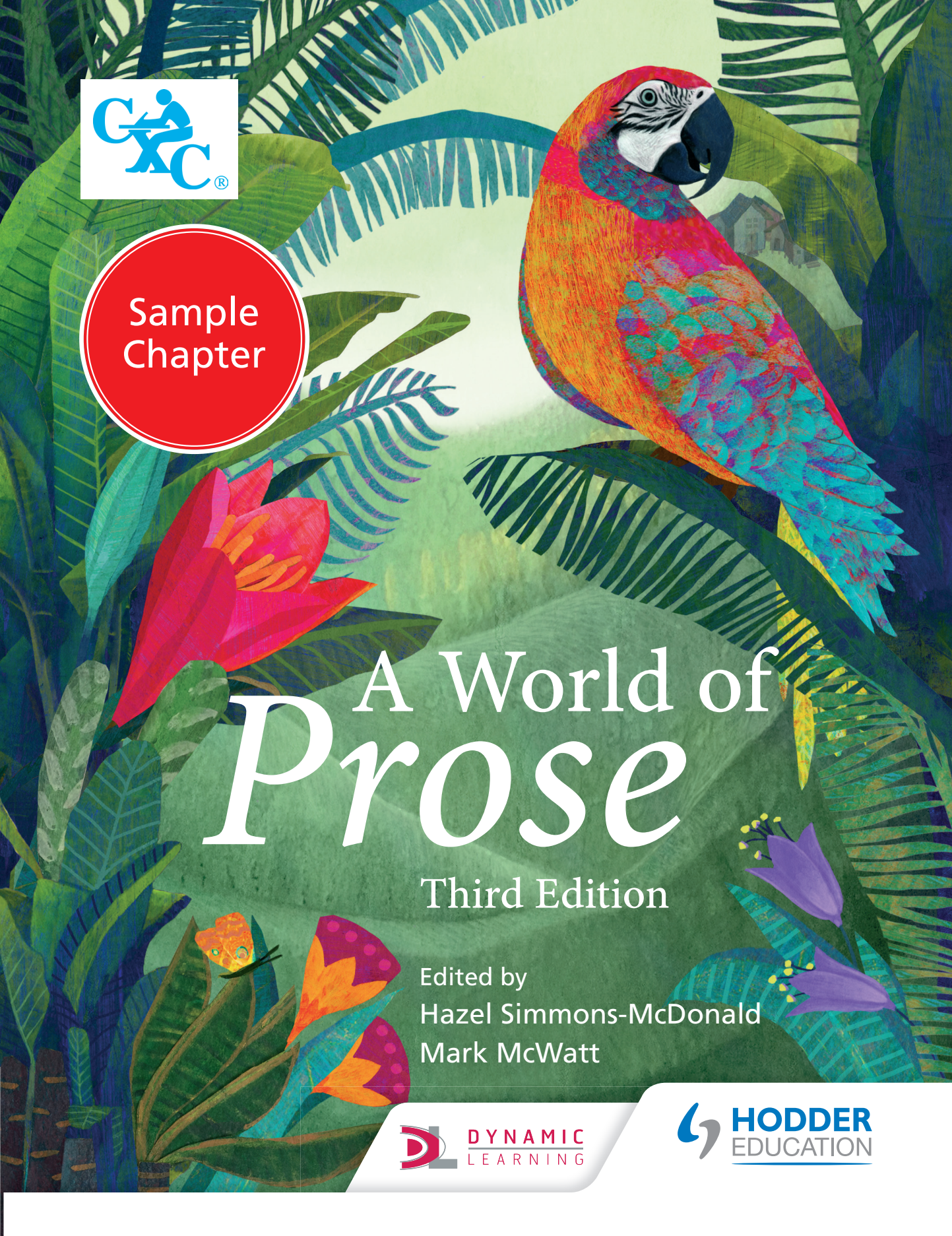
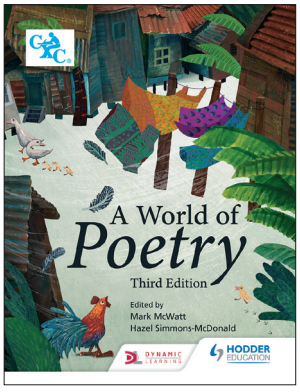

Sample Chapter
A World of
Prose
Third Edition
Edited by
Hazel Simmons-McDonald
Mark McWatt
DYNAMIC LEARNING
HODDER EDUCATION



9781510414327 A World of Prose £10.99 June 2017

Inspire students to enjoy literature while helping them to prepare effectively for the CSEC® examination; ensure coverage of all prescribed poems for the revised CSEC® English A and English B syllabuses with an anthology that has been compiled with the approval of the Caribbean Examinations Council by Editors who have served as CSEC® English panel members.

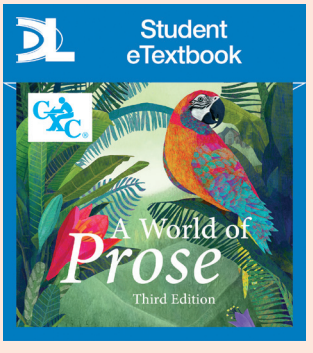
- Stimulate an interest in and enjoyment of literature with a wide range of themes and subjects, a balance of well-known texts from the past and more recent works, as well as stories from the Caribbean and the rest of the world.
- Support understanding with notes on each text and questions to provoke discussion, and a useful checklist to help with literary analysis.
- Consolidate learning with practical guidance on how to tackle examination questions including examples of model answers for reference.

A World of Prose is also available in Student eTextbook format via Dynamic Learning

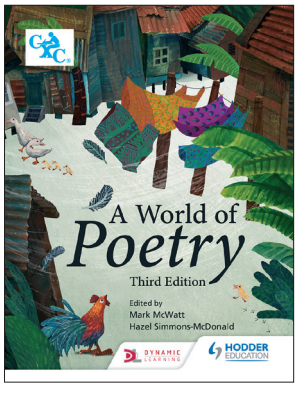
Student eTextbook 9781510411043
1 year: £7.33 2 years: £10.99 June 2017

Student eTextbooks are downloadable versions of the printed textbook that you can assign to students so they can:

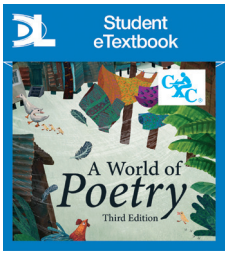
- Download and view on any device or browser
- Add, edit and synchronise notes across 2 devices
- Access their personal copy on the move via the Dynamic Reader App



Also available:



A World of Poetry
9781510414310
£10.99 June 2017



A World of Poetry
Student eTextbook
9781510411012
1 year: £7.33
2 years: £10.99 June 2017

To find out more and request a free, no obligation 30-day Dynamic Learning trials, visit **www.hoddereducation.co.uk/dynamiclearning**

A World of *Prose*

Third Edition

Edited by
Mark McWatt
Hazel Simmons-McDonald

HODDER EDUCATION
AN HACHETTE UK COMPANY

Contents

Preface to students		vii
Raymond's Run	*Toni Cade Bambara*	1
Blackout	*Roger Mais*	8
Shabine	*Hazel Simmons-McDonald*	12
Blood Brothers	*John Wickham*	16
Buried with Science	*John T. Gilmore*	20
Emma	*Carolyn Cole*	27
Two Boys Named Basil	*Mark McWatt*	38
Victory and the Blight	*Earl Lovelace*	53
Child of Darkening Humour	*Noel D. Williams*	61
The Man of the House	*Frank O'Connor*	71
The Day the World Almost Came to an End	*Pearl Crayton*	80
It's Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White	*Barbara Jenkins*	86
The Boy Who Loved Ice Cream	*Olive Senior*	93
Uncle Umberto's Slippers	*Mark McWatt*	105
The Creek	*Subraj Singh*	117
Georgia and Them There United States	*Velma Pollard*	122
Shoes for the Dead	*Kei Miller*	127
The Girl Who Can	*Ama Ata Aidoo*	133
The Pain Tree	*Olive Senior*	138
Mint Tea	*Christine Craig*	147
To Da-Duh, in Memoriam	*Paule Marshall*	156
Savi's Trial	*Hazel Simmons-McDonald*	166
Mom Luby and the Social Worker	*Kristin Hunter*	177
Berry	*Langston Hughes*	182
The Two Grandmothers	*Olive Senior*	189

What is a short story? 199
Notes and questions 206
Glossary of terms 218
Acknowledgements 222

The following icon is used in this book:

This indicates the page number of the notes and questions which accompany the story or vice versa.

Preface to students

Dear students,

In this third edition of *A World of Prose* we have increased the number of stories to 25 and we have replaced seven of the stories from the earlier edition. The selections we have added include some stories from recent publications by Caribbean authors. The stories in this anthology are all good examples of the short-story genre* and they reflect the cultural diversity of the countries from which the writers come. This contributes to the overall richness of the collection. Each story is well crafted, and the events are narrated with economy and subtlety of language. In many instances the main characters of the stories are young people who have arrived at an important moment of their lives. You will find that you can empathise and perhaps even identify with some of them.

As with the second edition, we have included a higher proportion of West Indian stories. Those we have chosen use a variety of styles and, in all cases, the subject matter is interesting and not difficult to understand. However, the material is challenging enough to generate serious discussion and it provides scope for the kinds of analysis that CXC requires you to do.

We have not organised the stories around a single unifying theme, and we have not imposed a rigid format on the sequencing of the stories. However, in our selection we have tried to indicate the range of tone and nuance that exemplifies a good narrative style. We hope that the information on each short story that is included at the back of the book will help you to become more familiar with the short-story form, and will be useful to you as you try to interpret and analyse the stories. The section 'What is a short story?' explores the different components or building blocks of this literary form, while the 'Glossary of terms' provides useful explanations of difficult words and phrases associated with it.

In addition, we have included brief notes and questions on each story. The notes provide you with biographical information about the authors. The questions are not exhaustive and do not cover all aspects of the stories that deserve comment and discussion. We have deliberately refrained from providing a long list of questions because we do not want to suggest that only the points we have raised are the ones worthy of discussion. Our questions focus on areas that will, through discussion with your teachers and classmates, help you to begin your exploration of the deeper levels of meaning in the stories. Once started on this process of discovery, you will, no doubt, have questions of your own that you will want to discuss.

* For definitions of words used in this anthology, see the 'Glossary of terms' on page 218.

We hope you will experience many hours of enjoyment from reading these stories we have chosen for you.

Hazel Simmons-McDonald and Mark McWatt

Buried with Science

John T. Gilmore

p.208

Wilbert Gittens could not take any more of the salt-fish and stodgy corn-meal coucou, thick as half-set concrete, but he tried not to show the disgust he felt. Nevertheless, Judith noticed the minute he put down his fork on the plate.

'You ain't like my food? What the hell give yuh de right not to like my food? Yuh don' pay nothing fuh it!'

'You know the boy ain't got no work, so how he is to pay?' his brother Alfred intervened. 'The times hard, Judith.'

'If he did want work, he could get work. He should go out an' look fuh some, 'stead o' stan'ing up in de yard de whole time lif'ing weights …'

At this point Wilbert decided, not for the first time, that attempts at tact were wasted on his sister-in-law, and got up from the table. As he went out the door, Judith's voice went up through being simply raised in anger to a scream: 'You t'ink yuh goin' be some big body-buil'ing champion, or what?'

Walking up the road, Wilbert reflected that it was not his fault that the firm for which he used to work had gone bankrupt, or that he had only had a job for five months in the two years since he had left school. Jobs were not like the recent rains, coming down from the sky bucket a drop. What he would like was a second-hand van, and a lawnmower and a few tools, and he could start up a little landscaping business. There would be plenty of work round all the Parks, and Heights, and Gardens, and Terraces, that were building these days. But right now he didn't even have the money to go into town and see what kind of action was showing at the cinema. Alfred was still paying off the bank for that shiny car he got, and couldn't afford to help him out, even if Judith would let him.

Sammy Pinder and his great-uncle Ernest Cadogan were sitting at the table when Wilbert came into the rum-shop. Ernest had worked on the nearest plantation all his life, and was not what you would call rich, but he had children overseas who would send him a money order from time to time and he was always prepared to buy a drink for the boys. As Wilbert sat down, he pushed an ice-cold bottle of stout over to him. 'Fire one wid muh.'

There was a crowd round the pool table at the other end of the shop, but it was still early and the news was just coming over the TV which was fixed above the bar.

'… and local archaeologists excavating the foundations of a prehistoric house today reported a sensational discovery. They found the skeleton of what is believed to be a young man who died some one thousand years ago. Buried with the skeleton were a number of items, including a small gold plaque bearing what may be the representation of a bat. This is the first piece of Amerindian gold to be discovered in the Eastern Caribbean, though one similar piece is known from Jamaica.'

'Topping our regional stories, Trinidad garment manufacturers today …'

'Dah is a bat?' was Sammy's incredulous comment on the picture which briefly appeared on the screen.

'Dey don' mean a cricket bat, yuh molly-booby,' said Wilbert.

'I ain't such a idiot, Wilbert. I know is suppose to be a leather-bat, but it still don' look like needer one to me.'

'But why dey must go an' dig up a dead just to get a little piece o' gold,' said Ernest, adding some more rum to his rum and coke, 'dah is wha' I don' un'erstand.'

'You mean yuh frighten fuh duppies, Uncle Ernest?' giggled Sammy.

'I ain't frighten fuh nothin' in this world, but I know if yuh don' trouble trouble, trouble don' trouble you, an' I know better dan to laugh at what I don' un'erstand.'

'So Ernest, yuh mean if dere was a whole heap o' gold, or money, or something so in a ol' grave, you would just lef' it there?' asked Wilbert.

'If? If?' The old man sucked his teeth as if it was the stupidest question he had heard in his life. 'Yuh know de wall-in place dey got in a cane-piece 'bout half a mile from here wid de t'ree tombs in it?' Wilbert and Sammy nodded. 'Well, when I did a small boy, my fader help to carry ol' Massa Duke in he lead coffin an' put he in one o' dem. "I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers," he said, like Jacob in God's Holy Book. He was de las' o' he fambly tuh own de plantation. Dem tombs full up wid de ol'-time white people an' don' let nuhbody fool you is only ol' nigger believe in obeah, 'cause dey got plenty white people believe in it too, an' all o' dem up dere is buried wid science. De reason de Dukes don' have de plantation nuh more is because ol' Massa Duke granfader fader so blasted greedy he tek most o' de fambly money when he gone. It say plain as anyt'ing, write up 'pon top de tomb, dat he buried wid all his particulars.' Ernest

It's Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White

Barbara Jenkins

p.211

When I was eleven, my family split up. I didn't know then and I don't know now what caused this to happen. All I know is that one day my mother said that we were going to stay with some other people. It was right after I had taken the Exhibition exam for a high school place; the school holiday was about to begin and I remember my confusion as we children always spent the six weeks of holidays with our grandmother, at my mother's childhood home in Belmont Valley.

Maybe our father had decided he wouldn't continue to pay rent for our three rooms in the house in Boissiere Village. He didn't live with us, he visited in erratic pouncings. When his car slid silently to a halt at the house, the message, *Yuh fadda reach*, ran through the neighbourhood and, wherever we were, we scampered home. He sat on the bed, pointing to his left cheek for us to kiss and I wished for sudden death rather than enter his aura of smoke, staleness and rum. My mother made him coffee. One of us carried it to him. He drank it and left. Without his support, perhaps my mother saw the scattering of her brood as her only option when she no longer had a home in which we could all live together.

When she told me we would be going somewhere else, I got a cold, hard clenching feeling in my belly, but I didn't have the words to tell her that. As she was leaving, she stood facing me, held my shoulders and said, 'Be a good girl,' as she did whenever she left me anywhere, but that time my mother didn't look into my eyes; she looked down at the floor. I saw her cheeks were smeared and wet; I was puzzled. I touched her face; the powder she rarely wore came off on my palm. She was dressed as if for a special occasion, a christening or a funeral, and, as she turned away, I caught hold of the skirt of her smoke-grey shantung dress with the tiny pearl buttons like a row of boiled fishes' eyes. My hand left a dull orange smear of Max Factor Suntan. I saw the stain I had made and I felt glad.

None of us was left with family. I was to go to a neighbour; one sister was sent to San Fernando to stay with friends of my mother's – people we children didn't know; where the other went I don't remember, but I do know that our mother took only my one-year-old brother with her, and we didn't know where. I think that she must have been planning this for a while; the far-flung arrangements would have been difficult to negotiate quickly without telephone, and the timing was too convenient to be coincidence.

My new home was a shop. Over the street door was a sign, white lettering on black, 'Marie Tai Shue, licensed to sell spirituous liquors'. I knew the shop well, since, as the eldest, I was the one sent to make message. We children on the making message mission scrambled up with dusty bare feet to sit on the huge hundredweight crocus bags of dry goods stacked against the interior walls of the shop until Auntie Marie called out, 'What you come for?' Nobody but the bees cared that we were sitting on foodstuffs – rice, sugar, dried beans, and the bees only bothered if you sat on a sugar bag without noticing their plump golden-brown stripes camouflaged against the brown string of the sacks, heads burrowed into the tight weave.

Early morning, my mother sent me for four hops bread and two ounces of cheese or salami; mid-morning, half-pound rice, quarter-pound dried beans, quarter-pound pig tail, salt beef or salt fish; more hops bread and two ounces of fresh butter mid-afternoon. I had no money for my shopping; we took goods 'on trust' all week. The items were handed over, the amount owed was noted in Chinese script on a small square of brown paper selected from a creased and curling pack threaded through a long hooked wire suspended from a nail driven into the back wall. I would peer over the counter to watch Auntie go to the dark recesses of the shop, hear the thunk of the chopper as it cleaved through the salted meat into the chopping block, then remember to call, 'Mammie say cut from the middle,' or 'Mammie say not too much bone.' On Saturdays, my mother went herself for the week's supplies: Nestlé's condensed milk, Fry's cocoa powder, bars of yellow Sunlight soap for washing clothes and a single-cup sachet of Nestlé instant coffee, just in case. She'd bring a rum bottle for cooking oil and a can for pitch-oil for the stove. What she was able to take away depended on Auntie's goodwill and on how much of that week's accumulated 'on trust' total she could wipe off.

In my new life I was on the other side of the shop counter with a new family. The six children ranged in age from fifteen to nine. I moved in with a cardboard box and a folding canvas camp-bed which the boys set up in the girls' room, between Suelin's bed and Meilin's and Kanlin's double-decker. One of the boys hammered two new nails behind the bedroom door where my clothes would hang alongside the girls': a Sunday dress, two outgrown school overalls as day clothes and another for the night. That first night, I closed my eyes and saw pictures running behind my eyelids. I saw my cousins at my grandmother's climbing trees, picking and eating chenette, mango, pommerac, playing in the rain and the river. Without me. I saw Miriam, chief rival as my grandmother's favourite, brushing Granny's long silver hair until she fell asleep at siesta-time. Perhaps, with me not there, Uncle Francois was choosing Jeannie to help him pack the panniers of gladioli and dahlias to take to the flower shop. I felt red heat rise and fill my head at my mother for cheating me of what was mine by right. Then I remembered her face

Savi's Trial

Hazel Simmons-McDonald

p.215

I

'I'm Savitree. Please have a seat. How can I help?'

'How can I help you?' I repeated louder because he was standing there staring at me as though he was in some sort of trance. Mr Blenman, a senior partner in the firm, had insisted that I see this Mr Gervais Singh, even though I had reminded him that I would be away on holiday and did not want to take on any new assignments. I had been clearing my desk and looking forward to starting my holiday the following day. I held out my hand.

'Oh, sorry,' Mr Singh said. He shook my hand hastily and lowered himself to the edge of the chair, leaning forward and plunking his elbows on my desk, seeming unable to shift his gaze from my face. 'Sorry, I didn't mean to stare.'

'That's OK.' He seemed agitated and I tried to put him at ease. 'What can I do for you?'

'I don't know how to begin but I need some legal advice.' He shook his head as though trying to deny something or get rid of a memory. 'This has been a horrible day. I got a call from the hospital to say that my mother had been admitted. When I got there she was in the Intensive Care Unit with a tube coming out of her mouth and an intravenous hook up. The doctor said she had ingested something that made her violently ill. My father had called the paramedics because she had been vomiting blood. I thought this was related to her cancer but the doctor said he thought she had ingested poison. They will let us know tomorrow whether they have to do surgery because of possible damage to her stomach.'

'This must be distressing for you and your father; but how can I help?'

'I'm worried. He couldn't stop crying and kept saying "It's my fault, it's my fault" over and over. The paramedics said his behaviour was unusual and they mentioned having to report it. If they do, I expect the police may want to question my father at some point. Earlier this year, my mother was diagnosed with cancer and she has refused conventional treatment. She has been taking

some herbal concoctions but they have never made her ill. She's lost a lot of weight and she told us to let her be. She said if this is how she is meant to die that's how she'll die. It's been tough watching her get weaker but she's strong minded.'

I wasn't sure why he thought it necessary to give me all these details.

'So what's the problem with your father?' I probably sounded a bit irritated because he glanced at me and quickly looked away.

'We thought that perhaps a certain combination of the herbs might have caused the problem or that my mother used too much of one thing or combined some in error. But the doctors ruled that out. They said they found a trace of poison in the tests they ran and that may be responsible.' He shook his head again. 'She's in a bad way but I'm hoping she'll pull through.'

'So, the herbs were tainted with poison … by mistake?'

'No. My father told me that he and my mother had discussed her situation and she told him she didn't want to get to a stage where she was totally useless in a bed, wasting away. He said they agreed that he would help her to take something that would let her go quickly and painlessly. She's suffered a lot from the cancer already – it was at an advanced stage when she was diagnosed.' He paused and glanced at me again then he continued when I was silent. 'At first he said he wasn't sure what happened. Then he said he had slipped a couple drops of something into her tea to ease her pain, but she had just a sip before she started to be sick. The cup was still full almost to the brim when I checked at home before coming here. Perhaps she got ill from an accumulation of other things she's been eating – the bitter cassava or the brown rice?' He was talking softly, to himself. He looked up at me and said. 'I don't know.' He pressed his knuckles into his eyes, sighed then went on. 'He said he told the paramedics he put something in her tea and I guess that raised a red flag. I'm worried, that's why I've come.' His voice cracked. 'You know what will happen if my mother dies.'

'Yes, that's tough.'

'My father loves my mother. He could only have done something if she wanted him to do it and if he thought it would help. I'm not even sure that he put anything in the tea apart from the saccharine drops she uses or if he put in anything at all. Maybe he just said that.'

'Could be. But you don't know what happened, so if I were you I wouldn't jump to the conclusion that he and your mother had tried euthanasia. I know it's an offence here, but there's nothing concrete to suggest …'

Berry

Langston Hughes

p.216

When the boy arrived on the four o'clock train, lo and behold, he turned out to be coloured! Mrs Osborn saw him the minute he got out of the station wagon, but certainly there was nothing to be done about it that night – with no trains back to the city before morning – so she set him to washing dishes. Lord knows there were a plenty. The Scandinavian kitchen boy had left right after breakfast, giving no notice, leaving her and the cook to do everything. Her wire to the employment office in Jersey City brought results – but dark ones. The card said his name was Milberry Jones.

Well, where was he to sleep? Heretofore, the kitchen boy and the handy-man gardener-chauffeur shared the same quarters. But Mrs Osborn had no idea how the handy-man might like Negroes. Help were so touchy, and it was hard keeping good servants in the country. So right after dinner, leaving Milberry with his arms in the dish water, Mrs Osborn made a bee line across the side lawn for Dr Renfield's cottage.

She heard the kids laughing and playing on the big screened-in front porch of the sanatorium. She heard one of the nurses say to a child, 'Behave, Billy!' as she went across the yard under the pine and maple trees. Mrs Osborn hoped Dr Renfield would be on his porch. She hated to knock at the door and perhaps be faced with his wife. The gossip among the nurses and help at Dr Renfield's Summer Home for Crippled Children had it that Mrs Osborn was in love with Dr Renfield, that she just worshipped him, that she followed him with her eyes every chance she got – and not only with her eyes.

Of course, there wasn't a word of truth in it, Mrs Osborn said to herself, admitting at the same time that that Martha Renfield, his wife, was certainly not good enough for the Doctor. Anyway tonight, she was not bound on any frivolous errand toward the Doctor's cottage. She had to see him about this Negro in their midst. At least, they'd have to keep him there overnight, or until they got somebody else to help in the kitchen. However, he looked like a decent boy.

Dr Renfield was not at home. His wife came to the door, spoke most coldly, and said that she presumed, as usual, the Doctor would make his rounds of the Home at eight. She hoped Mrs Osborn could wait until then to see him.

'Good evening!'

Mrs Osborn went back across the dusk-dark yard. She heard the surf rushing at the beach below, and saw the new young moon rising. She thought maybe the Doctor was walking along the sea in the twilight alone. Ah, Dr Renfield, Dr Ren …

When he made the usual rounds at eight he came, for a moment, by Mrs Osborn's little office where the housekeeper held forth over her linens and her accounts. He turned his young but bearded face toward Mrs Osborn, cast his great dark eyes upon her, and said, 'I hear you've asked to see me?'

'Yes, indeed, Dr Renfield,' Mrs Osborn bubbled and gurgled. 'We have a problem on our hands. You know the kitchen man left this morning so I sent a wire to the High Class Help Agency in the city for somebody right away by the four o'clock train – and they sent us a Negro! He seems to be a nice boy, and all that, but I just don't know how he would fit in our Home. Now what do you think?'

The Doctor looked at her with great seriousness. He thought. Then he answered with a question, 'Do the other servants mind?'

'Well, I can't say they do. They got along all right tonight during dinner. But the problem is, where would he sleep?'

'Oh, yes,' said Dr Renfield, pursing his lips.

And whether we should plan to keep him all summer, or just till we get someone else?'

'I see,' said Dr Renfield.

And again he thought. 'You say he can do the work? … How about the attic in this building? It's not in use … And by the way, how much did we pay the other fellow?'

'Ten dollars a week,' said Mrs Osborn raising her eyes.

'Well, pay the darkie eight,' said Dr Renfield, 'and keep him.' And for a moment he gazed deep into Mrs Osborn's eyes. 'Goodnight.' Then turned and left her. Left her. Left her.

So it was that Milberry entered into service at Dr Renfield's Summer Home for Crippled Children.

The Two Grandmothers

Olive Senior

p.217

I

Mummy, you know what? Grandma Del has baby chickens. Yellow and white ones. She made me hold them. And I help her gather eggs but I don't like to go out the back alone because the turkey gobbler goes gobble! gobble! gobble! after my legs, he scares me, and Mr SonSon next door has baby pigs. I don't like the mother pig though. Grandma lives in this pretty little house with white lace curtains at all the windows, Mummy you must come with me and Daddy next time, and you can peek through the louvres Grandma calls them jalousies isn't that funny and you can see the people passing by. But they can't see you. Mummy why can't we have lace curtains like Grandma Del so we can peek through nobody ever goes by our house except the gardeners and the maids and people begging and Rastas selling brooms? Many many people go by Grandma Del's house they all call out to her and Grandma Del knows everyone. My special friend is Miss Princess the postmistress who plays the organ in church she wears tight shiny dresses and her hair piled *so* on her head and she walks *very slow* and everybody says she is sweet on Mister Blake who is the new teacher and he takes the service in church when Parson doesn't come and then Miss Princess gets so nervous she mixes up all the hymns. Mister Mack came to fix Grandma's roof and Grandma said 'poorman poorman' all the time. Mister Mack's daughters Eulalie and Ermandine are big girls at high school in town though Eulalie fell and they don't know what is to be done. Mummy, why are they so worried that Eulalie fell? She didn't break her leg or anything for she is walking up and down past the house all day long and looks perfectly fine to me.

Mummy, I really like Grandma Del's house it's nice and cosy and dark and cool inside with these lovely big picture frames of her family and Daddy as a baby and Daddy as a little boy and Daddy on the high school football team, they won Manning Cup that year Grandma says, did you know that Mummy? and Daddy at university and a wedding picture of Daddy and you and me as a baby and all the pictures you send Grandma every year but those are the small pictures on the side table with the lovely white lace tablecloth. In the picture frame on the wall there is Great-grandpapa Del with a long beard and whiskers, he is sitting down in a chair and Great-grandmama is standing behind him, and then there is a picture of Grandma herself as a young lady with her hair piled high like Miss Princess and her legs crossed at the ankles she looks so lovely. But you

know what, Mummy, I didn't see a picture of Daddy's father and when I asked Grandma she got mad and shooed me away. She got even madder when I asked her to show me her wedding picture. I only wanted to see it.

Mummy, do you know that Grandma sends me to Sunday School? We stay over for big church and I walk home with her and all the people, it's so nice. Only Parson comes to church in a car. Mummy did you go to Sunday School? I go with Joycie a big girl next door and Grandma made me three dresses to wear. She says she cannot imagine how a girl-child (that's me) can leave home with nothing but blue jeans and T-shirts and shorts and not a single church dress. She has this funny sewing machine, not like Aunt Thelma's, she has to use her feet to make it go just like the organ in church Miss Princess pumps away with her feet to make it give out this lovely sound and works so hard you should see her and the first time I went to Grandma's church I was so scared of the bats! The church is full of bats but usually they stay high up in the roof. But as soon as the organ starts playing on Sunday the bats start swooping lower and lower and one swooped so low I nearly died of fright and clutched Grandma Del so tight my hat flew off.

Did I tell you Grandma made me a hat to wear to church with her own two hands? She pulled apart one of her old straw hats, leghorn she said, and made me a little hat that fits just so on my head with a bunch of tiny pink flowers. Grandma didn't send it with me though, or my Sunday dresses, she says she will keep them till I return for she knows that I am growing heathenish in town. When Grandma dresses me up for church I feel so beautiful in my dresses she made with lace and bows and little tucks so beautiful and my hat, I feel so special that my own Grandma made these for me with her own two hands and didn't buy them in a store. Grandma loves to comb my hair she says it's so long and thick and she rubs it with castor oil every night. I hate the smell of castor oil but she says it's the best thing for hair and after a time I even like the smell. Grandma Del says my skin is beautiful like honey and all in all I am a fine brown lady and must make sure to grow as beautiful inside as I am outside but Mummy, how do I go about doing that?

Nights at Grandma's are very funny. Mummy can you imagine there's no TV? And it's very, very dark. No street lights or any lights. We go to bed early and every night Grandma lights the oil lamps and then we blow them out when we are going to bed, you have to take a deep breath, and every morning Grandma checks the oil in the lamps and checks the shades. They have 'Home Sweet Home' written around them. So beautiful. She cleans the shades with newspapers.
She says when I come next year I'll be old enough to clean them all by myself. Grandma knows such lovely stories; she tells me stories every night not stories from a book you know, Mummy, the way you read to me, but stories straight

from her head. Really! I am going to learn stories from Grandma so when I am a grown lady I will remember all these stories to tell my children. Mummy, do you think I will?

II

Mummy, you know Grandma Elaine is so funny she says I'm not to call her Grandma any more, I'm to call her Towser like everybody else for I'm growing so fast nobody would believe that she could have such a big young lady for a granddaughter. I think it's funny I'm practising calling her Towser though she is still my grandmother. I said to her, 'Grandmother, I mean Towser, Grandma Del introduces me to everyone as her granddaughter she calls me her "little gran".' And Grandma Elaine says, 'Darling, the way your Grandmother Del looks and conducts herself she couldn't be anything but a grandmother and honey she and I are of entirely different generations.'

Grandma Elaine says such funny things sometimes. Like she was dressing to go out last night and she was putting on make up and I said 'Grandma' (she was still Grandma then) I said, 'Grandma, you shouldn't paint your face like that you know, it is written in the Bible that it's a sin. Grandma Del says so and I will never paint my face.' And she said, 'Darling, with all due respect to your paternal grandmother, she's a lovely lady or was when I met her the one and only time at the wedding, and she has done one absolutely fantastic thing in her life which is to produce one son your esteemed father, one hunk of a guy, but honey, other than that your Grandmother Del is a country bumpkin of the deepest waters and don't quote her goddam sayings to me.' Mummy, you know Grandma Elaine *swears* like that all the time? I said, 'Grandma you mustn't swear and take the name of the Lord in vain.' And she said, 'Honeychile with all due respect to the grey hairs of your old grandmother and the first class brainwashing your daddy is allowing her to give you, I wish my granddaughter would get off my back and leave me to go to Hell in peace.' Can you imagine she said that?

She's really mad that you allow me to spend time with Grandma Del. She says, 'Honey, I really don't know what your mother thinks she is doing making you spend so much time down there in the deepest darkest country. I really must take you in hand. It's embarrassing to hear some of the things you come out with sometimes. Your mother would be better advised to send you to Charm School next summer you are never too young to start. Melody-Ann next door went last year and it's done wonders for her, turned her from a tomboy into a real little lady.' (Though, Mummy, I really can't stand Melody-Ann any more, you know.) 'And your mother had better start to do something about your hair from now it's almost as tough as your father's and I warned your mother about it from the very

What is a short story?

The term 'short story' is used to describe a literary form that is a short prose narrative or short prose fiction. It is different from an anecdote, which usually narrates a single incident in a simple, unelaborated way. It is also different from a novel in that it is much shorter and more concentrated. However, we use some common terms to talk about both a novel and a short story. Like a novel, a short story has:

- a plot, which is the pattern that the writer uses to organise the events or action of the story, and which has a beginning, a middle and an end; the plot may be humorous (comic) or sad (tragic), or it may be romantic or satirical (it may combine all of these)
- characters, or people who take part in the action
- a setting, or the place and the time that the action happens
- a point of view, or the perspective from which the author narrates the events and describes the characters
- style, which is the way the author uses language to shape the story
- a theme, which is the unifying idea that holds the story together; we can think of the theme as the author's personal vision, expressed through the use of the elements of fiction (i.e. plot, character, setting, point of view and style).

A good short story, whether it is written in the mode of realism, fantasy or naturalism (see 'Glossary of terms') appeals to the readers not only because it uses the elements of fiction to create a unified narrative, but also because it touches us emotionally and intellectually. A good short story sparks our imagination and presents us with a condensed vision of life that engages our thoughts and feelings.

What should we look for in reading a short story?

Above everything else, we should read stories for the pleasure they can provide. The way in which we approach and respond to a story will determine how much we get out of it. When we become involved in reading to the extent that we begin to relate what the author has to say to our own experience, the story becomes more meaningful to us.

So, is there a best way to study a short story? Perhaps not. Each individual has his or her own way of getting at the underlying meaning of a text. However, when we first read a story we want to enjoy it simply by seeing how the events unfold. We want to allow ourselves to feel and to be drawn into the magic that the author weaves for us. Perhaps the best way to do this is to read in a comfortable and relaxed way, and to give the story our

Notes and questions

p.1

Raymond's Run

Toni Cade Bambara was born in 1939 in New York. She is an African-American novelist and short-story writer of what she calls 'straight-up fiction', which seems to mean fiction that does not owe anything to autobiographical or biographical facts, or to incidents that actually occurred (to the best of her knowledge). She uses this phrase at the end of her preface to *Gorilla, My Love* (1972). In the preface she asserts that she does not write 'autobiographical fiction' or fiction that uses 'bits and snatches of real events and real people'. In *Gorilla, My Love* Bambara displays a highly sensitive ear for the rhythms and nuances of black speech.

- What is it about the narrator's language that makes her come alive in our imagination?
- How much does she reveal of her own personality, even as she sketches other people for us?
- How does the story's resolution suggest the idea of growth?

p.8

Blackout

Roger Mais (1905–1955) is best known for his novels *The Hills Were Joyful Together*, *Brother Man* and *Black Lightning*, in which he compellingly depicts the lives and problems of working-class Jamaicans in urban and rural settings. His short stories often venture beyond these experiences into the existence of characters who have to deal with issues other than those of survival, but no less urgent.

This story narrates a brief encounter between two people from diametrically opposed worlds, a moment when each has to acknowledge and communicate with the other against the background of a blackout made necessary by a distant world war that would change their lives and the worlds they came from. Their conversation represents a small area of light in the darkness that normally prevents a white American woman and a black Jamaican man from really seeing each other. Yet the story insists on the irony that is implicit in the idea that these two are just a man and a woman, especially since this is happening on a West Indian island that is still a colony.

- What effect does Mais achieve by giving us access to the woman's consciousness, but not the man's?
- How does the story ensure that our sense of the man changes over the course of the encounter?

- The twins are 13 years old. Is their age at all significant in the resolution of the story?

p.20

Buried with Science

John T. Gilmore is a Barbadian academic and writer who is currently a professor of Caribbean Studies at the University of Warwick in the UK, having earlier lectured at the Cave Hill campus of the University of the West Indies. He has always been deeply interested in the history, heritage and lore of his native Barbados. *Buried with Science* is the title story of Gilmore's collection of short fiction in which he celebrates this history and lore.

- How do you respond to the rum-shop conversation that leads to Wilbert's conviction that there was treasure to be found in the old tomb?
- What is it that leads the young men to attempt a second raid on the tomb, although they found no treasure the first time?
- What do they find when they open the small coffin? Explain how it would have got there and why.
- What treasure do the boys get at the end of the story?

p.27

Emma

Carolyn Cole is a playwright who resides in New York City, USA. In this story she presents the complexity of adult relationships through the perspective of an innocent child who, like her friend and playmate, is fascinated by the adult world. Their pretend play is patterned on the actions and behaviour of the adults, especially that of Emma, the narrator's mother.

- The events of the story are filtered through the consciousness of the child narrator. What effects does the author achieve by using this technique?
- Discuss how the author's choice of point of view contributes to the creation of empathy in the story.
- From the children's perspective everything is a game. Discuss the author's use of this motif in the story.
- Contrast the characters of Mrs Robinson and Emma.
- Would you consider Emma to be a tragic figure? Why or why not?

p.38

Two Boys Named Basil

This story by Mark McWatt is part of a collection entitled *Suspended Sentences: Fictions of Atonement* in which the author uses as a framing device the concept of a group of students having to write stories for a collection as a penalty for

Glossary of terms

action Events that take place in the story or that make up the plot. This includes the things that the characters do, and also the things that are done to them. Although there may be other minor plots (or subplots) in a story there is usually only one central action.

anecdote A short, simple, sometimes humorous narration of an incident. Some stories use one or more anecdotes to develop character or to advance the plot.

antagonist The opposite of protagonist (the hero/heroine). The antagonist is usually a character who opposes the protagonist. The conflict between the protagonist and antagonist forms the basis of the plot or the action of the story.

anticlimax A resolution of the plot that is disappointing and unexpected. It can happen where we expect the climax to happen, or sometimes after the climax. An anticlimax is usually considered to reflect weak writing, but sometimes an author may use it deliberately to underscore a particular view of life, for example, as futile or boring.

atmosphere The mood that the author creates through the use of language to describe the setting. Usually the atmosphere leads the reader to develop expectations about the course of events in the story. It is important in establishing the tone of the story.

character Any person who takes part in a story (see pages 201–2).

climax The high point, or the turning point in a story. Usually the part of the story in which the most important event takes place. After the climax the plot is usually resolved. The events leading up to the climax are referred to as the *rising action,* those after the climax are referred to as the *falling action* and lead the reader to the eventual resolution or outcome of the plot.

complication The development of conflict either between characters or between a character and his or her situation. The plot advances through the complication. The reader expects that the conflict that has been introduced will lead to a climax and eventual resolution. Suspense is built up through the complication.

conflict The opposition that the main character or protagonist faces from another character (in this case the antagonist), from the events that take place, from the situations in the story or from the protagonist's own personality or temperament.

crisis The turning point in the story; that is, the climax.

denouement Borrowed from French and translated literally means 'the untying of a knot'. It refers to the conclusion of the plot in which the author presents the resolution or the outcome of the story.

dialogue The words spoken by the characters in the story or their conversations with each other make up the dialogue of a story. Dialogue serves several purposes in a narrative. It can advance the plot to its climax and eventual resolution. It can also reveal the personalities of the characters, thereby helping the reader to form impressions of them.

diction The author's choice and arrangement of words in the narrative. This is an important aspect of style and will determine the effect that the story has on the reader.

didactic When a story or some other literary work is used to teach a lesson or present a moral, it is referred to as being didactic.

distance Used to indicate how far the author or narrator is removed from the events, actions and characters in a narrative. If a narrator is aloof from the events that are presented, he or she is distant.

dramatic irony A situation in a narrative or other literary work in which the author and the reader or audience share knowledge of which a character is unaware.

episode A specific and brief incident that is narrated in its entirety and at once. A story may contain one episode. A story may also contain a series of episodes that are held together by a common setting and character (or characters), and that develop towards one climax and resolution. This kind of story is usually referred to as episodic.

exposition When authors present background information that the reader needs to know in order to follow the events that take place in a story. Sometimes the background information is concerned with events that happened prior to the ongoing ones in the story.

falling action The events that take place after the climax and in which we see the resolution of the plot.

fantasy A kind of narrative in which the events that are presented could not have happened in real life.

fiction A story in which an author narrates events purely from his or her imagination. The plot, action and characters are all invented by the author. Fiction is the opposite of fact.

figurative language An author's use of words or a group of words in a non-factual or non-literal way to describe events, scenes and characters vividly and to convey the main sensations that the thing described evokes. *Metaphors* and *similes* are figures of speech or examples of figurative language.

first-person narration The telling of a story from the point of view of a person directly involved in the action. The narrator is a character and uses 'I' and 'we'. The reader views the events, action and other characters through the narrator's perspective (see page 203).

A World of Prose includes all the prescribed texts for the revised CSEC® English A and English B syllabuses. It has been compiled with the approval of the Caribbean Examinations Council by Editors who have served as CSEC® English panel members.

These sample pages have been taken from **A World of Prose, ISBN 9781510414327.**

- The material in this anthology will help students to prepare effectively for the CSEC® examination.
- The texts have been chosen to cover a wide range of themes and subjects and include a balance of well-known texts from the past as well as more recent works.
- The anthology includes texts from the Caribbean and the rest of the world to stimulate an interest in and enjoyment of reading and literature.
- This collection contains notes on each text and questions to provoke discussion, as well as a useful guide to help students with literary analysis.

HODDER EDUCATION
www.hoddereducation.com