



Qurratulain Hyder

Beyond the Fog

Link to the text: <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/beyond-the-fog>

Author Biography:

Qurratulain Hyder was one of the most outstanding and influential literary names in Urdu literature. She is best known for her magnum opus, *Aag Ka Darya* (River of Fire), a novel first published in Urdu in 1959, from Lahore, Pakistan, that stretches from the 4th century BC to post partition of India. Widely regarded as the "Grande Dame" of Urdu literature, Hyder moved to Pakistan in 1947, then lived in England for some time before finally returning to India in 1960. She worked as a journalist to earn her living and kept publishing short stories, literary translations and novels regularly.

Questions:

- What did you find interesting about the story?
- Which major issues did the story raise?
- How would you describe the main character's relationship with Miss Richmond?
- What types of words and phrases does the translator choose to keep in the original language? Why do you think the author does this?
- What is the function of the characters' names throughout the story?
- How is the passage of time related by the narrator?

Discuss the following excerpt:

A sudden wave of compassion and love washed over Catherine and she was overwhelmed by an instinctive desire to rush out and hug her half-mad, eccentric father, her suffering mother, and her dear uncle, to give up this palace, this aristocratic Brahmin family and her well-heeled husband, and leave with these loving, penniless, naïve, and crazy people, because her real home was where they lived, because ultimately the world is filled with Holiday Inns and plastic cups, three-storied Heinz-style houses with red sloping roofs, and nowhere had she found her place, her home. Was she really Akhand Sobhagyawati Rajyalakshmi Shailaja Deviji? Inside her skin she was just plain Catherine Bolton, and the conflict between Colonel Bolton and Corporal Bolton that had always left her exhausted and worn out was finally over. She would go outside and announce: Daddy, Mummy, here, I'm back. I'm coming with you.

- In what ways can we understand the main character's mental state at this moment?
 - How would you describe her decisions making process in this moment compared to other moments related in the story?
- How does the story complicate our understanding of the concept of home?