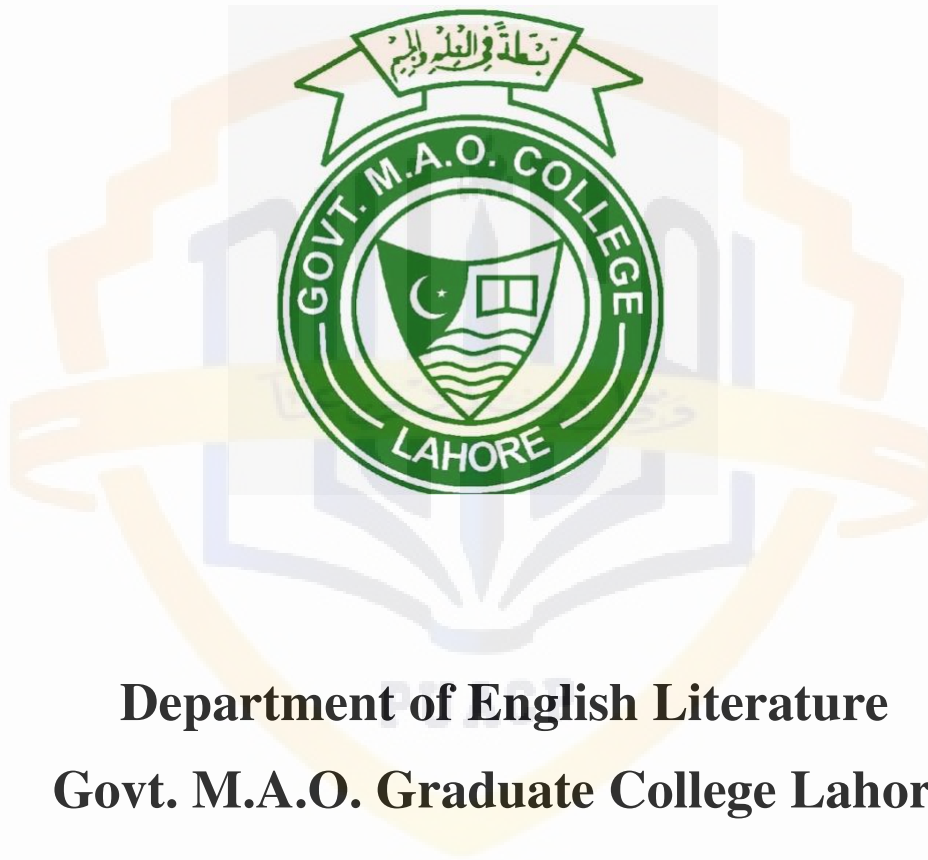


## South Asian Lit Notes 1

English Literature (University of the Punjab)



**BS Hons. English (Semester VII)**  
**Course Title: South Asian Literature**  
**Course Code: ENG-404**



**Department of English Literature**  
**Govt. M.A.O. Graduate College Lahore**

**Notes : 1/2 ( poetry )**

**Arranged By :**  
**Syed Sahil Abbas ( 2018-2022 )**

| Code    | Subject Title          | Cr. Hrs | Semester |
|---------|------------------------|---------|----------|
| ENG-404 | South Asian Literature | 3       | VII      |
| Year    | Discipline             |         |          |
| 4       | English                |         |          |

#### Aims:

To familiarize the students with South Asian writing and the regional flavor that it adds to literatures in English.

#### Contents:

##### Drama

Girish Karnad

Naag Mandala

##### Fiction

Kamila Shamsi

Burnt Shadows

Bapsi Sidhwa

Ice Candy Man

Mohsin Hamid

The Reluctant Fundamentalist

Arundhati Roy

The God of Small Things

##### Poetry

Taufig Rafat

The Stone Chat

Flood Wedding

Zulfiqar Ghose

Attack on Sialkot

A Dragonfly in the Sun

Nesim Ezekiel

Goodbye Party for Ms Pushpa

Maki Kureshi

The Far Thing

Christmas Letter to My Sister

Sujata Bhatt

A Different History

Genealogy

#### Recommended Readings:

1. Singh, B. P. *The State, The Arts and Beyond*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.
2. Mirza, Shafqat Tanveer. *Resistance Themes in Punjabi Literature*. Lahore: Sang-e-meel, 1992.
3. Hanaway, William. Ed. *Studies in Pakistani Popular Culture*. Lahore: Lok Virsa Publishing House, 1996.
4. G. N. Devy. Ed. *Indian Literary Criticism Theory and Interpretation*. Hyderabad Press: Orient Longman, 2002.

**Note:** The recommended readings are optional and are provided to facilitate the aims and objectives of the syllabus. They are not to be taken as text books.

# Nissim Ezekiel

## Introduction :

*Father of Indian English Poetry.* Nissim was a leading poet of Indian English literature. He was Indian Jewish poet, actor, playwright, editor and art critic. He is most famous for his highly symbolic and ironic poetry. He was born in 1924. His father Moses Ezekiel was a professor of botany at Wilson College Mumbai and mother was principal of a school. He did his BA in English Literature from Wilson college and MA English from Mumbai University in 1947. He also learnt Philosophy from Birkbeck College London.

He was professor and Head of English department at Mithi college of Arts Bombay. He was Editor of many journals like The Quest and Illustrated Weekly in India. He was Member of General Council of Lalit Kala Akademi and Sahitya Akademi. He was also Broadcaster of Art and literature in All India Radio. He died in 2004.

## Awards

He got several awards for his tremendous contribution to Indian English literature. He got

- Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983
- Padmashri Award in 1988.

## Poetry of Nissim Ezekiel

As I said he is famous for his poetry. He treated poetry as "Records of mind's growth". In his poetry one can find Truth of acknowledging what is felt and experienced. He was a realistic poet. He modernized Indian English poetry using techniques and themes.

## Characteristics of his poetry

**Urban Poet:** He brought Urban touch to his poetry and his poetry expose evils of Urban Indian society with irony and satire. That's why he is called an Urban poet.

**Language:** He used very simple language in his poetry. He was economical in the use of language. He believes in clarity and directness in poetic language.

**Words:** He used right words in the right place. He used simple words from common everyday in his poetry.

**Wit and Irony:** He is popular for his rich use of wit and irony in his poetry. He used it as weapon to expose absurdities and follies of Indians.

**Imagery and Symbolism:** He used highly effective symbols and imagery in his poetry. Symbols in his poetry evokes graphic picture of human life.

### **Themes of Poetry**

One can find following themes in his poetry.

Urbanity, Man and Woman relations, Love, Skepticism, Detachment, Independence and Individuality.

His poetry seems to be a comment on Indian social scenarios . He highlights social facts and problems which Indians faced because of poverty and superstitions.

### **Major Works**

Following are his major works.

- A time to change 1952
- Collection of Sixty poems 1953
- The discovery of India 1956
- The Unfinished Man 1960
- Hymns in the Darkness 1976
- Letter-Day Psalms 1982

---

## **Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa**

Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa is a poem written by Nissim Ezekial. Nissim Ezekial was an Indian poet. More than a poet he was a critic. He used to criticize the influence of western society on Indian people and how our people have this inferiority complex which needs to be overcome. They had to find their own identity rather than trying to be like someone else and make a fool of themselves.

His poem Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa is also a satirical poem. It shows how Indian people prefer English language over their own even though they are not fluent in it neither can speak it correctly. He also tells about the mindset of people that how to improve our life style we want to leave our own country. It deals with a deeper issue that how no one is willing to make their own country better and something they themselves would want to live in. They just leave this country and go abroad for the sake of their own comfort. He also mentions that how people who live abroad have a different image in the eyes of people.

The poem starts with the speaker addressing the colleagues as friends and tells them that in a day or two Miss Pushpa is about to depart from here and to say goodbye to her we are hosting this party. Then he goes on to say that Miss Pushpa is a sweet person and she is constantly smiling because of how she is feeling at the moment. Then he tells about Miss Pushpa's family and says that she comes from a reputed family and tries to make a connection with her by saying that he once lived in the same city in which her parents reside. Then he comes back to Miss Pushpa and says that she is very popular and every time he has asked for her help she has done it and he appreciates that a lot. Then he asks Miss Pushpa to say a few words.

The language of the poem shows the tone of it pretty clearly. It's a satire and Nissim makes fun of the way Indian people speak English language. The over use of "ing" forms and miss use of pronouns. It's all there to show

how stupid they look while trying to be like someone they are not. If they had stuck to their own true nature and would have felt proud in their own culture and language then maybe the image of their own country would have been a lot better. The natives have to take pride in their own motherland before the world will.

## Analysis :

- *Nissim Ezekiel*
- The poem is one of the **Ezekiel** most famous poem both because of its “subject matter” and “the way in which it was written”.
- **Satirical** and **Humorous** work on semi educated people in India .Their way of life and how they use English in their life .
- Look at the Indian **culture** and common people.
- Written in the form of **dramatic monologue** (only a single speaker address to the audience)
- Two sources of **humour**

1: use of English

2: character of speaker

- **Free verse**

( no specific rhyming scheme)

- Dialect of urban Indians “ **Babu English**”

( babu is the term use by the British)

- Make fun of people
- **Grammatical** mistakes
- **Strange arrangements** of words
- **Direct translation** of expression
- **Colloquial Language**

## **Themes:**

- Human Foibles (imperfection)
- Satire on Indian English
- Effect of Colonization

---

## Sujata Bhatt

## Introduction :

Sujata Bhatt is an Indian English poetess. She was born on May 6, 1956 in Ahmadabad. She studied in US and received MFA Degree from University of Iowa and went on to be writer-in-residence at University of Victoria. She is famous for her poetry.

## **Awards**



She received several awards including

- Commonwealth Poetry Prize in 1988
- Alice Hunt Bartlett Prize in 1977
- Cholmondeley Award in 1991
- Italian Tratly Poetry Prize in 2000.

### **Poetry and style**

- Gujarati is her mother tongue and combining Gujarati and English Sujata writes in Indian-English rather than Anglo-Indian Poetry.
- She also translated Gujarati Poetry into English.
- Free Verse : She writes in Free verse and we can observe that her Free verse is fast moving urgent with narratives softly spoken.
- As she is tri-cultural, she uses linguistic variations and multilingual mixings in her poetry.
- In her poetry she consciously and selectively writes about Eastern as well as western culture contents that are often merged.

### **Themes of poetry**

One can find these following basic themes in her poetry:

Interpersonal Relations, Intercultural Relations, Feminism, Patriotism, colonialism and cultural aspects.

### **Major Works**

Her Major works include 6 Poetry collections

- Brunizem 1988
- Monkey Shadows 1991
- The Stinking Rose 1995
- Pure lizard 2008
- Point No Point
- Augator

---

## **A Different History**

Sujata Bhatt is an Indian poetess. She migrated to America and became an American citizen. Because of that she suffered from identity alienation and crisis. She could not decide which culture she belonged from. Who she was representing. Whether it is the culture she spent half of her life in or the culture she was about to spend half her life in. she used to write about her culture and never let herself and the world forget where she was from and what culture she exhibits.

A different history by Sujata Bhatt is a poem that deal with identity, especially one's cultural identity. The poem starts with the reference to "Great Pan". Pan was the only god in Greek mythology who died. Sujata Bhatt said that he never died. He migrated instead. He came to India. A place where gods can live freely and they can appear in any form as well i.e. monkeys and snakes.

In the next stanza she talks about the culture of India and tells that how they consider every tree sacred and because of that they respect books a lot as well. They don't touch them with feet or throw them to each other nonchalantly. She tells that in India a person has to be gentle with books and its pages and here she talks about another goddess from Hindu mythology, Sarasvati. She is the goddess of knowledge and knowledge can only be obtained from respect.

In the second half of this story Sujata Bhatt talks about the oppression of British. She asks about the language of the oppressor and how they came here and killed many people and were absolutely atrocious. She says that they were so brutal and left such a deep impact on our people that every generation comes with this complex that English language is superior. The language of their oppressors.

## **Analysis :**

- **Sujata Bhatt**
- Poem consist of two stanzas.
- Each stanzas have different topic
- First stanza is about **cultural identity**
- Second stanza is about **how language is closely connected to power**
- Explore the relationship of **culture, identity and language**
- **Free verse**
- **Symbols** are very important that are used in this poem
- **Great Pan**

( Greek God )

- **Sarasvati**

( Goddess of Art and Knowledge)

- **Trees**

( Crucifixion of the Christ)

- **Books**

(Represents knowledge)

- **Scythe**

(Symbolizes the British)

## **Themes:**

- Significance of language
- Identity crisis
- Culture
- Religion
- Picture of Colonization
- Effect of Colonialism



# Genealogy

Sujata Bhatt wrote genealogy from her daughter's perspective. As the name suggests, the story is about the family tree of Sujata Bhatt. She talks about 3 generations in this poem and contemplates on the concepts of death and the circle of life.

The poem starts with Sujata Bhatt telling us about her daughter. She says that once her daughter tells her that when Sujata Bhatt was in her mother's womb. Her daughter was still in her. She used the word "Aaji" here which means grandmother in Marathi language. This goes to show how she wanted to keep her own culture alive in her writings.

In the second stanza Sujata Bhatt tells us about a painting her daughter painted. The unique thing about that painting was the sun. The painting was of a sky at night time and her daughter painted a sun with a black color too. Then she tells us that her daughter also painted stars and she asks her about the angels and what they are doing at night. This also represents her culture as in Hinduism they tell the kids that whenever a person dies. He/she becomes an angel and appear as a star every night to watch upon their beloveds.

She also talks about how her daughter thinks that death is a pleasant experience as you can fly anywhere you want to. She thinks it would be a fun activity and that is why she is looking up to that moment herself.

In the last stanza Sujata Bhatt talks about a conversation she overheard when her daughter was talking to her father. She was contemplating on the time when she will be a grandmother herself. She knows that by that time her parents won't be alive. And she asks her father that it would be better for you if had learned how to fly by that time. Then you can fly over at my house and watch me with my grandchildren.

---

## Zulfiqar Ghose

### Introduction :

**Born:** March 13, 1935, Sialkot

India [now Pakistan]).

Pakistani American author of novels, poetry, and criticism about cultural alienation.

### **Early life:**

Ghose grew up a Muslim in Sialkot and in largely Hindu Bombay (Mumbai) and then moved with his family to England.

### **Education:**

He graduated from Keele (England) University in 1959. He married Helena de la Fontaine, an artist from Brazil (a country he later used as the setting for six of his novels).

In 1969 he moved to the United States to teach at the University of Texas, from which he retired as professor emeritus in 2007.

Ghose became a U.S. citizen in 2004.

## Major works:

Ghose's first novel,

- **Contradictions (1966),**

explores differences between Western and Eastern attitudes and ways of life.

- **In The Murder of Aziz Khan (1967)**

a small farmer tries to save his traditional land from greedy developers.

- **The trilogy The Incredible Brazilian—comprising The Native (1972)**
- **The Beautiful Empire (1975), and A Different World (1978)**

presents the picaresque adventures.

- **A New History of Torments (1982), Don Bueno (1983)**
- **Figures of Enchantment (1986)**
- **The Triple Mirror of the Self (1992)**
- **Shakespeare's Mortal Knowledge: A Reading of the Tragedies (1993).**

Ghose poems:

Ghose's poems—including those in **The Loss of India (1964)**

- **Selected Poems (1991), and 50 Poems (2010)—are often about the travels and memories of a self-aware alien.**
- **Beckett's Company (2009) is a collection of personal and literary essays.**
- **He also wrote the autobiography Confessions of a Native-Alien (1965).**

Major Themes:

- Identity
- Homeland
- Themes of Diaspora
- Memory
- Homelessness.

Conclusion:

He has used powerful terms and language in his poetry to convey his messages. His poems are based upon powerful meaning with powerful discourse.

---

## The Attack on Sialkot

Poem "The attack on Sialkot" by Zulfiqar Ghose is an autobiographical poem in which writer share his life childhood experiences and then give his own thoughts on them as when he was child he saw his grandfather who use to follow religion very strictly but that strictness results in nothing fruitful as his own grandson is a secular person and eat pork ,if he spread kindness and show humanity in his acts, language and thoughts may be the results will be opposite ,poet is not against god or any religion simply he didn't believe in them ,his view is that we have to focus on humanity and leave the conservative thinking also take things logically and follow anything blindly but first consider what is wrong and what is right and then start following it ,so also says that to kill humanity is not allowed in any religion and religion is irrelevant to grief which means when there is war and massacre ,the Grief is same for everyone ,loved ones are loved ones not Muslims ,Hindus ,Sikhs and Christians but humans .

## **Analysis :**

**Zulfiqar Ghose (1935)**

**(Free verse, conversational tone, narrative and autobiographical element)**

**Poem#1\_ "The Attack on Sialkot"**

✓Zulfiqar Ghose is known as an American-Pakistani writer who with his conversational tone and narrative element is distinctive among other Pakistani poets.

✓Attack on Sialkot is a conflict between Secularism and Islamic fundamentalism. Generation gap between the writer and his grandfather is shown.

✓He feels that childish like attitude of the people who follow religion as some kind of terror is not going to help anyone.

✓Without understanding the religion and just to follow rituals and offer Prayers is not some thing proper.

✓His father is a very Conservative person who strictly follows religion as a true follower.

✓ Ghose himself is Secular so he condemns his Grandfather's approach towards religion, and his ritualistic approach.

✓He also questions about his grandfather's land marks of faith which are falling because of the war.

✓ He concludes by saying that there will be no direction to turn to, after war...

**Historicity of Attack on Sialkot (Anna molka Ahmad)**

\_One kind of narrative was highlighted throughout the war of 1965 so, there is need to rediscover the history to uncover the parallel narrative

In this sense this poem should be taken as a cultural piece and not only a literary text to discover about the movement of secularism against Islamic fundamentalism.

## Themes :

- Typical approach as per religion
  - Secularism
  - Generation Gap
  - Religion as a tradition
  - East v/s West
  - War
- 

## A Dragonfly in the Sun

The poem “a dragonfly in the sun” is written in free verse that presents a sensational sketch of the night light entangled in the dragonfly's wings. The glimmer caught in the annexes of dragonfly delineates a delightful panorama. The verb “caught” infers that the invincible light is being entrapped by a trivial dragonfly. The exaggeration surpasses a magnitude when it is declared by the poet that the sunlight is barricaded by a spider web.

Imagine a gigantic Sun obstructed by a diminutive spider web. Evidence of the imaginative capability of Zulfikar Ghose. Firstly, the depiction of dragonfly wings is exacerbated by the inscription of different colours that appear as the dragon impedes against the sun. The appearance of distinct pigments on the sky seems to be disseminated by the spider who spread them into the atmosphere. However, soon the colours perish and evening follows accompanied by the dancing of a dragonfly in front of a pomegranate tree. The flickering of a dragonfly in front of a red-pigmented tree is a beautiful sight, one must catch a glimpse of in this short life.

## Analysis :

### Poem#2\_The dragonfly in the sun(free verse)

**Tone and mood:** (Motivational and revolutionary tone/optimistic approach)

- ✓ How we are bypassing spectacular trivial refinements that are happening all the time in the universe by getting busied in our chores of customary lives.
- ✓ We must lift our heads for once to experience this grace and we must perceive all this.
- ✓ How a dragonfly such a trivial creature is blocking the way of sunlight that's the property of such a gigantic sun.
- ✓ Even the trivial incidents are enough to us motivation and it's totally upon us to lift our heads and get motivated by the spectacular events and positivity of our surrounding.

## Themes:

- Nature
- Nostalgia
- Identity crisis

- Marginalization
  - Religious as a tradition
  - Secularism
  - Deracination on account of religion
  - War
  - Nostalgia
- 

## Taufiq Rafat

### Introduction :

**Born:** October 25, 1927, Sialkot

**Died:** August 2, 1998, Lahore

#### **Early life:**

He was a Pakistani author and poet. His work influenced other Pakistani poets and he is credited with the introduction of the concept of a “**Pakistani idiom**” in English literature.

Taufiq Rafat was born in 1927 in Sialkot.

#### **Education:**

His education from Dehra Dun, Aligarh and Lahore. He was a famous Pakistani poet and writer as well. He was regarded as pioneer of English language poetry and writing in Pakistan.

He has depicted the real culture of Pakistan in his writings. He was an admirer of Ezra Pound, T. S Eliot and W. H Auden.

Taufiq Rafat is the one poet whose work has appeared in all three of Pakistan’s major anthologies.

#### **Major works:**

- **First Voices (1965)**
- **Pieces of Eight (1971)**
- **Wordfall (1975)**
- **He also wrote a full-length play in verse:**
- **The Foothold, which remains unpublished but was performed by The Government College Dramatic Club in Lahore.**
- **He has been a guide, mentor and critic to many younger poets.**
- **His major work is considered his collection of poems Arrival of the Monsoon.**

- **He also translated the epic Puran Bhagat (1983) of Punjabi poet Bulleh Shah and Qadir Yar into lyrical English.**

### **Major Themes:**

- Death
- Decaying
- change.

### **Conclusion:**

poems have a lot of nature & imagery. His poems are simple and true to human experiences. His poems can be understood easily by the common man.

---

## **The Stone Chat**

### **Summary and Analysis of the Poem:**

This poem “The Stone-Chat” was written by famous Pakistani poet Taufiq Rafat. Rafat is considered the founder of Pakistani poetry in English due to his representation of Pakistani culture through the English language. His poetry is characterized by the use of cultural imagery, nature, and the use of binary. In his poem “The Stone-Chat” all these characteristics are prominent.

The poem starts with the poet declaring that beauty does not need any ornamentation of words to be considered beautiful “the beautiful is beautiful anyway, so why embellish it with words”. These first two lines set the entire mood of the poem. The poet makes use of contrasting images to define what is beautiful. Similarly, the use of the article “the” is significant as it may refer to any muse the poet considers beautiful.

The poem then shifts its focus and presents the first contrasting imageries i.e. “green and fruitful movements” and “parched for a desert”. These two binary imageries are important as they highlight two basic phenomena: spring which is related to life and youth and desert which is related to clarifying and maturity. The poet highlights how the eye is accustomed to seeing the good and lively things; the immature things that now it is at the mercy of the desert i.e. it longs for maturity. The poet then presents the image of “Jhelum’s eroded hills” where the poet stopped once to alleviate or “relieve” himself. The poet then draws an analogy between these eroded hills of Jhelum and “a village crone” (an old ugly village woman). These hills according to the poet seem bedridden and hold no significant value but they seem to possess a special feature. These hills just like an old village woman spit out “occasional proverb”. They possess a sense of maturity and experience. The poet continues and says that to understand this maturity one must first know himself “I must try and know myself, as I must once have been, and become”. The poet to further explain his argument presents the image of a “stone-chat” a bird who is vibrating its tail with excitement amid the colorless background. This bird according to the poet has discovered its self-worth despite the scarcity of wheat. This bird even living under harsh circumstances is singing a song and calling this place home. It has learned the art of distinguishing between these shades of grey which at first seemed colorless. This bird according to the poet has adapted to its surroundings while preserving its identity amid hardships. The poet then presents complete opposite imagery of “neighborhood is a riot of color, ad a ragged patch of wheat sufficient, cause to be mellifluous about”. The use of these imageries at the end is significant as the poet highlights the basic theme which is the adaption to one’s surroundings. This adaption according to the poet will eventually lead to satisfaction and sufficiency.



## **Analysis :**

**Taufeeq Rafat (1927\_1998)aged 71**

**Stonechat** (free verse)

- ✓ Teaches the lesson of maturity by:
- ✓ Binary opposition, analogies, and the bird stonechat
- ✓ He says that beautiful is beautiful anyways so, instead of longing for the beauty , wait with determination for your harsh circumstances to become beautiful.
- ✓ He gives the example of a stonechat who has adapted to it's rough and tough environment despite of the lack of food and this for sure will gift with peace and satisfaction and sufficiency.

### **Themes:**

- Adaptation to the surrounding
- Maturity vs ignorance
- Self recognition vs self reliance

To conclude it, he says to gain maturity one must recognize his own self and adapt his harsh environment that will ultimately lead him good circumstances by replacing them with good things.

---

## **WEDDING IN THE FLOOD**

This poem is about a wedding ceremony. This is an eastern marriage. Marriage has a great importance in Pakistan. Marriage is a promise of life between bride and groom. It is the greatest form of relationship through which two families come closer. The poem is about a girl who is going to be wedded and the boy has to come from the other side of the river but the river gets flooded. Flood is an outflow of a river that causes destruction in life. Here, the flood comes and damages the dowry and even all the marriage ceremony. Flood is a natural phenomenon, and that is difficult to control.

### **Stanza #1**

**They are taking my girl away forever,  
sobs the bride's mother, as the procession  
forms slowly to the whine of the clarinet.  
She was the shy one. How will she fare  
In that cold house, among these strangers?  
This has been a long and difficult day.  
The rain nearly ruined everything,  
But at the crucial time, when lunch was ready,  
it mercifully stopped. It is drizzling again  
as they help the bride into the palankeen.  
The girl has been licking too many pots  
Two sturdy lads carrying the dowry  
a col, s looking-glass, a tin-trank,**

**beautifully painted in green and blue)  
lead the way, followed by a foursome  
bearing the palankeen on their shoulders.  
Now, even the stragglers are out of view.**

**Explanation :**

In the first stanza, the poet says that with the beginning of the marriage ceremony, the mother starts thinking about the departure of her daughter. She starts sobbing for her daughter because the Baraati will take away the bride from her relatives and closed ones. The clarinet is also producing the parting sound. The mother thinks that her daughter is very innocent and she will not be able to manage herself between the strangers in her new house. It is a difficult day for the bride as well as for the mother. All the rites are badly disturbed by the rain, but luckily, it stops at the time of lunch, which is considered an important part of every party. Then the light rain starts again. It is believed that rain does come on the marriage of that girl who used to lick pots. On the one hand, there are two men who carry the dowry, while on the other hand, four people carry the palankeen on their shoulders. Dowry comprises a Cot, a Looking-glass, and a Tin trunk. All the Baraatis are out of view.

**Stanza # 2**

**I like the look of her hennaed hands,  
gloats the bridegroom as he glimpses  
her slim fingers, gripping the palankeen's side,  
If only her face matches her hands,  
and she gives me no mother-in-law problems  
I'll forgive her the cot and the trunk  
and looking-glass. Will the rain never stop?  
It was my luck to get a pot-licking wench.**

**Explanation:**

In the second stanza, the bridegroom looks at the hands and fingers of the bride. He thinks that her hands are beautiful and hopes that her face will also as beautiful as her hands. Dowry is a marriage problem all over the world. But the bridegroom thinks that he will forgive the matter of dowry if she is beautiful. He is confused about the rain and starts questioning his luck to get a pot-licking girl. He leaves everything on Ferryman

**Stanza # 3**

**Everything depends on the ferryman now.  
It is dark in the palankeen, thinks the bride,  
and the roof is leaking. Even my feet are wet.  
Not a familiar face around me  
as I peep through the curtains. I'm cold and scared.  
The rain will ruin cot, looking-glass.  
What sort of a man is my husband?**

**They would hurry, but their feet are slipping,  
and there is a swollen river to cross.**

**Explanation:**

The girl thinks it is dark because of cloudy weather. Her feet are wet, and the roof of the palanquin is also leaking. Every face is new for her when she looks out through the curtains of palanquin. She is scared because of rain and is worried about the dowry. She also thinks about her husband as to what kind of a man he is. There is also a river, and they have to cross it, but their feet are slipping,

**Stanza # 4**

**They might have given a bullock at least,  
grumbles the bridegroom's father, a couple of oxen  
would have come in handy at the next ploughing.  
Instead, we are landed with  
a cot, a tin-trunk, and a looking-glass,  
all the things that she will use!  
Dear God, how the rain is coming down.  
The silly girl's been licking too many pots.  
I did not like the look of the river  
when we crossed it this morning.  
Come back before three, the ferryman said,  
or you'll not find me here. I hope  
he waits. We are late by an hour,  
or perhaps two. But whoever heard  
of a marriage party arriving on time?  
The light is poor, and the paths treacherous,  
but it is the river I most of all fear.**

**Explanation:**

In the fourth stanza, the bridegroom's father thinks that bride should have brought a couple of oxen in the dowry, which can be helpful in the next ploughing. But all these things are of her use. He calls the bride as 'silly girl' because she has been licking too many pots, and now the rain is causing problems to cross the river. The river is not giving a good look as it was in the morning. He hopes that ferry-man will wait for them because they are late by an hour or perhaps two. But no one follows the time, especially in marriage ceremonies. The river is giving a fearful view.

**Stanza # 5**

**Bridegroom and bride and parents and all,  
the ferryman waits; he knows you will come,  
for there is no other way to cross,  
and a wedding party always pays extra.**

The river is rising, so quickly aboard  
with your cot, tin trunk, and looking-glass,  
that the long homeward journey can begin.  
Who has seen such a brown and angry river  
or can find words for the way the ferry  
saws this way and that, and then disgorges  
its screaming load? The clarinet fills with water.  
Oh what a consummation is here:  
the father tossed on the horns of the waves,  
and full thirty garlands are bobbing past  
the bridegroom heaved on the heaving tide,  
and in an eddy, among the willows downstream,  
the coy bride is truly bedded at last.

### Explanation;

In the fifth stanza, the poet says that ferry-man waits because there is no other way to cross, and they have to pay some extra money. Flood is a natural force, and they cannot stop it. The ferry-man cannot have enough power to handle the boat and to fight against the flood. All are afraid of the river. The boat is filled with water. Everything is wet now, even the garlands and musical instruments. The father is thrown on the angry waves, and the bridegroom is thrown on the heaving tide. The shy bride is drowned in the water, and the earth plays a role of bed for her. At last, they all are drowned in the flood.

### Themes;

- Man proposes, God disposes
- Cultural depiction

**Note :** There is no regular rhyme scheme in this poem.

Flood is symbolic of sweeping the arranged marriage tradition which has been erased by the sudden explosion of modernism. Everyone dies in flood meeting with the ends they thought of in sexual and economic perspectives, cancelling all the human success and dignity.

---

## Maki Kureishi

### Introduction :

Maki Kureishi was the first Pakistani female English poet and in The Times Magazine of 2008, she was included in the top 50 writers since 1945. She was born in 1927 in Calcutta and after the partition of the sub-continent, her family moved to Karachi and stayed there.

Her mother belongs to Germany, and her father was also a professor in one of the University of Germany. Maki Kureishi became the associate professor of English at Karachi university, and then she married to a Muslim professor at that university.

She was from the Parsi religion. Basically, Parsi was originated from Iran and after the end of their reign in Iran, they disperse to the neighbouring country such that, India Pakistan etc.

They are somehow open-minded and liberals as they adopt the culture and festivals of the society where they lived. So you can see that the Persians living in India have the cultural impact of Hinduism and the Persians who are living in Pakistan have the cultural impact of Muslim culture, even their names are like Muslims, you can see in Maki Kureishi, looks like a Muslim name.

If u notice the first poem, Christmas letter to my sister, there is no religious connection between Persians and the Christmas festival, but she celebrates this festival every year, even her mother also celebrated Christmas each year, just because Christmas is a worldwide festival and they adopt the culture and festival of the society.

Maki Qureshi also faced identity crises because she belongs to the Parsi religion and was married to a Muslim professor.

Maki is a patient of polio, so she faced difficulty in walking and travelling etc. So she spent most of her time sitting in one place and writing poems remembering her old past days. Both poems which are included in our outline are based on her memories.

---

## **Christmas Letter to my Sister**

Let's discuss the title of this poem. She is addressing her sister. Basically, she is in Europe and become bored of her handicapped life routine. She is remembering the old beautiful days of Christmas when her mother used to celebrate Christmas and sharing her beloved memory with her sister in this letter. In this poem, She is telling about the letter which she wrote to her sister on Christmas.

### **Stanza # 1 :**

**Each Year I decorate a Christmas tree**

**With trinkets from Bohri Bazar, Germany and Japan**

In the starting stanza, she is saying that every year she celebrates a Christmas festival and decorates a Christmas tree. Although she is Persian but she is looking so excited for

Christmas because they adopt the culture of society. So she enjoys and celebrates Christmas every year.

In the second line of the stanza, she mentioned 3 places from where she usually buys the things of decoration. She uses the word trinkets which means little ornaments commonly used for decoration. She decorates the Christmas tree with these little ornaments which she buys from Germany, Japan and Bohri Bazar.

Bohri Bazar is situated in Karachi. Bohri is a sector, not sure but probably said that the Bazar got its name after the Bohri trader filled the vacuum left by the migration of the Hindu trading community after partition.

So she buys little ornaments from these places for decorating the Christmas tree.

### **Stanza # 2 :**

**You'll send home more from China**

**And Korea to please my daughter**

In this stanza, she is directly addressing her sister saying you will send more decoration items from Korea and China to make my daughter happy. You know children become happy and pleased to see the Decoration, lighting and glitter. They enjoy it.

So she is saying to her sister that you will send more ornaments for decoration from China and Korea. My daughter will be happy to see all this decoration.

### **Stanza # 3 :**

**Each year I hang the glitter**

**Of our children up again**

Saying that every year she makes decorations and lightning for the happiness and enjoyment of her children. Christmas has become a festival of amusement, happiness and enjoyment. The concept of decorating the tree, Santa and giving gifts has made it an event of happiness for children as well as adults.

### **Stanza # 4 :**

**Mother kept our tree secret**

**until Christmas Eve, when, doors were thrown down wide.**

This document is available free of charge on





In this stanza, she is expressing her nostalgic feelings. She is remembering her past time when she was a child and her mother was used to decorating the Christmas Tree. She is reminding the happiness and Christmas of her childhood to her sister, when her mother celebrates Christmas and decorated the tree, she keeps it like a secret and hides it from the children until the night of Christmas. And then when they saw that tree, they were astonished and happy to see the beauty and decoration of the tree.

### **Stanza # 5 :**

**it started us—a dour  
cypress from the garden, now enchanted  
bearing its fragile globes and stars  
like goblin fruit.**

Now she is talking about the ornaments which are used in decoration, cypress, globes and stars. She used the word goblin fruit, it is like spherical balls or cone balls, she is just referring to the decoration of Christmas trees.

She is saying that her mother was used to decorating the real old cypress tree, which makes us happy.

### **Stanza # 6 :**

**I use  
a less dramatic Casurina pine,  
as you plant spices in Cologne, but though  
your backyard's fertile as a flower-pot,  
they'll not grow native; yet are native  
to the private landscape where we lived,  
alien and homegrown.**

In this stanza she used a word, Cologne, it is the city of Germany.

Now she is talking about the plants which grows in her native country or in sub-continent but they will never grow in cologne, a city of Germany. Whatever effort you do to grow a

plant, they can't be native, they never adjust themselves in the new environment. She is just trying her efforts to grow a plant in Germany of her native land but can't do it.

Those plants which grow in our country are foreign for other, they are like alien in other countries. All spices are only homegrown. Mean to say she is just giving a paradoxical statement.

### **Stanza # 7 :**

**Often**

**as a Christmas treat the Raja sent**

**his official elephant. We were shipwrecked on.**

Now she is referring to history, As she is living in Germany, so the Hindu Raja who was a authority there sent his official elephant to entertain or amuse the colonizers on the festival of Christmas.

It was usual that the authorities used to send huge gifts to masters just to please the colonizers.

### **Last stanza :**

**When the haunches rose like a trial wave**

**we learned to brace and sway. Still practiced in equipoise**

**I teeter safe, and brace to my uncertainties**

**survive, Anglo-Indian as a dak bungalow**

Now she is telling about the difficulties and problems which she was facing in living there. The problems which she saw, she embraced them and tried her best to live and survive there. She is saying that she learned a lot from these difficulties and bears all the problems.

In these last three stanza she is just giving a light to issues of being expatriate or immigrant. In last line she used the word dak bungalow, it is the symbol of colonization, it is a Government building in British India Under company rule and the raj.

She is saying that just as this building is surviving till the day, same as we are surviving like an alien land.

## Themes :

- Memory
  - Past
  - Immigration
  - Identity crises --- complex
  - The fading away of the tradition when one leaves his homeland.
- 

## The Far Thing

Means Unfulfilled wishes or Unanswered prayers in the past.

Those wishes which were not fulfilled in her age, she refers them as a far thing.

In this poem she shares her past experience. Basically she emphasizes the importance of own culture. The narrator of the poem is poet himself. And the biographical elements is very prominently present. We can say that this poem is the semi autobiography of poet.

The far thing is also the title of one of her book and also she wrote a poem on this title. The main theme of this poem is that we cannot totally eliminate our culture. She wants to say that we can not eliminate from our history, from our roots it doesn't matter how far we are, how much distance is there, no one can break the relation with his or her hometown. We have a close relation with that place where we born.

### Stanza 1 :

In general, Pine cone means the flower of pine. Pine cone is basically describing a Pakistani culture, it is a reference to Pakistani culture.

In the first stanza she says that she has preserved pine cone from ten years just to show her child. She brought this pine cone from northern side of his native land when ever she visited there on holiday. She kept the pine cone with herself and take it to Germany just to show her child. She placed this pine cone in a drawer and now ten years has been gone, it is still preserved by her.

This stanza shows her love for own culture. How she preserved just a pine cone for almost ten years just to recognize her child about the culture and the land form which she belongs and after ten year's this pine cone is still surviving.

She is saying that if she wants she can throw this pine cone but she didn't do that because she wants to show this to her child.

## **Stanza 2 :**

Next is the descriptive stanza. She explains the specification of the pine cone very beautifully. It is made of wood, and its shape reflects the mastery of its creator if it is watered, it will still grow in this environment, but she said that it would not happen because she did not take it here for the purpose of planting, while the actual aim of taking pine cone here is just to show her child. In short she is just giving a message that u can never forget where u come from.

## **Stanza 3 :**

The pine cone has carved petals and looks like a crown on crown. If u check the image of pine cone on internet, u can understand what she is trying to say. It is like that one crown is placed on another crown.

She is saying that there is no sun light, I kept in a drawer where there is not a single wave of sunlight can enter. As plants cannot survive without sunlight but that pine cone is still surviving. It refers to the culture that after how many years she can not forget her own culture and hometown.

## **Stanza 4 :**

In the last stanza she says that she put the pine cone back in the drawer. Now she used the simile here, saying that pine cone is like bronze charioteer....Charioteer is the reference to charioteer by Delphi. It is an ancient bronze sculpture...

Moreover She resembles pine cone as a mountain. She uses the word Monolithic which means, a large block of stone. So she resembles pine cone as a monolithic which is irresist to change, it is slow to change, it is very hard and strong like large block of stone.

Then she refers to the Indus civilization, which was present three thousand years ago. Arya people made Indus civilization. All the culture and civilization present in the subcontinent were given by them. So she is referring to that time of Indus civilization. The earliest known urban culture of the Indian sub continent.

She compares herself with the gamblers faith, when a gambler is losing he still depend on change of his luck. In the same way no one can lose his culture. No one can forget his history or culture though he is losing but his faith is like a gambler.

She is also hopeful that her wishes will come true but the chances are very low. But she hopes tomorrow will be happiness and everything will be better.

## **Analysis :**

**Mood :** If we talk about the mood of the poem. The poem shows an optimistic approach, the mood of poem is optimistic.

**Tone :** Descriptive

**Points to remember :** Conversation style, Free verse poem , Attractive beautiful culture

**Themes :**

- Past
- Ancestral culture and language
- Autobiography

---

☆☆☆ ~~End of Part 1~~ ☆☆☆

.....to be continued

