

P.G DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
MAHARAJA COLLEGE, ARA
B.A III
MJC -III ENGLISH

Q. Critically analyse the poem *A Little Distance* by Vikram Seth

Text

*A little distance from the waterfall
By a small pool the yellow beach towel lies
On a long warm rock, and near it azaleas grow
And the shadows of thin fish fall
Across the speckled stones, and a light breeze blows
Rippling the skin of the pool, first this way, then that.
A blue-tailed lizard suns itself
And we ourselves as the sun burns through a cloud
Into the rocks, into our cold bones.*

*Tired, tired, my mind melts in the sun.
An ant crawls over my ankle. I sit up: there
You lie, beautiful, half-nude on the white pebbles,
Cream-coloured breasts open to the breeze and the sky
And a few lines of silver hair in the brown
To announce the burden of your twenty-eight years.
To be chaste, how frustrating for minutes,
How uncomplicated for days - to order fish, chives,
To discuss the rats in our room when the morning gongs
Sound out the monastery routine. To be
Just friends, reverting in a richer vein
To what we were, the way that we once were,
The way I hope, for a while, we may remain.*

*After six days, with nothing voiced, we are
Unexpected, companionable,
Perhaps like an aging couple. We do not
Even kiss goodnight yet wake to friendliness.
It is perhaps the tiredness in my mind
Or the fear of the structure set. Unsettledness
Is what I have come to fear. We sit away
From the noise of the waterfall, by a clear pool,
Less conscious of the risk that is not worthwhile
Than of the warm grey boulders and the slopes
That circumscribe our peace, and the warmth of the sun*

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*Melting us into the stones, and the azaleas
Mauve against a sea of pine.*

We don't know what the poem is about. Is it about internalized repression of the truth or love and love? Is it about friendship, as he also has a female character and is contacting her to express his feelings? He is sensually observing the events that are taking place a short distance away. He enjoys sitting with her and watching her when she visits, but what has occurred that he still loves her without having the guts or the heart to do so? Is she merely someone to be with for fun?

Since the story is similar to those we encounter in other nations, we are unaware of all of that. She is a temporary buddy, not a lifelong one.

*The pleasures of swimming and bathing together are the focus of *A Little Distance*, which is all about an enjoyable journey. They both take a sunbath and relish the benefits of this activity. In addition to adding to the poem's beauty, the seashore, swimming pool, stones, and waterfall create a picturesque and landscaped scene that displays the entire vista.*

As a co-visitor, Seth takes pictures of the moments spent together and the pictures they share. Foreign tourists come and go, just as the travellers do, and just as friends arrive and go, so do the items in this place. It is not particularly noteworthy. It's all about lounging on the beach and enjoying the sun. Everything seems shallow and hollow. Nothing can be felt as deeply within oneself. Vikram Seth hasn't understood what Indian love is.

The poet begins his poetry with a yellow beach towel on a long, warm rock beside the pool, a short distance from the waterfall. As the poem gets closer, azaleas bloom and the shadows of the slender fish fall across

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the spectacled stones. The pool's surface is rippled by the wind. There is sunniness around, and a blue-tailed lizard suns itself.

The poet's mind melts in the light and he feels exhausted. He sits up as an ant crawls across his ankle. On the white stones, however, she rests half-naked, her cream-colored breasts exposed to the sky and breeze, and a few brown lines of silver hair. It's hard to be chaste here, to be honest. How quickly the days go by! They eat breakfast together and continue to converse, just like friends.

Nothing happens in between them once the six days have passed. They are still the same. Despite their friendship, they remain uneasy. The poet has stated it all, and as a result, the days continue to pass. That is the only way to express affection and give her a kiss. The final words they say to each other at night are "goodnight" and "goodbye." They are little more than friends—modern friends. However, if the poet is merely a friend, we have no idea what her interests are. They continue to observe the surroundings while sitting by the pool. He claims that this is not what they want to do. What is he hoping to accomplish? What do they want to do, this he says it not. What does he want to do, he also says it not. What is in their hearts it is very difficult to take out? What partners or friends are they, we do not know it.

The poem "A Little Distance" is about fleeting friendship and love, as well as a trip to the seashore where one can enjoy the warm sunshine that permeates the surrounding rocks and waterfall. Nothing of disposition or proposition is present; everything is concealed by it.

The live-in connection is exploited in the poem. The central theme of Seth's life tale is his indecisiveness about whether or not to fall in love. His preference for gay and bisexual relationships stems from this, and

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He loves and likes her on the one hand, but reacts to her in a different way on the other. We have no idea what the sight of his love and affection is, and we are unable to express it. This is really a private issue. The poem makes us think of Goa, where tourists from other countries come for a vacation, a tour, a chance to relax, and a change.

Despite the fact that we refer to him as an Indian English poet, he is essentially an NRI who travels back and forth between India and America. He is an economics student who has studied abroad to the fullest extent possible and has traveled to numerous Asian and European nations.

He was drawn to Chinese poetry while conducting studies in China. Before it became well-known, the Writers Workshop in Calcutta released his first poetry manuscript, which had not been approved in the West. Whether he is referred to as the "suitable" or "unsuitable"

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youth of Indian English poetry, his name and accolades describe how far he has come—so far that it is impossible to turn back.

*In the contemporary love narrative *A Little Distance*, partnerships are what pave the road, not hearts. They are not life partners or lovers of any type; they are just fellow travelers, tourists, and guests. This is the same situation as when vacationers, picnickers, and hotel employees go out. A person who frequently travels from place to place does not feel a connection to anyone. The subject of discussion may also be a foreign girl taking a bath on the seashore while he looks at her with a great deal of love and affection. The blonde beauty may not be from India, but rather the West, as only Vikram can confirm if asked and he responds. By what means did he meet her? Atlantic or the Pacific? Where? We do not understand if she is some ex-girlfriend of his.*

Dr. Vandana Singh