

# Unit 5

## Readings

**I. Questions 1 to 10 are based on this excerpt from a short story.**

**from THE ECLIPSE**

*This story is set in a boarding school. The students and their teacher, Mr. Ripley, have taken a field trip out of town to see a total eclipse of the sun.*

Mr. Ripley handed out the pieces of blackened glass and strips of exposed negative. We had been warned not to look at the sun without one of these protections, and now, holding up my sooty glass, I took my first look.

5 The sun was in crescent, an imitation of the moon, a humble step down from power. It looked no different from the several partial eclipses I had seen in my life, and I was disappointed.

The younger children played in the snow and screamed. Nydia giggled with Tom Frank, one of our classmates, and Marcia, in low tones, was giving advice to Hank McCurdy, another classmate. She loved to give advice, especially to  
10 boys. Terry paced to and fro, lost in her own thoughts.

The light was weakening and weakening and the cold growing: a deathly cold. We began to stamp and beat our hands together, and when a thermos of hot cocoa was produced there were cheers.

"Why couldn't it be coffee!" murmured sophisticated Marcia.  
15 Whenever I looked at the sun through the black glass it had grown narrowed; and finally it was little more than a sickle of reddish light. Then less. Less. . . Still less.

And now the miracle took place. I dropped my glass. Across the snow, suddenly, ran streamers of shadow and iridescent light, wavering bands turning  
20 and turning in an unimaginable wheel of rays. What was happening? There was a startling impression of swiftness, as if something—someone?—hastened forward to a climax. The sky darkened abruptly. A great still coldness dropped onto the world and all around its edge there was a band of orange light, like the instant before sunrise on all the horizons of the earth at once.

25 "Look up! Look, look, look," whispered Terry.

In the deep sky where there had been a sun, we saw a ring of white silver; a smoking ring, and all the smokes were silver, too; gauzy, fuming, curling, unbelievable. And who had ever seen the sky this color! Not in earliest morning nor at twilight, never before had we seen or dreamed this strange immortal blue  
30 in which a few large stars now sparkled as though for the first time of all.

At some point I glanced for an instant at those nearest me. I had never seen before, nor have I since, the expression of total awe on the faces of a crowd; all

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turned upward, arrested, self-forgotten, like the faces of revelation in old religious paintings.

35 There were tears on Terry's cheeks, I remember, and Carla Cudlipp, a fat pragmatical girl, was on her knees in the snow in an attitude of prayer. Even Miss Lagrange, a battle axe if ever one lived, was trembling all over like a frightened child.

But I watched them for no longer than a second; it was more important to  
40 watch, to try to memorize, that marvelous smoking circle of light, where all too soon the blinding edge of crescent appeared and one could look no longer, and had no wish to look.

We were quiet going down the hill again; even the younger children were quiet: "Gosh," said Marcia, and sighed. It seemed as suitable a comment as any.  
45 All of us were frozen with cold, subdued, spotted with soot. The world once more was muted in the queer dreamlight. Nothing seemed familiar.

"But suppose you'd never seen the sun set in your life," said Nydia suddenly. "Suppose you'd never seen a rainbow. It would be the same thing; you'd be just as—as dumbfounded. You know, you'd get this same terrific kick  
50 out of it. I mean it's not a phenomenon or God or anything, it's just that the moon gets in front of the sun once in a while; just a natural thing. It's only that you hardly ever get to *see* it."

"Yes, but gosh, when you do see it, it makes everything else seem more wonderful," I said. "It's as though they let you in on the secret for a minute or  
55 two; I mean it's sort of as though they let you remember how it all works and how *wonderful* it is!"

But it was beyond my powers to express what it meant. I fell silent, trying to recapture in memory the exact impression, the exact sensation, of that instant when the universe had seemed to open like a door before me, or my own eyes to  
60 open and behold for the first time.

We felt that we had been away for months. Everything in our room, when we returned, looked childish, trivial, and cheap.

Marcia hurled her coat on the bed, smoothed her sweater down on her hips, sighed.

65 "I know! Let's have a snack before lunch," she said, brightening. Then she went to the cabinet and brought out the box of crackers and the marshmallow whip, settling comfortably on her bed with them, spreading the crackers with a lavish hand. She held one out to me. I had not realized I was so hungry, and went on eating when the others had stopped, although I knew it would be a  
70 matter of minutes until the lunch bell rang.

Nydia went to the mirror and refreshed herself at her own reflection for a while, then she turned to the Victrola, cranked it up, and put on a record called

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"Brown Eyes Why Are You Blue?" Recklessly, she reached in the cabinet and brought out a cigarette, lighted it, and began dancing slowly with her eyes closed, 75 as if asleep. She had learned, by diligent application, to hold the smoke in her mouth for a long time and then let it out gradually through her nostrils, and she did this now. She looked very worldly. I sat watching her as I crunched steadily through the box of soda crackers.

Terry, oblivious of all, was writing yet another somber letter to her Jack- 80 (she had written three the day before)—and Marcia was polishing her nails with a buffer; the pearl ring she had been given on her sixteenth birthday gleamed and winked rhythmically.

There was a noise in the hall outside our room and Nydia's blue eyes flew open. She stubbed out the cigarette on the sole of her shoe, tossed it into the 85 waste basket, and stood for a moment listening, holding her breath and fanning away the smoke. Then she laughed.

"Come on, Lib," she said to me, holding out her hands. "Let's dance, you need the practice, you're still terrible. I'll lead."

Humbly and doggedly I did my best to follow. Terry looked up and smiled 90 at us vaguely from her remote place. Marcia watched my feet. "Try not to trudge," she said.

Little by little we were curing ourselves of wonder, and the universe shrank back to its small customary size.

*Elizabeth Enright (1909-1968)*  
American author-illustrator

**II. Questions 11 to 18 are based on this poem.**

**HUNTING WITH MY FATHER**

When I was a boy we always did it this way:

I wake to the smell of coffee  
and you are at the fire,  
its flames mirrored in your glasses.

5 Buck, the Colonel's dog, sleeps on beneath the bunk house, his  
old legs quivering with problems of their own. The raw south  
Texas dawn is about to break  
and at the camp we are quiet as we eat.  
Three deer hang gutted from a live oak,  
10 their long shapes still graceful.

Father and I will hunt this desert  
as if our lives depend on it,  
but the kill is not what draws us here.  
Every morning we walk the long mesa,<sup>1</sup>

15 slowly working the ravines overgrown with mesquite.<sup>2</sup>  
When we come to a water hole we will post<sup>3</sup> for hours  
watching the grey end of the afternoon.  
Standing there, deep in the silence of animals,  
my father is showing me the greater world  
20 that I might find my resemblance in it.

*Tom Absher*  
Contemporary American poet

<sup>1</sup>mesa—a flat-topped elevation with one or more clifflike sides

<sup>2</sup>mesquite—small shrubs

<sup>3</sup>post—take up position

**III. Questions 19 to 28 are based on this excerpt from a play.**

**from THE APOLLO' OF BELLAC**

*CHARACTERS:*

AGNES

CLERK

THERESE

MAN FROM BELLAC

*SCENE: The reception room of The International Bureau of Inventions. This is a large, well-appointed room on the second floor of a magnificent office building in Paris. There is an elaborate crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling. The morning sun plays upon it. Four doors open off the room. Three of them are marked Private. These lead into the office of the PRESIDENT, and the FIRST VICE- PRESIDENT, and the Director's Conference Room. Behind a desk sits the RECEPTION CLERK. The desk has a telephone and a row of signal lights. It also has a blotter on which the CLERK is writing something in an appointment book. The CLERK is well on in years and his face makes one think of a caricature by Daumier.<sup>2</sup>*

*TIME: Autumn in Paris. The present or shortly before.*

*The CLERK is writing with a meticulous<sup>3</sup> air. The outer door opens. AGNES comes in timidly and stands in front of the desk. The CLERK does not look up.*

AGNES: Er—

CLERK: Yes?

5 **AGNES:** Is this the International Bureau of Inventions, Incorporated?

*CLERK: Yes.*

*AGNES: Could I please see the Chairman of the Board?*

**CLERK** (*Looks up*): The Chairman of the Board? No one sees the Chairman of the Board.

10 **AGNES:** Oh. (*The outer door opens again. THERESE sweeps into the room. She is blonde, shapely, thirty-five, dressed in expensive mink. CLERK rises respectfully.*)

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<sup>1</sup>Apollo—sun-god of classical Greek mythology, patron of music and poetry

<sup>2</sup>Daumier (1808-79)—French painter and caricaturist who won contemporary fame for satirical cartoons about government corruption

<sup>3</sup>meticulous—very careful, fuss

CLERK: Good morning, Madame.

THERESE: Is the President in?

15 CLERK: Yes, Madame. Of course. (THERESE *walks haughtily to the President's door*. CLERK *opens it for her and closes it behind her*. He goes back to his desk where AGNES is waiting.)

AGNES: Could I see the President?

CLERK: No one sees the President.

20 AGNES: But I have—

CLERK: What type of invention? Major? Intermediate? Minor?

AGNES: I beg pardon?

CLERK: Assistant Secretary to the Third Vice-President. Come back Tuesday. Name?

25 AGNES: My name?

CLERK: You have a name, I presume? (THE MAN FROM BELLAC *appears suddenly from outer door*. He is *non-descript, mercurial,<sup>4</sup> shabby*.)

MAN: Yes. The young lady has a name. But what permits you to conclude that the young lady's invention is as minor as all that?

30 CLERK: Who are you?

MAN: What chiefly distinguishes the inventor is modesty. You should know that by now. Pride is the invention of non-inventors. (A STREET SINGER, *accompanied by violin and accordion, begins "La Seine"*<sup>5</sup> outside the windows. CLERK *crosses to close them*.)

35 AGNES (To the MAN): Thanks very much, but—

MAN: To the characteristic modesty of the inventor, the young lady adds the charming modesty of her sex—(He *smiles at AGNES*). But—(CLERK *closes one of the windows*) how can you be sure, you, that she has not brought us at last the invention which is destined to transform the modern world?

40 CLERK (Closes the other window): For world-transformations it's the Second Vice President. Mondays ten to twelve.

MAN: Today is Tuesday.

CLERK: Now how can I help that?

MAN: So! While all humanity awaits with anguish the discovery which will at

45 last utilize the moon's gravitation for the removal of corns,<sup>6</sup> and when we have every reason to believe that in all likelihood Mademoiselle—

Mademoiselle?

AGNES: Agnes.

MAN: Mademoiselle Agnes has this discovery in her handbag—You tell her

to 50 come back Monday.

*Continued*

<sup>4</sup>mercuriat—quick-witted, spirited

<sup>5</sup>"*La Seine* "—*a* song about the river that runs through  
Paris <sup>6</sup>corns—hardened parts of the skin, especially on toes



CLERK (*Nervously*): There is going to be a Directors' meeting in just a few minutes. The Chairman of the Board is coming. I must beg you to be quiet.

MAN: I will not be quiet. I am quiet Mondays.

55 CLERK: Now, please. I don't want any trouble.

MAN: And the Universal Vegetable? Five continents are languishing in the hope of the Universal Vegetable which will once and for all put an end to the ridiculous specialization of the turnip, the leek and the string-bean, which will be at one and the same time bread, meat, wine and coffee, and  
60 yield with equal facility cotton, potassium, ivory and wool. The Universal Vegetable which Paracelsus could not, and Burbank dared not, imagine! Yes, my friend. And while in this handbag, which with understandable concern she clutches to her charming bosom, the seeds of the Universal Vegetable await only the signal of your President to burst upon an  
65 expectant world, you say—come back Monday.

AGNES: Really, sir—

CLERK: If you wish an appointment for Monday, Mademoiselle—

MAN: She does not wish an appointment for Monday.

CLERK (*Shrugs*): Then she can go jump in the lake.

70 MAN: What did you say?

CLERK: I said: She can go jump in the lake. Is that clear?

MAN: That's clear. Perfectly clear. As clear as it was to Columbus when—  
(*The BUZZER sounds on the CLERK'S desk. A LIGHT flashes on.*)

CLERK: Excuse me. (*He crosses to the VICE PRESIDENT'S door, knocks and*  
75 *enters. MAN smiles. AGNES smiles back wanly.*)

AGNES: But I'm not the inventor of the Universal Vegetable.

MAN: I know. Jam.

AGNES: I'm just looking for a job.

*Jean Giraudoux (1882-1944)*  
French playwright and fiction writer

**IV. Questions 29 to 38 are based on this excerpt from an essay.**

**from MY REMARKABLE UNCLE**

The most remarkable man I have ever known in my life was my uncle Edward Philip Leacock—known to ever so many people in Winnipeg fifty or sixty years ago as E.P. His character was so exceptional that it needs nothing but plain narration. It was so exaggerated already that you couldn't exaggerate it.

- 5 When I was a boy of six, my father brought us, a family flock, to settle on an Ontario farm. We lived in an isolation unknown, in these days of radio, anywhere in the world. We were thirty-five miles from a railway. There were no newspapers. In the solitude of the dark winter nights the stillness was that of eternity.
- 10 Into this isolation there broke, two years later, my dynamic Uncle Edward, my father's younger brother. He had just come from a year's travel around the Mediterranean. He must have been about twenty-eight, but seemed a more than adult man, bronzed and self-confident, with a square beard like a Plantageneti King. His talk was of Algiers, of the African slave market; of the Pyramids. To
- 15 us it sounded like the *Arabian Nights*.<sup>2</sup> When we asked, "Uncle Edward, do you know the Prince of Wales?" he answered, "Quite intimately"—with no further explanation. It was an impressive trick he had.

In that year, 1878, there was a general election in Canada. E.P. was in it up to the neck in less than no time. He picked up the history and politics of Upper

20 Canada in a day, and in a week knew everybody in the countryside. He spoke at every meeting, but his strong point was the personal contact of electioneering, of bar-room treats. This gave full scope for his marvellous talent for flattery and make-believe.

"Why, let me see"—he would say to some tattered country specimen beside

25 him glass in hand—"surely, if your name is Framley, you must be a relation of my dear old friend General Sir Charles Framley of the Horse Artillery?" "Mebbe," the flattered specimen would answer. "I guess, mebbe; I ain't kept track very good of my folks in the old country." "Dear me! I must tell Sir Charles that I've seen you. He'll be so pleased." . . . In this way in a fortnight E.P. had conferred

30 honours and distinctions on half the township. They lived in a recaptured atmosphere of generals, admirals and earls. Vote? How else could they vote than

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<sup>1</sup>Plantagenet—the ruling family of England between the 12th and 14th centuries

<sup>2</sup>*Arabian Nights*—famous collection of stories told to an Arabian Sultan by his wife Scheherazade on 1001 successive nights

conservative, men of family like them?

The election, of course, was a walk-over. E.P. might have stayed to reap the fruits. But he knew better. Ontario at that day was too small a horizon. For these  
35 were the days of the hard times of Ontario farming, when mortgages fell like snowflakes, and farmers were sold up, or sold out, or went "to the States", or faded humbly underground.

But all the talk was of Manitoba now opening up. Nothing would do E.P. but that he and my father must go west. So we had a sale of our farm, with  
40 refreshments, old-time fashion, for the buyers. The poor, lean cattle and the broken machines fetched less than the price of the whiskey. But E.P. laughed it all off, quoted that the star of the Empire glittered in the west, and off to the West they went, leaving us children behind at school.

They hit Winnipeg just on the rise of the boom, and E.P. came at once into  
45 his own and rode on the crest of the wave. There is something of magic appeal in the rush and movement of a "boom" town. Life comes to a focus; it is all here and now, all *present—just* a clatter of hammers and saws, rounds of drinks and rolls of money. In such an atmosphere every man seems a remarkable fellow, a man of exception; individuality separates out and character blossoms like a rose.

50 E.P. came into his own. In less than no time he was everything and knew everybody, conferring titles and honours up and down Portage Avenue. In six months he had a great fortune, on paper; took a trip east and brought back a charming wife from Toronto; built a large house beside the river; filled it with pictures that he said were his ancestors, and carried on in it a roaring hospitality  
55 that never stopped.

His activities were wide. He was president of a bank (that never opened), head of a brewery (for brewing the Red River) and, above all, secretary-treasurer of the Winnipeg Hudson Bay and Arctic Ocean Railway that had a charter authorizing it to build a road to the Arctic Ocean, when it got ready. They had no  
60 track, but they printed stationery and passes, and in return E.P. received passes over all North America.

But naturally his main hold was politics. He was elected right away into the Manitoba Legislature. They would have made him Prime Minister but for the existence of the grand old man of the Province, John Norquay. But even at that in  
65 a very short time Norquay ate out of E.P.'s hand, and E.P. led him on a string. I remember how they came down to Toronto, when I was a schoolboy, with an adherent group of "Westerners", all in heavy buffalo coats and bearded like Assyrians. E.P. paraded them on King Street like a returned explorer with savages.

70 Then came the crash of the Manitoba boom. Simple people, like my father,

*Continued*

were wiped out in a day. Not so E.P. The crash just gave him a lift as the smash of a big wave lifts a strong swimmer. He just went right on. I believe that in reality he was left utterly bankrupt. But it made no difference. He used credit instead of cash. He still had his imaginary bank, and his railway to the Arctic  
75 Ocean. Any one who called about a bill was told that E.P.'s movements were uncertain and would depend a good deal on what happened in Johannesburg. That held them another six months.

It was during this period that I used to see him when he made his periodic trips "east", to impress his creditors in the West. He floated, at first very easily,  
80 on hotel credit, borrowed loans and unpaid bills. A banker, especially a country town banker, was his natural mark and victim. He would tremble as E.P. came in, like a stock-dove that sees a hawk. E.P.'s method was so simple; it was like showing a farmer peas under thimbles. As he entered the banker's side-office he would say: "I say. Do you fish? Surely that's a greenhart casting-rod on the  
85 wall?" (E.P. knew the names of everything.) In a few minutes the banker, flushed and pleased, was exhibiting the rod, and showing flies in a box out of a drawer. When E.P. went out he carried a hundred dollars with him. There was no security. The transaction was all over.

The proceeding with a hotel was different. A country hotel was, of course,  
90 easy, in fact too easy. E.P. would sometimes pay such a bill in cash, just as a sportsman won't shoot a sitting partridge. But a large hotel was another thing. E.P., on leaving, would call for his bill at the desk. At the sight of it he would break out into enthusiasm at the reasonableness of it. "Just think!" he would say in his "aside" to me, "compare that with the Hotel Crillon in Paris!" The hotel  
95 proprietor had no way of doing this; he just felt that he ran a cheap hotel. Then another "aside", "Do remind me to mention to Sir John how admirably we've been treated; he's coming here next week." "Sir John" was our Prime Minister and the hotel keeper hadn't known he was coming—and he wasn't. . . . Then came the final touch—"Now, let me see. . . seventy-six dollars. . . seventy-six . . .  
100 You give me"—and E.P. fixed his eye firmly on the hotel man—"give me twenty-four dollars, and then I can remember to send an even hundred." The man's hand trembled. But he gave it.

This does not mean that E.P. was in any sense a crook, in any degree dishonest. His bills to him were just "deferred pay", like the British debts to the  
105 United States. He never did, never contemplated, a crooked deal in his life. All his grand schemes were as open as sunlight—and as empty.

Of course it could not last. Gradually credit crumbles. Faith weakens. Creditors grow hard, and friends turn their faces away. Gradually E.P. sank down. The death of his wife had left him a widower, a shuffling, half-shabby figure,

*Continued*

110 familiar on the street, that would have been pathetic but for his indomitable self-belief, the illumination of his mind. Even at that, times grew hard with him.

Presently even his power to travel came to an end. The railways found out at last that there wasn't any Arctic Ocean, and anyway the printer wouldn't print.

Just once again he managed to "come east." It was in June of 1891. I met  
115 him forging along King Street in Toronto—a trifle shabby but with a plug hat<sup>3</sup> with a big band of crepe<sup>4</sup> round it. "Poor Sir John," he said. "I felt I simply must come down for his funeral." Then I remembered that the Prime Minister was dead, and realized that kindly sentiment had meant free transportation.

That was the last I ever saw of E.P. A little after that someone paid his fare  
120 back to England. He received, from some family trust, a little income of perhaps two pounds a week. On that he lived, with such dignity as might be, in a lost village of Worcestershire. He told the people of the village—so I learned later—that his stay was uncertain; it would depend a good deal on what happened in China. But nothing happened in China; there he stayed, years and years. There he  
125 might have finished out, but for a strange chance of fortune, a sort of poetic justice, that gave to E.P. an evening in the sunset.

It happened that in the part of England where our family belonged there was an ancient religious brotherhood, with a monastery and dilapidated estates that went back for centuries. E.P. descended on them, the brothers seeming to him an  
130 easy mark, as brothers indeed are. In the course of his pious "retreat", E.P. took a look into the brothers' finances, and his quick intelligence discovered an old claim against the British Government, large in amount and valid beyond a doubt.

In less than no time E.P. was at Westminster, representing the brothers. He knew exactly how to handle British officials; they were easier even than Ontario  
135 hotel keepers.

So E.P. got what he wanted. The British Government are so used to old claims that it would as soon pay as not. There are plenty left.

The brothers got a whole lot of money. In gratitude they invited E.P. to be their permanent manager; so there he was, lifted into ease and affluence. The 140 years went easily by, among gardens, orchards and fishponds old as the Crusades.

*Stephen Leacock (1869-1944)*  
Canadian writer, teacher, and humorist

<sup>3</sup>plug hat—(colloquial) top hat

<sup>4</sup>band of crepe—black ribbon worn to indicate mourning

**V. Questions 39 to 46 are based on this excerpt from an essay.**

**from ARE THE HOMELESS CRAZY?**

It is commonly believed by many journalists and politicians that the homeless of America are, in large part, former patients of large mental hospitals who were deinstitutionalized in the 1970s—the consequence, it is sometimes said, of misguided liberal opinion that favored the treatment of such persons in

10 community-based centers. It is argued that this policy, and the subsequent failure of society to build such centers or to provide them in sufficient number, is the primary cause of homelessness in the United States.

Those who work among the homeless do not find that explanation satisfactory. While  
20 conceding that a certain number of the homeless are or have been mentally unwell, they believe that, in the case of most unsheltered people, the primary reason is economic rather than clinical. The cause of homelessness, they say with disarming logic, is the lack of homes and of income with which to rent or acquire them.

30 They point to the loss of traditional jobs in industry (2 million every year since 1980) and to the fact that half of those who are laid off end up in work that pays a poverty-level wage. They point out

that since 1968 the number of children living in poverty has grown by 3 million, while welfare benefits to families with children have  
40 declined by 35 percent.

And they note, too, that these developments have occurred during a time in which the shortage of low-income family housing has intensified as the gentrification<sup>1</sup> of our major cities has accelerated. Half a million units of low-income housing are lost each year to  
50 to arson, demolition, or abandonment.

Between 1978 and 1980, median rents climbed 30 percent for people in the lowest income sector, driving many of these families into the streets. Since 1980, rents have risen at even faster rates.

In our rush to explain the homeless as a psychiatric problem even the words of medical practitioners  
60 who care for homeless people have been curiously ignored. A study published by the Massachusetts Medical Society, for instance, has noted that, with the exceptions of alcohol and drug use, the most frequent illnesses among a sample of the homeless population were trauma (31%), upper-respiratory

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<sup>1</sup>gentrification—the creation of upper-class neighbourhoods by entrepreneur real estate contractors



disorders (28%), limb disorders  
70 (19%), mental illness (16%), skin  
diseases (15%), hypertension (14%),  
and neurological illness (12%). Why,  
we may ask, of all these calamities,  
does mental illness command so  
much political and press attention?  
The answer may be that the label of  
mental illness places the destitute  
outside the sphere of ordinary life. It  
80 personalizes an anguish that is public in  
its genesis; it individualizes a misery  
that is both general in cause and  
general in application.

There is another reason to assign  
labels to the destitute and single out  
mental illness from among their  
many afflictions. All these other  
problems—tuberculosis, asthma,  
scabies, diarrhea, bleeding gums,  
90 impacted teeth, etc.—bear no stigma,  
and mental illness does. It conveys a  
stigma in the United States. It  
conveys a stigma in the Soviet Union  
as well. In both nations the label is  
used, whether as a matter of  
deliberate policy or not, to isolate and  
treat as special cases those who, by  
deed or word or by sheer presence,  
represent a threat to

100 national complacency. The two  
situations are obviously not identical,  
but they are enough alike to give  
Americans reason for concern.

The notion that the homeless are  
largely psychotics who belong in  
institutions, rather than victims of  
displacement at the hands of  
enterprising realtors, spares us from  
the need to offer realistic solutions

110 to the deep and widening extremes of  
wealth and poverty in the United  
States. It also enables us to tell  
ourselves that the despair of  
homeless people bears no intimate  
connection to the privileged existence  
we enjoy—when, for example, we  
rent or purchase one of those restored  
town houses that once provided  
shelter for people now  
120 huddled in the street.

What is to be made, then, of the  
supposition that the homeless are  
primarily the former residents of  
mental hospitals, persons who were  
carelessly released during the 1970s?  
Many of them are, to be sure. Among  
the older men and women in the  
streets and shelters, as many as  
one-third (some believe as  
130 many as one-half) may be chronically  
disturbed, and a number of these  
people were deinstitutionalized  
during the 1970s. But to operate on  
that assumption in a city such as New  
York—where nearly half the  
homeless are small children whose  
average age is six—makes no sense.  
Their parents, with an average age of  
twenty-seven, are not  
140 likely to have been hospitalized in  
the 1970s, either.

A frequently cited set of figures  
tells us that in 1955 the average daily  
census of non-federal psychiatric  
institutions was 677,000, and that by  
1984 the number had dropped to  
151,000. But these

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people didn't go directly from a hospital room to the street. The  
150 bulk of those who had been psychiatric patients and were released from hospitals during the 1960s and early 1970s had been living in low-income housing, many in skid-row hotels or boarding houses. Such housing—commonly known as SRO (single-room occupancy) units—was drastically diminished by the gentrification of our cities that  
160 began in the early '70s. Almost 50 percent of SRO housing was replaced by luxury apartments or office buildings between 1970 and 1980, and the remaining units have been disappearing even more rapidly.

Even for those persons who are ill and were deinstitutionalized during the decades before 1980, the  
170 precipitating cause of homelessness in 1987 is not illness but loss of housing. SRO housing offered low-cost sanctuaries for the homeless, providing a degree of safety and mutual support for those who lived within them. They were a demeaning version of the community health centers that society had promised; they were the  
180 de facto "halfway houses" of the 1970s. For those people too—at most half of the homeless single persons in America—the cause of homelessness is lack of housing.

Even in those cases where mental instability is apparent, homelessness itself is often the precipitating factor. For example, many pregnant women without homes are denied

190 prenatal care because they constantly travel from one shelter to another. Many are anemic. Many are denied essential dietary supplements by recent federal cuts. As a consequence, some of their children do not live to see their second year of life. Do these mothers sometimes show signs of stress? Do they appear disorganized, depressed,

200 disordered? Frequently. They are immobilized by pain, traumatized by fear. So it is no surprise that when researchers enter the scene to ask them how they "feel," the resulting report tells us that the homeless are emotionally unwell. The reports do not tell us that we have *made* these people ill. They do not tell us that illness is a natural

210 response to intolerable conditions. Nor do they tell us of the strength and the resilience that so many of these people retain despite the miseries they must endure.

A writer in the *New York Times* describes a homeless woman standing on a traffic island in Manhattan. "She was evicted from her small room in the hotel just

220 across the street," and she is determined to get revenge. Until she does, "nothing will move her from that spot. . . . Her argumentativeness and her angry fixation on revenge, along with the apparent absence of hallucinations, mark her as paranoid." Most physicians, I

*Continued*

imagine, would be more reserved in passing judgment with so little  
230 evidence, but this reporter makes his diagnosis without hesitation. "The paranoids of the street," he says, "are among the most difficult to help."

Perhaps so. But does it depend on who is offering the help? Is anyone offering to help this woman get back her home? Is it crazy to seek vengeance for being thrown into the  
240 street? The absence of anger, some psychiatrists believe, might indicate much greater illness.

"No one will be turned away," says the mayor of New York City, as hundreds of young mothers with their infants are turned from the doors of shelters season after

season. That may sound to some like a denial of reality. "Now  
250 you're hearing all kinds of horror stories," says the President of the United States<sup>2</sup> as he denies that anyone is cold or hungry or unhoused. On another occasion he says that the unsheltered "are homeless, you might say, by choice." That sounds every bit as self-deceiving.

The woman standing on the traffic  
260 island screaming for revenge until her room has been restored to her sounds relatively healthy by comparison. If 3 million homeless people did the same, and all at the same time, we might finally be forced to listen.

*Jonathan Kozol*  
Contemporary American essayist

<sup>2</sup>President of the United States—Ronald Reagan was the U.S. President at the time this essay was published in the Winter 1988 issue of the *Yale Review*

*Continued*



**VII. Questions 47 to 53 are based on this poem.**

**UNWRITTEN LETTER**

The wind has torn your embroidered apples  
From their boughs  
And flung them on the ground:  
The rain has filled your water-barrels 5  
Full to overflowing,  
Made channels through your beds,  
And spattered all the shining window-panes  
You loved to keep so clean. Sun,  
too, has done his damage:  
10 The goldenglow is short and shrivelled up,  
The purple asters fade, and look forlorn,  
And dahlias drop their petals  
One by one,  
And when the evening comes  
15 Look for your watering-pot.  
There is no happiness in your garden now—  
Even the trees feel it.

All the neighbors are saying  
They would like to see you again;  
20 And I wish secretly  
To meet you suddenly  
Walking through your long, lonely avenue of elms.

*Dorothy Livesay*  
Contemporary Canadian poet

VIII. Questions 54 to 63 are based on this excerpt from a novel.

from TAY JOHN

*Tay John was a legendary hero of the Shushwap Indians of British Columbia. The name, Tay John, is derived from *tete jaune*, a French term that means Yellowhead. In this excerpt, the narrator recounts an event that he witnessed the first time he saw Tay John.*

It wasn't wide, that river I was following. Twice as wide as a man might jump, perhaps, but it was swift, and I could hear the boulders rolling in the surge of its waters. Then across from me, as though he had grown there while my eyes blinked, I saw a man. He was stripped to the waist, wearing only moccasins and a  
5 pair of moose-hide leggings. Behind him some little distance I saw his rifle stacked against a tree and beside it, his pack with a shirt of caribou hide, the hair still upon it, tossed upon the ground. He had come down the creek opposite me. What he was doing there when I saw him, standing out on that flat among the grasses, I don't know. About to make his camp for the night perhaps.  
10 I couldn't speak to him. There was too much noise with that confounded water. I shouted. "Hallo!" I shouted; "Hallo!" I waved my arms and shouted again. It seemed absurd. I was so close to him that he should have been able to hear a whisper. He stood there across from me, too, with his head tilted a bit as though he were listening. Yet even then it seemed he wasn't listening to me at all,  
15 but to something else I couldn't hear. Had he been able to hear me, for all I knew then, he wouldn't have understood what I said. But, still, he wasn't all Indian. There was that yellow hair. It was long and heavy. A girl would have been proud of it, and he had it held with some sort of a band around his forehead. A black band, like a strip of hide cut from some small fur-bearing animal. A piece of  
20 marten, say.  
Yes, his hair shone. It seemed to shed a light about him. Then he looked directly at me. I have no doubt he would have spoken to me had we met in the usual way. But here was this rushing torrent between us. We couldn't cross it. Our voices couldn't be heard above it. When he looked at me I could see the  
25 reflected light of the sun burning deep down in his dark eyes. Then he turned slowly, and took a step back towards his rifle.  
And in that moment, while his foot was lifted for his second step, and his back towards me, it happened. Suddenly it seemed to me like a play being put on for my benefit, with the forest and mountains for backdrop, the gravel bar where  
30 this Yellowhead was for stage, and the deep river with its unceasing crescendo for the orchestra pit.

*Continued*

A bear was there above him, between him and his rifle. It may have been there for some time. Anyway it was there now, no question about it. A grizzly bear at that, a silver tip, with a great roll of muscle over its shoulders and the hair  
35 slowly rising in fear along the length of its backbone. For the bear was frightened, make no mistake about that. Later when it stood up I saw it was a she-bear. She probably had a cub cached somewhere close by. As a rule, of course, a bear won't attack a man—but this was a she-grizzly, and she was trapped. There was the pack behind her, you see, with its human smell. There was the man before her.  
40 Her cub was somewhere near by. If she hadn't been frightened or angered—and the cause and often the result of the one is much the same as the other—she would have turned around and left a situation she was unprepared to meet. But, no, she stood her ground.

And my Yellowhead across from me stood his. He slowly, ever so slowly,  
45 put his foot back upon the ground and waited. He stood, a bronze and golden statue planted among the grasses that rose up to his knees. This was the sort of thing I had sometimes dreamed of—of meeting a bear one day close up, hand to hand so to speak, and doing it in. An epic battle: man against the wilderness. And now I saw the battle taking form, but another man was in my place and with  
50 the river between us I could give no help. None at all. My revolver? I might have hit the man, but against the bear it was worth no more than shooting peas. I waited.

Something was going to happen. The grizzly opened her mouth. I saw her sharp white teeth. She flicked the grass with her long-nailed fore-paw. That paw  
55 seemed suddenly to sprout out from her body, then to be drawn back. She advanced a step. I saw the right hand of this Yellowhead fellow move gently to his waist and come out with the handle of a gleaming knife in its fist. The muscles along his shoulders rippled. His rifle was beyond his reach, past the bear. He glanced not once at the river nor at me behind him. His eyes I knew were on  
60 the bear. She swung her head low, from side to side, as though she cautioned him to be careful. Her mouth opened and she roared. I could hear that across the river. It came to me faintly, like a cough.

Then Yellowhead moved quickly. His left hand swiped the band off his head and threw it towards the grizzly, not directly at her, but just above her head. She  
65 reared up, and then I saw the hang of her laden teats. She stood so that she towered above Yellowhead. That's what I called him now. I found myself saying "Yellowhead," "Yellowhead." I had to give him a name so that I could help him—morally, you know. I had to align him with the human race. Without a name no man is an individual, no individual wholly a man.

70 There she was above him, immense and unassailable as a mountain side. She

*Continued*

clawed the air after this black thing that flew towards her. And when she swung he sprang beneath her arm. I saw his left hand grab the long fur around her neck, and I saw his right swing twice with the long-bladed knife, and the knife stayed there the second time, a flash of light embedded in her side, searching for the  
75 great, slow beat of her heart. It was a matter of moments. Then they were on the ground rolling over and over. I caught glimpses now and then of that yellow mass of hair, like a bundle the she-grizzly held with affection to her breast. It was his only chance. If he had stepped back from her those claws would have ripped his belly open, torn his head from off his shoulders. He did the one thing, the only  
80 thing he could have done, and did it well.

They rolled to the very edge of the stream on whose other bank I stood. They were quiet there. Yellowhead was beneath. "If he's not dead," I said, "he's drowned." The great mass of fur was quiescent<sup>1</sup> before me, and from its side a stream of dark blood flowed into the hungry river.  
85 Then the mass quivered. It heaved. A man's head appeared beside it, bloody, muddied, as though he were just being born, as though he were climbing out of the ground. Certainly man had been created anew before my eyes. Like birth itself it was a struggle against the powers of darkness, and Man had won. Like birth, too, it was a cry and a protest—his lips parted as though a cry, unheard by  
90 me, came from them. Death, now that is silence—an acceptance—but across this creek from me was life again. Man had won against the wilderness, the unknown, the strength that is not so much beyond our strength as it is capable of a fury and single passion beyond our understanding. He had won. *We* had won. That was how I felt. I shouted. I did a dance. Then I calmed down. I wanted more than  
95 anything I knew to go across and touch this man, this Yellowhead, to tell him, "Well done!" But I couldn't cross that river. I might have gone back to the foot log, but that would have taken more than an hour, and it would seem that I was leaving him in his moment of victory—when no man wishes to be alone. A victory is no victory until it has been shared. Defeat? Well, that is another matter.  
100 But Yellowhead was damaged. Somehow the grizzly had clawed his face. One side of it streamed blood. It looked raw like meat. For a time he sat there on the ground, among the grasses, and the blood ran off his shoulder, down his arm, down between his very fingers. He didn't look at me. Seemed to have forgotten all about me. He stared with wonder, I think, at the body of the bear lying half in  
105 the river. He spat some of her fur out, caught between his teeth. Then he washed his face, found the band for his hair and bound it back. After that he took his knife, still caught between the she-grizzly's ribs, cut her head off, neatly severing the vertebrae at its base, climbed with it up a tree and left it there, caught in a crotch so that it gazed upon the scene of its dismay.

*Continued*

<sup>1</sup>quiescent—motionless, quiet

110 He came down to the side of the river, bathed his face again. It still bled. I  
shouted, but he didn't hear me, or didn't care to. He disdained me, that fellow,  
absolutely.

It was growing dusk now. He went back to the edge of the forest where his  
pack and rifle rested. He staggered once and leaned against a tree. Then he pulled  
115 on his caribou-hide shirt, hoisted his pack and shouldered it. He picked up his rifle and  
stepped, without one backward glance, behind the trees. He vanished, as though he  
were leaving one form of existence for another. For a moment or two I saw his  
yellow head, a gleam of light being carried away through the timber. Entering the  
forest his pack brushed against a branch of spruce. The branch

120 moved there before my eyes, swayed gently, touched by an invisible hand after he had  
gone. It moved. The river flowed. The headless trunk of the she-grizzly swung out a  
bit from the bank, rolled over in the force of the current, as if in her deep sleep she  
dreamed. Night's shadow was on the valley. Trees creaked in a new wind blowing.  
An owl hooted somewhere close to me.

125 It was late when I got back to camp. It was dark, black as the inside of a bear. Night  
was about me like a covering from which I tried to escape. My hands wandered far  
from me feeling my way. My fingers touched branches, the harsh bark of trees. I  
pulled them back to me, held them against my sides. They were some company for  
me in the darkness.

130 Days passed before I told them in the camp of what I had seen on the bank of the river  
that streamed clear and fresh and nameless before our tents. It took me a time to  
find the words.

*Howard O'Hagan*

Canadian writer.

Howard O'Hagan was born in Lethbridge  
and grew up in the Yellowhead Lake  
region of the Rocky Mountains near Jasper.