

## **B.A. Sem III – AEC English – Short Notes & Short Questions**

### **[1] Character sketch of Narrator in the Story “Eyes Are Not Here”**

The tale about meeting between strangers on a train. The journey brings together two people (who are blind) into close proximity and a casual conversation takes place. They both try to pretend that they are sighted unaware of each other's disability. At the beginning of the story, a man is alone in a train compartment simply waiting for the journey to begin. The narrator in this short story can be observed from different perspectives. He is very conscious about concealing his identity as a blind man. He is a lonely person yet he tries to avoid the unwanted and unnecessary sympathy of others. He prefers to be independent and is full of life. He doesn't detach himself from society nor is he depressed by brooding on his handicap. Instead, he boldly and confidently talks to others as is quite evident in his conversation with the girl and the man. Being able to converse skillfully with others without them noticing even once that he is blind takes a lot of courage and that is exactly what the blind narrator comes across as – a confident individual. He loves to play the game of guessing what goes on around him and thereby, tricking others into believing that he can see. In this game of pretense, he invariably wins against his opponent. Ruskin Bond has created the blind protagonist of his story as a man who, despite his physical handicap, is nevertheless, a person worthy of our admiration. He serves as an inspiration to all those who are handicapped. It is as if through the blind narrator, Bond seems to be telling other handicapped people like him to be bold and confidently take on the world and the challenges that life throws at him. The narrator is nostalgic about his earlier days and romantic about the beauty of nature. He is frank and gallant in his praise of the young girl. He is fascinated by the girl's voice, the sound of her slippers and the smell of her perfumed hair. The very thought of laughter makes him troubled and lonely, which explains why he seeks human company and is happy conversing with complete strangers.

## **[2] The Editor – Short Note**

The Editor had a wife and a small daughter. He was more involved with his wife than with his daughter Probha. He had never considered what care and efforts were needed to bring up a child. But sudden and untimely death of his wife, Probha's upbringing was passed to the Editor. Probha from the age of six, she took charge of his house. She became her father's sole guardian. The Editor put himself entirely in his daughter's hands. She looked after her father so well that he became totally helpless. The Editor started thinking about her marriage to a suitable groom. He thought of earning more money for her better future.

He gave attention to the need to earn money. He started writing satirical farce. When Probha would come while the Editor was writing something, he would get angry with Probha. The money the Editor earned was not proportionate to his economic needs. The Zamindar of his village appointed him to be salaried editor of a paper. Every one told the Editor that he discharged his duties very honorably. This was a good time for the Editor. There was perpetual smile on his face. The opponents of the Zamindar, from Ahir village brought out a paper. The Editor thought he was losing his role as an Editor of the paper. His employer was not happy with the Editor. He was not welcomed at public gatherings by the people.

Probha was now scared of her father. He did not give any importance to Probha. He gave much importance to his writing only. One evening the Editor was pacing in a garden in front of his house. At that moment the Editor felt a delicate touch and it was intensifying. Probha was calling her father, longing with all her heart for his care and affection. When the Editor returned to his house, he saw Probha lying on the bed and she had a fever. He left his job as an Editor; this gave him greater happiness than he had ever known. The Editor held in his lap and lifted

her into his arms very lovingly and carried her indoors. This was very great change brought in the life of the Editor.

### **[3] 'Palanquin Bearers' by Sarojini Naidu – Short note**

"Palanquin Bearers" is a poem by Sarojini Naidu, an Indian poetess known for her evocative and lyrical verses. The poem paints a vivid picture of a palanquin being carried through the streets of an Indian town.

#### **Context:**

The poetess vividly recreates the scene of the 19th century when the cars were not in fashion for carrying the brides to their husbands' house. On those days even the ladies of royal families were carried in the palki to their relatives. The brides too were carried in the palki. In any city of Northern India, particularly in Hyderabad palki was in fashion. The curtains were hanging as windows through which the ladies and brides could get the glimpse of outside. Palkis were carried on shoulders of two- or four-persons using bamboo-sticks for support. In order to avoid the physical tiredness and boredom of the way, the palanquin bearers used to sing.

#### **Summary:**

The poem begins with the poet addressing a group of palanquin bearers who are carrying a palanquin through the streets of an Indian town. She speaks to them with admiration and respect, admitting their strength and endurance. The palanquin bearers are described as strong and skilled, with muscles like iron. They move swiftly and gracefully despite the heavy burden they carry. The poet marvels at their ability to bear the weight of the palanquin, which symbolizes the burdens and responsibilities of life. As the bearers continue their journey, the poet imagines the palanquin as a throne, carrying a queen or a bride. She

envisioning the palanquin as a symbol of grace and beauty, gliding through the town's bustling streets.

The poet contrasts the bearers' strength and agility with the delicate and precious cargo they carry. She highlights the contrast between the world of labor represented by the bearers and the world of luxury represented by the palanquin's occupant. In the final stanza, the poet expresses her hope that the bearers will be rewarded for their hard work and dedication. She suggests that their labor is like a divine service and that they deserve blessings and rewards in return.

Overall, "Palanquin Bearers" is a poem that celebrates the physical strength, skill, and endurance of the bearers who carry the palanquin, while also highlighting the contrast between their world and the world of luxury and privilege they serve. It is a tribute to the unsung heroes who play a vital role in society's functioning.

#### **[4] When You Are Old – a Poem by W.B. Yeats – Short Note**

##### **About the Poem**

"When You Are Old" is one of Yeats' most famous poems. It is based on a French sonnet of the sixteenth century. This poem is about the fleeting moments of life and the power of time over us all. We cannot control getting old, but we can control our actions when we have the chance. The poem's speaker addresses his concerns of old age to his beloved. He tells her that in old age, she will regret not returning the speaker's love. He reminds her that there were many who admired her, but only he truly loved her in moments of joy and sorrow. The poem ends with the beloved's realization that she has lost the chance of ever being with him.

##### **Critical Appreciation**

“When You Are Old” is a bittersweet poem that reveals the complexities of love. The poem is generally taken to be addressed to Maud Gonne, an Irish actress with whom Yeats was infatuated throughout his life. In any case, the poem argues in favor of a kind of love based not on physical appearances—which fade over time—but on the deeper beauty of the soul.

In the first stanza, the speaker asks the addressee to think ahead to a time when she will be old, tired, and grey. Then, says the speaker, the addressee will look back nostalgically on her life to date, thinking of her youthful looks and vigor as though they were a dream. Those who love the addressee now—that is, at the time of the poem's writing, when this woman is ostensibly still young—are portrayed as superficial and insincere. The speaker implies that the so-called love of these men for the addressee will fade, just as the basis for that love—the addressee's beauty and youth—will fade too.

The speaker contrasts his own love for the addressee with the inferior love described above. The speaker's love, the poem argues, will stand the test of time because it is based on the addressee's “pilgrim soul” and the “sorrows” of her “changing face.” That is, the speaker perceives an inner restlessness of this woman's soul and implies that this will express itself in her “changing face” as she grows old. The speaker, then, claims to experience love that goes beyond the surface—the addressee's face may change over time, but the “soul” that the speaker loves will not.

The speaker imagines the addressee bending down to tend to a fire and muttering sadly about how love ran away to walk restlessly in the mountains and hide among the stars of the night.

## **Unit I – Prose and Poetry**

### **Lesson 1- The Eyes Are Not Here – Textual Questions**

#### **[1] Why were the girl's parents anxious?**

**Ans:** The girl's parents were anxious because the girl was blind and moreover, she was going to travel alone in the train. They were anxious about her comforts and gave all necessary instructions to be kept in mind.

#### **[2] What happened when the narrator spoke to the girl in his compartment?**

**Ans:** The girl was blind. It was dark in the compartment. She didn't feel the presence of anyone in the compartment. The narrator's voice startled her.

#### **[3] What did the narrator say about people with good eyesight?**

**Ans:** The narrator said that people with good eyesight fail to see what is right in front of them. They have too much to see around.

#### **[4] How did the narrator describe Mussoorie?**

**Ans:** The narrator described that in Mussoorie the hills are covered with wild dahlias, the son is delicious, and at night, you can sit in front of a log fire and drink little brandy.

#### **[5] What did the narrator wonder about the girl?**

**Ans:** The narrator wondered how the girl looked like, he liked the sound of her voice, and even the sound of her slippers.

#### **[6] Why was the narrator shut out from the world again?**

**Ans:** The girl got down from the train at the next station. She did not travel for long with the narrator. When she went away the narrator was all alone and shut out from the world.

### **Lesson 2- The Editor**

#### **[1] What did Probha do from the age of six?**

**Ans:** At the age of six, Probha took care of her wifeless father. She began to assume the role of housekeeper. She constituted herself the sole gurdian of her father.

**[2] Why was the narrator worried about Probha's future?**

**Ans:** The Narrator was worried about Probha's future. From where he should be able to earn enough money to provide her with dowry for a suitable bridegroom. He was giving her good education, but what would happen if she fell into the hands of ignorant fool.

**[3] How did the narrator start earning more money?**

**Ans:** The Narrator started writing satirical farce. Then he was appointed as a salaried editor of a paper started by the Zamindar of his village.

**[4] How did the narrator's behaviour change over time?**

**Ans:** The Narrator's behaviour changed too much over the passage of time. He would get angry if she reminded him of taking bath or food. He drove the maid-servants away, and beat the men-servants, he would run with a stick behind the beggars.

**[5] How did Jahirgram's people treat the narrator after he wrote the sermons?**

**Ans:** The narrator realized that he had made a fatal mistake by writing a sermon. Jahirgram's people ceased to show him the same level of attention and respect as before. The honour he had grown had worn out and people began to treat him with negligible familiarity.

**[6] Describe the effect of the Ahirgram newspaper's attack on the narrator.**

**Ans:** The Ahirgram newspaper's attack had a disturbing effect on the narrator. It made very ugly accusations against him. His friends and relatives often laughed at him. This caused the narrator great pain and commotion.

### **Lesson 3 – Palanquin Bearers**

**[1] What is a palanquin used for?**

The palanquin is used for carrying a bride in a comfortable and ceremonial manner.

**[2] How is 'she' compared to a ship?**

**Ans:** In the poem ‘she’ is not directly compared to a ship, but she is described as moving lightly and swiftly, much like how a ship might glide smoothly over water. This image evokes picture of something moving effortlessly.

**[3] How does the poem describe the movements of the bearers?**

**Ans:** The poem describes the movement of the bearers as lightly and swiftly. This description conveys a sense of smooth, gentle and rhythmic movement, as if they are dancing and moving in harmony with a song.

**[4] What message does the poem carry?**

**Ans:** The poem conveys the message that reverence and beauty in the act carrying someone important like a bride. They feel blessed to carry her. It highlights the tenderness and grace with which they perform their duty.

#### **Lesson 4 – When You Are Old**

**[1] How much control does the time have on our lives?**

**Ans:** In this poem W.B. Yeats suggests that time has the greatest control on human lives. This poem is about the fleeting moments of life and power of time over us all. Time is depicted as inevitable in its impact on physical appearance.

**[2] Why does the poet refer to the past?**

**Ans:** The poet refers to past to evoke nostalgia and reflect on the fleeting nature of youth and love. The poet says that the addressee will look back on her past life, thinking of her youthful looks and vigor. The poet emphasizes the passage of time and encourages contemplation of life’s choices.

**[3] How is the poet’s love different compared to those who admired her?**

**Ans:** The speaker’s love is portrayed as deeper and more genuine compared to those who merely admired person’s physical beauty. The poet’s love is based on the addressee’s “pilgrim soul” and the “sorrow” of her changing face.

**[4] How does the poet describe the addressee remembering the past?**

**Ans:** The poet suggest that in their old age, the addressee will take down a book



and slowly read, remembering the soft look and deep shadows in their eyes during their youth. This description highlights the inevitability of aging and nature of remembering one's past.

**[5] How does the poet look into the future by going into the past?**

**Ans:** The poet imagines the future by reflecting on the past. By asking the person to remember their youth and lost loves, the poet suggests that as people grow older, they will naturally look on their lives. Our understanding our past helps us understand our future better, especially it comes to love and missed opportunities.