

## Class 9<sup>th</sup> Sub- English

### Beehive Chapter 5 Poetry – *A Legend in the Northland*

#### Thinking about the Poem

1. The name and description suggests that 'the Northland' is the North Polar region of the world, probably the Northern region of the Scandinavian countries Norway, Sweden and Finland.
2. Saint Peter asked the old lady for one of her baked cakes to satisfy his hunger, as he had been fasting all day. The lady baked three cakes in succession, one smaller than the others, but could not bear to give any of them away.
3. He punished her by changing her into a woodpecker that built her nest 'as birds do' and gathered scanty food by boring in the 'hard, dry wood' all day long.
4. The woodpecker gets her food ( worms and insects) by boring holes into trees. They are known for tapping on tree trunks in order to find insects living in holes in the tree.
5. No, probably the old lady would not have been so ungenerous if she had known who Saint Peter really was. Instead, she would have tried to please him with her cakes for the fulfillment of her desires.
6. No, this is not a true story; it is a legend because people can't be changed into woodpeckers. I feel that the point in the story where the little woman is changed into a woodpecker is the most important. This is because the punishment given to the woman teaches us the value of generosity and charity.
7. A legend is an old traditional story, usually with a moral. Here it is meant to be narrated to children. The poet herself says that she

doesn't believe this tale to be true. This poem is called a 'legend' because it preaches generosity towards the fellow beings.

8. Once Saint Peter stopped by an old lady's cottage because he was feeling hungry and weak after the day's fasting. The lady was baking cakes on the hearth. As he was weak with fasting, he asked her for a cake from her store of cakes. The fasting, he asked her for a cake from her store of cakes. The selfish lady tried to bake small cakes but each time they seemed too big for her to give away. Finally, she baked one that was as thin as a wafer. Unable to part with it too, she put it on a shelf and did not give any cake to the Saint.

So Saint Peter became very angry with her behaviour and said she was too selfish to live as a human and have food, shelter and a fire to keep her warm. He punished her by changing her into a woodpecker that would have to build a nest to live in and bore for food in the trunks of trees. Her clothes were burned and she was left with her scarlet cap on her head as she flew out through the chimney. Even today she still lives in the woods and is seen by all the rural school boys.