

Feminist Writings
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A Temporary Matter - Part 4

So, hello and welcome to this NPTEL course entitled 'Feminist Writings'. So, we were looking at Jhumpa Lahiri's short story 'A Temporary Matter'. So, with this lecture, we will finish the short story. So, we have already seen or covered most part of the story and we have seen, we have talked about the different themes which correspond to the broader structure of this course 'Feminist Writings'.

We have seen how the whole idea of 'identity', the whole idea of gendered identity is all reconfigured in this story in terms of the husband staying back and cooking meals and the wife going out and doing the job in the real world etc. And then, of course, the whole idea of spatiality and how space produces and reproduces identities - is something which we have seen in the story already.

Now, the point where we ended last time was where these two people; the couple were having a strange or separated, mentally alienated from each other due to the loss of their child. They seem to be coming together very interestingly because of power cuts. So whenever the power cut happens, and this obviously Boston, in America; power cuts are a very uncommon phenomenon.

But whenever the power cut happens for one hour every evening, they come together and they play a game. And that game, that ludic activity of telling things to each other which had not been talked about before - that seems to bring them closer.

That seems to bring them, cover a bit of a distance that had been created between them ever since the loss of their child. So that game of telling each other things begins to brew and then it begins to recreate the conversation, it begins to recreate the connect that they had lost quite evidently over the period of time.

So, we saw the last point, how Shukumar and Shobha, the protagonists in the story, they tell each other things, they confess things to each other, things they have done, things they had lied to each other before. And this whole coming clean and the whole game becomes a

confession game, it becomes a bit of a game about telling things which had not been spoken about before.

And this conversation about non-conversation, conversation about things unsaid; that seems to sort of begin to bring them together in a way which is very organic and of course experiential. So we will start with the point where, you will see how the story, the narrator of the story is commenting on this connect game.

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had been pregnant at the time, her stomach suddenly immense, to the point where Shukumar no longer wanted to touch her. The first time he saw the picture he was lying in bed next to her, watching her as she read. When he noticed the magazine in the recycling pile he found the woman and tore out the page as carefully as he could. For about a week he allowed himself a glimpse each day. He felt an intense desire for the woman, but it was a desire that turned to disgust after a minute or two. It was the closest he'd come to infidelity.

He told Shoba about the sweater on the third night, the picture on the fourth. She said nothing as he spoke, expressed no protest or reproach. She simply listened, and then she took his hand, pressing it as she had before. On the third night, she told him that once after a lecture they'd attended, she let him speak to the chairman of his department without telling him that he had a dab of pâté on his chin. She'd been irritated with him for some reason, and so she'd let him go on and on, about securing his fellowship for the following semester, without putting a finger to her own chin as a signal. The fourth night, she said that she never liked the one poem he'd ever published in his life, in a literary magazine in Utah. He'd written the poem after meeting Shoba. She added that she found the poem sentimental.

Something happened when the house was dark. They were able to talk to each other again. The third night after supper they'd sat together on the sofa, and once it was dark he began kissing her awkwardly on her forehead and her face, and though it was dark he closed his eyes, and knew that she did, too. The fourth night they walked carefully upstairs, to bed, feeling together for the final step with their feet before the landing, and making love with a desperation they had forgotten. She wept without sound, and whispered his name, and traced his eyebrows with her finger in the dark. As he made love to her he wondered what he would say to her the next night, and what she would say, the thought of it exciting him. "Hold me," he said, "hold me in your arms." By the time the lights came back on downstairs, they'd fallen asleep.



As we see, this is what Lahiri write - 'Something happened when the house was dark. They were able to talk to each other again. The third night, after supper, they sat together on the sofa and once it was dark, he began kissing her awkwardly on her forehead and her face and though it was dark, he closed his eyes and knew that she did too.'

So again, the whole idea of kissing, obviously, it carries a sense of intimacy which had been lost, which had been destroyed between them ever since the loss of their child. And we are told over here that, you know, whenever the house went dark... so in a very interesting sense, the darkness - it created an illumination in themselves, it created a light that would help them to connect to each other at that point of time.

Because, you know, we have seen before, how when the light, when the house was normal and functional in terms of light, they would just escape from each other, have dinner separately in their rooms. So Shukumar would have dinner in the study, Shobha would have her dinner in the drawing room and they would hardly talk to each other.

But with the darkness coming in, they were forced to sit together and have dinner and that began to sort of bring them back again. And we are told over here that Shukumar kissed her awkwardly on her forehead and, you know, the darkness sort of helped him do it.

The fourth night, they walked carefully upstairs, to bed, feeling together for the final step with their feet before the landing, and making love with a desperation they had forgotten. So again, the intimacy comes back, the romance comes back, the love comes back. She wept without sound, and whispered his name, and traced his eyebrows with her finger in the dark.

As he made love to her he wondered what he would say to her the next night, and what she would say, the thought of it exciting him. So he is anticipating that this is probably the coming back of normalcy, intimacy, romantic relationship and he keeps wondering what she is going to tell him the next morning. And that thought of, that anticipation of what she is going to tell him next morning after making love - that excites him. 'Hold me', he said, 'Hold me in your arms.'

By the time the lights came back on downstairs, they'd fallen asleep. So again, the whole idea of intimacy, the whole idea of romance comes back with that game about telling each other things they had not spoken about before. So anything, silly things, profound things, funny things, dark things, lies, confessions, all these things were talked about in those games that they played when the lights went out.

And we see how, you know, because of the game, the intimacy comes back; they are able to kiss each other, they are able to make love to each other and they are able to have a conversation with each other with a proper true intimacy that they had enjoyed before the loss of their child.

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When she went upstairs to change, Shukumar poured himself some wine and put on a record, a Thelonius Monk album he knew she liked.

When she came downstairs they ate together. She didn't thank him or compliment him. They simply ate in a darkened room, in the glow of a beeswax candle. They had survived a difficult time. They finished off the shrimp. They finished off the first bottle of wine and moved on to the second. They sat together until the candle had nearly burned away. She shifted in her chair, and Shukumar thought that she was about to say something. But instead she blew out the candle, stood up, turned on the light switch, and sat down again.

"Shouldn't we keep the lights off?" Shukumar asked. She set her plate aside and clasped her hands on the table. "I want you to see my face when I tell you this," she said gently.

His heart began to pound. The day she told him she was pregnant, she had used the very same words, saying them in the same gentle way, turning off the basketball game he'd been watching on television. He hadn't been prepared then. Now he was.

Only he didn't want her to be pregnant again. He didn't want to have to pretend to be happy.

"I've been looking for an apartment and I've found one," she said, narrowing her eyes on something, it seemed, behind his left shoulder. It was nobody's fault, she continued. They'd been through enough. She needed some time alone. She had money saved up for a security deposit. The apartment was on Beach Street. She could walk to work. She had signed the lease that night before coming home.



Okay, so we see how the whole idea of 'what she will say' the day after making love excited Shukumar and we are told 'When she went upstairs to change, Shukumar poured himself some wine and put on a record, a Thelonius Monk album he knew she liked. When she came downstairs, they ate together. She didn't thank him or compliment him. They simply ate in a darkened room in the glow of a beeswax candle. They had survived the difficult time.

They finished off the shrimp; they finished off the first bottle of wine and moved on to the second. They sat together until the candle had nearly burnt away. She shifted in her chair and Shukumar thought that she was about to say something. But instead, she blew out the candle, stood up, turned on the light switch and sat down again.' So again, all these little meticulous details are something which Lahiri really strives on, she really excels in these things.

And this is something which is, we've seen already, when for instance, we read the Dunya Mikhail poem 'The Iraqi Nights' where little objects like teapots, diaries, stories written, children going to school, grocery lists etc - so all these little ordinary objects, they connect to extraordinary emotional situations, they connect to extraordinary experiential situations. And there is a connect between ordinariness and extraordinariness - is something which Lahiri does quite well in her fiction.

And that's one of the things, the distinctive feature in her writing, and that is, the very careful and very keen attention to detail that she has as a writer. "Shouldn't we keep the lights off?" Shukumar asked. She set her plate aside and clasped her hands on the table. "I want you to

see my face when I tell you this" she said gently.' So she is about to tell something momentous and she says, she wants him to see her face when she is telling him this. 'His heart began to pound.

The day she told him she was pregnant, she had used the very same words, saying them in the same gentle way, turning off the basketball game he'd been watching on television. He hadn't been prepared. Now he was.' So, you know, there is an anticipation brewing over here, there is a climax moment in the story where she is about to say something momentous and Shukumar remembers exactly and instantly that these are exactly the words that she used 'I want to see your face when I tell you this.'

When she told him the news of her pregnancy and that was some time ago and he had not been prepared then but he is prepared now. So, a momentous statement is coming up, something big is coming up and that anticipation is beautifully built by the narrative. So, we are told that he is now prepared. Only, he didn't want her to be pregnant again. He didn't want to have to pretend to be happy.

So, we are also told immediately that Shukumar didn't want Shobha to be pregnant again. He didn't want to pretend to be happy. Now comes the conversion, now comes the momentous statement that she is about to tell him. And which is this - 'I've been looking for an apartment and I found one, she said., narrowing her eyes on something, it seemed, behind his left shoulder. It was nobody's fault, she continued. They had been through enough.

She needed some time alone. She had money saved up for a security deposit. The apartment was in Beacon Hill, so she could walk to work. She had signed the lease the night before coming home.' So we are told that this is what she wanted to tell him, that she is thinking of moving out, separating from him, at least in terms of where they live.

So, she tells him that she has found an apartment, she's been looking for an apartment for some time now and she has found one which is very close to her work, so she can walk to work, it is very convenient for her. And she says that she has some money saved up as a security deposit and, you know, she had signed the lease the night before coming home.

So that very night when they came home, that very night when they made love, this is the night when she had signed the lease and now she is telling him that she wants to move out.

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"I've been looking for an apartment and I've found one," she said, narrowing her eyes on something, it seemed, behind his left shoulder. It was nobody's fault, she continued. They'd been through enough. She needed some time alone. She had money saved up for a security deposit. The apartment was on Beacon Hill, so she could walk to work. She had signed the lease that night before coming home.

She wouldn't look at him, but he stared at her. It was obvious that she'd rehearsed the lines. All this time she'd been looking for an apartment, testing the water pressure, asking a Realtor if heat and hot water were included in the rent. It sickened Shukumar, knowing that she had spent these past evenings preparing for a life without him. He was relieved and yet he was sickened. This was what she'd been trying to tell him for the past four evenings. This was the point of her game.



'She wouldn't look at him, but he stared at her. It was obvious that she had rehearsed her lines. All this time, she had been looking for an apartment, testing the water pressure, asking her realtor if heat and hot water were included in the rent.'

So we are told that, you know, all this time that she had been coming home and, you know, having all these meals with Shukumar, played these games with Shukumar, Shukumar knows immediately now that it was also the time she had been looking for an apartment, she had been going through these pragmatic, mundane details like checking the heat and water pipes, checking the different facilities, utilities of the house - all those pragmatic things were being taken care of by her - the same time that she was coming home and, you know, spending this time with Shukumar in terms of the power cut dinners that they were having.

'It sickened Shukumar knowing that she had spent these past evenings preparing for a life without him. He was relieved and yet he was sickened. This was what she'd been trying to tell him for the past four evenings. This was the point of her game.' So now, it is a moment of an epiphany for Shukumar. He knows now that this is what she had been preparing; this is what she had been rehearsing to tell him for a long time now.

And this was the whole point of having these games, the series of games about, you know, telling each other things which they hadn't said before. That maybe now seen in retrospect, that may be now seen as a preparation for this statement of telling him that she is thinking of moving out, she has actually zeroed in on a particular apartment and now she is thinking of

going over there and starting a life of her own, away from him. So this was the point of her game.

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Now it was his turn to speak. There was something he'd sworn he would never tell her, and for six months he had done his best to block it from his mind. Before the ultrasound she had asked the doctor not to tell her the sex of their child, and Shukumar had agreed. She had wanted it to be a surprise.

Later, those few times they talked about what had happened, she said at least they'd been spared that knowledge. In a way she almost took pride in her decision, for it enabled her to seek refuge in a mystery she knew that she assumed it was a mystery for him, too. He'd arrived too late from Baltimore — when



'Now it was his turn to speak. There was something he'd sworn he would never tell her, and for six months he had done his best to block it from his mind. Before the ultrasound, she had asked the doctor not to tell her the sex of the child, and Shukumar had agreed. She had wanted it to be a surprise.' So, obviously, this is America, so you can determine the sex of the fetus.

But they had agreed, they had promised each other that they would not tell this to each other, they would not find out the sex of the fetus. But, Shukumar had agreed, and then we sort of guess now that Shukumar somehow found out, Shukumar somehow managed to find out what was the child - a girl child or a female child. But obviously, he had sworn not to tell her that because of the death of the child, because of the fact that the child was born dead, that massive human tragedy which had consumed them, which had completely eaten them up.

And now, he is thinking of telling her and this would be a form of retaliation, this would be a form of getting back at her, this would be a form of revenge perhaps, in terms of being betrayed by her. This knowledge that she did not have and that one obviously she could have done without would be now told to her. Shukumar is thinking of telling that to her at this point, in a moment of anger, perhaps in a moment of revenge, in a moment of retaliation

perhaps. Because we are told that she had wanted it to be a surprise. She did not want them to find out the sex of the child, she wanted that to be a surprise.

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"I've been looking for an apartment and I've found one," she said, narrowing her eyes on something, it seemed, behind his left shoulder. It was nobody's fault, she continued. They'd been through enough. She needed some time alone. She had money saved up for a security deposit. The apartment was on Beacon Hill, so she could walk to work. She had signed the lease that night before coming home.

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Later, those few times they talked about what had happened, she said at least they'd been spared that knowledge. In a way she almost took pride in her decision, for it enabled her to seek refuge in a mystery. He knew that she assumed it was a mystery for him, too. He'd arrived too late from Baltimore — when it was all over and she was lying on the hospital bed. But he hadn't. He'd arrived early enough to see their baby, and to hold him before they cremated him. At first he had recoiled at the suggestion, but the doctor said holding the baby might help him with the process of grieving. Shoba was asleep. The baby had been cleaned off, his bulbous lids shut tight to the world.



Later, those few times they talked about what had happened she said at least they had been spared that knowledge. So whenever they talked about, later, about the massive tragedy of the death of their child, she had confessed it was a good thing at least that they did not know the gender of the child.

Because, you know, if you think about it experientially, the gender of the child would make the child into a human being and that would actually engulf, that would actually intensify and worsen the human loss, the human tragedy which they suffered, which is the loss of their child.

So she said - at least that knowledge which is denied to them, that knowledge which is spared to them, that was some kind of relief, that was some kind of, you know, that was better in a way because they did not know whether it was a male child or a female child because knowing that, once we have the knowledge, you know you lost a boy or a girl and that would be even more intense, that would be even worse in terms of the impact it will have on you.

In a way, she almost took pride in her decision for it enabled her to seek refuge in a mystery. So there is some mystery, some closure, in some sense which helped her in a certain way, in a certain sense to get over the, not to get over, but at least you address, at least you deal with the tragedy in terms of how, the impact it had on her because like I is said, if that had been

determined, if that had been known to her, then that child would have been a human being in her mind and that would intensify the human loss that she has suffered massively due to the death of her child.

'He knew that she assumed it was a mystery for him, too' - because they promised each other they would not find out. So, he knew she assumed it was a mystery for him too. 'He'd arrived too late from Baltimore when it was all over and she was lying in the hospital bed. But he hadn't. He had early enough to see the baby and to hold him before they cremated him.'

So we are told that he had seen the baby and we are told that it was 'him', it was a 'he' child, it was a male child and they cremated him. 'At first he had recoiled at the suggestion, but the doctor said that holding the baby might help him with the process of grieving. Shobha was asleep. The baby had been cleaned off, his bulbous lids shut tight to the world.'

So you know, this is a very very disturbing description of the death of a child and we are told that when he came back from Baltimore, he had actually seen the baby, the dead baby and he had known that it was a 'he' baby, it was a male child. The doctor told him that at least holding the baby would help him mourn the process of grieving, that might give him a sense of closure, but that obviously was denied to Shobha who was asleep. The baby had been cleaned off, his bulbous lids shut tight to the world.

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she'd been looking for an apartment, testing the water pressure, asking a Realtor if heat and hot water were included in the rent. It sickened Shukumar, knowing that she had spent these past evenings preparing for a life without him. He was relieved and yet he was sickened. This was what she'd been trying to tell him for the past four evenings. This was the point of her game.

Now it was his turn to speak. There was something he'd sworn he would never tell her, and for six months he had done his best to block it from his mind. Before the ultrasound she had asked the doctor not to tell her the sex of their child, and Shukumar had agreed. She had wanted it to be a surprise.

Later, those few times they talked about what had happened, she said at least they'd been spared that knowledge. In a way she almost took pride in her decision, for it enabled her to seek refuge in a mystery. He knew that she assumed it was a mystery for him, too. He'd arrived too late from Baltimore — when it was all over and she was lying on the hospital bed. But he hadn't. He'd arrived early enough to see their baby, and to hold him before they cremated him. At first he had recoiled at the suggestion, but the doctor said holding the baby might help him with the process of grieving. Shoba was asleep. The baby had been cleaned off, his bulbous lids shut tight to the world.

"Our baby was a boy," he said. "His skin was more red than brown. He had black hair on his head. He weighed almost five pounds. His fingers were curled shut, just like yours in the night."

Shoba looked at him now, her face contorted with sorrow. He had cheated on a college exam, ripped a picture of a woman out of a magazine. He had returned a sweater and got drunk in the middle of the day instead. These were the things he had told her. He had held his son, who had known life only within her, against his chest in a darkened room in an unknown wing of the hospital. He had held him until a nurse knocked and took him away, and he promised himself that day that he would never tell Shoba, because he still loved her then, and



And this is what he says to her - 'Our baby was a boy, he said. His skin was more red than brown. He had black hair on his head. He weighed almost 5 pounds. His fingers were curled

shut, just like yours in the night.' So this description of the baby is obviously meant to be told to Shobha in a way that it would be perhaps a retaliation, perhaps a revenge, perhaps a knowledge that he has been suffering and now he wants her to suffer as well, he wants her to know this as well, in a way which will, you know, make it even more difficult for her because he had the knowledge all this time which she did not.

And that gave her some sense of distance from the tragedy, some degree of distance from the tragedy which he hadn't had because he had actually seen the child. And now he is describing the child in details in terms of everything - the baby was boy, his skin was more red than brown, he had black hair on his head, he weighed almost 5 pounds.

His fingers were curled shut, just like yours in the night - so all these little descriptions - the curled finger which were exactly like what his mother's fingers were when she slept at night, and the black hair on his head, the skin being more red than brown and the weight of the baby. So all that makes the baby a human being. And that of course makes the tragedy immediately more, exponentially more human in quality, exponentially more human in depth, in darkness.

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Shobha looked at him now, her face contorted with sorrow. He had cheated on a college exam, ripped a picture of a woman out of a magazine. He had returned a sweater and got drunk in the middle of the day instead - these are the things he had told her. He had held her

son, who had known life only within her, against his chest in a darkened room, in an unknown wing of the hospital.

He had held him until a nurse knocked and took him away and he promised himself that he would never tell Shobha, because he still loved her then, and it was only thing in her life that she wanted to be a surprise. So this point in the story is about the complete collapse, the complete closure of love, the complete end, the complete culmination of love and he had wanted this to be not known to Shobha.

He had wanted this to be a mystery to Shobha, he had wanted Shobha not to know this, at least in a way that would help her, you know, deal with this tragedy as it is said. So, Shobha is now, take a look at the description - her face is contorting with sorrow, it is like a massive pain, spasmodic pain, a visceral pain in which she is suffering and her face is contorting, the face is distorting.

And we are told a series of things that he had confessed to her- cheating on an examination, ripping out a woman's picture from a magazine, returning a sweater that she had gotten him and getting drunk, but this is a different degree of knowledge altogether. And we are told that she now knows that he had held his son who had only known life within her, within the mother's womb, he had actually held him against his chest in a darkened room.

And then this knowledge has been, you know, not told to Shobha because this knowledge would be more difficult to deal with, more difficult to suffer - the fact that he held the baby, the human baby with the knowledge that he is dead. So the whole human quality of the tragedy is now experientially accentuated, experientially enhanced and this is something he is telling her because now, you know, he had promised himself that he is not going to do this because he loves her but now, of course, with the knowledge that she is moving out, he is telling her that, in a way that she should also suffer this particular knowledge.

So he had promised himself that he would never tell Shobha because he still loved her then, still loved her then. Obviously which means that, you know, this is a culmination of that love, that love has come to an end. It was the one thing in her life that she had wanted to be surprise, so that is something, so that brings the story into a closure, that brings the story into a sort of a culmination of the relationship.

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Shukumar stood up and stacked his plate on top of hers. He carried the plates to the sink, but instead of running the tap he looked out the window. Outside the evening was still warm, and the Bradfords were walking arm in arm. As he watched the couple the room went dark, and he spun around. Shoba had turned the lights off. She came back to the table and sat down, and after a moment Shukumar joined her. They wept together, for the things they now knew.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. "A Temporary Matter." *Interpreter of Maladies*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1991. 1-21.



'Shukumar stood up and stacked his plate on top of hers. He carried the plates to the sink, but instead of running the tap, he looked out of the window, outside the evening was still warm and the Bradfords were walking arm in arm. As he watched the couple the room went dark, and he spun around. Shobha had turned the lights off. She came back to the table and sat down, and after a moment Shukumar joined her. They wept together, for the things they now knew.'

So you can see that, you know, it ends obviously with a very very disturbing description. A very experientially un nihilistic description of nothingness. So they have a knowledge of nothingness, the knowledge is now perfect, the knowledge of loss is now perfect over here. So both of them know now, Shukumar always knew and Shobha knows now and they weep together for the things that they now knew. So the knowledge, the knowledge of that loss is now perfect, it is now complete.

And Shukumar now gives her that knowledge because he knows that he doesn't need to protect her any more, he doesn't need to love her anymore, he doesn't feel the love for her anymore, he doesn't feel the need to protect her anymore, so he gives her the knowledge and that of course, crushes her. And they weep together for the things they now knew. So that knowledge which comes to them now, now they become co-sharers of the knowledge, they become co-sufferers of the knowledge.

So this story is obviously is a very dark human story about a massive experience of loss. And again, if you look at the way, this is what I perhaps mentioned at the very beginning when we started looking at the story, what makes Lahiri into such a master story writer is the fact that - the little descriptions, the little details of kitchen sinks and plates and lights going out and the way knives stacked, the way the refrigerator is described - so all these things keep connecting to the deep, dark psychological depths and is a constant connect between superficial signifiers and very deep and dark experiential content - is what makes Lahiri one of the modern greats in short stories I think.

As I mentioned, this is very much a part of the great traditional short story from Maupassant to Chekov to Joyce and then Lahiri continues the tradition. And she in her mind is, perhaps, the finest short story writer in the world today. And this particular collection of short stories from Interpreter Maladies which won the Pulitzer as I'm sure all of you know.

It gets a very fair and authentic description of her skill, of her craft as a writer, in terms of looking at the different productions of identities, the different performances of identities which are very gendered in quality, and also the relationship between gendered identity and spatiality when it comes to very close domestic spaces, it is something which keeps coming up in her fiction, which keeps coming up in her writings, and that is the part of the craft, that is the part of the very delicate craft that he has as a writer.

But this particular story, A Temporary Matter, as I mentioned, you know the whole, if you go back to the title now - A Temporary Matter, it begins to have a different kind of ring, it begins to have a different kind of interpretative, you know, possibility. So everything is temporary. So the whole idea of the power cut is temporary. And the power cut brought them closer - that was temporary.

The, sort of, brief happiness which they began to enjoy during the power cut - that was very temporary. But what is not temporary, what is permanent in the story is the sense of loss, the experience of loss and we see how the story ends with that moment of loss, when the knowledge of the loss becomes complete; Shukumar always knew it was a baby boy that they lost and he knew what the baby boy looked like.

The human qualities, the human attributes, the human figures, the human descriptions that the baby boy had, he knew it and now he tells that to Shobha in a way that makes them co-sharers of this suffering, co-sufferers, co-mourners, in a way. And that obviously is a

culmination of the relationship that the two of them have because the moment he decides to tell her is also the moment when he knows that he doesn't, he doesn't feel the need to protect her anymore, he doesn't feel the need to love her anymore.

That becomes, again, look at the way in which very deep psychological details about letting go of someone, almost like a liquidation of love, almost an evacuation of emotions where it falls into nothingness. All these are described in such great details by Lahiri in terms of knowledge transfer, in terms of superficial signifiers, in terms of the decisions of the mind.

And, you know, that moment when Shukumar decides to tell Shobha about the description of the human boy who they lost, the child that they lost together as parents, that moment, it was a moment of, which is also the step that they are taking of separation, that separation is now complete, the knowledge is now complete, the separation is now complete and the final image of the two of them weeping together for the things they now knew is the final moment of culmination when they know that it is all over - and that is not temporary.

So, everything else was temporary and that permanence of the knowledge, the degree of infinity in that knowledge is something which is sort of stretched across the story, which makes the story such a deep, human tragedy, such a deep existential account of loss, of absence, of suffering with which this story is sort of woven unlike Dunya Mikhail's poem Iraqi Nights.

We find the existential depth in the story, in the narrative, it is woven in through very superficial materials signifiers, material markers which make the existential depth even more intense, even more accentuated in the mind. So with that, we conclude 'A Temporary Matter' by Jhumpa Lahiri and we move on to the final text in this particular course. So I'll see you in the next lecture. Thank you for your attention.