

**APRIL 1999**

## **PROVINCIAL EXAMINATION**

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**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

# **ENGLISH 12**

### **GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Insert the stickers with your Student I.D. Number (PEN) in the allotted spaces above and on the **back** cover of this booklet. **Under no circumstance is your name or identification, other than your Student I.D. Number, to appear on this booklet.**
2. Ensure that in addition to this examination booklet, you have a **Readings Booklet** and an **Examination Response Form**. Follow the directions on the front of the Response Form.
3. **Disqualification** from the examination will result if you bring books, paper, notes or unauthorized electronic devices into the examination room.
4. All multiple-choice answers must be entered on the Response Form using an **HB pencil**. Multiple-choice answers entered in this examination booklet will **not** be marked.
5. For each of the written-response questions, write your answer in **ink** in the space provided in this booklet.
6. When instructed to open this booklet, **check the numbering of the pages** to ensure that they are numbered in sequence from page one to the last page, which is identified by

**END OF EXAMINATION**.

7. At the end of the examination, place your Response Form inside the front cover of this booklet and return the booklet and your Response Form to the supervisor.

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## ENGLISH 12 PROVINCIAL EXAMINATION

- |  | Value                   | Suggested Time     |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. This examination consists of <b>five</b> parts: |                         |                    |
| PART A: Editing Skills                             | 10                      | 10                 |
| PART B: Reading Comprehension                      | 21                      | 35                 |
| PART C: Poetry                                     | 20                      | 30                 |
| PART D: Prose                                      | 25                      | 50                 |
| PART E: Composition                                | 24                      | 55                 |
|  | <b>Total: 100 marks</b> | <b>180 minutes</b> |
2. Electronic devices, including dictionaries and pagers, are **not** permitted in the examination room.
3. The **Readings Booklet** contains the prose and poetry passages you will need to answer certain questions on this examination.
4. The time allotted for this examination is **three hours**. *Use your time wisely.* Adequate writing space has been provided for average-sized writing. Do not attempt to determine the length of your answers by the amount of writing space available.

## PART A: EDITING SKILLS

Total Value: 10 marks

Suggested Time: 10 minutes

**INSTRUCTIONS:** The following passage has been divided into numbered sentences which may contain problems in grammar, usage, word choice, spelling, or punctuation. One or more sentences may be correct. No sentence contains more than one error.

If you find an error, select the underlined part that must be changed in order to make the sentence correct and record your choice on the Response Form provided. Using an HB pencil, completely fill in the circle that corresponds to your answer. If there is no error, completely fill in circle D (no error).

### ENCOUNTER WITH DRAGONS

1. When we were in Indonesia recently, my wife and me had a chance to see the famous Komodo dragons.  
(A) (B) (C) (D) no error
2. These astonishing creatures inhabit the island of Komodo. Which is a small island near the tropical paradise of Bali in Indonesia.  
(A) (B) (C) (D) no error
3. They are not actually dragons of the fire-breathing variety, but are the largest Monitor lizards in the world, their name is a result of their primitive appearance.  
(A) (B) (C) (D) no error
4. “Even if they don’t breathe fire, they are very impressive lizards!” exclaimed Pat Kelly, our tour director aboard *The Bali Sea Dancer*, in his briefing prior to us disembarking for the island.  
(A) (B) (C) (D) no error

5. He also informed us that they grow as long as three metres in length, weigh as  
 (A)  
 much as 150 kilograms, and ate as much as 90% of their body weight at a single  
 (B)  
 meal, usually selecting deer, wild pigs, or water buffalo. (D) no error  
 (C)
6. Because dragons have very potent bacteria in their mouths, they need only inflict  
 (A) (B)  
 a wound with their razor-sharp teeth and wait for their victim's to die of infection, a  
 (C)  
 process that takes about three days. (D) no error
7. From a distance of up to eleven kilometres, they can track their pray using  
 (A)  
 a very keen sensor in their forked tongues; the dragons then  
 (B)  
dislocate their jaws to gulp down their catch. (D) no error  
 (C)
8. Armed with this information, we were somewhat nervous when the ship's dinghy  
 (A)  
 dropped us on the beach, however, we were determined to see these strange and  
 (B)  
primitive beasts for ourselves. (D) no error  
 (C)
9. A park ranger, armed only with a forked stick, led us three kilometres along a path  
 (A) (B)  
 through the eerily silent jungle to a compound. (D) no error  
 (C)
10. To our dismay, we discovered that the compound was to enclose the tourists not  
 (A) (B)  
 the dragons, which were wandering around freely nearby and watching us  
 (C)  
 with enough interest to make us more than a little uncomfortable. (D) no error

**OVER**

**PART B: READING COMPREHENSION**

**Total Value: 21 marks**

**Suggested Time: 35 minutes**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read “One Magical Bloom” on pages 1 and 2 in the **Readings Booklet**. Select the **best** answer for each question and record your choice on the Response Form provided.

11. The narrator stopped telling people that her clematis had bloomed because they
- A. did not believe her.
  - B. made fun of her clematis.
  - C. told her about their gardens.
  - D. did not share her enthusiasm.
12. In paragraph 3, the blooming of the clematis was “magical” because the
- A. slugs had eaten it.
  - B. cat had damaged it.
  - C. narrator had neglected it.
  - D. narrator’s spouse had cut its roots off.
13. In paragraph 3, the word “slugfest” is an example of
- A. pun.
  - B. euphemism.
  - C. onomatopoeia.
  - D. understatement.
14. In paragraph 3, the word “disdainful” means
- A. hungry.
  - B. vicious.
  - C. scornful.
  - D. indifferent.
15. For many years, the
- A. clematis grew but did not bloom.
  - B. narrator forgot about the clematis.
  - C. garden became filled with clematis plants.
  - D. other garden plants choked out the clematis.

16. The reason the narrator liked gardening was because it
- A. reminded her of Ontario.
  - B. gave her a chance to get some fresh air.
  - C. was a spiritual connection to her parents.
  - D. provided her family with fresh vegetables.
17. According to paragraph 8, her mother's garden was important to the narrator when she was growing up because it provided
- A. a sense of "home".
  - B. a link to her mother.
  - C. flowers to brighten the home.
  - D. a contact with the natural world.
18. The plant that flowered in winter was the
- A. salvia.
  - B. pansy.
  - C. marigold.
  - D. amaryllis.
19. In paragraph 13, the narrator suggests that her grandmother died because she
- A. lost her determination.
  - B. became dependent on others.
  - C. could not endure the cold winters.
  - D. could not live without her husband.
20. The narrator and her husband named
- A. the rose after the grandmother.
  - B. their daughter after the clematis.
  - C. the clematis after the grandfather.
  - D. their daughter after the grandmother.
21. The clematis first bloomed on the day
- A. the grandfather died.
  - B. the grandmother died.
  - C. the daughter was born.
  - D. of the daughter's first birthday.

**One Magical Bloom**  
(pages 1 and 2 in the **Readings Booklet**)

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Use the space provided in this booklet for written-response questions. Write your answers in **ink**. You may quote **or** paraphrase. Complete sentences are **not** required in this section.

1. Give **three** reasons why the narrator's grandfather was admired.

a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)

b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)

c) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)

2. Identify **two** stylistic devices and give an example for each device from the passage that classifies this piece as a personal essay.

a) Device: \_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)  
Example: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)

b) Device: \_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)  
Example: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)



3. Give **three** reasons why the narrator now feels that she can plant a rose.

a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)

b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)

c) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)

## PART C: POETRY

Total Value: 20 marks

Suggested Time: 30 minutes

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the poem “Home for the Aged” on page 3 in the **Readings Booklet**. Select the **best** answer for each question and record your choice on the Response Form provided.

22. In line 3, the word “muted” means
- A. loud.
  - B. quiet.
  - C. short.
  - D. harsh.
23. In line 4, the phrase “Their thoughts are leaves” contains an example of
- A. simile.
  - B. metaphor.
  - C. metonymy.
  - D. personification.
24. In line 6, the words “decorously shabby” contain an example of
- A. hyperbole.
  - B. oxymoron.
  - C. synecdoche.
  - D. understatement.
25. Line 8, “The loitering lovers, the boys on bikes, the cars” contains an example of
- A. alliteration.
  - B. dissonance.
  - C. apostrophe.
  - D. internal rhyme.
26. In line 11, the word “discreet” suggests
- A. reckless.
  - B. cautious.
  - C. secretive.
  - D. belligerent.

27. The ending of the poem is
- A. bitter.
  - B. optimistic.
  - C. pessimistic.
  - D. indeterminate.
28. Line 14, “In faded headlines on their dusty brains?” suggests that the old men
- A. have some memory loss.
  - B. suffer vision impairment.
  - C. no longer read the papers.
  - D. have problems with personal care.
29. The poem is an example of
- A. a sonnet.
  - B. free verse.
  - C. a narrative.
  - D. blank verse.





**PART D: PROSE**

**Total Value: 25 marks**

**Suggested Time: 50 minutes**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the story entitled “By the River” on pages 4 to 8 in the **Readings Booklet**. Select the **best** answer for each question and record your choice on the Response Form provided.

30. One reason why Jim may have laughed at the movie characters is because he
- A. is insecure.
  - B. is conceited.
  - C. thinks they are humorous.
  - D. does not understand them.
31. In paragraph 9, the word “engulfed” means
- A. scared.
  - B. blocked.
  - C. shadowed.
  - D. surrounded.
32. The tone of paragraph 19 is
- A. angry.
  - B. ominous.
  - C. romantic.
  - D. humorous.
33. Paragraph 44 suggests that the conductor’s attitude to Crystal is
- A. hopeful.
  - B. scornful.
  - C. annoyed.
  - D. sympathetic.
34. This story takes place in
- A. late spring.
  - B. early spring.
  - C. late summer.
  - D. early summer.

35. By the end of the story, the author suggests that

- A. Jim will not return.
- B. the train will not return.
- C. Crystal will not survive.
- D. Crystal's clothes are tattered and old.

36. The point of view of this story is

- A. objective.
- B. first person.
- C. omniscient.
- D. limited omniscient.









## PART E: COMPOSITION

Value: 24 marks

Suggested Time: 55 minutes

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Using standard English, write a coherent, unified, multi-paragraph composition of 300-500 words on the **topic** below. In your composition, you may apply any effective and appropriate method of development which includes **any combination** of exposition, persuasion, description, and narration.

Use the page headed **Organization and Planning** for your rough work. Write your composition in **ink** on the pages headed **Finished Work**.

9. Write a multi-paragraph composition on the topic below. Your response may draw upon any aspect of your life: your reading, your own experiences, the experiences of others, and so on.

**Topic: Recognizing Truth**

**OVER**

## **Organization and Planning**



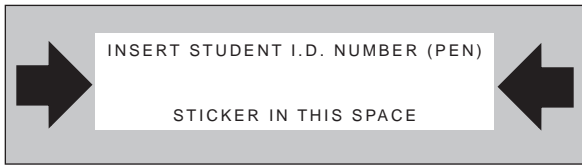












# **ENGLISH 12**

**April 1999**

Course Code = EN

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

# ENGLISH 12

April 1999

Course Code = EN

Score for  
Question 1:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
(3)

Score for  
Question 8:

8. \_\_\_\_\_  
(6)

Score for  
Question 2:

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
(4)

Score for  
Question 9:

9. \_\_\_\_\_  
(24)

Score for  
Question 3:

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
(3)

Score for  
Question 4:

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
(6)

Score for  
Question 5:

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
(6)

Score for  
Question 6:

6. \_\_\_\_\_  
(6)

Score for  
Question 7:

7. \_\_\_\_\_  
(6)

**ENGLISH 12**  
**READINGS BOOKLET**  
**APRIL 1999**

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## PART B: READING COMPREHENSION

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the following passage and answer the questions on pages 4 to 7 in the examination booklet.

adapted from **One Magical Bloom**

by Jennifer Lanthier  
*The Globe and Mail*, August 9, 1995

- 1 My blue clematis<sup>1</sup> bloomed this year. Hardly a news bulletin, I know. I began the day telling friends and relatives in great excitement; then, as they failed to respond in kind, my tone became quieter and my approach off-hand. Eventually, I stopped telling people.
- 2 Gardening is taking a bashing these days—too much of a yuppie pastime, perhaps, or worse, too identified with excess, with those wealthy enough to hire others to do the dirty work for them. Whatever the cause, you know it’s out of control, unhip, way uncool, when *Chatelaine* magazine puts out a special gardening supplement. Or when your neighbour, frustrated from digging out garden beds, takes to saying each weekend: “I’m off to the garden centre, to punch somebody.”
- 3 But the blooming of my clematis is a magical thing. Purchased four years ago (back when a slugfest in the garden centre had an entirely different meaning), it was my first real attempt at gardening, beyond impatiens and pansies. I proudly bore it home and left it for perhaps three minutes, under the indifferent eye of my non-gardening spouse and the disdainful gaze of the cat. When I returned with transplanting tools, I found my husband in paroxysms of giggles, the bare root of the clematis neatly severed from its impressive, two-foot growth of vine. The cat, his new collar and leash a bold experiment, had a mouthful of elegant green tendrils. I planted the root anyway. The cat was banished indoors.
- 4 Years passed and the gardens, front and back, became awash with fashionable perennials<sup>2</sup>: poppies, periwinkle, peonies, bergamot, bleeding heart, monkshood, delphinium, sea lavender, bell flower, flax and phlox. Neighbours to the east and west took to gardening, too, and beds of vegetables, annuals<sup>3</sup> and perennials found a place beside shrubbery and garden sheds. But still the clematis refused to bloom. Yet it did not die; each year it pushed new, leafy growth along the lattice. But the deep blue petals so longed for did not appear.
- 5 A single clematis is no big deal, friends with gardens said. Just because some plants thrive doesn’t mean all will—maybe your soil is too acid, too clay, too dry, too alkaline. Perhaps you need more sun or less, a more sheltered corner, less competition from other plants. Some clematis need to be cut back, others left alone—which kind did you plant, they wondered. But the label and instructions had been lost in the maelstrom of the cat attack. I had no idea what I was dealing with.
- 6 Somehow, coaxing a bloom—just one—from this stubborn plant became the only thing barring me from enjoying my garden. And my garden had assumed a significance in my life that is hard to convey. You might assume it’s just a generational thing: an impulse over which I had no control.

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<sup>1</sup> clematis: *a flowering vine*

<sup>2</sup> perennials: *plants that grow back every year*

<sup>3</sup> annuals: *plants that last for one season only*

**OVER**

- 7 In truth, my garden is a link to my family.
- 8 I can see my mother skeptically raising her eyebrows, too aware of my coming of age in a time of annuals. But during a childhood that seemed to be spent moving around from one small Ontario town to another, I found my mother's garden a touchstone, a proof of home.
- 9 Whenever our family moved, we could look forward to the brave red of her salvia, the velvety faces of her pansies and the welcoming scent of marigolds and alyssum. When we lived in Northern Ontario, we waited eagerly for Christmas and my grandfather's gift of amaryllis bulbs to grow indoors, the instructions followed precisely, the growth monitored obsessively, until at last the showy blossom brought a winter garden to our snowbound house.
- 10 My grandfather, my father's father, was the acknowledged head of gardening in the family. His Montreal garden enchanted passersby, who caught their breath at the variety of roses he cultivated year after year. His wardrobe was permanently mired in the 1940s (while my grandmother's, oddly, was stuck in the 1960s), and their dilapidated three-storey Victorian house went far too many years in need of basic repairs. The two things most important to them, however, were always in abundant supply: inside the house, books; outside the house, plants.
- 11 My grandfather was a perfectionist, whether pruning roses, ruthlessly uprooting a rare mistake of a laburnum, or letting the raspberry canes achieve just the right tangledness in the wild corner of the garden. He grew everything in his garden, it seemed, from the vivid scarlet of bergamot to the deep, deep blue of clematis, on a trellis near his shed. But the roses were his pride. He worked his way steadily through their beds, explaining his actions with gentle clarity, then barking out related quotations from Shakespeare's sonnets, or Latin phrases, daring you to admit, at the age of 10, that you did not recognize or understand.
- 12 I bought my clematis when he died. Not a rose. How can I explain this? It would have seemed presumptuous.
- 13 My grandmother—the woman my grandfather called his Irish rose, the most beautiful flower in his garden—died the following year. She was a very determined woman. It was her wish that she not endure another cold Montreal winter without him, another summer of dying roses.
- 14 Last year, my clematis bloomed: one single, spectacular, deep-blue flower. It opened on the morning my first child, my daughter, was born. Pausing in front of the verandah, reluctant to leave for the hospital, I pointed it out to my husband. He refused to be distracted from the two minutes remaining between contractions.
- 15 But later that morning, we gave our daughter my grandmother's name.
- 16 This year, as spring unfolded, I watched the clematis curiously. Would it? Wouldn't it? On the morning of my daughter's first birthday, and not a day before, a half-dozen brilliant blue flowers unfurled their petals.
- 17 Next year, perhaps, I'll plant a rose.

## PART C: POETRY

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the following poem and answer the questions on pages 8 to 11 in the examination booklet.

### Home for the Aged

by Elizabeth Brewster

- 1 The old men sit, five of them on a bench,  
Half sleeping, half awake, dazed by the sun,  
In the muted afternoon, between one broadcast ball game and the next  
Their thoughts are leaves that drift across a sky perpetually autumn.
- 5 Their hands are folded: they have done with the Sunday papers.
- Decorously shabby, decently combed and clean,  
They watch with half-closed eyes the passers-by,  
The loitering lovers, the boys on bikes, the cars  
Rushing eagerly to some scene of active life.
- 10 Their lives are folded up like the papers, and who can know  
Whether their years passed sober and discreet,  
With the measured, dutiful, regular click of a clock,  
Or whether some old violence lingers still  
In faded headlines on their dusty brains?
- 15 What boyhood do they wander in, what middle age forget?  
And do they watch their dwindling stock of time  
With hope, or resignation, or despair?



## PART D: PROSE

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the following selection and answer the questions on pages 12 to 16 in the examination booklet.

adapted from **By the River**

by Jack Hodgins

- 1 But listen, she thinks, it's nearly time.
- 2 And flutters, leaf-like, at the thought. The train will rumble down the valley, stop at the little shack to discharge her husband, Jim Styan, and move on. This will happen in half an hour and she has a mile still to walk.
- 3 Crystal Styan walking through the woods, through bush, is not pretty. She knows that she is not even a little pretty, though her face is small enough, and pale, and her eyes are not too narrow. She wears a yellow wool sweater and a long cotton skirt and boots. Her hair, tied back so the branches will not catch in it, hangs straight and almost colourless down her back. Someday, she expects, there will be a baby to play with her hair and hide in it like someone behind a waterfall.
- 4 She has left the log cabin, which sits on the edge of the river in a stand of birch, and now she follows the river bank upstream. A mile ahead, far around the bend out of sight, the railroad tracks pass along the rim of their land and a small station is built there just for them, for her and Jim Styan. It is their only way in to town, which is ten miles away and not much of a town anyway when you get there. A few stores, a tilted old hotel, a movie theatre.
- 5 Likely, Styan would have been to a movie last night. He would have stayed the night in the hotel, but first (after he had seen the lawyer and bought a few things she'd asked him for) he would pay his money and sit in the back row of the theatre and laugh loudly all the way through the movie. He always laughs at everything, even if it isn't funny, because those figures on the screen make him think of people he has known; and the thought of them exposed like this for just anyone to see embarrasses him a little and makes him want to create a lot of noise so people will know he isn't a bit like that himself.
- 6 She smiles. The first time they went to a movie together she slouched as far down in the seat as she could so no one could see she was there or had anything to do with Jim Styan. She once thought she'd like to study at a university or somewhere, if Jim Styan hadn't told her grade ten was good enough for anyone and a life on the road was more exciting.
- 7 What road? she wonders. There isn't a road within ten miles. They sold the rickety old blue pickup the same day they moved onto this place. The railroad was going to be all they'd need. There wasn't any place they cared to go that the train, even this old-fashioned milk-run outfit, couldn't take them easily and cheaply enough.
- 8 But listen, she thinks, it's nearly time.

- 9 The trail she is following swings inland to climb a small bluff and for a while she is engulfed by trees. Cedar and fir are dark and thick and damp. The growth on the scrub bushes has nearly filled in the narrow trail. She holds her skirt up a little so it won't be caught or ripped, then runs and nearly slides down the hill again to the river's bank. She can see in every direction for miles and there isn't a thing in sight which has anything to do with man.
- 10 "Who needs anybody?" Styan said, long ago.
- 11 It was with that kind of question—questions that implied an answer so obvious only a fool would think to doubt—that he talked her first out of the classroom and then right off the island of her birth and finally up here into the mountains with the river and the moose and the railroad. It was as if he had transported her in his falling-apart pickup not only across the province about as far as it was possible to go, but also backwards in time, perhaps as far as her grandmother's youth or even farther. She washes their coarse clothing in the river and depends on the whims of the seasons for her food.
- 12 "Look!" he shouted when they stood first in the clearing above the cabin. "It's as if we're the very first ones. You and me."
- 13 When they moved in he let his moustache grow long and droopy like someone in an old, brown photograph. He wore overalls which were far too big for him and started walking around as if there were a movie camera somewhere in the trees and he was being paid to act like a hillbilly instead of the city-bred boy he really was. He stuck a limp felt hat on the top of his head like someone's uncle Hiram and bought chickens.
- 14 "It's a start," he said.
- 15 "Six chickens?" She counted again to be sure. "We don't even have a shed for them."
- 16 He stood with his feet wide apart and looked at her as if she were stupid. "They'll lay their eggs in the grass."
- 17 "That should be fun," she said. "A hundred and sixty acres is a good-sized pen."
- 18 "It's a start. Next spring we'll buy a cow. Who needs more?"
- 19 Yes, who? They survived their first winter here, though the chickens weren't so lucky. The hens got lice and started pecking at each other. By the time Styan got around to riding in to town for something to kill the lice a few had pecked right through the skin and exposed the innards. When he came back from town they had all frozen to death in the yard.
- 20 At home, back on her father's farm in the blue mountains of the island, nothing had ever frozen to death. Her father had cared for things. She had never seen anything go so wrong there, or anyone have to suffer.
- 21 Listen, it's nearly time, she thinks. And knows that soon, from far up the river valley, she will be able to hear the throbbing of the train, coming near.

- 22 She imagines his face at the window. He is the only passenger in the coach and sits backwards, watching the land slip by, grinning in expectation or memory or both. He tells a joke to old Bill Cobb the conductor but even in his laughter does not turn his eyes from outside the train. One spot on his forehead is white where it presses against the glass. His fingers run over and over the long drooping ends of his moustache. He is wearing his hat.
- 23 Hurry, hurry, she thinks. To the train, to her feet, to him.
- 24 She has rounded the curve in the river and glances back, way back, at the cabin. It is dark and solid, not far from the bank. Behind the poplars the cleared fields are yellowing with the coming of fall but now in all that place there isn't a thing alive, unless she wants to count trees and insects. No people. No animals. It is scarcely different from her very first look at it. In five years their dream of livestock has been shelved again and again.
- 25 Once there was a cow. A sway-backed old Jersey.
- 26 "This time I've done it right," he said. "Just look at this prize."
- 27 And stepped down off the train to show off his cow, a wide-eyed beauty that looked at her through a window of the passenger coach.
- 28 "Maybe so, but you'll need a miracle, too, to get that thing down out of there."
- 29 A minor detail to him, who scooped her up and swung her around and kissed her hard, all in front of the old conductor and the engineer who didn't even bother to turn away. "Farmers at last!" he shouted. "You can't have a farm without a cow. You can't have a baby without a cow."
- 30 She put her head inside the coach, looked square into the big brown eyes, glanced at the sawed-off horns. "Found you somewhere, I guess," she said to the cow. "Turned out of someone's herd for being too old or senile or dried up. Come on, Bossy," she said. "This is no place for you."
- 31 "She's not impressed," she said. "She don't see any barn waiting out there either, not to mention hay or feed of any kind. She's smart enough to know a train coach is at least a roof over her head."
- 32 The four of them climbed over the seats to get behind her and pushed her all the way down the aisle. Then, when they had shoved her down the steps, she fell on her knees on the gravel and let out a long unhappy bellow. She looked around, bellowed again, then stood and high-tailed it down the tracks. Before Styan even thought to go after her she swung right and headed into bush.
- 33 Styan disappeared into the bush, too, hollering, and after a while the train moved on to keep its schedule. She went back down the trail and waited in the cabin until nearly dark. When she went outside again she found him on the river bank, his feet in the water, his head resting against a birch trunk.
- 34 "Maybe she'll come back," she said.
- 35 "A bear'll get her before then, or a cougar. There's no hope of that."
- 36 She put a hand on his shoulder but he shook it off.

- 37 He'd dragged her from place to place right up this river from its mouth, looking and looking for his dream, never satisfied until he saw this piece of land. For that dream and for him she had suffered. She smiles, though, at the memory. Because even then he was able to bounce back, resume the dream, start building new plans. She smiles, too, because she knows there will be a surprise today; there has always been a surprise. When it wasn't a cow it was a bouquet of flowers or something else. She goes through a long list in her mind of what it may be, but knows it will be none of them. Not once in her life has anything been exactly the way she imagined it. Just so much as foreseeing something was a guarantee it wouldn't happen, at least not in the exact same way.
- 38 "Hey you, Styan!" she suddenly calls out. "Hey you, Jim Styan. Where are you?" That train, that kinky little train will drop her husband off and then pass on like a stay-stitch thread pulled from a seam.
- 39 "Hey you, Styan! What you brought this time? A gold brooch? An old nanny goat?"
- 40 And when the train comes into sight she is there, on the platform in front of the little sagging shed, watching. She stands tilted far out over the tracks to see, but never dares—even when it is so far away—to step down onto the ties for a better look.
- 41 The boards beneath her feet are rotting and broken. Long stems of grass have grown up through the cracks and brush against her legs. A squirrel runs down the slope of the shed's roof and yatters at her until she turns and lifts her hand to frighten it into silence.
- 42 She talks to herself, sings almost to the engine's beat—"Here he comes, here he comes"—and has her smile already as wide as it can be. She smiles into the side of the locomotive sliding past and the freight car sliding past and keeps on smiling even after the coach has stopped in front of her and it is obvious that Jim Styan is not on board.
- 43 Unless of course he is hiding under one of the seats, ready to leap up, one more surprise.
- 44 But old Bill Cobb the conductor backs down the steps, dragging a gunny sack out after him. "H'lo there, Crystal," he says. "He ain't aboard today either, I'm afraid." He works the gunny sack out onto the middle of the platform. "Herbie Stark sent this, it's potatoes mostly, and cabbages he was going to throw out of his store."
- 45 She takes the tiniest peek inside the sack and yes, there are potatoes there and some cabbages with soft brown leaves.
- 46 The engineer steps down out of his locomotive and comes along the side of the train rolling a cigarette. "Nice day again," he says with barely a glance at the sky. "You makin' out all right?"
- 47 "Hold it," the conductor says, as if he expects the train to move off by itself. "There's more." He climbs back into the passenger car and drags out a cardboard box heaped with groceries. "The church ladies said to drop this off," he says. "They told me make sure you get every piece of it, but I don't know how you'll ever get it down to the house through all that bush."

- 48 “She’ll manage,” the engineer says. He holds a lighted match under the ragged end of his cigarette until the loose tobacco blazes up. “She’s been doing it—how long now?—must be six months.”
- 49 The conductor pushes the cardboard box over against the sack of potatoes and stands back to wipe the sweat off his face. He glances at the engineer and they both smile a little and turn away. “Well,” the engineer says, and heads back down the tracks and up into his locomotive.
- 50 The conductor tips his hat, says “Sorry,” and climbs back into the empty passenger car. The train releases a long hiss and then moves slowly past her and down the tracks into the deep bush. She stands on the platform and looks after it a long while, as if a giant hand is pulling, slowly, a stay-stitching thread out of a fuzzy green cloth.

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