



# Students' Literary Supplement

MAY 2010



*Eliza Doolittle goes to Mr. Higgins*

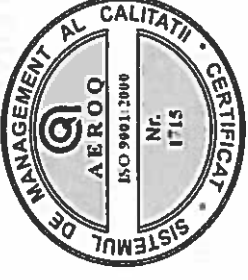
A scene from G. B. Shaw's *Pygmalion*, acted by 3rd year students: Alexandra Ilie, Cristian Bârgăoanu, Lucian Lăcătușu (*Celebrating Anglophone Cultures, "Vasile Alecsandri" University, the English Department, Bacău, 23th – 24th April 2010*).



UNIVERSITATEA „VASILE  
ALECSANDRI” DIN BACĂU



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# STUDENTS' LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Hi there! You are of course wondering where I have come from and what I am doing here with my transparent wings and my long cap and my smile. Methinks I should introduce myself to you right away, but it occurred to me that letting you guess my name would be by far a much more interesting game. What you need to know about me is not much. First, my Father is an unavoidable acquaintance to all those studying English literature. (If you take a look at page 12 you will see that He is quite famous among you, too). Secondly, I am the sprite of joy and art and a master of beautiful visions. You know me, even if you think you don't, you heard me singing in my Father's texts or in your most enchanting dreams. Here is my song, which I once sang to a sad prince, only now it is somewhat adapted to your 21st century eyes:



Full fathom five your dreams may lie  
Yet of your thoughts are corals made,  
And those are pearls that were your sighs.  
No worthy thing in you doth fade  
But that doth suffer a writing change  
Into something rich and strange.

I will correct, modify, transform, improve, comment, praise, suggest and follow you! So follow me! And if you don't like me as I am, draw me in a different form next year! Look for the letters of my name in the following pages!

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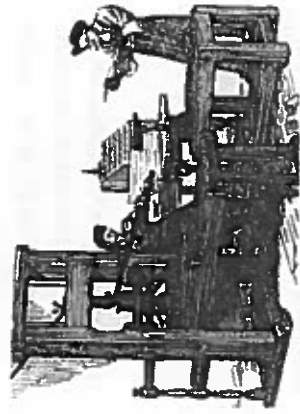
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This is an annual supplement to  
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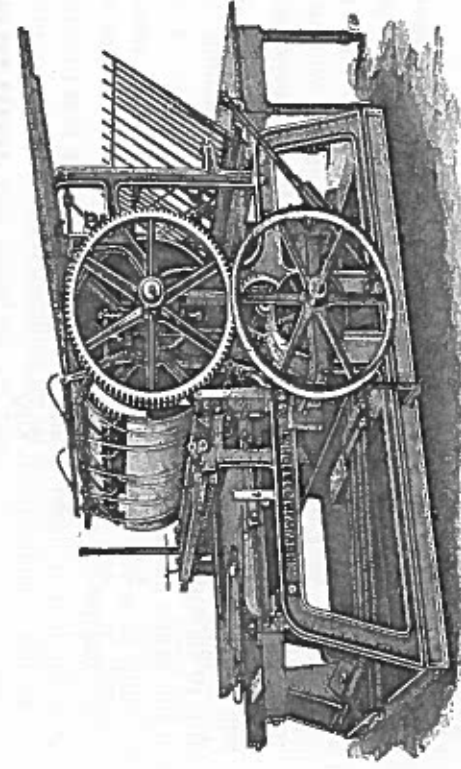


Some say the author has been dead for some time, others proclaim the death of literature altogether. Now this is not acceptable for students of literature like us, since we know only too well how full of life literature was, is and will be. It is a life of a different nature, a life that can only be experienced when we forget about ourselves as we are reading. Or shall we say that we find our true selves in the reading experience?

We really hope that you will both lose and find yourselves in this literary supplement, which is intended to identify, improve, strengthen, cherish, stimulate, praise, and make known all possible forms of literary creativity in which you may take a writing (or drawing/painting) interest. We will not be alone in our enterprise, because a very playful sprite offered to whisper or sing to us whenever we may get lost in storms of words *that lie like truth*. We strongly believe that there are so many of you who cannot help dreaming the strange dream of dreams in which language says so much more than it seems. Therefore consider these lines an invitation to participate in this adventure of the spirit that will never be a waste of *shame*, but a globed moment in which time has been conquered.

*Let us go then...*

The editors





**Professor Antoine Ertlé**

teaches English language and literature at "Michel de Montaigne" University of Bordeaux, France.

**"I regard the University as a haven where human relations ought to be what they too often are not in the outside world, a blend of tolerance, generosity, warmth"**

Dear Professor Antoine Ertlé, we know you have been to Bacău before, and that you have been involved in many academic activities that were the result of the Erasmus partnership between our faculty and your department at "Michel de Montaigne" University in Bordeaux, France. Please, name one thing that you like and another that you don't like about Romania and Romanians in general.

It is difficult to name just one thing that I like about Romania, as I felt an immediate connection with the country and the people from the moment I first set foot in Bucharest airport! But it obviously has to be the people themselves, and the unique quality of the welcome they offered me. As to the things I don't like about Romania, one of them is connected to driving, in the shape of the hidden radars and police cars, which seem to be stalking every single village in the country! Another one is the contrast between social classes which is a lot sharper, or at least more visible, than in France.

In what ways do you think the Erasmus programme is useful to both Romanian and French students?

Any international exchange is extremely useful to both the academic and personal developments of students. They discover things about themselves, about others, and realize that there are millions of different ways to learn, to live, and that harmony and happiness is based on the knowledge and respect of that diversity. Any student interested in language and culture should realize that a semester or a year in France or Romania is a unique way to experience European diversity.

How difficult is to convince French students to come to Bacău and study here for a semester?

It was a bit difficult at first, especially for English students, who all think of Great Britain, America, Australia and other English-speaking countries as their natural destination for a mobility period. However, once they start preparing their project in more details, they realize that in these countries, they will be just one foreign student among thousands of others, that the cost of living is a lot higher than in France, that they already have an advanced knowledge of British or American culture... Once they have realized that, it is easy to convince them that Bacău has a lot to offer! Finally, we also have a few students, too few, unfortunately, who, usually for a personal reason, come to me and tell me that going to Romania is an old dream of theirs, and that they would like to be sent to Bacău...

What did the French students think about their experience at our faculty after they returned to Bordeaux? What did they enjoy best and what did they consider their worst experience here, in Bacău?

The feedback we get from students returning from Bacău is overwhelmingly positive, even more so since our exchanges started to include the French and drama departments. I can think of several cases, to illustrate the success of the exchange, the most telling one being the one of Marion Darné, a passionate friend of Bacău from the day she heard about it in my office, and whose only wish, when she came home to Bordeaux was to go back to Bacău as soon as possible.

How are the Romanian students seen by their French fellows in Bordeaux? Do the Romanian students manage to cope with the academic requirements in Bordeaux?

I teach students from Bacău nearly every year since the exchange began, and it is always a pleasure to see how good they are at language issues (I teach a third-year class in Phonetics and Phonology) and how quickly they fit in. All my colleagues, who often have hasty judgments about Erasmus students, welcome Bacău students with special attention and admire their good level, method and thoroughness.

How you see the professor-student relationship?

This is not an easy question, as at no point in our training are we advised on how to behave to students. It all depends therefore on a person's character. As to my own way of interacting with students, I think it is simply based on a very natural ethics or philosophy: life is so hard and unfair as it is that I could not imagine being unduly harsh to anyone for anything related to education. On the contrary, I regard the University as a haven where human relations ought to be what they too often are not in the outside world, a blend of tolerance, generosity, warmth.

What is your best and your worst memory about any of the literature courses you attended when you were a student yourself?

When I was in my fourth year at the Sorbonne in Paris, we had some high-profile professors teaching on the set-books that were on our syllabus for. My worst and best memories are linked to one of these professors, who had come to talk to us about Hemingway. It turned out that he had been a close friend of Hemingway's in Paris, and he started sharing with us a number of fascinating anecdotes. But we soon realized that he had been drinking, maybe to help conjure up the character, and his lecture quickly lost its clarity and interest. It was sad to see students leave the room one by one, with an embarrassed look on their face... Another memory I will never forget is that of our Professor of American literature, a very nice woman in her late sixties, who always greeted her students as 'sweet friends'. We used to applaud at

the end of each lecture...

You have a great experience as a professor of language and literature. Is literature easy or difficult to teach? Can it be taught at all?

Literature is probably less easy to teach than other subjects related to language studies, as it seems to be perceived by students more and more as a medium of another age, one requiring a lot of hard work to penetrate, as opposed to other media, so easily and instantly accessible today. It is therefore important to introduce students who start literature to the right texts, so as not to put them off but on the contrary to show them how infinitely rich and rewarding, or simply fun - why not? - reading and studying literature can be.

Have you ever written any prose or poetry of your own? If yes, what can you tell us about that experience?

I have never written anything but academic papers and dissertations, but have often thought, just like most people, no doubt, that this or that idea would make a good start for a novel or a short-story. I have also written a lot of letters, before we had emails to communicate, and I miss that particular form of writing.

Who is your favourite English or American writer? Why?

Another difficult question! Let me escape with a short list: Shakespeare for the ever-renewed magic, Fielding for the sheer fun of it, Dickens, for the great stories one is so reluctant to leave at the end of the book, Virginia Woolf for the poetry and beauty, and that great model for all language learners, Joseph Conrad: I reread most of his novels nearly each year (together with Kingsley Amis's Lucky Jim, a must for all aspiring, present or ex-lecturer!); Poe, James, Wharton, Cormac McCarthy; and also a lot of Indian writers, with a special mention for Salman Rushdie. And of course, all the Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights I have been working on since my student days: Marlowe, Middleton, Dekker, Jonson, Webster... To be quite honest, I have to add all the 'comfort reading' provided by crime fiction British authors Ian Rankin and Peter Robinson.



Are you in any way familiar with Romanian literature? Have you met any contemporary Romanian writers?

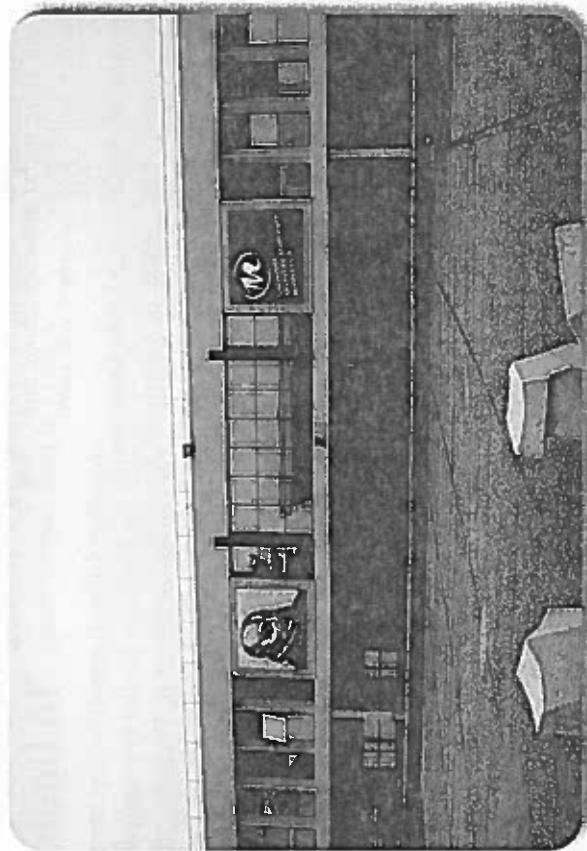
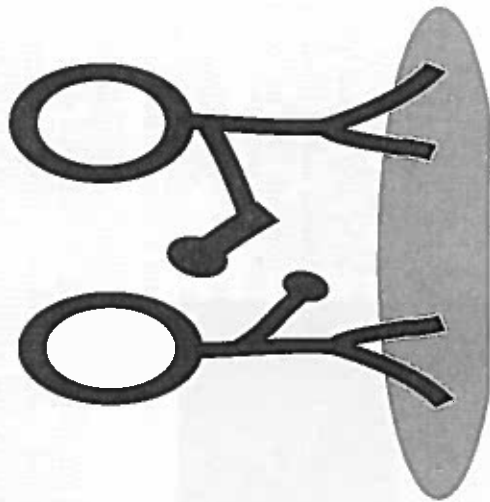
I have unfortunately never met any contemporary Romanian writer. The early contacts I had with Romanian literature and thought were through Ionesco and Mircea Eliade, probably the first two Romanian names that spring to the mind of a French person of my generation and training. Thanks to my Bacău friends, I have been introduced to Eminescu's poetry, but I must confess that I am very ignorant in the field of Romanian literature. A flaw I will definitely have to fix during my next trip!

Professor Ertlé, what piece of advice would you give us as human beings trying to find our own way in life?

Giving advice of that nature is a great responsibility! I have been lucky enough to centre my personal and professional life around the love of languages and cultures, which has taught me a very simple and important message: the key to happiness and harmony, or at least the best way to protect oneself from the blows and hardships of life, is to be as open-minded and respectful as possible towards others, and above all to put things in perspective: we are here for a few brief moments, so why waste them over trifles and meaningless struggles?

Thank you for your openness and kindness and we would be so pleased to have you here with us as soon as possible!

Thank YOU for doing me the honour of selecting me for your interview. I look forward to meeting you soon in Bacău!



## Salman Rushdie in Romania



*"A book is a version of the world. If you do not like it, ignore it; or offer your own version in return."*  
(Salman Rushdie)

Between 23-26 November 2009, Salman Rushdie, one of the most famous contemporary writers of English literature, visited Romania as a guest of Polirom Publishing House. He participated to several press conferences and had meetings with his Romanian readers at Gaudeamus Book Fair. He also visited Transylvania and was very impressed by its history and traditions.

### An Indian at Cambridge

Here is some biographical information about him, in case you aren't familiar with him and his work. Salman Rushdie was born in Bombay on 19 June 1947. He went to school in Bombay and at Rugby in England, and read History at King's College, Cambridge, where he joined the Cambridge Footlights theatre company. After graduation, he lived with his family who had moved to Pakistan in 1964, and worked briefly in television before returning to England, where he began to work as a copywriter for an advertising agency. His first novel, *Grimus*, was published in 1975.

### Becoming famous

The novel that made him famous was his second one, the much acclaimed *Midnight's Children*, which was published in 1981. It won the Booker Prize for Fiction, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for fiction), an Arts Council Writers' Award and the English-Speaking Union Award, and in 1993 it was judged to have been the 'Booker of Bookers', the best novel to have won the Booker Prize for Fiction in the award's 25-year history. The critic Malcolm Bradbury

acclaimed the novel's achievement in *The Modern British Novel* (Penguin, 1994): "a new start for the late-twentieth-century novel".

Another awarded novel was his third one: *Shame* (1983), which won the *Prix du Meilleur Livre Etranger* and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction.

### Sentenced to death for a novel

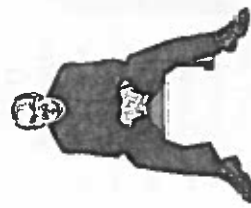
The publication, in 1988, of his fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses* – "the most famous unread novel", as he called it – led to accusations of blasphemy against Islam from Muslim leaders and angry demonstrations of Islamist groups in India and Pakistan. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a *fatwa* (the sentence to death) against Rushdie on 14 February 1989, and his books were burnt in public squares. He was forced to hide himself under the protection of the British government, which honored him with the title of *Knight Bachelor*.

### A controversial personality

Satirized in Pakistani movies, seen as a pop icon in Western culture, Salman Rushdie wrote about terrorism, Christian and Muslim fundamentalism; he also wrote comic books, texts for tabloids, computer games, football and rock and lyrics for bands such as U2. He commented upon Tarantino's movies and signed manifestos against totalitarian states.

Besides all these, he was involved in many love affairs with supermodels, appeared in Robert Altman's movie, *Prêt-à-Porter* and criticized Islam and the veil that women are forced to wear. Salman Rushdie is one of the most interesting, awarded and publicized writers in history.

Gabriela Ciuraru-Rusu and Andreea Popa, E-F, II



*"Free speech is life itself!"*  
(Salman Rushdie)



A few months ago, our University adopted the name of Vasile Alecsandri as a marker of its identity. We choose to honour this great writer by translating here a fragment from one of his most appreciated texts.

## Vasile Alecsandri



Edgar Allan Poe  
(1809 – 1849)



**Vasile Alecsandri** (1821 – 1890) was one of the most important figures of the cultural and political life of 19th century Romania. He wrote poetry, prose and drama and was an active promoter of Romanian folklore which he often used as source of inspiration for his own works. The most enduring part of his work remains a series of comedies whose heroine, Chirița, a rich woman from the countryside, and her family, are ridiculed for their pretentiousness and lack of education. The excerpt translated here is a part of *Chirița în provincia* (*Chirița in the Countryside*).



Walt Whitman  
(1819 – 1892)



Lewis Carroll  
(1832 – 1898)



Emily Dickinson  
(1830 – 1886)

## Chirița in the Countryside (I, 3)

-excerpt-

**SAFTA:**  
Smoking again, sis?... I can already see you getting sick again.

**CHIRIȚA:**  
Not at all, sis, it's in fashion. As long as I'm riding horses, I have to get the hang of it...

**SAFTA:**  
I wonder what it is that you find so tasteful in puffing like a German.

**CHIRIȚA:**  
Tasteful?

Everybody smokes these days, Puff through their nose or lips, Some just do it for the fashion. Others smoke to get the kicks.

The world itself is a cigar That changes into ashes. Passionate love itself Will burn and turn to ashes...

Only airs have we here In both gentlemen and women.

They all smoke... You might just say That most of them are airy.

**SAFTA:**  
What do you mean airy?... You mean air-sick?

**CHIRIȚA:**  
Both... but... g'on and tell me, sister-in-law, how is Luluța?

**SAFTA:**  
She's in the garden.

**CHIRIȚA:**  
Poor child!... Ever since her ma', Madame Năstăsica Afinoaic, passed away, we took her under our wing... She's dear to me like a daughter-in-law.

**SAFTA:**  
Who knows?... You might be her mother-in-law in time.

**CHIRIȚA:**  
Hush!... That's exactly what I've planned with my man... Luluța's got a good dowry... So does Guliță... We couldn't possibly find a better match...

**SAFTA:**  
Not even if you picked a rod for your own back.

**CHIRIȚA:**  
The only thing that worries me is that Luluța doesn't even trouble her head over Guliță... and she's been sad ever since she's an orphan... she even seems to lose it sometimes... she's not in her senses.

**SAFTA:**  
Don't mind her, she's still young.

**CHIRIȚA:**  
Young, you say?... She's in her teens... when Guliță was born, she was a year old... I remember as if it were yesterday... on Saint Peter's day (while speaking, she's looking for her matches) What on Earth have I done with my matches?... Well I never!... I've dropped them on the field. (Outloud) Monsiu Charles?

**CHARLES:**  
(advancing) Order, madam.

**CHIRIȚA:**  
Wouldn't you happen to have any phosphorus with you?

**CHARLES:**  
(lighting a match) Voila, madam. (Aside) Elle fume comme un caporal.

**CHIRIȚA:**  
(lighting a thick cigarette) Merci... Voulez-vous aussi boire une cigarette?

**CHARLES:**  
(Aside) Aie, aie... Elle va recommencer ses traductions libres... (Est-ce possible? C'est extraordinaire... He bien, votre fils vous ressemble... il a une facilité! Dans quelques années il parlera aussi bien que vous.

**CHIRIȚA:**  
Quel bonheur! Mamma's Gugulea... Listen to monsiu Charles... He says you'll be speaking French as easily as a river flows... N'est pas, monsiu Charles, qu'il parlera comme l'eau?

**CHARLES:**  
Comme?... Ah, oui, oui... vous dites comme ça en Moldave. Oui, oui...

**CHIRIȚA:**  
But let me test him... Guliță, tell your ma', how do you call a fork in French?

**GULIȚA:**  
Forkution.

**CHIRIȚA:**  
Nice... how about a steak?

**GULIȚA:**  
Steakution.

**CHIRIȚA:**  
Very nice... how about a pic?

**GULIȚA:**  
Pietion.

**CHIRIȚA:**  
Well done... Guliță... Well done, Guliță. (Kisses him)

**CHARLES:**  
(Aside) Stupidition, va!

Translated by Alexandra Ilie, E-R, III

## Why do you love English?

*How interesting! many answers refer to the music of English words! This is the first step towards literature... the next step is into the realm of metaphors, and some of you already took it!*



### **Teodora Capriș, E-R, I:**

I love English because it inspires me and it gives space to my crazy imagination.

### **Andrei Obreja, E-R, I:**

Usually, I am an honest person. There are moments when I hate English and moments when I love it. What I love about learning it is the fact that it gives a new meaning to my thoughts and ideas. Through its new words I feel I have the power to reach out.

### **Andrei Întuneric, E-R, I:**

I love English because it offers me the opportunity of meeting people from all over the world. Probably, English is what most people world-wide have in common, beside food and water. It is wonderful for me to know that I can understand what a Russian from Siberia, a Mexican from Toluca or a Japanese from Tokyo says.

### **Gabriela Ciuraru-Rusu, E-F, II:**

I love English because it is different from the language I usually speak. I also find it very interesting because I can use it when I travel around the world. I also love English for its peculiar musicality.

### **Andreea Popa, E-F, II:**

I really believe that I'm not that bad at writing and speaking this lovely language and I would like to keep studying it in order to be able to observe and laugh at all the other people that claim to be very good at it, but who don't know anything about it in fact.

### **Simona Crupenschi, E-F, II:**

I love to hear people speaking English, I love the sound of it, the melody of its sentences.

### **Carmen Nuțu, R-E, III:**

I love English because of my first teacher of English. When I was a pupil in the primary school, she only gave me fours as marks. That helped me a lot, I can tell you.

### **Cristian Bârgăoanu, E-R, III:**

I love English because I can express myself more freely in it and my thoughts flow more easily when

## Do you remember your first experience of English?

### **Gabriela Ciuraru-Rusu, E-F, II:**

I had my first experience of English many years ago, when I was in kindergarten. A lovely young lady came and taught us a short poem. The first words I learnt were "mouse" and "nose". I forgot the whole poem, but these two words entered my memory for ever – they made me smile so easily!

### **Andreea Popa, E-F, II:**

I've been studying English since I was in kindergarten. I remember learning the numbers, the colours and the animals, but it was Cartoon Network that really 'taught' me English.

### **Gabriela Bucalău, E-F, II:**

My first experience with English was when I was little and I was watching cartoons. This is how I learnt my first words in English: "cat" and "mouse" from "Tom & Jerry", "dog" from "Scooby Doo" and "bird" from "Stop the pigeon".

### **Simona Crupenschi, E-F, II:**

Ever since I was a child, I have loved watching cartoons without subtitles. That was the beginning of my love for English. I used to imitate those characters, those animals talking... Here is one particular sentence I liked to repeat as often as I could: "That's all, folks!"

### **Manuela Diaconu, E-F, II:**

I think it was during my summer holiday, when I was almost 11 years old and my teacher asked me about some words that were in the English school-book. She was quite sure that I didn't know them, but she was amazed to find out that I knew almost everything she asked me. When she asked me where I knew them from, I confessed: I had watched too many movies!

### **Cristian Bârgăoanu, E-R, III:**

My first experience of English was when I was in kindergarten, as it was then that I started watching cartoons. This dialogue from one cartoon stuck in my memory at that time, it was so musical to me: "Hello! How are you?" "Why, fine, thank you, and you?" "Everything's as right as rain..."

### **Irina Doloi, E-R, III:**

When I was five, my sister was learning English by reading from a children's book and she repeated everything so many times that I came to learn those texts by heart. I don't remember the words any more, but my brother never failed to mention to his student fellows at the University how I had managed to learn an entire book without even looking at it.

### **Lucian Lăcătușu, E-R, III:**

When I was in kindergarten (the garden where children are cultivated), one beautiful teacher taught us nice poems. This is the first thing in English I learnt: "Little mouse, little mouse, Where is your house?" "Near the door, Under the floor."

### **Petronela Marin, E-R, III:**

When I was a 2nd grade pupil, I started to teach my brother English words. I remember how I used to explain to him the difference between "bear" and "beer", and how much I laughed, because I didn't understand them either. Afterwards, it always made me smile to hear my teachers pronounce these words...

### **Ana Ghiurcă, R-E, III:**

When I was little, I wanted to say something in English to an Englishman who had come to Romania. I asked my brother to teach me a few words, and he taught me this: "My name is Ana, and you are ugly." So I went to the man and I told him exactly that.

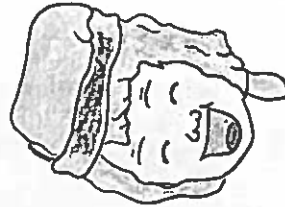


*If these people had been asked about their first teacher of English, I suppose they would have said: Cartoon Network!*



*You sound like one named Caliban, he used to speak like that a very long time ago on a certain island full of sounds and noises...*

*You sound like one named Caliban, he used to speak like that a very long time ago on a certain island full of sounds and noises...*

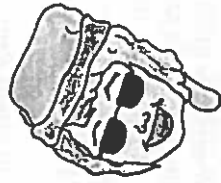


## Who is your favourite English author?

Most of the first year students are in love with William Shakespeare!



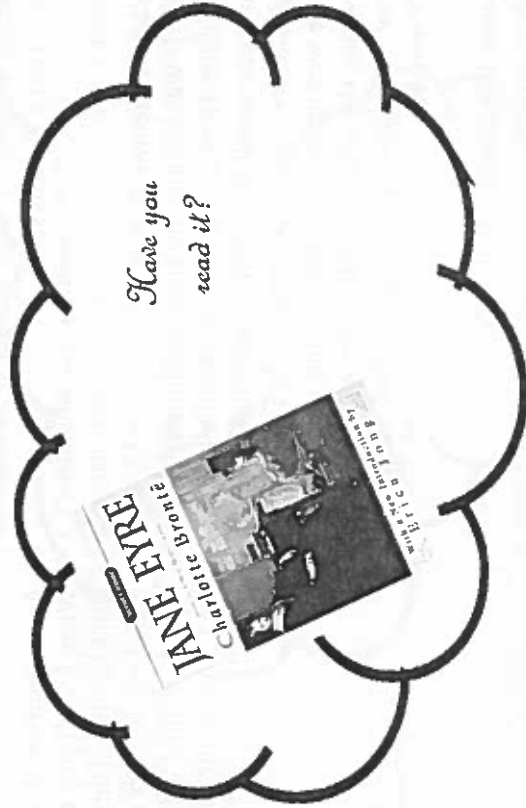
**William Shakespeare**  
( 1564 - 1616 )



Second year students were bewitched by a Victorian talented woman writer!



**Charlotte Brontë**  
( 1816 - 1855 )



## Who is your favourite English character?

First year students chose a very dark king. They even wrote a poem for him.

### To Macbeth

Through the ashes of time

Through letters and rhyme

A true hero, one of a kind,

Fascinates us with his mind.

His adventures show him

Brave, loyal and fair, but still

We are soon saddened by his darker side.

He's easily weakened and he'll not survive.

We are willing to solve the riddles of something

Where almost nothing is what it may seem.

This story, one of the greatest by far,

Can tell us a lot about who we are.



He's deceived by mind-boggling prophecies  
And by a cold hearted wife's horrific pleading.  
He accepts the killing sin,  
Yet he makes it with a trembling chin.  
But when you mud your faith in such a way  
The only payment that you get is nothing great.  
A sword put an end to Macbeth's life  
As he lost his final fight.

As we delight ourselves in this dramatic story  
Our desire remains the same: true glory.  
We go through happiness and sorrow  
Today, tomorrow, tomorrow and tomorrow.

*Dragos Lungociu, E-R, I*

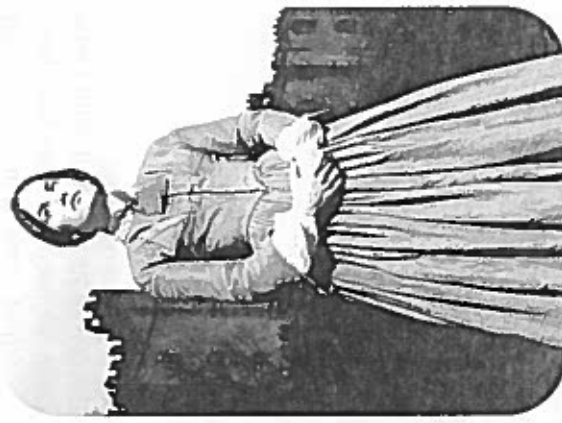
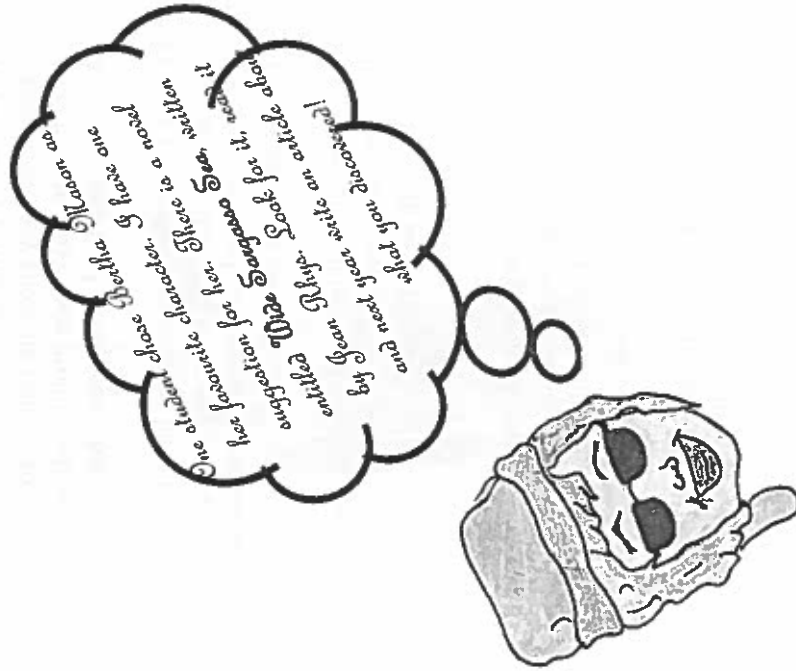
Now we can easily see

How changeable a man can be.

From the loyal thane he easily became

A blind man with a great thirst for fame.

Second year students bet on a very memorable Jane!



Jane Eyre



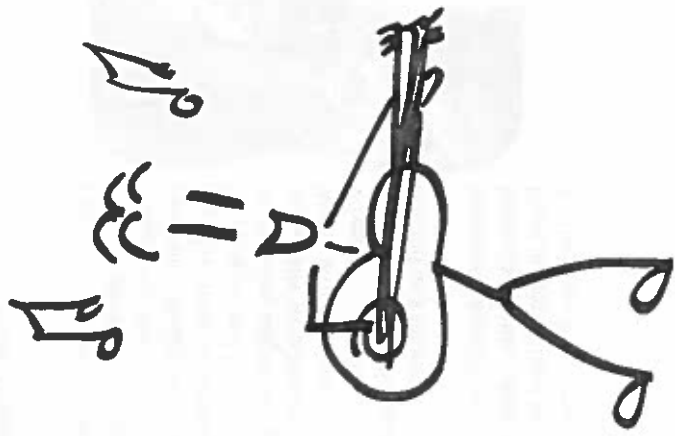
## Student I fe

Sometimes I say that I am as happy as I can be  
Because I am a student at this university.  
The teachers here are really great  
And some days ago, at an exam, I got an eight,  
Nothing compares to the days of high-school  
Unless you are a fool.

By the way, the exams will quickly come  
And you should be really dumb  
Not to attend them.  
If you have too much fame,  
Maybe some teachers will play your game  
Or maybe you will manage because you are present.

Oh, I almost forgot to tell you about Mr. Popa's poem,  
I hope you'll at least read it at home,  
Cause it counts a lot at his course  
And it doesn't contain anything about wars.  
This really is long and great  
Maybe everybody can get a ten, nine or an eight.

You should consider learning some grammar now  
With one of the greatest teachers in town  
Her name I will not tell  
Because I want to study well.  
I hope my ideas are clear enough  
And I hope this year all of you will be tough.



## To be a teacher

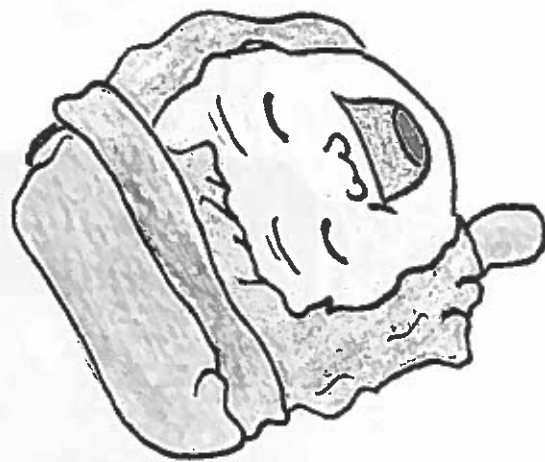
To be teacher I think is hard,  
Cause when they enter the schoolyard,  
They have to leave their problems from home aside  
And work in a field of expertise that is so wide.

I think it's almost as when you have to speak,  
You have to think and say something quick,  
You have to use all your mental operations  
To manage in all situations.

People are divided in smart and less smart  
It's like in day or night,  
They are both so different  
And yet so similar.

Teachers have to deal with all type of personalities  
And all time they must use their ability of analysis,  
They have to work with children and parents  
And still have time for their friends.

And you ask yourself how they can do that  
It's not like they have an ace in their hats,  
They rely on their education  
And this gives them perfection.



Poems by Bogdan Căciulcanu, E-F, I

## Love of thoughts

Good morning! How are you?  
I was fine...until I heard you moo  
Do you feel like crawling out of bed?  
Maybe...but my legs are heavy, made of lead  
Oh! Come on! We have a wonder of a day ahead  
Please close the blinds! I feel my eyes go deeper in my head  
Look! It has been snowing all night long, I think  
Yes...and now it's cold...and wet. One step, I sink.  
Come to the mirror, wash your face  
I'll take my time, is this a race?

Be quiet, guys! I'm awake...I'm awake!  
What's with this noise, for pity's sake  
Nothing! Just organising thoughts that we can find  
Just great! Serves me right for letting dwarfs inside my mind.



## Decay

Arise...Oh kings of old  
Can you not hear the trumpets sing?  
Do they not make your cars ring?  
Have you frozen in your vaults -so dark and cold?

Remember the rallying call of battle,  
Young hearts throbbing inside metal,  
Sword in hand, courage in their veins  
Lead by your noble-hearted thanes

What is the value of your bones now?  
Oh! Long forgotten kings, what have you fought for  
Is one coin the measure of a soul...or more?  
That is the question that sits heavy on our brow.

Arise! Oh Kings of Old,  
For death has conquered all our souls.  
Save us from our mortal goals  
Arise and teach us to be noble, to be bold!



## Eagle Eye



"Hi, dad!" saluted an eight years old boy, lying in bed, when he saw his father enter his room, after a day's work.

"Hello, son!" saluted the father in a low and heavy voice.

"So... how was work today?" asked the boy with a big smile on his face, thus hoping to cheer up his father.

"Oh... I really had a rush day and as you can see I'm a little tired", the father answered.

"Oh!... Too bad! It looks like tonight I won't have a bedtime story", the child said to himself.

"How about you... how was school today?"

"As usual, dad, we learned the multiplication table and we played different kinds of games."

"Appears that you had a rush day, too!" said the father laughing.

"Dad, can you tell me another bedtime story?"

"But I told you one last night!"

"Yeah, and I liked it so much that I want you to tell me another one... please!" begged the child with two big eyes like two bright stars on a night sky.

"Ok, tiger, just let me put my coat on the couch."

"Richard, let your father eat first", the mother said while she was entering the boy's room.

"It's ok, honey. But I will tell you a short one," the father said, looking straight into the eyes of the boy, to be sure that he was well understood.

"Well, then, I'm out in the kitchen. I will wait for you to finish the story" the mother said and closed the door, leaving the two men of the house alone.

"Ok... let's see... hmmm... what story did I tell you last night?" the father asked, putting the index finger upon his beard.

"You told me the story of the Quilteute were-wolves who protected their village from the bad creatures," said the kid refreshing his father's memory.

"Oh... yeah, I remember it now! But do you know the Eagle Eye story?"

"I don't think so," said the boy with a confused look.

"No, you don't! Well, let me see..."

"A long time ago there was a tribe on the West Coast of America. This tribe had magical powers. At the age of eighteen, every boy, when threatened by some danger, could change into an animal, but not just any animal, only the one that the father's boy saw first after his child's birth. (It might well have been just a part of an animal, too.)

The tribe was getting smaller as time passed. They didn't have a land of their own; they were always moving from one place to another and back.

One day, an important family of the tribe gave birth to a boy. The boy's father closed his eyes when the child started to cry for the first time and he went outside. He had been hoping that he would see a great animal, because he knew that his son's future depended on this. He peeped on to his left and he saw a bleeding eye, but he closed his eyes in disgust and then he looked on his right, and there he saw a snake skin and felt in his heart that the snake was a better protector for his son, so he named the boy Snake Skin.

The boy was growing and his qualities were promising. He was a great hunter with an authoritative presence and he was very intelligent, too. He became famous in no time, not only in his tribe, but even in other tribes. However, the tribe's quack started to suspect something, because he didn't understand why the boy's name was Snake Skin, since his qualities were so different from those of a snake. He expected the boy to be a very flexible skinny cold-blooded liar, but he wasn't, so the quack knew that something was wrong.



When the boy was seventeen and a half, the tribe was attacked by a gang of cowboys. All the red people died, being killed by the white faces, except for three boys, who buried themselves in sand to escape death. The boys were: Lion Paw, who was 21 years old, Cow Horn, who was 20 years old, and Snake Skin, who hadn't turned 18 yet.

After they saw the disaster, full of hatred and revenge, Lion Paw and Cow Horn swore to find and to kill all the cowboys. Snake Skin wanted to help, too, although he couldn't change himself in his animal protector. He promised them that he could be useful, but the two left him behind.

Snake Skin started to look for the cowboys on his own, but whenever he found one, the cowboy was already dead, having been killed by Lion Paw or by Cow Horn.

One day he saw one of the cowboys at a fountain. He recognized him by his dirty clothes and horse. Snake Skin knew that there were three days left until he could take the shape of a snake, but he felt that he needed to take his chance, so he pulled out an arrow, he gently loaded it on his bow and took aim.

"This is for you, dad!" he thought and when he was prepared to release the arrow, a cold metal tube touched his neck.

"What the hell have we here!?" a voice was heard. "What you gonna do with that arrow, you, good for nothing red skin?"

Snake Skin turned and saw another killer and, much scared, feeling the heavy push of the gun, he made small easy steps backwards until he found him-



self surrounded: the two cowboys were standing in front of him, while an abyss was behind.

Suddenly, a strange warmth invaded his heart and spread all over his body. He looked at the gun and could see the bullet loaded in the gun very clearly, but the cowboy pushed him and Snake Skin fell into the precipice.

As he was falling he saw his hands turn into wings and his feet into claws: he became an eagle. His wings grew and soon he was flying among the clouds. He didn't understand why he was an eagle, but he loved it. He had much power, because he could see everything, he was above everything. Nobody could reach him, nobody could surpass him. There in the sky he knew that he was a king, a god, but down on earth he would be tormented like all the creatures on earth, because down on earth he would depend on his claws treading on the surface, while there, high above, he only depended on himself, on his wings. He was free in the sky. The blue sky was his mind, and his flying was his deepest desire come true. He made a loop upwards and then turned back, remembering that he had a job to finish. He saw the cowboys at a mile's distance and he...

Good night, my boy!" the father stopped and, after he gently covered his sleeping son with the blanket, he kissed him and went to the kitchen. Dinner was ready.

Ciprian Iovu, E-R, I



## The anxieties of a noble bug

Hello, my dear friend. Oh, please, don't be so immature and avoid laughing. I know you are very surprised to see what I have written on this piece of paper, but it's time to recover from the shock and continue reading.

My name is Garbage VII. Yes, I know, it sounds weird, but if you want to know, I'm part of a dynasty. My ancestors settled in the area around the kitchen garbage bin some couple of years ago. We rule that area and we have no rivals, except for some stupid bugs from the bathroom. They think they can conquer us, but we defeat them all the time. We are superior from all points of view. We have better food and that's our major advantage. Oh, they can have access to water more easily than we have, but this is not a decisive advantage on their part. All in all, they will never be able to win a battle against us. And just to tell you a secret, I heard from some sources that the owner of this apartment wants to relocate the bathroom. Ha ha ha! I can't wait to see those stupid bugs running like antelopes. That will be a very funny moment.

But let me get back to the subject. As I mentioned before, this apartment in which my tribe lives has an owner. He is a man around 40 years old. He has a wife. She is a supermodel. Sometimes, when I see her, I regret I'm a bug. Of course, they don't have children. They are too busy to have these weird things that you call "children". Those are my enemies. Children are bad. I will never forget the day when a brother of mine died at the hands of a champion like this. Well, not really at his hands, but under the shoe that he held in his hands. It was disgusting. Thanks to God, (the garbage God, not your God), I never met any child, except for yesterday.

So, yesterday morning, I was searching for food, as I always do at this time of the day. There is a simple reason why I do that: I don't want other stupid bugs (here you must read: "members of the Royal Family") to take my extra-large portion of garbage in which I always find fish or bread. Yes, I'm selfish and I know that. Then, suddenly, I saw a shadow behind me. I hoped from the bottom of my heart, and believe me that I have one, that the shadow wasn't a "friend" of mine, also in search of food. But I almost immediately realized that the shadow was too large. I stopped for a second. Or ten seconds, who cares?!? I admit that I was very scared. I could only think about one thing: a shoe. And a child, of course. Not to mention the blood. Blue blood of course, because I'm part of the nobility. After a few seconds I saw a light. It was the light from

the kitchen turned on, probably, by the shadow behind me. However, the shadow had never changed at all. "That's very strange!", I thought then. A couple of seconds passed. The same tranquility reigned everywhere around. I felt that the shadow moved closer. I closed my eyes. I saw nothing, of course. But I felt a strange fear. The child with the shoe in his hand was in my every thought. There were two thoughts actually. The first was: shoe. The second was: nothing. Another couple of seconds passed. It was the time to make a decision about how I would deal with the shadow. For a moment I thought I would die. Then, I remembered that I was part of a dynasty, so I would die only physically, because my spirit would be kept alive by my family. It was so sweet to realize that all those thoughts were idiotic. I had a life and a shadow behind me. I decided to fight for my life. For the first time, I realized that I must fight for something which was interesting up to some point when I had no idea about how to act.

Another couple of seconds passed. Damn time. It was under pressure. The shadow remained unmoved. I had a little advantage. Suddenly, I heard a noise. A sharp one. It sounded like someone entering through the door. Now, two children, with two shoes in their hands, were in my mind. The situation became desperate. I felt the end approaching. Then, all my dreams would fade away. I stood and held my breath. The noise became clearer. I heard human voices.

Then, as a last solution, I thought it would be smart if I tried to move. I took some steps forward. The shadow diminished. Then, carefully, I took some steps backwards. The same shadow was now bigger. "Very strange", I thought. Seconds later, I took some steps to the left. It was the same. The shadow followed me precisely. I realized that I had no chance at all. It was time to look back and see the child with the shoe in his hand. Slowly, I began to turn. I still heard voices.

About two seconds later, I had completely turned back. I saw nothing. Soon, I realized that the voices I heard were produced by a TV. Also, I realized that the shadow was, actually, my shadow. I was exhausted.

This is my story. Now I'm not afraid anymore. I know that every shadow that I see is mine. There's no reason to be scared of shadows. Even now, when I'm writing these words, I see a shadow in front of me. Now I'm sure it's not dangerous at all. Still, I can't explain why it's moving. Oh, is that a shoe?!?

Alexandru Amarici, E-R, I

## [building]

I was born in a *building*. I live in one. I *build* and I am both a *builder* and a *building*. It's not just my *build* or what I am built of, it's *building* up a picture of myself.

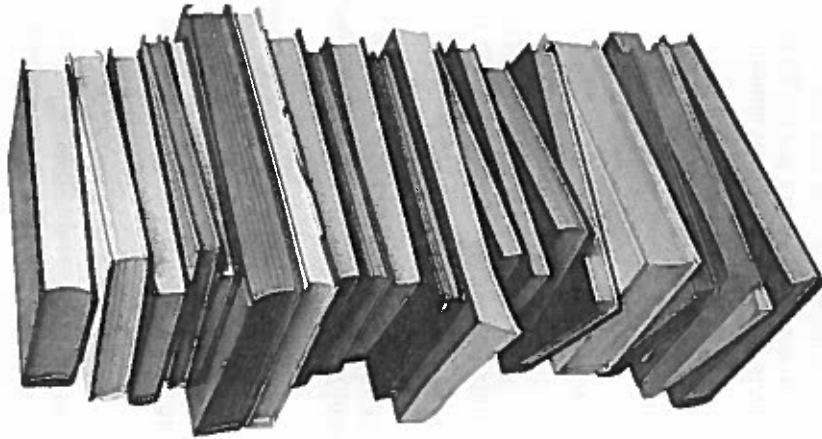
There are days when the image of a cracked foundation insinuates into my thoughts... and then I think of its fragility and of a possible break-down... and it might be too late to *re-build* it... one should not disturb the harmony of the process of *building*. So I think about reinforcing the walls, so they would cope with the complexity of the roof.

I have never asked myself whether those walls were well poured and strong enough to hold the whole edifice. The eagerness of *building-up* has cast a shadow upon my safety, but *building* requires speed. There is a plan to be followed up... any delay could bring along penalties, as every *building* takes its toll. Therefore I must take advantage of the presence of other *builders* around me, in order to alleviate my fear of failure, to facilitate my progress.

And there will come days when I might find myself abashed, with a melancholy look at the frameless universe, days when I might not have the needed tools and the others won't lend me theirs... days when I might not find the necessary strength to work, or when the environment will not allow me to... But nothing should put a *builder* off the stroke! The outline must be filled! And with each day that passes and with each brick that is put in its place, one comes nearer to the complete image of one's ideal... to that moment when the *builder* becomes the *building*. And this ultimate shield, this vivid barrier is so vulnerable at first in its ceaseless struggle to defend its cherished values.

I guess I am inside a *building* now, attempting to *build* up another side yet. And I hope I've managed to stir your imagination a little bit.

Andrei Mihai Negurici, E-F, I



## Bedtime story online

- Eva:** Hi! How are you?
- Sym:** hi! Fine... I guess
- Eva:** I can't sleep... can you tell me a story... you know... like you used to
- Sym:** Hm...
- Eva:** you know... If we broke up, it doesn't mean we have to stop talking to each other
- Sym:** probably not...but I need some time to hate you
- Eva:** I'm here... hate all you want. You want to curse me? Fine... do it. You want to unload all your troubles? Shoot!
- Sym:** I hate you for being so irresistible
- Eva:** 😊
- Sym:** it was a night much like this one... and you could hear a long cry outside (we're in the countryside)
- Eva:** Oh! Started already?
- Sym:** the long howl swept across the fields... piercing the night sky. The moon lighted their path... the pack was on the hunt
- Sym:** (thought one story up on the spot)
- Eva:** you really are a wolf!
- Sym:** the ravens watched the wolves' hunger-stricken bodies as the pack moved as ghosts through the forest... and their beaks could already taste the blood that would be spilt
- Sym:** one howl and the pack started pouring in from everywhere
- Sym:** with one exception
- Sym:** Half-a-tail was missing
- Sym:** as usual he was off chewing or sniffing something
- Sym:** and usually it wasn't food
- Eva:** aww! That's so cute
- Sym:** he was called that...Half-a-tail...because he had had a previous unfortunate meeting with a big lizard
- Sym:** in his quest to find the world out... he had stumbled upon this weird green creature
- Eva:** ughh...I don't like lizards
- Sym:** now...a more experienced wolf knows...that when you see such a green thing...usually it's best to run
- Sym:** but the ever curious and young Half-a-tail... saw a little creature to play with
- Eva:** well... that reminds me of somebody
- Sym:** the lizard didn't mind at first... but when he wanted to escape the sniffing nose
- Sym:** the curious wolf stepped on the lizard's tail to keep it in place
- Sym:** now...the lizard... as you know... can do without its tail... when times of danger come about
- Sym:** and so he did... and through some odd twist... the lizard wanted to know
- Sym:** whether the wolf would shed his tail as well...
- Eva:** oh... no... poor Half-a-tail
- Sym:** so when the little wolf... having a new chew toy... left to play elsewhere
- Sym:** the lizard bit his tail... and didn't want to let it go
- Eva:** ouch!
- Sym:** in agony the poor wolf ran... and nothing mattered anymore
- Sym:** the lizard's tail... the woods... the lizard itself... no more

**Sym:** the only thing in mind right now... was how to make his tail less sore

**Eve:** 😊 a little poem... 😊 you have always been a subtle poet

**Sym:** and so he ran...and ran and never seemed to stop

**Sym:** (yea... well... I may have been a poet... but I don't feel so romantic right now)

**Sym:** screaming... yelling ... panting... howling

**Sym:** and when the lizard let go... it felt as if he had been free again

**Eva:** did you feel free when we broke up?

**Sym:** for a few seconds Half-a-tail felt good that the lizard was bound no more to his tail... but then he realized that he didn't have a friend to play with anymore

**Sym:** his friend had turned on him... and had made him suffer

**Eva:** ....I'm sorry...I wish I felt the same way about you as you do about me... as you did...

**Sym:** but Half-a-tail quickly recovered and was up and running... calling... howling in the night... kissing the moon and licking his wound

**Eva:** That's the spirit, Half-a-tail... move on... there are other lizards to play with. watch out for poisonous ones

**Sym:** 😊

**Sym:** and that's when Half-a-tail got his name

**Sym:** THE END

**Eva:** the end indeed...

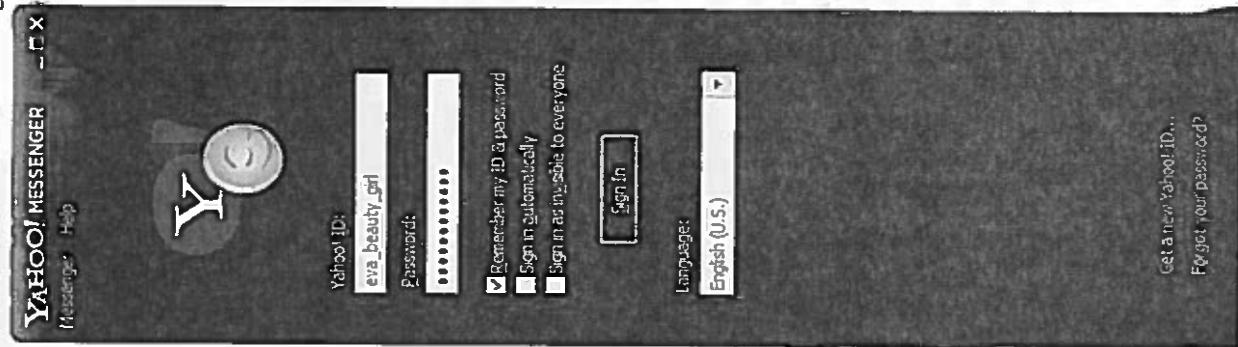
**Sym:** it was good...while it lasted

**Eva:** yeah... I know...

**Sym:** well... I think I'm going to bed now..



Cristian Bărgăoanu, E-R, III





## Iceland - the Land of fire

Sometimes, the most beautiful things happen when we least expect it. I almost believe that the less we expect a wonderful thing to happen the more probably it will happen.

Last year, after I enjoyed the last days of spring, here, in Romania, I had the opportunity to enjoy it all over again somewhere near the North Pole. It was the year with two springs, the year that would remain forever in memory.

It all happened so fast that only after I had boarded the plane, with the destination Keflavik, Iceland, did I realize that it was real. Everything was so exciting; I was flying above clouds and my spirit was even higher. It would be my first flight, my first taste out of the country, a completely new experience. As the plane approached landing, I thought that the pilot had made a mistake and now we were landing on the moon. Later on, I was told that this is usually the first impression of someone visiting Iceland. Keflavik, the International Airport, is situated in a place with a volcanic landscape, something looking very similar to the moon's surface.

On the way to Reykjavik, the cleanest capital in the world, as they say, my first impression faded away and soon I found myself back on earth. The city landscape had been changed by the human touch and looked different. Here there were beautiful gardens, parks and houses, nicely arranged, and even trees. Trees are rare in Iceland; they are mostly imported and you see them only in the main towns. They are much smaller than our trees and there is even a joke about that: if you ever get lost in the Icelandic forest, the only thing you need to do is stand up and then you'll find your way.

When I arrived in Iceland, the spring had just started, the mountains were still covered with snow and the weather was rather cold, sometimes it was even snowing. This was the time when I could enjoy snow and swimming all together. Due to the multitude of thermal water springs, which provide heating for the whole country, swimming pools are to be found everywhere. Icelanders love swimming and many of them, after a day's work, go to a swimming pool to relax and socialize. I still remember those moments in the Jacuzzi pool, among friendly and talkative Ice-

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landers while I was admiring the snow around us and the snowflakes falling on us from above.

Spring is quite different in Iceland, you may have "all the seasons in one day", that's why it was very difficult for me to know what to put on. You could have snow, rain and sun all in one day. Night is very short in spring there, it gets dark at around 11pm and by 3am daylight has already come. When I left Iceland the night was so short, that it was almost nonexistent. I remember myself standing on the sea shore watching the sunset at midnight and, a few minutes later, watching the sunrise.

The "Golden Circle" trip was another adventure and it consisted of a tour of the main tourist attractions in Iceland. It starts with what they call "the crack", that is, the place where they say that the American and European tectonic plates meet. It is what the name suggests, a crack along the mountains that looks very much like a canyon. This is the place where, in ancient times, people held their administrative meetings, the walls of the crack being then used as sound amplifiers. The trip continued with the visit of a huge waterfall made by a river whose water comes from the heart of the island, where a great glacier is slowly melting. The waterfall was at the geysers, where every 15 minutes or so the hot water springs out of the ground and reaches admirable heights.

Another experience was my visit to a lake and situated at 3 hours boat ride from the main land. It is a very small fishermen island, but it has its own beauty and elegance. At that time there was a tree on the island, I don't know if they planted something meaningful, but even so it was a cute and attractive place. There I had the chance to visit the youngest mountain on earth, formed by a volcanic eruption in the 1970's. There is still some volcanic activity going on underneath, the heat from it radiates through the whole mountain up to the top. It is enough to dig a few shovels deep and you could burn your hand. Well, they choose to bake bread instead and I had the privilege to taste from the delicious bread they bake in the mountain.

Iceland is full of surprises, it is a land of ice and fire, but at the same time it is such a quiet and peaceful country that you hardly hear of it, if it weren't for the volcanoes which sometimes break the silence and send a cloud over the world saying: "Don't forget, Iceland exists". Yes, Iceland exists, there, over the icy waters of the Atlantic and also in my heart and memory forever.

Andrei Senuc, E-R, I

## Great memories of a French carnival

24th March 2009, Poitiers

An ordinary day, just like any other. The sun lingers at my window. The rays cover my bed giving me a ticklish sensation. What a beautiful morning. I always wake up full of energy on these amazing spring days. Today I have no time to waste. I have to go to the university because I have to give an oral presentation. Each foreign student has to talk about their country for no more than ten minutes. I am thrilled. I have some great things to say about Romania and I know they will ask me a lot of questions. I am not nervous at all. There is no question they could ask without me knowing the exact answer. I guess I am too self-confident but I have always thought of this as one of my best qualities.

On my way to the university I have this feeling that something great is going to happen today. My usually monotonous pace suddenly turns into an alert and joyful cadence. Hundreds of students are on the street. They are singing something, but I can't figure out what the exact lyrics of their song are. Out of curiosity, I dare ask someone about what is happening today. Well, the agitation is not caused by a strike, as one may always suspect in a country like France, but by a more important thing. A sort of carnival is organized each spring in the center of the city. What a childish thing, I say to myself. A costume parade? What for? It can't be Halloween, because I'm in France, not in America and it's March, not the end of November. I am sure nobody will go to see or participate in such a thing. It makes no sense to me.

However, I have friends who are interested in such things, so I let myself persuaded, almost dragged and dropped in the middle of this carnival. One of the rules is that anyone who is wearing a costume doesn't need to pay for their bus ticket, but I prefer to pay for it and not look stupid wearing any odd-looking outfit.

Once there, I am thrilled by the street spectacle. These are the most inspired costumes I have ever seen. I am particularly impressed by the outfit of a little girl trying to imitate a rich person from the bourgeoisie.

She is wearing long black gloves that are actually painted on her hands with special colors - the one who did it was a true artist, I am sure. Her dress is long and red and she has an oversized hat on her tiny head. She even walks as if she were a true aristocrat.

The streets of the city are covered in confetti. It is snowing with them, as if we were in a fairytale. Their initial playful dance up in the sky is followed by a gentle, almost melancholy fall on the ground. It is getting darker and darker and the costumes seem to disappear into thin air. I can only see shadows and silhouettes. Nevertheless the carnival continues until late at night.

As I am walking down the street I see a giant ant coming towards me. It looks something like those Chinese dragons that are used in Asian parades. If you were caught in the middle of the circle made by that ant you had to go along with the flow and walk and dance with the others the cucaracha song, which perfectly suits this big ant costume. There are men walking on stilts, even a ventriloquist with a strange doll that is giving me goose bumps when the puppet master makes her talk. It isn't that scary, because he tells a lot of jokes and people laugh a lot, but the fact that he can transfer his voice to a doll seems incredibly funny and weird at the same time...

This carnival has cast a spell on me. I certainly can't cover all the little stories that made this experience into a unique one. It's a complete carnival, with its richness of colours, its restless movement, its joyful moments and a certain order governing its apparent chaos. It's past 1 a.m. Tomorrow I'm going on a road trip to the Atlantic Ocean. I just hope that in the morning, the sun will fill my room again with its warm sparkling rays. Maybe I'll dream of my perfect outfit for next year's carnival. One may never know what the future has in store.

Eileyns Ştiucă, E-F, III

## Vietnam, my love (I)



A few years ago, I was so surprised when my boss called me and told me about a new project in which I was going to participate: the pre-commissioning, commissioning and operating of the first ever built power plant in Vietnam, whose main activity would be the production and refinement of chemical fertilizers.

It is always very difficult when you sign a new contract, but now it was the hardest, because the location was so exotic and far away. The only thing I knew about Vietnam was the infamous war in the 1970's. I also remembered that groups of Vietnamese students had studied in Romanian universities before and this made me think that I would not be a complete stranger to some of them perhaps.

So, after complex medical investigations (the whole area of Vietnam had been affected by the bird flu), I said good-bye to my family and off I went! It was a two-day flying journey, the longest yet in my entire life (13 hours of flight, not counting the hours spent in airports). I was going towards sunrise and this made me feel as if I was going on a spiritual journey, maybe I was going to be reborn, as Buddha teaches his followers (Buddha is not mentioned here by

chance, as Buddhism is the religion of the Vietnamese).

Now, as I look back at those two years I spent there, I realize the Vietnamese are very similar to the Romanians. Many people laugh at this idea, but I assure you there are good reasons why I think this way. Let me explain them to you.

Geographically speaking, Vietnam neighbours with a great empire in the north, China (we neighbour with a big country in the north ourselves: it is Russia). As usual, this situation causes troubles, since powerful empires will never quite understand that small countries and civilizations need their own freedom and rights. The Vietnamese have been forced, just as the Romanians were, to fight for their lands and they worship their heroes and past history. One particularly cherished figure is that of Tran Hung Dao, whose greatness is equal in Vietnam to that of Stephen the Great in Romania.

Another historical and geographical similarity between Vietnam and Romania is that their relation with another neighbouring country, Cambodia, is very much like our relation with Hungary. Their best friend, just like ours, lies in the east – it is the sea: the South China Sea. On the sea-shore there I had the opportunity to visit one of the most beautiful resorts in the world, Vung-Tau. It was from this harbour, in fact, that the American troops left for their country, together with thousands of Vietnamese friends who had been at last permitted to go with them (due to Ho Chi Minh, the country was now liberated).

One aspect of the Vietnamese history is worth mentioning here in particular. Vietnam became a French colony beginning with the 17th century, and this had a crucial influence on their culture, as they had to change their alphabet and started to use Latin

characters instead of the Chinese ones they had used before. Nowadays, Vietnam is the only country of Indochina where people write with Latin letters. If we come back to Romania for a moment, we also need to remember that we were very much influenced by the French culture and that, even though we are surrounded by Slavic cultures, we maintained our Latin character.

Let me now go back to my personal experience in Vietnam. I landed in Saigon, the capital of Southern Vietnam, and this was the first contact with the country. They say that every city has its own perfume. Well, Saigon's "perfume" was an air completely different from that of my native Romania – its high degree of humidity made it quite suffocating at first.

On my way to the hotel, I noticed that the people were very slow and relaxed and I wondered why. I soon found out that their view on life was totally different from the Western view. Europeans and Americans are taught by their Christian religion that they only have one life and this makes them hurry all the time and be very agitated and preoccupied to achieve their purposes during their lifetime. In Vietnam, nobody worries about where they are going, they just think about going, that's all. Their most profound belief is that in order to enjoy something one needs to be relaxed. One cannot attain happiness and joy unless one is able to taste everything very slowly. Pleasure becomes possible only when you have time to waste.

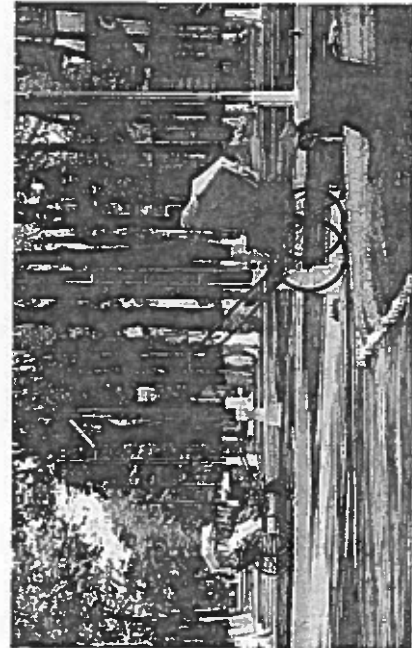
Later on, when I was in a helicopter, I could see the image of the relaxed Vietnamese from above. It was really amazing to watch the street spectacle. Thousands of motorcycles and taxis were moving as



if they were a frozen river slowly melting. I was watching the people through the window and they were smiling to me, some of them had climbed on their cars and sometimes, at street junctions, they had a good time pushing one another and some of them fell, but they immediately stood up and started everything all over again. In Bucharest, this would end at the police station, but here life is a hit-and-run matter, with no serious punishment.

One of the things that make the Vietnamese behave so shockingly to us is their Buddhist metaphysics. I think it influenced me a lot, too, because I always remember the time I spent there as a sort of rebirth, one of the most important of my life. I did not become a Buddhist myself, but I enjoyed everything there to the full. Next time I will tell you more about it.

Relu Dorofte, E-R, I



## A literary zodiac



Hans Christian Andersen



Welcome to the ordinary story  
You are strong, so don't you worry  
You will see the face of danger  
If you talk too much to strangers.  
So watch your back and be cautious,  
Or you will suffer something atrocious  
No matter who and where you are.



George Orwell



You may feel like in a farm,  
But, please, keep your special charm.  
Try to step up and be free,  
Be the one you want to be,  
Just believe in destiny.  
You have always been a dreamer  
And I know you'll be a winner.



William Shakespeare



My dear Taurus, you will feel and see  
All the stories written by me  
Come true in your personal reality.  
Don't get entrapped by your own confusions  
And just try to avoid the great disillusion.  
Don't get scared, it makes you sweat.  
In the end you will find your Romeo/Juliet.



J.K. Rowling



You are strong, since you're a Leo  
You can truly be a hero!  
There's the pigeon that brings news,  
You will find your magic muse.  
Monsters, ghosts, two-headed lizards  
Will attack the mighty wizard.  
Just be careful 'cause this year  
You will have a lot to fear.  
Do not lose your hopes and dreams  
Pain's not always what it seems.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle



Here's the truth, but you can't see it,  
You may have to fight to prove it.  
You'll have to confront with danger  
And indeed you'll feel much anger,  
But, my dear Watson, trust me,  
In the end you'll surely find it.



Agatha Christie



A secret is tricky and will do  
Anything to capture you,  
Like a mouse-trap I'd say,  
But I know you'll find a way.  
Even on those chilly nights,  
When you see just black and white,  
Wondering what on earth you'll do  
Without hints or any clue..  
You can end your own story,  
You'll find happiness, don't worry!



H.G. Wells



Here we are, back from the future,  
Where I saw you smart and greater.  
You were dancing in the rain  
Full of fame, defeating pain.  
I saw Libra's smiling face  
Defying life's twisting maze.  
I think I will see you soon.



Edgar Allan Poe



I spoke with the raven and it told me  
You will be what you always wanted to be,  
Either a ruler or a star,  
A great personality by far.  
But you must beat your demons first  
And try to defeat your power thirst.  
A bird will bring you hope for tomorrow,  
And kill your sadness and your sorrow.



Sylvia Plath



Since you live in your bell jar  
You've forgotten who you are,  
But you know you'll die and rise  
Growing stronger every time.  
You'll be loved, you will be wise.  
With your hopes and your moon,  
I think I will see you soon.



Charles Dickens



Take a deep breath and prepare,  
You will see yourself elsewhere,  
Traveling in the middle of nowhere.  
The adventure tastes so sweet.  
All you have to do is dare.



Jonathan Swift



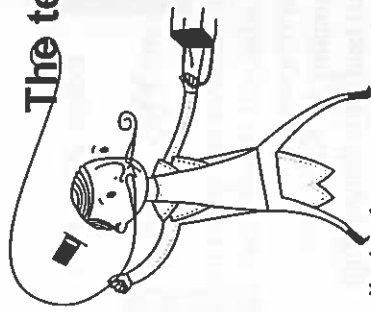
You will step on other people,  
You will look like a huge creature.  
They will scream, but you'll not hear  
That for you the end is near.  
You'll be drowned in your own pride  
Lacking love, you will lack light.  
But don't despair, you still can try  
To find your own blue happy sky.



Douglas Adams



You will find a golden fish,  
So don't throw it away.  
It just wants to be your friend,  
So let it stay.  
You may find that it's like you.  
It's a fish, but it has powers  
That can always so much help you.  
Just be careful what you wish.



## The teacher as a lion tamer

3  
Be an intern. Once you've exposed yourself to some general experience working with lions and students, find an internship in which you can gain further experience and use the education you've obtained. Places to inquire about internships include big-cat rescue facilities, wild-animal sanctuaries and also schools or colleges.

The similarity between a teacher and a lion tamer can sometimes be astonishing. You may ask yourself why I thought of such a simile. Well... if you just think about what steps are needed to be taken in order to become a lion tamer and about the ones needed for becoming a teacher you will see that there is almost no difference between them.

First let's define the terms. A teacher is a person who helps students learn something in a school, college or university by giving lessons, while a lion tamer is a person who 'teaches' lions to be calm and to obey the one who is training them. In order to become a lion tamer or a teacher you need to follow the following steps.

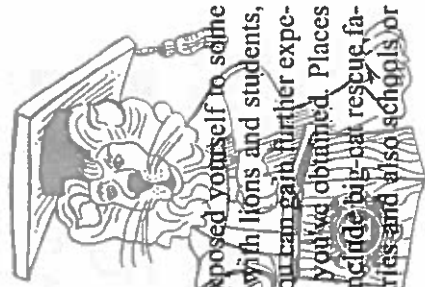
1

Go to college. If you want to be taken seriously as a lion tamer, you must get some college education in the zoology or veterinary medicine area, with a specialization in big cats. Attend general courses in veterinary medicine, animal behavior and animal safety. The more formal education you have, the better chances you have of becoming a lion tamer. If you want to become a teacher you also have to get some college education in the area of philology and even zoology because some of the students sometimes behave like animals. After all, one needs to know what one is dealing with (in order to know how to treat it: as a lion, as a bull or even as a pig). The more formal education you get, the better chances you have of becoming 'a mad teacher' or a gossiped teacher.

2

Get lots of experience... for both jobs. Find out how you can volunteer or be a locum tenens at lion-rescue facilities, zoos or wild-animal parks or even a school. Seek out volunteer positions that are specifically oriented toward working with lions and students. You may start out with minimal interaction, if any at all. Stick with it and you'll move up into more hands-on interaction.

28



4

Distribute your resume. Conduct some research to figure out which direction you want to go using your lion-taming and teaching experience. Some potential employers to consider as a lion tamer include circuses, wild animal shows, zoos, animal rescue and sanctuary facilities as well as wild animal parks, schools or colleges.

As you can see the four stages are the same for both lion tamers and teachers. Even if the jobs seem different the only difference lies in their names. The 'beings' you are going to teach are almost the same because they all are hard to control and also difficult to understand, but the difference between them is that a lion is always going to be an intelligent animal, while some of the students can be either human or animal, but never intelligent.

The society wants lions and students to be admirable and obedient and, in order to make them so, teachers and lion tamers need to show them how to express their feelings in front of the audience.

Andreea Pärvu, E-R, II



## The battle

My sword! I see it trembling by my side.  
It seems to fear the task ahead  
My hand is steady, my focus crystal clear.

My eyes watch the spectacle before me and prepare for the whirlwind of images that won't make any sense. I feel as though an arrow has pierced my head and has forgotten to exit on the other side, but it doesn't bother my concentration...and the steady pace of my horse relaxes me. I feel no pity...no remorse...I feel nothing. I urge my spurs inside my horse's ribs and join the battle. A well coordinated dance or pure chaos has begun for me. A volley of attacks and counters...one hand severed...straight through the stomach... across the chest... one thrust deep inside the other's heart...and off with his head. There is an order to this, but it is not will...it is but training. And then...as out of nowhere I feel heavy as though the burden of old age has overcome me... my sword seems blunt...my vision is now dimmed. What is this? Why has my hand begun to shake? Why is my sword getting heavier? Damned cowards...they found me out and pierced my will to fight. I won't give in... I still have so much to do. I can see the arrowhead coming out of my chest...they hit me in my back.

I grip my sword once more and hold it tight  
My wings back...my body ready for the fight

To great kings I swore m allegiance  
How I step on empty shells that once were brothers  
I feel their souls pushing me to vengeance  
But steadily their voices become mutters

The battle is won...my enemies gather round me still, but after all I may feel peace...one sound...one touch...one gentle wind caressing me...one arrow through my broken heart. I kiss the earth and say goodbye... I will fly and join my brothers... forever on the golden wings of valkyries...forever cold.

Poems by Cristian Bărgăoanu, E-R, III





## Riddles

In confinement I'm chained every day  
 Yet my enemies need not be crowing  
 To my chain I have always a key,  
 And no prison can keep me from going.  
 Small and weak are my hands I'll allow,  
 Yet for striking my character's great,  
 Though ruined by one fatal blow  
 My strokes, if hard pressed, I repeat.  
 I have neither mouth, eye nor ear  
 Yet I always keep time as I sing,  
 Change of season I never need fear,  
 Though my being depends on the spring.  
 Would you wish, if these hints are too few,  
 One glimpse of my figure to catch?  
 Look round! I shall soon be in view  
 If you have but your eyes on the watch.

Jane Austen

God gave us this type of vacation  
 And in every country it has become sort of a fashion.  
 Nobody can live or work without it,  
 It is found in every week.  
 Kids wait for it so they can play  
 Adults wait for it so they at home can stay.  
 Everyone knows that we need it,  
 So noone should ever take it  
 From us adults or kids.  
 Can you guess what it is?

Bogdan Căciulcanu, E-F, I

*I would give you some  
 clues,  
 did I not think that the  
 answers  
 are so obvious!*

