of spilling hair
half sandalwood, half aloes

windlass creaking at the well
singing jade

the lotus blossom wakes, refreshed

her mirror
two phoenixes
a pool of autumn light

standing on the ivory bed
loosening her hair
watching the mirror

one long coil, aromatic silk
a cloud down to the floor

drop the jade comb -- no sound

delicate fingers
pushing the coils into place
color of raven feathers

shining blue-black stuff
the jewelled comb will hardly hold it

spring wind makes me restless
her slovenly beauty upsets me

eighteen and her hair's so thick
she wears herself out fixing it!

she's finished now
the whole arrangement in place

in a cloud-patterned skirt
she walks with even steps
a wild goose on the sand

turns away without a word
where is she off to?

down the steps to break a spray of
cherry blossoms



Sylvia Plath (1932-1963)
Mirror (1963)

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
What ever you see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful---
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.
Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish



Jamaica Kincaid (B. 1949)
Girl (1978)

Wash the white clothes on Monday and put them on the stone heap; wash the color clothes on Tuesday and put them on the clothesline to dry; don't walk barehead in the hot sun; cook pumpkin fritters in very hot sweet oil; soak your little cloths right after you take them off; when buying cotton to make yourself a nice blouse, be sure that it doesn't have gum on it, because that way it won't hold up well after a wash; soak salt fish overnight before you cook it; is it true that you sing benna* in Sunday school?; always eat your food in such a way that it won't turn someone else's stomach; on Sundays try to walk like a lady and not like the slut you are so bent on becoming; don't sing benna in Sunday school; you mustn't speak to wharbflyes will follow you; but I don't sing benna on Sundays at all and never in Sunday school; this is how to sew on a button; this is how to make a button-hole for the button you have just sewed on; this is how to hem a dress when you see the hem coming down and so to prevent yourself from looking like the slut I know you are so bent on becoming; this is how you iron your father's khaki shirt so that it doesn't have a crease; this is how you iron your father's khaki pants so that they don't have a crease; this is how you grow okrbafar from the house, because okra tree harbors red ants; when you are growing dasheen, make sure it gets plenty of water or else it makes your throat itch when you are eating it; this is how you sweep a corner; this is how you sweep a whole house; this is how you sweep a yard; this is how you smile to someone you don't like too much; this is how you

smile to someone you don't like at all; this is how you smile to someone you like completely; this is how you set a table for tea; this is how you set a table for dinner; this is how you set a table for dinner with an important guest; this is how you set a table for lunch; this is how you set a table for breakfast; this is how to behave in the presence of men who don't know you very well, and this way they won't recognize immediately the slut I have warned you against becoming; be sure to wash every day, even if it is with your own spit; don't squat down to play marbles; you are not a boy, you know; don't pick people's flowers; you might catch something; don't throw stones at blackbirds, because it might not be a blackbird at all; this is how to make a bread pudding; this is how to make doukona*; this is how to make pepper pot; this is how to make a good medicine for a cold; this is how to make a good medicine to throw away a child before it even becomes a child; this is how to catch a fish; this is how to throw back a fish you don't like, and that way something bad won't fall on you; this is how to bully a man; this is how a man bullies you; this is how to love a man; and if this doesn't work there are other ways, and if they don't work don't feel too bad about giving up; this is how to spit up in the air if you feel like it, and this is how to move quick so that it doesn't fall on you; this is how to make ends meet; always squeeze bread to make sure it's fresh; but what if the baker won't let me feel the bread?; you mean to say that after all you are really going to be the kind of woman who the baker won't let near the bread?

* benna: popular music, calypso

* doukona: a spicy pudding, often made from plantains wrapped in plantain or banana leaf.

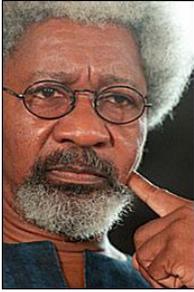


Cecilia Rodríguez Milanés (B. 1960)
Muchacha (After Jamaica) (2009)

WASH YOUR PANTIES and stocking when you take them off; always carry a perfumed handkerchief in your bosom; fry *frituritas de bacalao* in shimmering hot oil; ask for a little extra when you buy clothes from the *polacos*; wearing those pointed shoes will cripple you!; don't let me catch you talking to those boys hanging out o a corner by the empty lot; but I don't talk to 'em; you mustn't refer to papaya as papaya but as *fruta bomba* because people might think you're indecent; it's all right to call those little rolls *bolritos* thought; now that's nasty; this is the way you embroider a woman's hankie; this is the way you embroider a man's; this is the way you mend a sock; this is the way you iron a *guayabera* without messing up the pleats; this is the way you starch your fine lines blouses that you embroider; this is the way to take *la grasa* out of the soup; this is the way you sort the frijoles; this is the way you wash the rice; but *madrina* doesn't wash the rice; plant the cilantro under the kitchen window so you know when it's ready; these are the herbs and spices for *el lechoncito*, remember to use sour oranges' juice for the *mojo* on *noche buena*; this is how you grind the herbs and spices; don't throw the *fruta bomba* seeds near the house they grow *silverstre*; this *silverstre* is used to calm the nerves; this lead is cut in the middle and spread on burns to prevent scars, it can be drunk too for the lungs but watercress is the best for the lungs; this one is to ease your cramps; this is how you wash the porch; always soak bloodstains in icy cold water; they still won't come out; don't keep any stained clothing; wrap

red rags around your fruit trees to ward off the evil eye; always wear your *azabache* for the same reason, I will give one for your firstborn; never play music on *viernes santos*; don't ever let me catch you cursing; but you and . . .; don't sit with your legs open, it's indecent and you're a decent girl; wash your chocha with that peach tin can from under the sink, always; don't eat at anybody's house; don't give your picture to anyone; do not put your fingers with *merengue* in the pig's mouth, can't you see the animal has teeth?; don't dance the *merengue* too close; don't let any man stand behind you on the bus; show your husband everything but you *culo*, you can never show a man everything; this is how you make flam; this is how to *despojare* with branches of the *paraíso*; this is how you float the gardenias so they don't turn brown, plant them under the bedroom window when they take root so they perfume your nights; don't eat all the *anónes*, other people like them too; this is how you embrace your child; this is how you embrace someone else's child; I don't have to tell you how to embrace your husband; this is how you embrace other women; always *saluda* when you walk in anywhere, you're not just anyone, you know; don't wear black bras, you'll look like *fletera* from across the street; always use the formal *usted* when speaking to people you don't know; don't throw dishes at each other when you fight; don't let your inlaws meddle in your matrimony, that doesn't include me; don't talk Spanish at the factory/school/office; don't throw the house out the window; don't drive the oxcart in front of the oxen; don't make fun of *guajiros*, your father will be hurt; don't make fun of *gallegos*, your grandmother will be hurt; this is how you take a bath without running water; this is how you make a *contradito*; this is how you save your pennies; this is how you keep your shoes I good condition; you mustn't let the full moon shine on you when you're sleeping; when you call someone on the telephone always say *buenos días* or *buenas tardes*, you have manners, you know; this is how you make *camarones enchilados*; this is how you avoid being used, if it happens, it's your own fault and don't let it happen again; this is where you place the glasses full of water for the saints; this is where you put their food; this is how

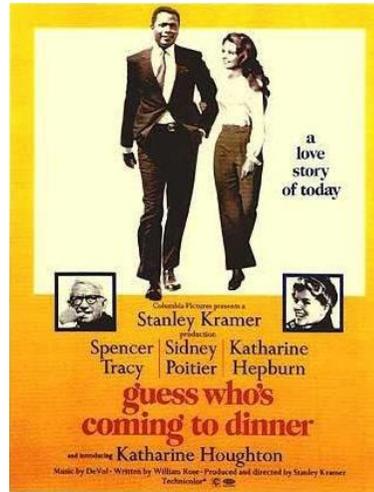
you light a candle for the dead; this is how you pray for the living; this is how you will mourn your *tierra*; but this is my country; this is how you will live in exile; this is how your spirit will rise when your body falls but only after many years, *mi hijita*, so don't worry about that now.



Wole Soyinka (B. 1934)
Telephone Conversation (1960)

The price seemed reasonable, location
 Indifferent. The landlady swore she lived
 Off premises. Nothing remained
 But self-confession. “Madam,” I warned,
 “I hate a wasted journey – I am African.”
 Silence. Silenced transmission of
 Pressurized good-breeding. Voice, when it came,
 Lipstick coated, long gold-rolled
 Cigarette-holder pipped. Caught I was, foully,
 “HOW DARE?” ... I had not misheard ... “ARE YOU
 LIGHT
 OR VERY DARK?” Button B. Button A. Stench
 Of rancid breath of public hide-and-speak.
 Red booth. Red pillar-box. Red double-tiered
 Omnibus squelching tar. It *was* real! Shamed
 By ill-mannered silence, surrender
 Pushed dumbfoundment to beg simplification.
 Considerate she was, varying the emphases –
 “ARE YOU DARK? OR VERY LIGHT?” Revelation came.
 “You mean – like plain or milk chocolate?”
 Her assent was cynical, crushing in its light
 Impersonality. Rapidly, wave-length adjusted,
 I chose. “West African sepia” – and as afterthought,
 “Down in my passport.” Silence for spectroscopic
 Flight of fancy, till truthfulness clanged her accent
 Hard on the mouthpiece. “WHAT’S THAT?” conceding
 “DON’T KNOW WHAT THAT IS.” “Like Brunette.”

“THAT’S DARK, ISN’T IT?” “Not altogether.
 Facially, I am Brunette, but madam, you should see
 The rest of me. Palm of my hand, soles of my feet
 Are a peroxide blonde. Friction, caused –
 Foolishly madam – by sitting down, has turned
 My bottom raven black – One moment madam!” – sensing
 Her receiver rearing on the thunderclap
 About my ears – “Madam,” I pleaded, “Wouldn’t you rather
 See for yourself?”



Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? This 1967 film featured
 Hollywood's first on-screen interracial kiss, between Sidney
 Poitier and Katherine Houghton. Poitier was the first African
 American actor to play a leading role in a Hollywood film.¹

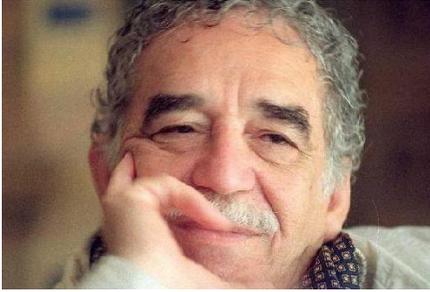
¹ From *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature*. Michael Meyer, ed.
 7th edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.



Langston Hughes (1902-1967)
Dinner Guest: Me (1965)

I know I am
 The Negro Problem
 Being wine and dined,
 Answering the usual questions
 That come to white mind
 Which seeks demurely
 To Probe in polite way
 The why and wherewithal
 Of darkness U.S.A.--
 Wondering how things got this way
 In current democratic night,
 Murmuring gently
 Over fraises du bois,
 "I'm so ashamed of being white."

The lobster is delicious,
 The wine divine,
 And center of attention
 At the damask table, mine.
 To be a Problem on
 Park Avenue at eight
 Is not so bad.
 Solutions to the Problem,
 Of course, wait.



Gabriel Garcia Marquez (B. 1927)
A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings: A Tale for Children (1968)

On the third day of rain they had killed so many crabs inside the house that Pelayo had to cross his drenched courtyard and throw them into the sea, because the newborn child had a temperature all night and they thought it was due to the stench. The world had been sad since Tuesday. Sea and sky were a single ash-gray thing and the sands of the beach, which on March nights glimmered like powdered light, had become a stew of mud and rotten shellfish. The light was so weak at noon that when Pelayo was coming back to the house after throwing away the crabs, it was hard for him to see what it was that was moving and groaning in the rear of the courtyard. He had to go very close to see that it was an old man, a very old man, lying face down in the mud, who, in spite of his tremendous efforts, couldn't get up, impeded by his enormous wings.

Frightened by that nightmare, Pelayo ran to get Elisenda, his wife, who was putting compresses on the sick child, and he took her to the rear of the courtyard. They both looked at the fallen body with a mute stupor. He was dressed like a ragpicker. There were only a few faded hairs left on his bald skull and very few teeth in his mouth, and his pitiful condition of a drenched great-grandfather took away and sense of grandeur he might have had. His huge buzzard wings, dirty and half-plucked were forever entangled in the mud. They looked at him so long and so closely that Pelayo and Elisenda very soon overcame their surprise and in the

end found him familiar. Then they dared speak to him, and he answered in an incomprehensible dialect with a strong sailor's voice. That was how they skipped over the inconvenience of the wings and quite intelligently concluded that he was a lonely castaway from some foreign ship wrecked by the storm. And yet, they called in a neighbor woman who knew everything about life and death to see him, and all she needed was one look to show them their mistake.

"He's an angel," she told them. "He must have been coming for the child, but the poor fellow is so old that the rain knocked him down."

On the following day everyone knew that a flesh-and-blood angel was held captive in Pelayo's house. Against the judgment of the wise neighbor woman, for whom angels in those times were the fugitive survivors of a spiritual conspiracy, they did not have the heart to club him to death. Pelayo watched over him all afternoon from the kitchen, armed with his bailiff's club, and before going to bed he dragged him out of the mud and locked him up with the hens in the wire chicken coop. In the middle of the night, when the rain stopped, Pelayo and Elisenda were still killing crabs. A short time afterward the child woke up without a fever and with a desire to eat. Then they felt magnanimous and decided to put the angel on a raft with fresh water and provisions for three days and leave him to his fate on the high seas. But when they went out into the courtyard with the first light of dawn, they found the whole neighborhood in front of the chicken coop having fun with the angel, without the slightest reverence, tossing him things to eat through the openings in the wire as if weren't a supernatural creature but a circus animal.

Father Gonzaga arrived before seven o'clock, alarmed at the strange news. By that time onlookers less frivolous than those at dawn had already arrived and they were making all kinds of conjectures concerning the captive's future. The simplest among them thought that he should be named mayor of the world. Others of sterner mind felt that he should be promoted to the rank of five-star general in order to win all wars. Some visionaries hoped that he could be put to stud in

order to implant the earth a race of winged wise men who could take charge of the universe. But Father Gonzaga, before becoming a priest, had been a robust woodcutter. Standing by the wire, he reviewed his catechism in an instant and asked them to open the door so that he could take a close look at that pitiful man who looked more like a huge decrepit hen among the fascinated chickens. He was lying in the corner drying his open wings in the sunlight among the fruit peels and breakfast leftovers that the early risers had thrown him. Alien to the impertinences of the world, he only lifted his antiquarian eyes and murmured something in his dialect when Father Gonzaga went into the chicken coop and said good morning to him in Latin. The parish priest had his first suspicion of an imposter when he saw that he did not understand the language of God or know how to greet His ministers. Then he noticed that seen close up he was much too human: he had an unbearable smell of the outdoors, the back side of his wings was strewn with parasites and his main feathers had been mistreated by terrestrial winds, and nothing about him measured up to the proud dignity of angels. The he came out of the chicken coop and in a brief sermon warned the curious against the risks of being ingenuous. He reminded them that the devil had the bad habit of making use of carnival tricks in order to confuse the unwary. He argued that if wings were not the essential element in determining the different between a hawk and an airplane, they were even less so in the recognition of angels. Nevertheless, he promised to write a letter to his bishop so that the latter would write his primate so that the latter would write to the Supreme Pontiff in order to get the final verdict from the highest courts.

His prudence fell on sterile hearts. The news of the captive angel spread with such rapidity that after a few hours the courtyard had the bustle of a marketplace and they had to call in troops with fixed bayonets to disperse the mob that was about to knock the house down. Elisenda, her spine all twisted from sweeping up so much marketplace trash, then got the idea of fencing in the yard and charging five cents admission to see the angel.

The curious came from far away. A traveling carnival arrived with a flying acrobat who buzzed over the crowd several times, but no one paid any attention to him because his wings were not those of an angel but, rather, those of a sidereal bat. The most unfortunate invalids on earth came in search of health: a poor woman who since childhood has been counting her heartbeats and had run out of numbers; a Portuguese man who couldn't sleep because the noise of the stars disturbed him; a sleepwalker who got up at night to undo the things he had done while awake; and many others with less serious ailments. In the midst of that shipwreck disorder that made the earth tremble, Pelayo and Elisenda were happy with fatigue, for in less than a week they had crammed their rooms with money and the line of pilgrims waiting their turn to enter still reached beyond the horizon.

The angel was the only one who took no part in his own act. He spent his time trying to get comfortable in his borrowed nest, befuddled by the hellish heat of the oil lamps and sacramental candles that had been placed along the wire. At first they tried to make him eat some mothballs, which, according to the wisdom of the wise neighbor woman, were the food prescribed for angels. But he turned them down, just as he turned down the papal lunches that the pentinents brought him, and they never found out whether it was because he was an angel or because he was an old man that in the end ate nothing but eggplant mush. His only supernatural virtue seemed to be patience. Especially during the first days, when the hens pecked at him, searching for the stellar parasites that proliferated in his wings, and the cripples pulled out feathers to touch their defective parts with, and even the most merciful threw stones at him, trying to get him to rise so they could see him standing. The only time they succeeded in arousing him was when they burned his side with an iron for branding steers, for he had been motionless for so many hours that they thought he was dead. He awoke with a start, ranting in his hermetic language and with tears in his eyes, and he flapped his wings a couple of times, which brought on a whirlwind of chicken dung and lunar dust and a gale of panic that did not seem to be of this world. Although

many thought that his reaction had not been one of rage but of pain, from then on they were careful not to annoy him, because the majority understood that his passivity was not that of a her taking his ease but that of a cataclysm in repose.

Father Gonzaga held back the crowd's frivolity with formulas of maidservant inspiration while awaiting the arrival of a final judgment on the nature of the captive. But the mail from Rome showed no sense of urgency. They spent their time finding out in the prisoner had a navel, if his dialect had any connection with Aramaic, how many times he could fit on the head of a pin, or whether he wasn't just a Norwegian with wings. Those meager letters might have come and gone until the end of time if a providential event had not put an end to the priest's tribulations.

It so happened that during those days, among so many other carnival attractions, there arrived in the town the traveling show of the woman who had been changed into a spider for having disobeyed her parents. The admission to see her was not only less than the admission to see the angel, but people were permitted to ask her all manner of questions about her absurd state and to examine her up and down so that no one would ever doubt the truth of her horror. She was a frightful tarantula the size of a ram and with the head of a sad maiden. What was most heartrending, however, was not her outlandish shape but the sincere affliction with which she recounted the details of her misfortune. While still practically a child she had sneaked out of her parents' house to go to a dance, and while she was coming back through the woods after having danced all night without permission, a fearful thunderclap rent the sky in tow and through the crack came the lightning bolt of brimstone that changed her into a spider. Her only nourishment came from the meatballs that charitable souls chose to toss into her mouth. A spectacle like that, full of so much human truth and with such a fearful lesson, was bound to defeat without even trying that of a haughty angel who scarcely deigned to look at mortals. Besides, the few miracles attributed to the angel showed a certain mental disorder, like the blind man who didn't recover his sight but grew three new teeth, or the paralytic who didn't

get to walk but almost won the lottery, and the leper whose sores sprouted sunflowers. Those consolation miracles, which were more like mocking fun, had already ruined the angel's reputation when the woman who had been changed into a spider finally crushed him completely. That was how Father Gonzaga was cured forever of his insomnia and Pelayo's courtyard went back to being as empty as during the time it had rained for three days and crabs walked through the bedrooms.

The owners of the house had no reason to lament. With the money they saved they built a two-story mansion with balconies and gardens and high netting so that crabs wouldn't get in during the winter, and with iron bars on the windows so that angels wouldn't get in. Pelayo also set up a rabbit warren close to town and gave up his job as a bailiff for good, and Elisenda bought some satin pumps with high heels and many dresses of iridescent silk, the kind worn on Sunday by the most desirable women in those times. The chicken coop was the only thing that didn't receive any attention. If they washed it down with creolin and burned tears of myrrh inside it every so often, it was not in homage to the angel but to drive away the dungheap stench that still hung everywhere like a ghost and was turning the new house into an old one. At first, when the child learned to walk, they were careful that he not get too close to the chicken coop. But then they began to lose their fears and got used to the smell, and before they child got his second teeth he'd gone inside the chicken coop to play, where the wires were falling apart. The angel was no less standoffish with him than with the other mortals, but he tolerated the most ingenious infamies with the patience of a dog who had no illusions. They both came down with the chicken pox at the same time. The doctor who took care of the child couldn't resist the temptation to listen to the angel's heart, and he found so much whistling in the heart and so many sounds in his kidneys that it seemed impossible for him to be alive. What surprised him most, however, was the logic of his wings. They seemed so natural on that completely human organism that he couldn't understand why other men didn't have them too.

When the child began school it had been some time since the sun and rain had caused the collapse of the chicken coop. The angel went dragging himself about here and there like a stray dying man. They would drive him out of the bedroom with a broom and a moment later find him in the kitchen. He seemed to be in so many places at the same time that they grew to think that he'd be duplicated, that he was reproducing himself all through the house, and the exasperated and unhinged Elisenda shouted that it was awful living in that hell full of angels. He could scarcely eat and his antiquarian eyes had also become so foggy that he went about bumping into posts. All he had left were the bare cannulae of his last feathers. Pelayo threw a blanket over him and extended him the charity of letting him sleep in the shed, and only then did they notice that he had a temperature at night, and was delirious with the tongue twisters of an old Norwegian. That was one of the few times they became alarmed, for they thought he was going to die and not even the wise neighbor woman had been able to tell them what to do with dead angels.

And yet he not only survived his worst winter, but seemed improved with the first sunny days. He remained motionless for several days in the farthest corner of the courtyard, where no one would see him, and at the beginning of December some large, stiff feathers began to grow on his wings, the feathers of a scarecrow, which looked more like another misfortune of decrepitude. But he must have known the reason for those changes, for he was quite careful that no one should notice them, that no one should hear the sea chanteys that he sometimes sang under the stars. One morning Elisenda was cutting some bunches of onions for lunch when a wind that seemed to come from the high seas blew into the kitchen. Then she went to the window and caught the angel in his first attempts at flight. They were so clumsy that his fingernails opened a furrow in the vegetable patch and he was on the point of knocking the shed down with the ungainly flapping that slipped on the light and couldn't get a grip on the air. But he did manage to gain altitude. Elisenda let out a sigh of relief, for herself and for

him, when she watched him pass over the last houses, holding himself up in some way with the risky flapping of a senile vulture. She kept watching him even when she was through cutting the onions and she kept on watching until it was no longer possible for her to see him, because then he was no longer an annoyance in her life but an imaginary dot on the horizon of the sea.



Isabel Allende (B.1942)

From *Zoro* (excerpt from Part 1) (2005)

Let us begin at the beginning, at an event without which Diego de la Vega would not have been born. It happened in Alta California, in the San Gabriel mission in the year 1790 of Our Lord. At that time the mission was under the charge of Padre Mendoza, a Franciscan who had the shoulders of a woodcutter and a much younger appearance than his forty well-lived years warranted. He was energetic and commanding, and the most difficult part of his ministry was to emulate the humility and sweet nature of Saint Francis of Assisi. There were other Franciscan friars in the region supervising he twenty-three missions and preaching the word of Christ among a multitude of Indians from the Chumash, Shoshone, and other tribes who were not always overly cordial in welcoming them. The natives of the coast of California had a network of trade and commerce that had functioned for thousands of years. Their surroundings were very rich in natural resources, and the tribes developed different specialties. The Spanish were impressed with the Chumash economy, so complex that it could be compared to that of China. The Indians had a monetary system based on shells, and they regularly organized fairs that served as an opportunity to exchange goods as well as contract marriages.

Those native peoples were confounded by the mystery of the crucified man the whites worshiped, and they could not understand the advantage of living contrary to their inclinations in this world in order to enjoy a hypothetical well-being in another. In the paradise of the Christians, they

might take their ease on a cloud and strum a harp with the angels, but that truth was that in the afterworld most would rather hunt bears with their ancestors in the land of the Great Spirit. Another thing they could not understand was why the foreigners planted a flag in the ground, marked off imaginary lines, claimed that area as theirs, and then took offense of anyone came onto it in pursuit of a deer. The concept that you could possess land was as unfathomable to them as that of dividing up the sea. When Padre Mendoza received news that several tribes led by a warrior wearing a wolf's head had risen up against the whites, he sent up prayers for the victims, but he was not overly worried; he was sure that San Gabriel would be safe. Being a communicant of his mission was a privilege, as demonstrated by the number of native families that sought his protection in exchange for being baptized, and who happily stayed on beneath his roof. The padre had never had to call on soldiers to "recruit" converts. He attributed the recent insurrection, the first in Alta California, to abuses inflicted by Spanish troops and to the severity of his fellow missionaries. The many small local tribes had different customs and communicated using a system of signing. They had never banded together for any reason other than trade, and certainly not in a common war. According to Padre Mendoza, those poor creatures were innocent lambs of God who sinned out of ignorance, not vice. If they were rebelling against the colonizers, they must have good reason.

Father Mendoza worked tirelessly, elbow to elbow with the Indians, in the fields, tanning hides, and grinding corn. In the evenings, when everyone else was resting, he treated injuries for minor accidents or pulled a rotted tooth. In addition, he taught the catechism classes and arithmetic, to enable the neophytes, as the baptized Indians were called, to count hides, candles, corn, and cows, but no reading or writing, which was learning that had no practical application in that place. At night he made wine, kept accounts, wrote in his notebooks, and prayed. By dawn he was ringing the church bell to call people to mass, and after morning rites he supervised breakfast with a watchful eye, so no one would go without food. For these reasons – and not in excess of self-

confidence or vanity – he was convinced that the rebelling tribes would not attack his mission. However, when the bad news continued to arrive for several weeks, he finally paid attention. He sent a pair of most loyal scouts to find out what was happening in other parts of the region; in no time at all they had located the warring Indians and gathered a full report, owing to the fact that they were received as brothers by the very Indians they were sent to spy on. They returned and told the missionary that a hero who had emerged from the depths of the forest and was possessed by the spirit of a wolf had succeeded in uniting several tribes; their goal was to drive the Spanish from the land of the Indian ancestors, where they had always been free to hunt. The rebels lacked a clear strategy; they simply attacked missions and towns on the impulse of the moment, burning whatever lay in their path, and then disappearing as quickly as they had come. They filled out their ranks by recruiting neophytes who had not gone soft from the prolonged humiliation of serving whites. The scouts added that this Chief Grey Wolf had his eye on San Gabriel not because of any particular quarrel with Padre Mendoza, whom he had nothing against, but because of the location of the good father's mission. In view of this information, the missionary had to take measures, he was not disposed to lose the fruit of his labor of years, and even less disposed to have his neophytes spirited away. Once they left the mission, his Indians would fall prey to sin and return to living like savages, he wrote in a message he sent to Captain Alejandro de la Vega, asking for immediate aid. He feared the worst, he added, because the rebels were very nearby; they could attack at any moment, and he could not defend himself without adequate military reinforcements. He sent identical missives to the Presidio in San Diego, entrusted to two swift horsemen using different routes, so if one were intercepted the other would reach the fort.

A few days later Captain Alejandro de la Vega galloped into the mission. He leaped from this horse, tore off his heavy uniform jacket, his neckerchief, and his hat, and thrust his head into the trough where women were rinsing their wash.

His horse was covered with foam; it had carried its rider many leagues, along with all the gear of the Spanish dragoon: lance, sword, heavy leather shield, and carbine, plus saddle. De la Vega was accompanied by a couple of men and several packhorses loaded with supplies. Padre Mendoza rushed out to welcome the captain with open arms, but when he saw that he had brought only two trail-weary soldiers as depleted as their mounts, he could not disguise his frustration.

"I am sorry, Padre. I have no available soldiers other than these two good men," the captain apologized as he wiped his face on his shirtsleeve. "The rest of the detachment stayed behind in Pueblo de los Angeles, which is also threatened by the uprisings."

"May God come to our aid, since Spain does not," the priest grumbled.

"Do you know how many Indians will attack?"

"Not many here know how to count accurately, Captain, but according to my scouts it might be as many as five hundred."

"That means no more than a hundred and fifty, Padre. We can defend ourselves. Who can we count on?" asked Alejandro de la Vega.

"On me, for one – I was a soldier before I was a priest – and on two other missionaries, who are young and brave. We have three soldiers who live here, assigned to the mission. We also have a few muskets and carbines, ammunition, two swords, and the gunpowder we use in the quarry."

"How many converts?"

"My son, let us be realistic. Most of the Indians will not fight against their own kind," the missionary explained. "At most, I can count on a half dozen who were brought up here, and a few women who can help us load our weapons. I do not want to risk the lives of my neophytes, Captain – they're like children. I look after them as if they were my own."

"Very well, Padre. Shoulders to the wheel, and may God help us. From what I see, the church is the strongest

building in the mission. We will defend ourselves there," said the captain.

For the next few days, no one rested in San Gabriel; even small children were set to work. Padre Mendoza, who was expert in reading the human soul, knew he could not trust the loyalty of the neophytes once they saw themselves surrounded by free Indians. He was disquieted when he caught a glimpse of a savage gleam in a worker's eye and witnessed the unwilling compliance with his orders: the neophytes dropped stones, burst bags of sand, got tangled in the ropes, and overturned tubs of tar. Forced by circumstances, Padre Mendoza violated his own rule of compassion and, without a twinge of doubt, as punishment sentenced two Indians to the stocks and dealt out ten lashes to a third. Then he had the door to the single women's lodge reinforced with heavy planks; it was sound as a prison, constructed so that the most daring could not get out to wander in the moonlight with their lovers. A solid, windowless building of thick adobe, it had the additional advantage that it could be bolted from outside with an iron bar and padlocks. That was where they locked up most of the male neophytes, shackled at the ankles to prevent them from collaborating with the enemy at the hour of battle.

"The Indians are afraid of us, Padre Mendoza. They think our magic is very powerful," said Captain de la Vega, patting the butt of his carbine.

"Believe me, Captain, these people know what firearms are, all right, though as yet they haven't discovered how they function. What the Indians truly fear is the cross of Christ," the missionary replied, pointing to the altar.

Well, then, we will give them a demonstration of the power of cross and gunpowder." The captain laughed, and laid out his plan.

The mission defenders gathered in the church, where they barricaded the doors with sacks of sand and stationed nests containing firearms at strategic points. It was Captain de la Vega's opinion that as long as they kept the attackers at a distance, so they could reload the carbines and muskets, the scales would be tipped in their favor, but in hand-to-hand

fighting they would be at a tremendous disadvantage since the Indians far surpassed them in numbers and ferocity.

Padre Mendoza had nothing but admiration for this captain's boldness. De la Vega was about thirty and already a veteran soldier, seasoned in the Italian wars, from which he bore proud scars. He was the third son of a family of hidalgos whose lineage could be traced back to El Cid. His ancestors had fought the Moors beneath the Catholic standards of Isabel and Ferdinand; for all the high praise of their courage, however, and all the blood shed for Spain, they received no fortune, only honor. Upon the death of their father, Alejandro's eldest brother inherited the family home, a hundred-year-old stone building towering over a piece of arid land in Castille. The church claimed the second brother, and so it fell to de la Vega to be a soldier; there was no other destiny for a young man of his breeding. In payment for bravery exhibited in Italy, he was given a pouchful of gold doubloons and authorization to go to the New World to better his fortunes. That was how he ended up in Alta California, to which he traveled in the company of Doña Eulalia de Callís, the wife of the governor, Pedro Fages, known as The Bear because of his bad temper and the number of those beasts brought down by his own hand. Padre Mendoza had heard the gossip about the epic voyage of Doña Eulalia, a lady with a temperament as fiery as that of her husband. Her caravan took six months to cover the distance between Mexico City, where she lived like a princess, and Monterey, the inhospitable military fortress where her husband awaited. It traveled at a turtle's pace, dragging along a train of oxcarts and an endless line of mules laden with luggage. Every place the party stopped, they organized a courtly diversion that tended to last several days. It was said that the governor's wife was an eccentric, that she bathed her body in jenny's milk and colored her hair – which fell to her heels – with the red salves of Venetian courtesans, and that from pure excess, not Christian virtue, she gave away her silk and brocade gowns to cover the naked Indians she came across along the road. And last, most scandalous of all, were tales of how she had clung to the handsome Captain Alejandro de la Vega.

“But who am I, a poor Franciscan, to judge this lady?” Padre Mendoza mused, glancing out of the corner of his eye at de la Vega and wondering, with irrepressible curiosity, how much truth there was in the rumors.

In their letters to the director of missions in Mexico, the friars complained, “The Indians prefer to live unclothed, in straw huts, armed with bow and arrow, with no education, government, religion, or respect for authority, and dedicated entirely to satisfying their shameless appetites, as if the miraculous waters of baptism had never washed away their sins.” The Indians’ insistence on clinging to their customs had to be the work of Satan – there was no other explanation – which is why the friars went out to hunt down and lasso the deserters and then whipped their doctrine of love and forgiveness into them.

Padre Mendoza had lived a rather dissolute youth before he became a missionary. The idea of satisfying their shameless appetites was not new to him, and for that reason he sympathized with the neophytes. He had, besides, a secret admiration for his rivals the Jesuits because they had progressive ideas; they were not like other religious groups, including the majority of his Franciscan brothers, who made a virtue of ignorance. Some years earlier, when he was preparing to assume responsibility for the San Gabriel mission, he had read with great interest the report of a Jean François de La Pérouse, a traveler who described the neophytes in the California missions as sad beings bereft of personality and robbed of spirit, who reminded him of the traumatized black slaves on the plantations of the Caribbean. The Spanish authorities attributed La Pérouse’s opinions to the regrettable fact that the man was French, but his writings made a profound impression on Padre Mendoza. Deep in his heart, he had almost as much faith in science as he did in God, which is why he decided to transform the mission into a model of prosperity and justice. He proposed to win followers among the Indians through persuasion, rather than lassos, and to retain them with good works rather than lashings. He achieved that goal in spectacular fashion. Under

his direction, the neophytes’ existence improved to such a degree that had La Pérouse passed through, he would have been astounded. Padre Mendoza could have boasted – though he never did – that the number of baptized at San Gabriel had tripled, and that runaway coverts never stayed away long; the fugitives always returned, repentant. Despite the hard work and sexual restrictions, the Indians came back because the padre showed them mercy and because they had never before had three meals a day and a solid roof to shelter them from storms. The mission attracted travelers from the Americas and Spain who came to this remote territory to learn the secret of Padre Mendoza’s success. They were impressed with the fields of grains and vegetables; with the vineyards producing good wine; with the irrigation system, inspired by Roman aqueducts; with the stables and corrals; with the flocks grazing on hills as far as the eye could see; with the storehouses filled with tanned hides and *botas* of tallow. They marveled at the peaceful passing of the days and the meekness of the converts, whose fame as basket weavers and leather workers was spreading beyond the borders of the province. “Full belly, happy heart,” was the favorite saying of Padre Mendoza, who had been obsessed with good nutrition ever since he’s heard of sailors suffering from scurvy when a lemon could have prevented their agony. He believed that it is easier to save the soul if the body is healthy, and therefore the first he did when he came to the mission was replace the eternal corn mush that was the basic diet of the neophytes with meat stew, vegetables, and lard for tortillas. He provided milk for the children only with Herculean effort, because every pail of foaming liquid came at the cost of wrestling a wild range cow. It took three husky men to milk one of them, and often the cow won. The missionary fought the children’s distaste for milk with the same method he used to purge them once a month for intestinal worms: he tied them up, pinched their nostrils together, and thrust a funnel into their mouths. Such determination had to yield results; thanks to the funnel, the children grew up strong and with resilient characters. The population of San Gabriel was worm-free, and it was the only

colony spared the deadly epidemics that decimated others, although sometimes a cold or an attack of common diarrhea dispatched a neophyte to the other world.



**Marge Piercy (B. 1936)
Barbie Doll (1973)**

This girlchild was born as usual
and presented dolls that did pee-pee
and miniature
GE stoves and irons
and wee lipsticks the color
of cherry candy.

Then in the magic of puberty, a classmate said:
You have a great big nose and fat legs.

She was healthy, tested intelligent,
possessed strong arms and back,
abundant sexual drive and manual dexterity.
She went to and fro apologizing.
Everyone saw a fat nose on thick legs.

She was advised to play coy,
exhorted to come on hearty,
exercise, diet, smile and wheedle.
Her good nature wore out
like a fan belt.
So she cut off her nose and her legs
and offered them up.

In the casket displayed on satin she lay
with the undertaker's cosmetics painted on,
a turned-up putty nose,
dressed in a pink and white nightie.

Doesn't she look pretty? everyone said.
Consummation at last.
To every woman a happy ending.



"Girl with Licca Doll," by Chiaki Tsukumo (2003).

According to the Japanese toymaker Takara, "Licca-chan was developed to make girls' dreams and wishes come true" and "to nurture kindness, gentleness, and love in children." First introduced in 1967, the doll has since sold nearly fifty million units and become, according to the toymaker, a national character that inspired a Licca-chan generation of women consumers.¹

¹ From The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature. Michael Meyer, ed. 7th edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.



**Janice Mirikitani (B. 1942)
Recipe for Round Eyes (1987)**

Ingredients: scissors, Scotch magic transparent tape,
eyeliner — water based, black.
Optional: fake eyelashes.

Cleanse face thoroughly.

For best results, powder entire face, including eyelids.
(lighter shades suited to total effect desired)

With scissors, cut magic tape 1/16" wide, 3/4"-1/2" long —
depending on length of eyelid.

Stick firmly onto mid-upper eyelid area
(looking down into handmirror facilitates finding
adequate surface)

If using false eyelashes, affix first on lid, folding any
excess lid over the base of eyelash with glue.

Paint black eyeliner on tape and entire lid.

Do not cry.



Ahdaf Soueif (B. 1950)
Sandpiper (1996)

Outside, there is a path. A path of beaten white stone bordered by a white wall — low, but not low enough for me to see over it from here. White sands drift across the path. From my window, I used to see patterns in their drift. On my way to the beach, I would try to place my foot, just the ball of my foot, for there never was much room, on those white spaces that glistened flat and free of sand. I had an idea that the patterns on the stone should be made by nature alone; I did not want one grain of sand, blown by a breeze I could not feel, to change its course because of me. What point would there be in trying to decipher a pattern that I had caused? It was not easy. Balancing, the toes of one bare foot on the hot stone, looking for the next clear space to set the other foot down. It took a long time to reach the end of the path. And then the stretch of beach. And then the sea.

I used to sit where the water rolled in, rolled in, its frilled white edge nibbling at the sand, withdrawing to leave great damp half moons of a darker, more brownish-beige. I would sit inside one of these curves, at the very midpoint, fitting my body to its contour, and wait. The sea unceasingly shifts and stirs and sends out fingers, paws, tongues to probe the shore. Each wave coming in is different. It separates itself from the vast, moving blue, rises and surges forward with a low growl, lightening as it approaches to a pale green, then turns over to display the white frill that slides like a thousand snakes down upon itself, breaks and skitters up the sandbank. I used to sit very still. Sometimes the wave would barely touch my feet,

sometimes it would swirl around me then pull back, sifting yet another layer of sand from under me, leaving me wet to the waist. My heels rested in twin hollows that filled, emptied and refilled without a break. And subtle as the shadow of a passing cloud, my half moon would slip down the bank — only to be overtaken and swamped by the next leap of foaming white.

I used to sit in the curve and dig my fingers into the grainy, compact sand and feel it grow wetter as my fingers went deeper and deeper till the next rippling, frothing rush of white came and smudged the edges of the little burrow I had made. Its walls collapsed and I removed my hand, covered in wet clay, soon to revert to dry grains that I would easily brush away.

I lean against the wall of my room and count: twelve years ago, I met him. Eight years ago, I married him. Six years ago, I gave birth to his child.

For eight summers we have been coming here; to the beach-house west of Alexandria. The first summer had not been a time of reflection; my occupation then had been to love my husband in this — to me — new and different place. To love him as he walked towards my parasol, shaking the water from his black hair, his feet sinking into the warm, hospitable sand. To love him as he carried his nephew on his shoulders into the sea, threw him in, caught him and hoisted him up again; a colossus bestriding the waves. To love him as he played backgammon with his father in the evening, the slam of counters and the clatter of dice resounding on the patio while, at the dining-room table, his sister showed me how to draw their ornate, circular script. To love this new him, who had been hinted at but never revealed when we lived in my northern land, and who after a long absence, had found his way back into the heart of his country, taking me along with him. We walked in the sunset along the water's edge, kicking at the spray, my sun-hat fallen on my back, my hand, pale bronze in his burnt brown, my face no doubt mirroring his: aglow with health and love; a young couple in a glitzy commercial for life insurance or a two-week break in the sun.

My second summer here was the sixth summer of our love — and the last of our happiness. Carrying my child and loving her father, I sat on the beach, dug holes in the sand and let my thoughts wander. I thought about our life in my country, before we were married: four years in the cosy flat, precarious on top of a roof in a Georgian square, him meeting me at the bus-stop when I came back from work, Sundays when it did not rain and we sat in the park with our newspapers, late nights at the movies. I thought of those things and missed them — but with no great sense of loss. It was as though they were all there, to be called upon, to be lived again whenever we wanted.

I looked out to sea and, now I realise, I was trying to work out my co-ordinates. I thought a lot about the water and the sand as I sat there watching them meet and flirt and touch. I tried to understand that I was on the edge, the very edge of Africa; that the vastness ahead was nothing compared to what lay behind me. But — even though I'd been there and seen for myself its never—ending dusty green interior, its mountains, the big sky, my mind could not grasp a world that was not present to my senses — I could see the beach, the waves, the blue beyond, and cradling them all, my baby.

I sat with my hand on my belly and waited for the tiny eruptions, the small flutterings, that told me how she lay and what she was feeling. Gradually, we came to talk to each other. She would curl into a tight ball in one corner of my body until, lopsided and uncomfortable, I coaxed and prodded her back into a more centred, relaxed position. I slowly rubbed one corner of my belly until there, aimed straight at my hand, I felt a gentle punch. I tapped and she punched again. I was twenty-nine. For seventeen years my body had waited to conceive, and now my heart and mind had caught up with it. Nature had worked admirably; I had wanted the child through my love for her father and how I loved her father that summer. My body could not get enough of him. His baby was snug inside me and I wanted him there too.

From where I stand now, all I can see is dry, solid white. The white glare, the white wall, and the white path, narrowing in the distance.

I should have gone. No longer a serrating thought but familiar and dull. I should have gone. On that swirl of amazed and wounded anger when, knowing him as I did, I first sensed that he was pulling away from me, I should have gone. I should have turned, picked up my child and gone. I turn. The slatted blinds are closed against a glaring sun. They call the wooden blinds sheesh and tell me it's the Persian word for glass. So that which sits next to a thing is called by its name. I have had this thought many times and feel as though it should lead me somewhere; as though I should draw some conclusion from it, but so far I haven't. I draw my finger along a wooden slat. Um Sabir, my husband's old nanny, does everything around the house, both here and in the city. I tried, at first, at least to help, but she would rush up and ease the duster or the vacuum cleaner from my hands. 'Shame, shame. What am I here for? Keep your hands nice and soft. Go and rest. Or why don't you go to the club? What have you to do with these things?' My husband translated all this for me and said things to her which I came to understand meant that tomorrow I would get used to their ways. The meals I planned never worked out. Um Sabir cooked what was best in the market on that day. If I tried to do the shopping the prices trebled. I arranged the flowers, smoothed out the pleats in the curtains and presided over our dinner-parties.

My bed is made. My big bed which a half-asleep Lucy, creeping under the mosquito-net, tumbles into in the middle of every night. She fits herself into my body and I put my arm over her until she shakes it off. In her sleep she makes use of me; my breast is sometimes her pillow, my hip her footstool. I lie content, glad to be of use. I hold her foot in my hand and dread the time – so soon to come – when it will no longer be seemly to kiss the dimpled ankle.

On a black leather sofa in a transit lounge in an airport once, many years ago, I watched a Pakistani woman sleep. Her dress and trousers were a deep, yellow silk and on her dress

bloomed luscious flowers in purple and green. Her arms were covered in gold bangles. She had gold in her ears, her left nostril and around her neck. Against her body her small son lay curled. One of his feet was between her knees, her nose was in his hair. All her worldly treasure was on that sofa with her, and so she slept soundly on. That image, too, I saved up for him.

I made my bed this morning. I spread my arms out wide and gathered in the soft, billowing mosquito-net. I twisted it round in a thick coil and tied it into a loose loop that dangles gracefully in mid-air.

Nine years ago, sitting under my first mosquito-net, I had written, 'Now I know how it feels to be a memsahib.' That was in Kano; deep, deep in the heart of the continent I now sit on the edge of. I had been in love with him for three years and being apart then was a variant, merely, of being together. When we were separated there was for each a gnawing lack of the other. We would say that this confirmed our true, essential union. We had parted at Heathrow, and we were to be rejoined in a fortnight, in Cairo, where I would meet his family for the first time.

I had thought to write a story about those two weeks; about my first trip into Africa: about Muhammad al-Senusi explaining courteously to me the inferior status of women, courteously because, being foreign, European, on a business trip, I was an honorary man. A story about travelling the long, straight road to Maiduguri and stopping at roadside shacks to chew on meat that I then swallowed in lumps while Senusi told me how the meat in Europe had no body and melted like rice pudding in his mouth. About the time when I saw the lion in the tall grass. I asked the driver to stop, jumped out of the car, aimed my camera and shot as the lion crouched. Back in the car, unfreezing himself from horror, the driver assured me that the lion had crouched in order to spring at me. I still have the photo: a lion crouching in tall grass — close up. I look at it and cannot make myself believe what could have happened.

I never wrote the story, although I still have the notes. Right here, in this leather portfolio which I take out of a drawer in

my cupboard. My Africa story. I told it to him instead - and across the candlelit table of a Cairo restaurant he kissed my hands and said, 'I'm Crazy about you.' Under the high windows the Nile flowed by. Eternity was in our lips, our eyes, our brows – I married him, and I was happy.

I leaf through my notes. Each one carries a comment, a description meant for him. All my thoughts were addressed to him. For his part he wrote that after I left him at the airport he turned round to hold me and tell me how desolate he felt. He could not believe I was not there to comfort him. He wrote about the sound of my voice on the telephone and the crease at the top of my arm that he said he loved to kiss. What story can I write? I sit with my notes at my writing-table and wait for Lucy. I should have been sleeping. That is what they think I am doing. That is what we pretend I do: sleep away the hottest of the midday hours. Out there on the beach, by the pool, Lucy has no need of me. She has her father, her uncle, her two aunts, her five cousins; a wealth of playmates and protectors. And Um Sabir, sitting patient and watchful in her black *jalabiyyah* and *tarha*, the deck-chairs beside her loaded with towels, sun-cream, sun-hats, sandwiches and iced drinks in Thermos flasks.

I look, and watch, and wait for Lucy.

In the market in Kaduna the mottled, red carcasses lay on wooden stalls shaded by grey plastic canopies. At first I saw the meat and the flies swarming and settling. Then, on top of the grey plastic sheets, I saw the vultures. They perched as sparrows would in an English market square, but they were heavy and still and silent. They sat cool and unblinking as the fierce sun beat down on their bald, wrinkled heads. And hand in hand with the fear that swept over me was a realisation that fear was misplaced, that everybody else knew they were there and still went about their business; that in the meat-market in Kaduna, vultures were commonplace.

The heat of the sun saturates the house; it seeps out from every pore. I open the door of my room and walk out into the silent hall. In the bathroom I stand in the shower tray and turn the tap to let the cool water splash over my feet. I tuck my skirt between my thighs and bend to put my hands and wrists

under the water. I press wet palms to my face and picture grey slate roofs wet with rain. I picture trees; trees that rustle in the wind and when the rain has stopped, release fresh showers of droplets from their leaves.

I pad out on wet feet that dry by the time I arrive at the kitchen at the end of the long corridor. I open the fridge and see the chunks of lamb marinating in a large metal tray for tonight's barbecue. The mountain of yellow grapes draining in a colander. I pick out a cluster and put it on a white saucer. Um Sabir washes all the fruit and vegetables in red permanganate. This is for my benefit since Lucy crunches cucumbers and carrots straight out of the green-grocer's baskets. But then she was born here. And now she belongs. If I had taken her away then, when she was eight months old, she would have belonged with me. I pour out a tall glass of cold, bottled water and close the fridge.

I walk back through the corridor. Past Um Sabir's room, his room, Lucy's room. Back in my room I stand again at the window, looking out through the chink in the shutters at the white that seems now to be losing the intensity of its glare. If I were to move to the window in the opposite wall I would see the green lawn encircled by the three wings of the house, the sprinkler at its centre ceaselessly twisting, twisting. I stand and press my forehead against the warm glass. I breathe on the window-pane but it does not mist over.

I turn on the fan. It blows my hair across my face and my notes across the bed. I kneel on the bed and gather them. The top one says, 'Ningi, his big teeth stained with Kola, sits grandly at his desk. By his right hand there is a bicycle bell which he rings to summon a gofer –', and then again: 'The three things we stop for on the road should be my title: "Peeing, Praying and Petrol".' Those were light-hearted times, when the jokes I made were not bitter.

I lie down on the bed. These four pillows are my innovation. Here they use one long pillow with two smaller ones on top of it. The bedlinen comes in sets. Consequently my bed always has two pillows in plain cases and two with embroidery to match the sheets. Also, I have one side of a chiffonier which is full of long, embroidered pillowcases.

When I take them out and look at them I find their flowers, sheltered for so long in the dark, are unfaded, bright and new. Lying on the bed, I hold the cluster of grapes above my face, and bite one off as Romans do in films. Oh, to play, to play again, but my only playmate now is Lucy and she is out by the pool with her cousins.

A few weeks ago, back in Cairo, Lucy looked up at the sky and said, 'I can see the place where we're going to be.' 'Where?' I asked, as we drove through Gabalaya Street. 'In heaven.'

'Oh!' I said. 'And what's it like?'

'It's a circle, Mama, and it has a chimney, and it will always be winter there.'

I reached over and patted her knee. 'Thank you, darling,' I said.

Yes, I am sick – but not just for home. I am sick for a time, a time that was and that I can never have again. A lover I had and can never have again.

I watched him vanish — well, not vanish, slip away, recede. He did not want to go. He did not go quietly. He asked me to hold him, but he couldn't tell me how. A fairy godmother, robbed for an instant of our belief in her magic, turns into a sad old woman, her wand into a useless stick. I suppose I should have seen it coming. My foreignness, which had been so charming, began to irritate him. My inability to remember names, to follow the minutiae of politics, my struggles with his language, my need to be protected from the sun, the mosquitoes, the salads, the drinking water. He was back home, and he needed someone he could be at home with, at home. It took perhaps a year. His heart was broken in two, mine was simply broken.

I never see my lover now. Sometimes, as he romps with Lucy on the beach, or bends over her grazed elbow, or sits across our long table from me at a dinner-party, I see a man I could yet fall in love with, and I turn away.

I told him too about my first mirage, the one I saw on that long road to Maiduguri. And on the desert road to Alexandria

the first summer, I saw it again. 'It's hard to believe it isn't there when I can see it so clearly,' I complained.

'You only think you see it,' he said.

'Isn't that the same thing?' I asked. 'My brain tells me there's water there. Isn't that enough?'

'Yes,' he said, and shrugged. 'If all you want to do is sit in the car and see it. But if you want to go and put your hands in it and drink, then it isn't enough, surely? He gave me a sidelong glance and smiled.

Soon, I should hear Lucy's high, clear voice, chatter-ing to her father as they walk hand in hand up the gravel drive to the back door. Behind them will come the heavy tread of Um Sabir. I will go out smiling to meet them and he will deliver a wet, sandy Lucy into my care, and ask if I'm OK with a slightly anxious look. I will take Lucy into my bathroom while he goes into his. Later, when the rest of the family have all drifted back and showered and changed, everyone will sit around the barbecue and eat and drink and talk politics and crack jokes of hopeless, helpless irony and laugh. I should take up embroidery and start on those *Aubusson* tapestries we all, at the moment, imagine will be necessary for Lucy's trousseau.

Yesterday when I had dressed her after the shower she examined herself intently in my mirror and asked for a french plait. I sat behind her at the dressing-table blow-drying her black hair, brushing it and plaiting it. When Lucy was born Um Sabir covered all the mirrors. His sister said, 'They say if a baby looks in the mirror she will see her own grave.' We laughed but we did not remove the covers; they stayed in place till she was one.

I looked at Lucy's serious face in the mirror. I had seen my grave once, or thought I had. That was part of my Africa story. The plane out of Nigeria circled Cairo airport. Three times I heard the landing-gear come down, and three times it was raised again. Sitting next to me were two Finnish businessmen. When the announcement came that we were re-routing to Luxor they shook their heads and ordered another drink. At dawn, above Luxor airport, we were told there was trouble with the undercarriage and that the pilot

was going to attempt a crash-landing. I thought, so this is why they've sent us to Luxor, to burn up discreetly and not clog Cairo airport. We were asked to fasten our seat belts, take off our shoes and watches, put the cushions from the backs of our seats on our laps and bend double over them with our arms around our heads. I slung my handbag with my passport, tickets and money around my neck and shoulder before I did these things. My Finnish neighbours formally shook each other's hands. On the plane there was perfect silence as we dropped out of the sky. And then a terrible, agonised, protracted screeching of machinery as we hit the Tarmac. And in that moment, not only my head, but all of me, my whole being, seemed to tilt into a blank, an empty radiance, but lucid. Then three giant thoughts. One was of him – his name, over and over again. The other was of the children I would never have. The third was that the pattern was now complete: this is what my life amounted to. When we did not die, that first thought: his name, his name, his name became a talisman, for in extremity, hadn't all that was not him been wiped out of my life? My life, which once again stretched out before me, shimmering with possibilities, was meant to merge with his.

I finished the french plait and Lucy chose a blue clasp to secure its end. Before I let her run out I smoothed some after-sun on her face. Her skin is nut-brown, except just next to her ears where it fades to a pale cream gleaming with golden down. I put my lips to her neck. 'My Lucy, Lucia, *Lambah*' I murmured as I kissed her and let her go. Lucy. My treasure, my trap.

Now, when I walk to the sea, to the edge of this continent where I live, where I almost died, where I wait for my daughter to grow away from me, I see different things from those I saw that summer six years ago. The last of the foam is swallowed bubbling into the sand, to sink down and rejoin the sea at an invisible subterranean level. With each ebb of green water the sand loses part of itself to the sea, with each flow another part is flung back to be reclaimed once again by the beach. That narrow stretch of sand knows nothing in the world better than it does the white waves that whip it, caress

it, collapse onto it, vanish into it. The white foam knows nothing better than those sands which wait for it, rise to it and suck it in. But what do the waves know of the massed, hot, still sands of the desert just twenty, no, ten feet beyond the scalloped edge? And what does the beach know of the depths, the cold, the currents just there, there – do you see it? – where the water turns a deeper blue.



Sandra M. Gilbert (B. 1936)
Mafioso (1979)

Frank Costello eating spaghetti in a cell at San Quentin,
Lucky Luciano mixing up a mess of bullets and
calling for parmesan cheese,
Al Capone baking a sawed-off shotgun into a
huge lasagna -

are you my uncles, my
only uncles?

O Mafioso,
bad uncles of the barren
cliffs of Sicily - was it only you
that they transported in barrels
like pure olive oil
across the Atlantic?

Was it only you
who got out at Ellis Island with
black scarves on your heads and cheap cigars
and no English and a dozen children?

No carts were waiting, gallant with paint,
no little donkeys plumed like the dreams of peacocks.
Only the evil eyes of a thousand buildings
stared across at the echoing debarcation center,
making it seem so much smaller than a piazza,

only a half dozen Puritan millionaires stood on the wharf,

in the wind colder than the impossible snows of the Abruzzi,
ready with country clubs and dynamos

to grind the organs for you.



"Baggage Examined Here" (1911). Between 1880 and 1920,
nearly four million Italian immigrants came to the United
States, most arriving in New York City and settling in cities
along the East Coast. While first - and second - class
steamship passengers, such as the boys in this photo, were
taken to Ellis Island, where they were subjected to a series of
medical examinations and interviews. Inspectors marked the
immigrants' clothing with chalk, indicating the need for
further examination: *Sc* for scalp disease, *G* for goiter, *H* for
hernia, *L* for lameness, or *S* for senility. *

*From *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature*.
Michael Meyer, ed. 7th edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's,
2006.



Agha Shahid Ali (1949-2001)
Postcard from Kashmir (1987)

(for Pavan Sahgal)

Kashmir shrinks into my mailbox,
my home a near four by six inches.

I always loved neatness. Now I hold
the half-inch Himalayas in my hand.

This is home. And this the closest
I'll ever be to home. When I return,
the colors won't be so brilliant,
the Jhelum waters so clean,
so ultramarine. My love
so overexposed.

And my memory will be a little
out of focus, in it
a giant negative, black
and white, still undeveloped.



Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni (B. 1956)
Indian Movie, New Jersey (1990)

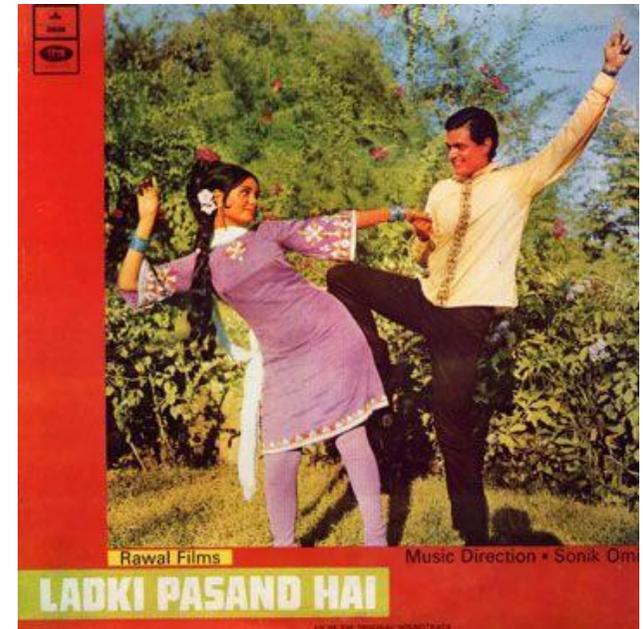
Not like the white filmstars, all rib
and gaunt cheekbone, the Indian sex-goddess
smiles plumply from behind a flowery
branch. Below her brief red skirt, her thighs
are satisfying-solid, redeeming
as tree trunks. She swings her hips
and the men-viewers whistle. The lover-hero
dances in to a song, his lip-sync
a little off, but no matter, we
know the words already and sing along.
It is safe here, the day
golden and cool so no one sweats,
roses on every bush and the Dal Lake
clean again.

The sex-goddess switches
to thickened English to emphasize
a joke. We laugh and clap. Here
we need not be embarrassed by words
dropping like lead pellets into foreign ears.
The flickering movie-light
wipes from our faces years of America, sons
who want mohawks and refuse to run
the family store, daughters who date
on the sly.

When at the end the hero
dies for his friend who also
loves the sex-goddess and now can marry her,

we weep, understanding. Even the men
clear their throats to say, "What *qurbani!*
What *dosti!*" After, we mill around
unwilling to leave, exchange greetings
and good news: a new gold chain, a trip
to India. We do not speak
of motel raids, canceled permits, stones
thrown through glass windows, daughters and sons
raped by Dorbusters.

In this dim foyer
we can pull around us the faint, comforting smell
of incense and *pakor*s, can arrange
our children's marriages with hometown boys and girls,
open a franchise, win a million
in the mail. We can retire
in India, a yellow two-storied house
with wrought-iron gates, our own
Ambassador car. Or at least
move to a rich white suburb, Summerfield
or Fort Lee, with neighbors that will
talk to us. Here while the film-songs still echo
in the corridors and restrooms, we can trust
in movie truths: sacrifice, success, love and luck,
the American that was supposed to be.



Rawal Films, *Ladki Pasand Hai* (*I Like This Girl*) (1971).
Indian's massive Hindi-language film industry, known as
Bollywood (a play on the word Hollywood, with the B
representing Bombay), produces twice as many films as
Hollywood each year, with a huge international audience.
Bollywood films are churned out so quickly that sometimes
scripts are handwritten and actors on set shoot scenes for
multiple films. Traditionally, these colorful extravaganzas,
chock full of singing, dancing, stick to a "boy meets girl"
formula - a hero and heroine fall in love and then struggle for
family approval. This image is from the soundtrack to a 1971
film with a typical Bollywood plot.¹

¹ From *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature*. Michael Meyer, ed.
7th edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.



Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Punishment (*Sasti*, 1893)

Translated from Bengali by William Radice

I

When the brothers Dukhiram Rui and Chidam Rui went out in the morning with their heavy farm-knives, to work in the fields, their wives would quarrel and shout. But the people near by were as used to the uproar as they were to other customary, natural sounds. When they heard the shrill screams of the women, they would say, "They're at it again" – that is, what was happening was only to be expected: it was not a violation of Nature's rules. When the sun rises at dawn, no one asks why; and whenever the two wives in this *kuri*-caste¹ household let fly at each other, no one was at all curious to investigate the cause.

Of course this wrangling and disturbance affected the husbands more than the neighbours, but they did not count it a major nuisance. It was as if they were riding together along life's road in a cart whose rattling, clattering unsprung wheels were inseparable from the journey. Indeed, days when there was no noise, when everything was uncannily silent, carried a greater threat of unpredictable doom.

The day on which our story begins was like this. When the brothers returned home at dusk, exhausted by their work, they found the house eerily quiet. Outside, too, it was

extremely sultry. There had been a sharp shower in the afternoon, and clouds were still massing. There was not a breath of wind. Weeds and scrub round the house had shot up after the rain: the heavy scent of damp vegetation, from these and from the water-logged jute-fields, formed a solid wall all around. Frogs croaked from the milkman's pond behind the house, and the buzz of crickets filled the leaden sky.

Not far off the swollen Padma² looked flat and sinister under the mounting clouds. It had flooded most of the grain-fields, and had come close to the houses. Here and there, roots of mango and jackfruit trees on the slipping bank stuck up out of the water, like helpless hands clawing at the air a last fingerhold.

That day, Dukhiram and Chidam had been working near the zamindar's office. On a sandbank opposite, paddy³ had ripened. The paddy needed to be cut before the sandbank was washed away, but the village people were busy either in their own fields or in cutting jute: so a messenger came from the office and forcibly engaged the two brothers. As the office roof was leaking in places, they also had to mend that and make some new wickerwork panels: it had taken them all day. They couldn't come home for lunch; they just had a snack from the office. At times they were soaked by the rain; they were not paid normal labourers' wages; indeed, they were paid mainly in insults and sneers.

When the two brothers returned at dusk, wading through mud and water, they found the younger wife, Chandara, stretched on the ground with her sari⁴ spread out. Like the sky, she had wept buckets in the after-noon, but had now given way to sultry exhaustion. The elder wife, Radha, sat on the verandah sullenly: her eighteen-month son had been crying, but when the brothers came in they saw him lying naked in a corner of the yard, asleep.

Dukhiram, famished, said gruffly, "Give me my food."

2 A major river in what is now Bangladesh.

3 The rice crop. Zamindar: landlord.

4 A long strip of cloth draped around the body, Indian women's traditional clothing.

Like a spark on a sack of gunpowder, the elder wife exploded, shrieking out, "Where is there food? Did you give me anything to cook? Must I earn money myself to buy it?" After a whole day of toil and humiliation, to return – raging with hunger – to a dark, joyless, foodless house, to be met by Radha's sarcasm, especially her final jibe, was suddenly unendurable. "What?" he roared, like a furious tiger, and then, without thinking, plunged his knife into her head. Radha collapsed into her sister-in-law's lap, and in minutes she was dead.

– "What have you done?" screamed Chandara, her clothes soaked with blood. Chidam pressed his hand over her mouth. Dukhiram, throwing aside the knife, fell to his knees with his head in his hands, stunned. The little boy woke up and started to wail in terror.

Outside there was complete quiet. The herd-boys were returning with the cattle. Those who had been cutting paddy on the far sandbanks were crossing back in groups in a small boat – with a couple of bundles of paddy on their heads as payment. Everyone was heading for home.

Ramlochan Chakravarti, pillar of the village, had been to the post office with a letter, and was now back in his house, placidly smoking. Suddenly he remembered that his sub-tenant Dukhiram was very behind with his rent: he had promised to pay some today. Deciding that the brothers must be home by now, he threw his chadar⁵ over his shoulders, took his umbrella, and stepped out.

As he entered the Ruis' house, he felt uneasy. There was no lamp alight. On the dark verandah, the dim shapes of three or four people could be seen. In a corner of the verandah there were fitful, muffled sobs: the little boy was trying to cry for his mother, but was stopped each time by Chidam.

"Dukhi," said Ramlochan nervously, "are you there?"

Dukhiram had been sitting like a statue for a long time; now, on hearing his name, he burst into tears like a helpless child.

1 In Bengal, a low caste originally of bird catchers, but by the 19th century, general laborers.

5 In Bengal, a sheet of cloth draped around the shoulders, usually worn by men but sometimes by women.

Chidam quickly came down from the verandah into the yard, to meet Ramlochan. “Have the women been quarelling again?” Ramlochan asked. “I heard them yelling all day.” Chidam, all this time, had been unable to think what to do. Various impossible stories occurred to him. All he had decided was that later that night he would move the body somewhere. He had never expected Ramlochan to come. He could think of no swift reply. “Yes,” he stumbled, “today they were quarrelling terribly.” “But why is Dukhi crying so?” asked Ramlochan, stepping towards the verandah.

Seeing no way out now, Chidam blurted, “In their quarrel, *Choṭobau* struck at *Barobau*'s¹ head with a farm-knife.” When immediate danger threatens, it is hard to think of other dangers. Chidam's only thought was to escape from the terrible truth – he forgot that a lie can be even more terrible. A reply to Ramlochan's question had come instantly to mind, and he had blurted it out.

“Good grief,” said Ramlochan in horror. “What are you saying? Is she dead?”

“She's dead,” said Chidam, clasping Ramlochan's feet.

Ramlochan was trapped. “*Rām, Rām*,”² he thought, “what a mess I've got into this evening. What if I have to be a witness in court?” Chidam was still clinging to his feet, saying, “*Thākur*,³ how can I save my wife?”

Ramlochan was the village's chief source of advice on legal matters. Reflecting further he said, “I think I know a way.

Run to the police station: say that your brother Dukhi returned in the evening wanting his food, and because it wasn't ready he struck his wife on the head with his knife. I'm sure that if you say that, she'll get off.”

Chidam felt a sickening dryness in his throat. He stood up and said, “*Thākur*, if I lose my wife I can get another, but if my brother is hanged, I how can I replace him?” In laying the

blame on his wife, he had not seen it that way. He had spoken without thought; now, imperceptibly, logic and awareness were returning to his mind.

Ramlochan appreciated his logic. “Then say what actually happened,” he said. “You can't protect yourself on all sides.” He had soon, after leaving, spread it round the village that Chandara Rui had, in a quarrel with her sister-in-law, split her head open with a farm-knife. Police charged into the village like a river in flood. Both the guilty and the innocent were equally afraid.

II

Chidam decided he would have to stick to the path he had chalked out for himself. The story he had given to Ramlochan Chakravarti had gone all round the village; who knew what would happen if another story was circulated? But he realized that if he kept to the story he would have to wrap it in Eve more stories if his wife was to be saved.

Chidam asked Chandara to take the blame on to herself. She was dumbfounded. He reassured her: “Don't worry – if you do what I tell you, you'll be quite safe.” But whatever his words, his throat was dry and his face was pale.

Chandara was not more than seventeen or eighteen. She was buxom, well-rounded, compact and sturdy—so trim in her movements that in walking, turning, bending or climbing there was no awkwardness at all. She was like a brand-new boat: neat and shapely, gliding with ease, not a loose joint anywhere. Everything amused and intrigued her; she loved to gossip; her bright, restless, deep black eyes missed nothing as she walked to the *ghāt*,⁴ pitcher on her hip, parting her veil slightly with her linger.

The elder wife had been her exact opposite; unkempt, sloppy and slovenly. She was utterly disorganized in her dress, housework, and the care of her child. She never had any proper work in hand, yet never seemed to have time for anything. The younger wife usually refrained from comment,

4 Steps leading down to a pond or river; meeting place, especially for women, who go there to get water or to wash clothes.

for at the mildest barb Radha would rage and stamp and let fly at her, disturbing everyone around.

Each wife was matched by her husband to an extraordinary degree. Dukhiram was a huge man – his bones were immense, his nose was squat, in his eyes and expression he seemed not to understand the world very well, yet he never questioned it either. He was innocent yet fearsome: a rare combination of power and helplessness. Chidam, however, seemed to have been carefully carved from shiny black rock. There was not an inch of excess fat on him, not a wrinkle or dimple anywhere. Each limb was a perfect blend of strength and finesse. Whether jumping from a river-bank, or punting a boat, or climbing up bamboo—shoots for sticks, he showed complete dexterity, effortless grace. His long black hair was combed with oil back from his brow and down to his shoulders – he took great care over his dress and appearance. Although he was not unresponsive to the beauty of other women in the village, and was keen to make himself charming in their eyes, his real love was for his young wife. They quarrelled sometimes, but there was mutual respect too: neither could defeat the other. There was a further reason why the bond between them was firm: Chidam felt that a wife as nimble and sharp as Chandara could not be wholly trusted, and Chandara felt that all eyes were on her husband – that if she didn't bind him tightly to her she might one day lose him.

A little before the events in this story, however, they had a major row. Chandara had noticed that when her husband's work took him away for two days or more, he brought no extra earnings. Finding this ominous, she also began to overstep the mark. She would hang around by the *ghāt*, or wander about talking rather too much about Kashi Majumdar's middle son.

Something now seemed to poison Chidam's life. He could not settle his attention on his work. One day his sister-in-law rounded on him: she shook her linger and said in the name of her dead father, “That girl runs before the storm. How can I restrain her? Who knows what ruin she will bring?”

1 “Elder Daughter-in-Law”; members of a family address each other by kinship terms. *Choṭobau*: “Younger Daughter-in-Law.”

2 God's name, repeated to express great emotion.

3 “Master” or “lord,” term of address for gods and upper-class (Brahmin) men. Tagore is an anglicized form of *Thāku*.

Chandara came out of the next room and said sweetly, “What’s the matter, *Didi*?”¹ and a fierce quarrel broke out between them. Chidam glared at his wife and said, “If I ever hear that you’ve been to the *ghāt* on your own, I’ll break every bone in your body.” “The bones will mend again,” said Chandara, starting to leave. Chidam sprang at her, grabbed her by the hair, dragged her back to the room and locked her in. When he returned from work that evening he found that the room was empty. Chandara had fled three villages away, to her maternal uncle’s house. With great difficulty Chidam persuaded her to return, but he had to surrender to her. It was as hard to restrain his wife as to hold a handful of mercury; she always slipped through his fingers. He did not have to use force any more, but there was no peace in the house. Ever-fearful love for his elusive young wife wracked him with intense pain. He even once or twice wondered if it would be better if she were dead: at least he would get some peace then. Human beings can hate each other more than death. It was at this time that the crisis hit the house.

When her husband asked her to admit to the murder, Chandara stared at him, stunned; her black eyes burnt him like fire. Then she shrank back, as if to escape his devilish clutches. She turned her heart and soul away from him. “You’ve nothing to fear,” said Chidam. He taught her repeatedly what she should say to the police and the magistrate. Chandara paid no attention – sat like a wooden statue whenever he spoke. Dukhiram relied on Chidam for everything. When he told him to lay the blame on Chandara, Dukhiram said, “But what will happen to her?” “I’ll save her,” said Chidam. His burly brother was content with that.

III

¹ “Elder Sister,” respectful form of address for Bengali women.

This was what he instructed his wife to say: “The elder wife was about to attack me with the vegetable-slicer. I picked up a farm-knife to stop her, and it somehow cut into her.” This was all Ramlochan’s invention. He had generously supplied Chidam with the proofs and embroidery that the story would require.

The police came to investigate. The villagers were sure now that Chandara had murdered her sister-in-law, and all the witnesses confirmed this. When the police questioned Chandara, she said, “Yes, I killed her.”

“Why did you kill her?”

“I couldn’t stand her any more.”

“Was there a brawl between you?”

“No.”

“Did she attack you first?”

“No.”

“Did she ill-treat you?”

“No.”

Everyone was amazed at these replies, and Chidam was completely thrown off balance. “She’s not telling the truth,” he said. “The elder wife first –”

The inspector silenced him sharply. He continued according to the rules of cross-examination and repeatedly received the same reply: Chandara would not accept that she had been attacked in any way by her sister-in-law. Such an obstinate girl was never seen! She seemed absolutely bent on going to the gallows; nothing would stop her. Such fierce, passionate pride! In her thoughts, Chandara was saying to her husband, “I shall give my youth to the gallows instead of to you. My final ties in this life will be with them.”

Chandara was arrested, and left her home for ever, by the paths she knew so well, past the festival carriage, the market-place, the *ghāt*, the Mgiumdars’ house, the post office, the school – an ordinary, harmless, flirtatious, fun-loving village wife; leaving a shameful impression on all the people she knew. A bevy of boys followed her, and the women of the village, her friends and companions—some of them peering through their veils, some from their doorsteps, some from

behind trees – watched the police leading her away and shuddered with embarrassment, fear and contempt. To the Deputy Magistrate, Chandara again confessed her guilt, claiming no ill-treatment from her sister-in-law at the time of the murder. But when Chidam was called to the witness-box he broke down completely, weeping, clasping his hands and saying, “I swear to you, sir, my wife is innocent.” The magistrate sternly told him to control himself, and began to question him. Bit by bit the true story came out. The magistrate did not believe him, because the chief, most trustworthy, most educated witness – Ramlochan Chakravarti – said: “I appeared on the scene a little after the murder. Chidam confessed everything to me and clung to my feet saying, ‘Tell me how I can save my wife.’ I did not say anything one way or the other. Then Chidam said, ‘If I say that my elder brother killed his wife in a fit of fury because his food wasn’t ready, then she’ll get off.’ I said, ‘Be careful, you rogue; don’t say a single false word in court – there’s no worse offence than that.’” Ramlochan had previously prepared lots of stories that would save Chandara, but when he found that she herself was bending her neck to receive the noose, he decided, “Why take the risk of giving false evidence now? I’d better say what little I know.” So Ramlochan said what he knew – or rather said a little more than he knew.

The Deputy Magistrate committed the case to a sessions trial.² Meanwhile in fields, houses, markets and bazaars, the sad or happy affairs of the world carried on; and just as in previous years, torrential monsoon rains fell on to the new rice-crop. Police, defendant and witnesses were all in court. In the civil court opposite hordes of people were waiting for their cases. A Calcutta lawyer had come on a suit about the sharing of a pond behind a kitchen; the plaintiff had thirty-nine witnesses. Hundreds of people were anxiously waiting for hair-splitting judgements, certain that nothing, at present, was more important. Chidam stared out of the window at the constant

² A trial that is settled through a special court sessions in one continuous sitting.

throng, and it seemed like a dream. A *koel*-bird¹ was hooting from a huge banyan tree in the compound: no courts or cases in *his* world!

Chandara said to the judge, “Sir, how many times must I go on saying the same thing?”

The judge explained, “Do you know the penalty for the crime you have confessed?”

“No,” said Chandara.

“It is death by the hanging.”

“Then please give it to me, Sir,” said Chandara. “Do what you like – I can’t take any more.”

When her husband was called to the court, she turned away.

“Look at the witness,” said the judge, “and say who he is.”

“He is my husband,” said Chandara, covering her face with her hands.

“Does he not love you?”

“He loves me greatly.”

“Do you not love him?”

“I love him greatly.”

When Chidam was questioned, he said, “I killed her.”

“I wanted my food and my sister-in-law didn’t give it to me.”

When Dukhiram came to give evidence, he fainted. When he had come round again, he answered, “Sir, I killed her.”

“Why?”

“I wanted a meal and she didn’t give it to me.”

After extensive cross-examination of various other witnesses, the judge concluded that the brothers had confessed to the crime in order to save the younger wife from the shame of the noose. But Chandara had, from the police investigation right through to the sessions trial, said the same thing repeatedly – she had not budged an inch from her story. Two barristers did their utmost to save her from the death-sentence, but in the end were defeated by her.

Who, on that auspicious night when, at a very young age, a dusky, diminutive, round-faced girl had left her childhood dolls in her father’s house and come to her in-laws’ house, could have imagined these events? Her father, on his

deathbed, had happily reflected that at least he had made proper arrangements for his daughter’s future.

In gaol,² just before the hanging, a kindly Civil Surgeon asked Chandara, “Do you want to see anyone?”

“I’d like to see my mother,” she replied.

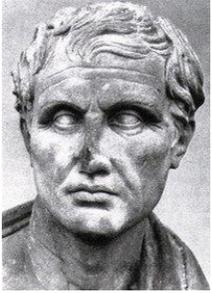
“Your husband wants to see you,” said the doctor. “Shall I call him?”

“To hell with him,”³ said Chandara.

1 Common Indian songbird

2 Jail.

3 “Death to him” (literal trans.); an expression usually uttered in jest.



Virgil (70-19 BC)

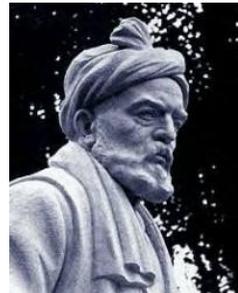
From *The Aeneid*: Prologue from Book I (~1 BC)

Translated from Latin by Robert Fitzgerald (1981)

I sing of warfare and a man at war.¹
 From the sea-coast of Troy in early days
 He came to Italy by destiny,
 To our Lavinian² western shore,
 A fugitive, this captain, buffeted
 Cruelly on land as on the sea
 By blows from powers of the air—behind them
 Baleful Juno³ in her sleepless rage.
 And cruel losses were his lot in war,
 Till he could found a city and bring home
 His gods to Latium, land of the Latin race,
 the Alban⁴ lords, and the high walls of Rome.
 Tell me the causes now, O Muse, how galled
 In her divine pride, and how sore at heart
 From her old wound, the queen of gods compelled him—
 A man apart, devoted to his mission—
 To undergo so many perilous days
 And enter on so many trials. Can anger
 Black as this prey on the minds of heaven?
 Tyrian⁵ settlers in that ancient time

1 Aeneas, a Trojan champion in the fight for Troy.
 2 Near Rome where Aeneas settled after the fall of Troy, Aeneas went in search of a new home, eventually settling here.
 3 Wife of the ruler of the gods, a bitter enemy of the Trojans.
 4 The city of Alba Longa was founded by Aeneas's son Ascanius. Romulus and Remus, the builders of Rome, were also from Alba.

Held Carthage,⁶ on the far shore of the sea,
 Set against Italy and Tiber's⁷ mouth,
 A rich new town, warlike and trained form war.
 And Juno, we are told, cared more for Carthage
 Than for any walled city of the earth,
 More than for Samos,⁸ even. There her armor
 And chariot were kept, and, fate permitting,
 Carthage would be the ruler of the world.
 So she intended, and so nursed that power.
 But she had heard long since
 That generations born of Trojan blood
 Would one day overthrow her Tyrian walls,
 And from that blood a race would come in time
 With ample kingdoms, arrogant in war,
 For Libya's ruin: so the Parcae⁹ spun.



Abolqasem Ferdowsi (932-1025)

From *Shâhnâme*: The Tragedy of Sohrâb and Rostâm: The Beginning (~1000)

Translated from Persian by Jerome W. Clinton

5 From Tyre, on the coast of Palestine, the principal city of the Phoenicians, a seafaring people.
 6 On the coast of North Africa, opposite Sicily. Originally a Tyrian colony, it became a rich commercial center, controlling traffic in the western Mediterranean.
 7 The river that flows through Rome.
 8 A large island on the coast of Asia Minor, famous for its cult of Hera (Juno)
 9 The Fates, imagined as female divinities who spun human destinies.

In the stories of the *dehqâns*¹⁰ there is a tale,
 To which I've added from old narratives.
 The teller if tales begins to speak, and says –
 Rostâm one day just as the sun rose up,
 Was sad at heart, and so prepared to hunt.
 He armed himself, put arrows in their sheaf,
 Then like a fearsome lion on the chase,
 He galloped toward the borders of Turân.¹¹
 As he approached the Turkish borderlands,
 He saw the plain was filled with onagers.¹²
 The Giver of the Crown¹³ glowed like a rose.
 He laughed aloud and spurred Rakhsh¹⁴ from his place.
 With bow and arrow, and with mace and rope,
 He brought down many onagers upon.
 The plain, Then from dead branches, brush, and thorns,
 Rostâm built up a fiercely blazing fire.
 And when the fire had spread, he wrenched a tree
 Out of the ground to serve him as a spit.
 He placed a heavy stallion on that tree,
 That was a feather in his palm, no more.
 When it was done he tore its limbs apart
 And wolfed it down, the marrow bones and all.
 Rostâm then slept and rested from the hunt.
 Nearby Rakhsh wandered, grazing in a meadow.
 Turkish horsemen, some seven of eight, passed by
 That plain and hunting ground, and as they did
 They spied a horse's tracks and turned aside
 To follow them along the river's bank.
 When they saw Rakhsh grazing in the meadow,
 They raced ahead to snare him with their ropes.
 When he was caught, they bore him galloping
 Toward the town; each eager for his share.

10 The Iranian provincial nobility of central Asia.
 11 In the land of the Turks, the traditional enemy of Iran.
 12 A species of wild ass native to the Iranian Plateau.
 13 Rostâm; he brought Kay Qobâd (the first shah of the Kaianian dynasty) to the throne. Kay Kavûs was Kaw Qobâd's successor
 14 Rostâm's steed and companion, who is hugely proportioned (as is Rostâm) and the only horse able to bear his weight.