

SOMEBODY'S MOTHER

Let us do these activities before we read.



I Recall a time you helped someone.
Write two words describing:

1. What were your feelings after you did so?
2. What might have been the feelings of the person whom you helped?

Share your answers with your classmates and teacher.

II Work in pairs. Read the words given below. Circle the words you would associate with an elderly person and underline the words you would associate with a school student. Share the reasons for your choices with your classmates and teacher.

strong	worried	trembling	hastening
firm	bent	merry	grey
slow	guide	helpful	

III Read the lines.

*The woman was old and ragged and grey
And bent with the chill of the Winter's day.*

Select the suitable meaning of 'ragged' as used in these lines. There are other four meanings given below. Discuss with your classmates and teacher.

1. (of clothes) old and torn; synonym: shabby
 - *a ragged jacket*
2. Having an outline, an edge, or a surface that is not straight or even
 - *a ragged coastline*
3. Not smooth or regular; not showing control or careful preparation
 - *I could hear the sound of his ragged breathing.*
 - *Their performance was still very ragged.*
4. (Informal) very tired, especially after physical effort
 - *The elderly man was ragged after climbing the stairs.*



Let us read

The woman was old and ragged and grey
And bent with the chill of the Winter's day.

The street was wet with a recent snow
And the woman's feet were aged and slow.

She stood at the crossing and waited long,
Alone, uncared for, amid the throng

Of human beings who passed her by
Nor heeded the glance of her anxious eyes.

Down the street, with laughter and shout,
Glad in the freedom of "school let out,"

Came the boys like a flock of sheep,
Hailing the snow piled white and deep.

Past the woman so old and grey
Hastened the children on their way.

Nor offered a helping hand to her—
So meek, so timid, afraid to stir

Lest the carriage wheels or the horses' feet
Should crowd her down in the slippery street.

At last came one of the merry troop,
The gayest laddie of all the group;

He paused beside her and whispered low,
"I'll help you cross, if you wish to go."



Her aged hand on his strong young arm
She placed, and so, without hurt or harm,

He guided the trembling feet along,
Proud that his own were firm and strong.

Then back again to his friends he went,
His young heart happy and well content.

“She’s somebody’s mother, boys, you know,
For all she’s aged and poor and slow”,

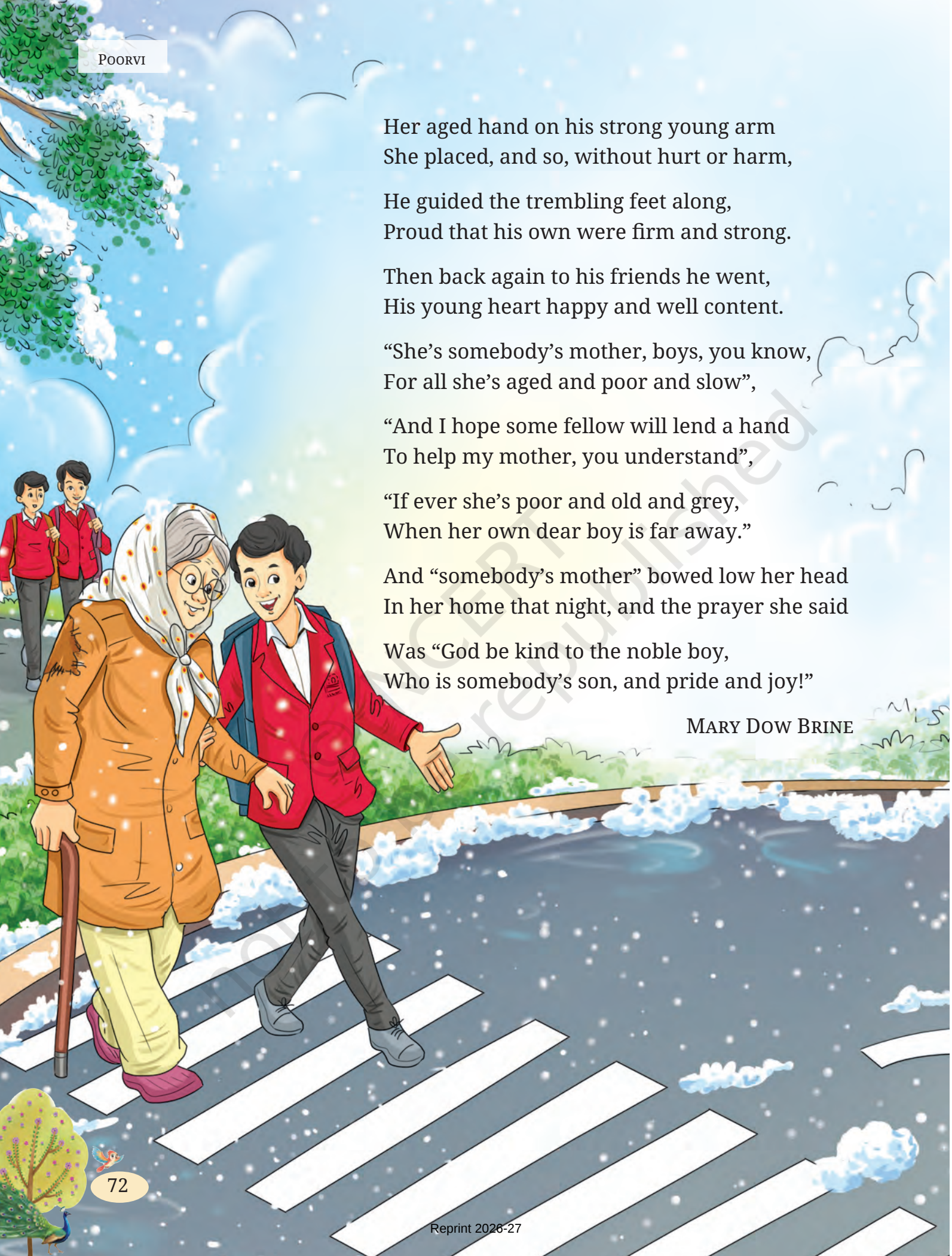
“And I hope some fellow will lend a hand
To help my mother, you understand”,

“If ever she’s poor and old and grey,
When her own dear boy is far away.”

And “somebody’s mother” bowed low her head
In her home that night, and the prayer she said

Was “God be kind to the noble boy,
Who is somebody’s son, and pride and joy!”

MARY DOW BRINE



Let us discuss

I Arrange the events of the poem in the correct order of occurrence. Share your answers with your classmates and teacher.

1. The boy returned to his friends, feeling proud of what he had done.
2. The old woman stood alone at the crossing, hesitant to move.
3. A group of schoolboys passed by, playing, and laughing.
4. The boy offered to help the old woman cross the street.
5. The woman prayed for the boy who helped her.
6. The children hurried past the old woman without offering help.
7. The woman placed her hand on the boy's arm, and he guided her safely across the street.
8. The boy thought about his own mother and hoped someone would help her one day.

II Fill in the blanks by choosing the correct answer from the options given in the brackets.

1. The central theme of the poem is _____. (kindness and empathy/ adventure and courage)
2. The tone of the poem is _____. (humorous and playful/ sympathetic and hopeful)
3. The poem is written in couplets with _____ lines in each stanza. (four/two)
4. The structure of the poem gives a rhythmic flow that reflects both the _____. (narrative and emotions/story's pace and message)
5. The poem follows a rhyme scheme of _____. (AABB/ABAB)

III Pick examples from the poem for the following poetic devices.

1. Simile
2. Alliteration
3. Repetition

IV Complete the following sentences appropriately explaining the imagery.

1. The poem uses imagery to describe scenes of a bustling street. We know this by the phrase _____.
2. The line 'The street was wet with a recent snow' suggests a cold and _____ weather, emphasising the woman's helplessness.

V Complete the following sentence with a suitable reason.

The poet repeats the phrase *Somebody's mother* because it _____.

VI Complete the analogy:

The old woman: vulnerable and neglected :: The young boy: _____.



Let us think and reflect

I Read the given extracts and answer the questions that follow.



1. *The woman was old and ragged and grey
And bent with the chill of the Winter's day.
The street was wet with a recent snow
And the woman's feet were aged and slow.*

(i) What does the phrase 'ragged and grey' refer to ?

- A. the woman's emotional state that day
- B. the woman's old and worn-out appearance
- C. the weather conditions of the particular day
- D. the colour of the street and the surroundings

(ii) Complete the following sentence with a suitable reason:

The woman was 'bent' with the chill of the Winter's day because she was _____.

(iii) Identify the fact and opinion from the following sentences:

- A. The street was wet with recent snow. _____
- B. The woman was too weak to cross the street on her own.

(iv) Why do you think the woman's feet were described as 'aged and slow'?

2. *He guided the trembling feet along,
Proud that his own were firm and strong.
Then back again to his friends he went,
His young heart happy and well content.*

(i) What does the contrast between the 'trembling feet' of the old woman and the 'firm and strong' feet of the boy emphasise?

(ii) Fill in the blank given below by selecting the correct option from the brackets.

- The poem tells us that the boy was 'proud' that his feet were strong.
- This tells us that the boy was _____. (arrogant about being strong/grateful for his ability to help)

(iii) What is the boy most likely to tell his friends on getting back?

- A. I'm so glad I could help her.
- B. I'm worried about her safety.
- C. I'm surprised she forgot to thank me.
- D. I'm thankful for all your support.

(iv) Rectify the false sentence given below.

The young boy's actions were driven by a logical decision.

II Answer the following questions.

1. What might be the old woman's fears as she waited for a long time at the crossing?
2. How does the poet show the helplessness of the old woman? Support your answer with evidence from the poem.
3. Why does the boy decide to help the old woman? What does this tell us about him?
4. How was the boy's approach towards the old woman different from that of the other boys in the group?
5. Justify the appropriateness of the title of the poem.
6. What does the poem suggest about the role of empathy and humanity in society?





Let us learn

I The grid given below has the antonyms of the words from the text. Locate these words in the grid horizontally, vertically, and diagonally. One example has been done for you. You may refer to a dictionary.

firm meek merry kind anxious bent

R	D	T	C	J	A	B	R	N
G	M	F	R	A	G	I	L	E
C	A	P	U	K	N	D	F	H
A	E	B	D	R	F	S	S	C
L	A	O	E	W	E	T	A	A
M	L	L	W	C	F	L	D	S
G	X	D	P	O	R	D	A	R
P	E	A	S	E	F	U	L	F
Q	S	N	O	I	V	E	E	T
S	T	R	A	I	G	H	T	L

II Match the words from the text given in Column 1 with the underlined phrases in Column 2.

Column 1	Column 2
1. hastened	(i) The mother heard the baby <u>move slightly</u> in the cradle at night.
2. heeded	(ii) It is our duty to <u>give</u> support to the poor.
3. stir	(iii) The students <u>worked quickly</u> to complete the project and submit it on time.
4. lend	(iv) All the boxes were <u>kept in a heap</u> at one place.
5. piled	(v) They <u>came forward</u> to help us when we were in need.
6. offered	(vi) The stranded people were brought to safety because they <u>paid attention to</u> our advice.

- III In the poem, the poet uses the idiom 'lend a hand' which means 'help somebody'. Some more idioms using 'hand' are given in Column 1. Match these idioms with their meanings in Column 2. You may refer to a dictionary.

Column 1	Column 2
1. get out of hand	(i) do something new
2. try your hand at something	(ii) applaud somebody
3. give somebody a free hand	(iii) work together
4. give somebody a big hand	(iv) become difficult to control
5. work hand in hand	(v) be very busy
6. have your hands full	(vi) allow somebody to do something with full freedom

- IV Complete the following analogy by filling in the blanks with the correct words from the poem.

- _____ : winter :: heat : summer
- hurt : _____ :: old : aged
- whispered : shouted :: humble : _____
- eyes : _____ :: legs : walk
- having a lot of money : wealthy :: densely packed people : _____

Read the lines from the poem given below.

Lest the carriage wheels or the horses' feet

Should crowd her down in the slippery street.

'**Lest**' is a conjunction that means to prevent something bad or unpleasant from happening. To better understand its usage in a sentence, we can replace 'lest' with 'just in case'.

For example, in the sentence '*She showed all the documents **lest** we doubt her*', the word 'lest' can be replaced with 'just in case' to mean that she showed the documents to prevent any doubt.





Let us listen

I You will listen to a woman read the special broadcast of the news. As you listen, arrange the pictures in the correct sequence of the events that took place. (Transcript for teacher on page 99)



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

II You will once again listen to the special broadcast of the news. As you listen, complete the following sentences with one to three exact words.

1. The woman was having a difficult time staying afloat due to the _____.
2. Rohan leapt into the river to save the woman without any _____.
3. Rohan's act of bravery was witnessed by _____.
4. Rohan was honoured at the Vigyan Bhawan for his incredible courage and _____.
5. Rohan proved that when it comes to saving lives, age is _____.



Let us speak

- I Read aloud the list of words from the poem that end in 'ed'. As you read, focus on the final sound of each word and place them in the appropriate columns. One example has been done for you.

ragged	aged	waited	heeded
offered	paused	guided	whispered

/id/sound	/d/ sound	/t/ sound
ragged	heeded	paused

Note: Adjectives that come before a noun and end with 'ed' have /id/as the final sound.

- II Work in pairs. Narrate an incident where you helped someone in the past. Take turns to speak and use the cue cards given below.

at school classmate explaining a concept	in the neighbourhood cleanliness campaign
at the market place elderly carrying bags	in the playground a friend gets injured

You may use the following prompts.

Beginning the Story	Describing the Experience
• It all started when... • The day began like any other... • I still remember... • At that moment, I realised...	• At that moment, I realised... • I was completely taken by surprise... • The next few hours were... • I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw...
Beginning the Story	Describing the Experience
• I was overjoyed/thrilled/ extremely satisfied • A wave of relief/joy/excitement washed over me... • I felt a mixture of emotions... • I have never felt...	• From that day on... • This memory reminds me to always... • This experience taught me the value of... • In the end, I realised...





Let us write

I Write a diary entry of a day you helped someone in need. Remember to include the following points while writing it.

- ✓ Start with a sentence describing the day.
- ✓ Mention whom you helped.
- ✓ Explain the situation in which the other person needed help.
- ✓ Add the place and time of the day when the situation arose.
- ✓ Describe how you helped the other person.
- ✓ Describe the reaction of the person you helped.
- ✓ Mention how you felt during and after helping the person.
- ✓ Conclude by mentioning why you would do something like this again.

You may begin like this:

26 April 20xx, Saturday

8:00 p.m.

Dear Diary,

Today, I feel was a special day...



Let us explore

I Did you know that even Earth has been referred to as mother in the ancient scriptures of India? In section 12.1.12 of *Prthvī-Sūkta* (hymn-to-the-earth) of *Atharva Veda*, Earth is referred to as mother and us as her children by stating:

माता भूमिः पुत्रोऽहं पृथिव्याः ।

It can be translated as 'Earth is my mother and I am her child'.

II Work in groups of four. Find out the names of countries that refer to their country as 'motherland' and a few others as 'fatherland'. Share your findings with your classmates and teacher.

III Read the poem and enjoy.

A Nation's Strength

Not gold, but only men can make
A people great and strong...
Men who for truth and honour's sake
Stand fast and suffer long.
Brave men who work while others sleep,
Who dare while others fly...
They build a nation's pillars deep
And lift them to the sky.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

(Note: Here, men refers to both men and women)

IV Make a gratitude card for your mother/grandmother to thank her for at least five things that she does for you. Also write two things that you would do regularly to help them. Use recycled material to make and decorate the card.

