

**ADVANCED GCE  
ENGLISH LITERATURE**

Comparative and Contextual Study (Closed Text)

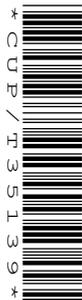
READING BOOKLET

**MONDAY 25 JUNE 2007**

**2713/RB**

Afternoon

Time: 2 hours 15 minutes



- **The first fifteen minutes are for reading the passages in this reading booklet.**
- During this time you may make any annotations you choose on the passages themselves.
- The questions for this examination are given in a separate question paper.
- **You must not open the question paper, or write anything in your answer booklet, until instructed to do so.**
- The Invigilator will tell you when the fifteen minutes begin and end.
- You will then be allowed to open the question paper.
- You will have **two hours** to work on the tasks.

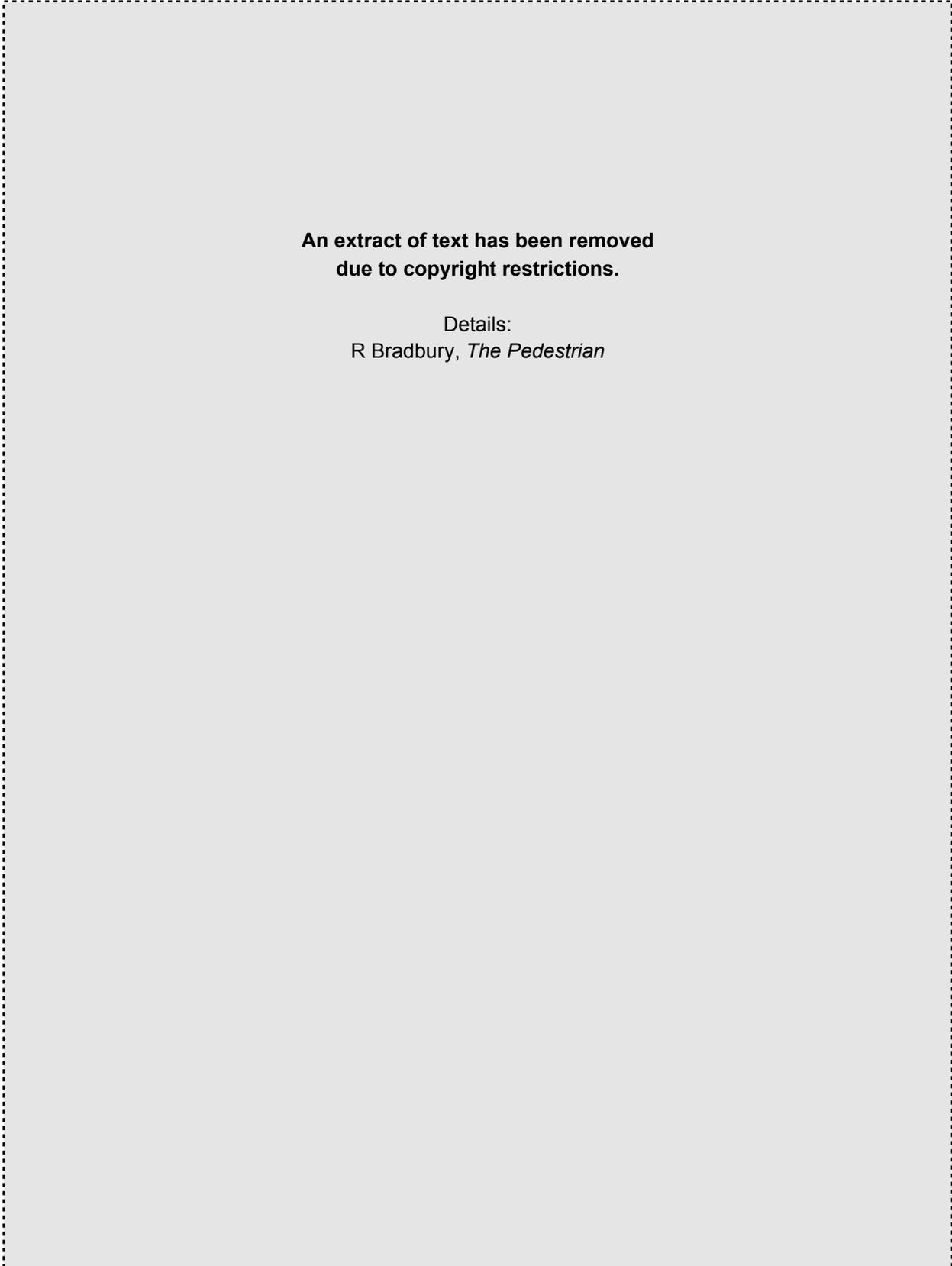
This document consists of **13** printed pages and **3** blank pages.

1 Satire

The passage comes from *The Pedestrian* (1951) by Ray Bradbury.

In this passage, the protagonist, Leonard Mead, is out, alone, taking an evening walk. This short story is set in the year 2053.

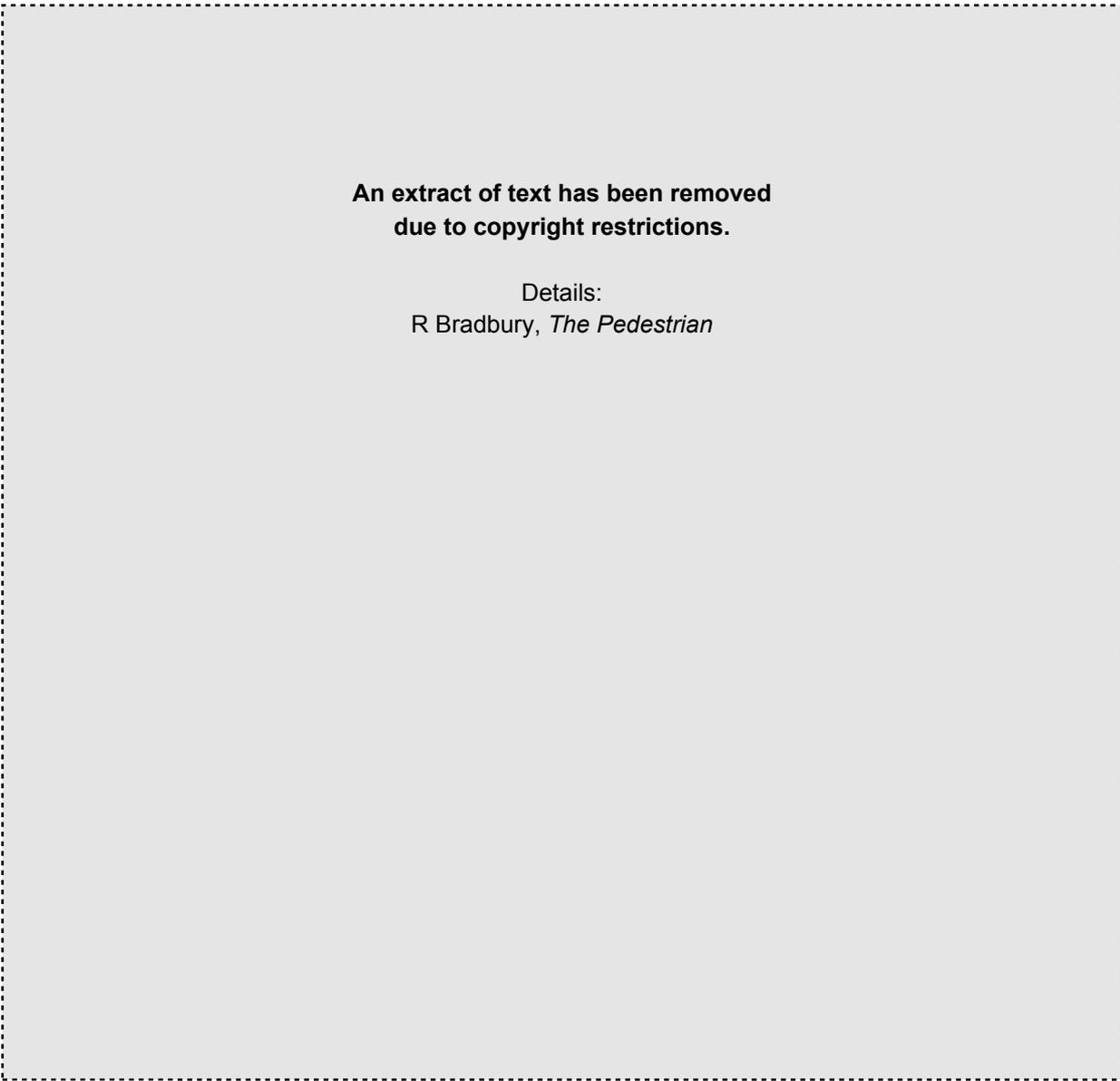
He turned back on



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Details:  
R Bradbury, *The Pedestrian*

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Details:

R Bradbury, *The Pedestrian*

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the chill November night.

## 2 The Gothic Tradition

The passage comes from *The Ash Tree* (1904) by M R James.

The death of Sir Richard in this passage takes place some fifty years after that of his father, Sir Matthew, and in a similar manner. The ash tree of the title grows outside Sir Richard's bedroom window.

So the day passed quietly, and night came, and the party dispersed to their rooms, and wished Sir Richard a better night.

And now we are in his bedroom, with the light out and the Squire in bed. The room is over the kitchen, and the night outside still and warm, so the window stands open.

There is very little light about the bedstead, but there is a strange movement there; it seems as if Sir Richard were moving his head rapidly to and fro with only the slightest possible sound. And now you would guess, so deceptive is the half-darkness, that he had several heads, round and brownish, which move back and forward, even as low as his chest. It is a horrible illusion. Is it nothing more? There! something drops off the bed with a soft plump, like a kitten, and is out of the window in a flash; another – four – and after that there is quiet again. 5 10

*'Thou shalt seek me in the morning, and I shall not be.'*<sup>1</sup>

As with Sir Matthew, so with Sir Richard – dead and black in his bed!

A pale and silent party of guests and servants gathered under the window when the news was known. Italian poisoners, Popish emissaries, infected air – all these and more guesses were hazarded, and the Bishop of Kilmore looked at the tree, in the fork of whose lower boughs a white tom-cat was crouching, looking down the hollow which years had gnawed in the trunk. It was watching something inside the tree with great interest. 15

Suddenly it got up and craned over the hole. Then a bit of the edge on which it stood gave way, and it went slithering in. Everyone looked up at the noise of the fall.

It is known to most of us that a cat can cry; but few of us have heard, I hope, such a yell as came out of the trunk of the great ash. Two or three screams there were – the witnesses are not sure which – and then a slight and muffled noise of some commotion or struggling was all that came. But Lady Mary Hervey fainted outright, and the housekeeper stopped her ears and fled till she fell on the terrace. 20

The Bishop of Kilmore and Sir William Kentfield stayed. Yet even they were daunted, though it was only at the cry of a cat; and Sir William swallowed once or twice before he could say: 25

*'There is something more than we know of in that tree, my lord. I am for an instant search.'*

And this was agreed upon. A ladder was brought, and one of the gardeners went up, and, looking down the hollow, could detect nothing but a few dim indications of something moving. They got a lantern, and let it down by a rope. 30

*'We must get at the bottom of this. My life upon it, my lord, but the secret of these terrible deaths is there.'*

Up went the gardener again with the lantern, and let it down the hole cautiously. They saw the yellow light upon his face as he bent over, and saw his face struck with an incredulous terror and loathing before he cried out in a dreadful voice and fell back from the ladder – where, happily, he was caught by two of the men – letting the lantern fall inside the tree. 35

He was in a dead faint, and it was some time before any word could be got from him.

By then they had something else to look at. The lantern must have broken at the bottom, and the light in it caught upon dry leaves and rubbish that lay there, for in a few minutes a dense smoke began to come up, and then flame; and, to be short, the tree was in a blaze. 40

The bystanders made a ring at some yards' distance, and Sir William and the Bishop sent men to get what weapons and tools they could; for, clearly, whatever might be using the tree as its lair would be forced out by the fire.

So it was. First, at the fork, they saw a round body covered with fire – the size of a man's head – appeared very suddenly, then seem to collapse and fall back. This, five or six times; then a similar ball leapt into the air and fell on the grass, where after a moment it lay still. The Bishop went as near as he dared to it, and saw – what but the remains of an enormous spider, veinous and seared! And, as the fire burned lower down, more terrible bodies like this began to break out from 45

the trunk, and it was seen that these were covered with greyish hair.

All that day the ash burned, and until it fell to pieces the men stood about it, and from time to time killed the brutes as they darted out. At last there was a long interval when none appeared, and they cautiously closed in and examined the roots of the tree. 50

'They found,' says the Bishop of Kilmore, 'below it a rounded hollow place in the earth, wherein were two or three bodies of these creatures that had plainly been smothered by the smoke; and, what is to me more curious, at the side of this den, against the wall, was crouching the anatomy or skeleton of a human being, with the skin dried upon the bones, having some remains of black hair, which was pronounced by those that examined it to be undoubtedly the body of a woman, and clearly dead for a period of fifty years.' 55

<sup>1</sup> A reference to the Book of Job (7:21) in the Bible

### 3 Writing of the Romantic Era

The poem extracts come from *Adonais: an Elegy on the Death of John Keats* (1821) by Percy Bysshe Shelley.

#### XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep –  
 He hath awakened from the dream of life –  
 'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep  
 With phantoms an unprofitable strife,  
 And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife  
 Invulnerable nothings. – *We* decay  
 Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief  
 Convulse us and consume us day by day,  
 And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

#### XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;  
 Envy and calumny<sup>1</sup> and hate and pain,  
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
 Can touch him not and torture not again;  
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain  
 He is secure, and now can never mourn  
 A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;  
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,  
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

#### XLI

He lives, he wakes – 'tis Death is dead, not he;  
 Mourn not for Adonais. – Thou young Dawn,  
 Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee  
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;  
 Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!  
 Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,  
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown  
 O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare  
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

#### XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is heard  
 His voice in all her music, from the moan  
 Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;  
 He is a presence to be felt and known  
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,  
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move  
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own;  
 Which wields the world with never-wearied love,  
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

<sup>1</sup> calumny: slander or malicious misrepresentation

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**PLEASE TURN OVER FOR 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN PROSE**

## 4 20th Century American Prose

The passage comes from *Native Son* (1940) by Richard Wright.

In this passage Bigger and Gus are chatting in a Chicago street.

Bigger took out his pack and gave Gus a cigarette; he lit his and held the match for Gus. They leaned their backs against the red-brick wall of a building, smoking, their cigarettes slanting white across their black chins. To the east Bigger saw the sun burning a dazzling yellow. In the sky above him a few big white clouds drifted. He puffed silently, relaxed, his mind pleasantly vacant of purpose. Every slight movement in the street evoked a casual curiosity in him. Automatically, his eyes followed each car as it whirred over the smooth black asphalt. A woman came by and he watched the gentle sway of her body until she disappeared into a doorway. He sighed, scratched his chin and mumbled. 5

‘Kinda warm today.’

‘Yeah,’ Gus said. 10

‘You get more heat from this sun than from them old radiators at home.’

‘Yeah; them old white landlords sure don’t give much heat.’

‘And they always knocking at your door for money.’

‘I’ll be glad when summer comes.’

‘Me too,’ Bigger said. 15

He stretched his arms above his head and yawned; his eyes moistened. The sharp precision of the world of steel and stone dissolved into blurred waves. He blinked and the world grew hard again, mechanical, distant. A weaving motion in the sky made him turn his eyes upward; he saw a slender streak of billowing white blooming against the deep blue. A plane was writing high up in the air. 20

‘Look!’ Bigger said.

‘What?’

‘That plane writing up there,’ Bigger said, pointing.

‘Oh!’

They squinted at a tiny ribbon of unfolding vapor that spelled out the word: USE ... The plane was so far away that at times the strong glare of the sun blanked it from sight. 25

‘You can hardly see it,’ Gus said.

‘Looks like a little bird,’ Bigger breathed with childlike wonder.

‘Them white boys sure can fly,’ Gus said.

‘Yeah,’ Bigger said, wistfully. ‘They get a chance to do everything.’ 30

Noiselessly, the tiny plane looped and veered, vanishing and appearing, leaving behind it a long trail of white plumage, like coils of fluffy paste being squeezed from a tube; a plume-coil that grew and swelled and slowly began to fade into the air at the edges. The plane wrote another word: SPEED ...

‘How high you reckon he is?’ Bigger asked. 35

‘I don’t know. Maybe a hundred miles; maybe a thousand.’

‘I could fly one of them things if I had a chance,’ Bigger mumbled reflectively, as though talking to himself.

Gus pulled down the corners of his lips, stepped out from the wall, squared his shoulders, doffed his cap, bowed low, and spoke with mock deference: 40

‘Yessuh.’

‘You go to hell,’ Bigger said, smiling.

‘Yessuh,’ Gus said again.

‘I *could* fly a plane if I had a chance,’ Bigger said.

‘If you wasn’t black and if you had some money and if they’d let you go to that aviation school, you *could* fly a plane,’ Gus said. 45

For a moment Bigger contemplated all the ‘ifs’ that Gus had mentioned. Then both boys broke into hard laughter, looking at each other, through squinted eyes. When their laughter subsided, Bigger said in a voice that was half-question and half-statement:

‘It’s funny how the white folks treat us, ain’t it?’

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‘It better be funny,’ Gus said.

‘Maybe they right in not wanting us to fly,’ Bigger said. ‘‘Cause if I took a plane up I’d take a couple of bombs along and drop ’em as sure as hell ...’

They laughed again, still looking upward. The plane sailed and dipped and spread another word against the sky: GASOLINE ...

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‘Use Speed Gasoline,’ Bigger mused, rolling the words slowly from his lips. ‘God, I’d like to fly up there in that sky.’

‘God’ll let you fly when He gives you your wings up in heaven,’ Gus said.

They laughed again, reclining against the wall, smoking, the lids of their eyes drooped softly against the sun. Cars whizzed past on rubber tires. Bigger’s face was metallically black in the strong sunlight. There was in his eyes a pensive, brooding amusement, as of a man who had been long confronted and tantalized by a riddle whose answer seemed always just on the verge of escaping him, but prodding him irresistibly on to seek its solution. The silence irked Bigger; he was anxious to do something to evade looking so squarely at this problem.

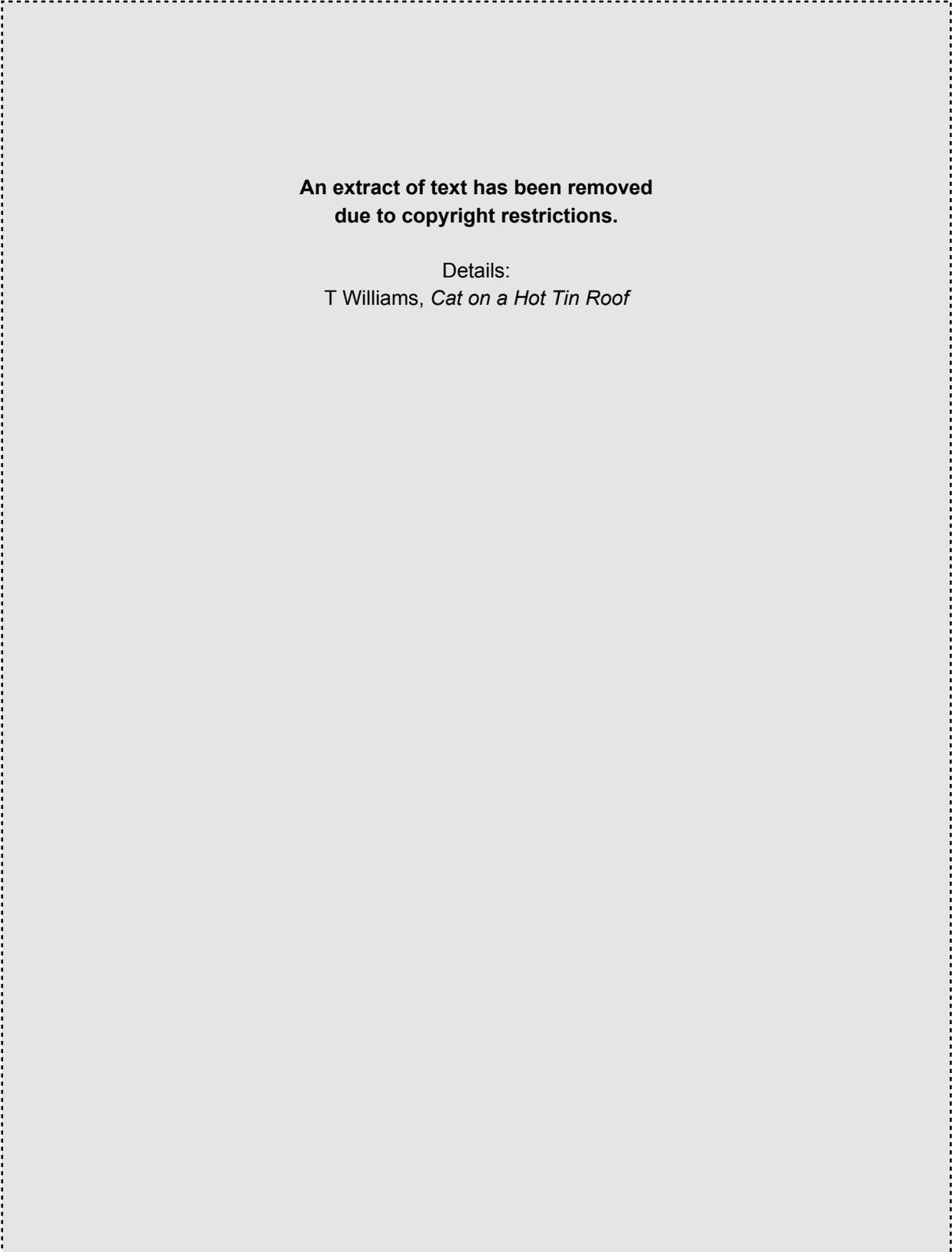
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5 Drama Post-1945

The passage comes from *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) by Tennessee Williams (USA).

In this passage, which takes place on Big Daddy's birthday, Brick confronts his father. Brick knows the results of medical tests that Big Daddy has undergone; Big Daddy doesn't. Brick is an invalid who needs a crutch to help him walk.

BRICK: Who *can* face



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T Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

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*the curtain falls.]*

CURTAIN

<sup>1</sup> Mendacity: lying

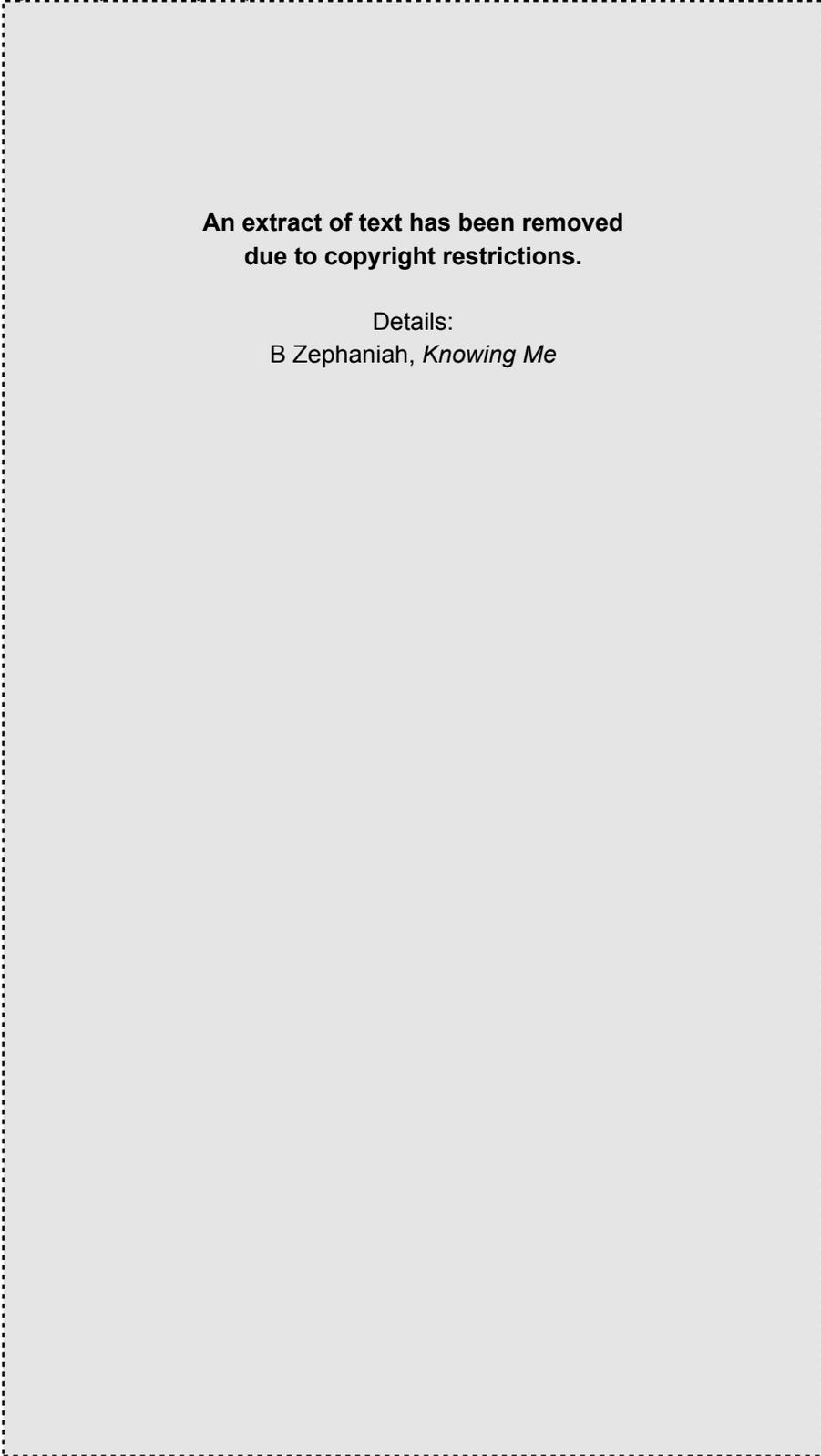
6 Post-Colonial Literature

The poem is written by Benjamin Zephaniah and was first published in 2001.

Benjamin Zephaniah is a contemporary British poet, writer and performer.

**Knowing Me**

According to de experts



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B Zephaniah, *Knowing Me*

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Details:

B Zephaniah, *Knowing Me*

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have an identity crisis.

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