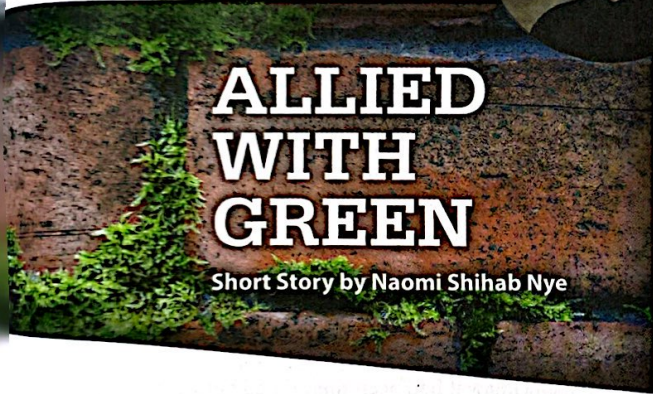
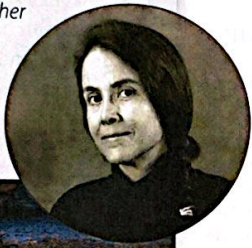


BACKGROUND

Naomi Shihab Nye (b. 1952) was born to a Palestinian father and an American mother. During her adolescence, she lived in St. Louis, Missouri; Jerusalem, Israel; and San Antonio, Texas. She has traveled extensively as an adult, as well. Influenced by her heritage and the cultural diversity of the places she has known, Nye has written books of poetry as well as fiction for younger audiences.



ALLIED WITH GREEN

Short Story by Naomi Shihab Nye

NOTICE & NOTE



Notice & Note

Use the side margins to notice and note signposts in the text.

MONITOR COMPREHENSION

Annotate: Mark the sentence that makes up most of paragraph 3.

Interpret: What does the author emphasize with the details in that sentence? Why might you need to reread that sentence before answering?

SETTING A PURPOSE

As you read, consider the author's use of the word green. How is she using the term to describe something that Lucy, the story's main character, feels very strongly about?

- 1 For her paper on "What I Believe In," Lucy writes first "the color green."
- 2 That's how everything starts. A tiny shoot of phrase prickling the mind . . .
- 3 Then she runs around for a few days doing other things but noticing the green poking up between buildings, on sides of roads, in front of even the poorest homes, how pots of green lined on rickety front porches, hanging baskets of green on light posts downtown, the new meticulous xeriscape¹ beds of puffy green grasses and plants alongside the river, are what seem to keep everything else going. If

¹ xeriscape (zîr'î-skâp'): landscaping that is designed to save water and protect the environment.

BACKGROUND

Have students read the information about the author. Point out that Nye is an accomplished poet as well as a writer of fiction and that her background as a poet is evident in the story. Encourage students to pay attention to the author's use of language and images.

SETTING A PURPOSE

Direct students to use the Setting a Purpose prompt to focus their reading.

MONITOR COMPREHENSION

Point out that this long sentence will require rereading for most readers. Although it is prose and occurs in a short story, it is almost like a small poem, and poems often require rereading. Suggest to students that they reread the sentence, inserting the word that in line 4 between noticing and the green. (Answer: The author emphasizes all green things she sees in the city. You might need to reread the sentence because it is easy to get confused by the way the word "noticing" is used.)



For speaking and reading support for students at varying proficiency levels, see the Text X-Ray on page 216D.

TEACH

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Explain to students that a subordinate clause acts as one of the parts of speech. It can act as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. Subordinate clauses that act as adverbs always answer the questions when, where, why, how, or to what extent. So, the word *when* is a clue that the sentence might include a subordinating conjunction. (Answer: The complex sentence in paragraph 6 is the second sentence. The compound subject “she and her mom” agrees with the verb “wash,” and the subject “they” agrees with the verb “carry.” The comma is placed at the end of the subordinate clause “When she and her mom wash lettuce, blueberries, peaches.”)

ANALYZE THEME

Explain that ideas that are repeated or emphasized often point toward the theme. Noting repeated phrases or images as well as ideas or events that are described in detail can help to identify the theme. In other words, the theme of a story is often revealed in the **supporting details** of the story. Those details may include a character’s actions, the development of the plot, or even just a thought in passing. (Answer: The names suggest growing plants, especially trees and relate to the message about caring for growing things.)

MONITOR COMPREHENSION

Explain to students that writers sometimes refer to things outside their stories. These are called **allusions**, and it may be an important part of understanding the story to find out what they mean. (Answer: Look up *Joni Mitchell* on the Internet.)

CRITICAL VOCABULARY

addiction: Lucy was supposed to write a paper about addiction, and she wrote about trimming plants.

ASK STUDENTS why Lucy considers trimming plants to be an addiction. (Lucy feels that she is addicted to plants, or “green,” because she loves plants and feels we are all dependent on them, in much the same way an addict is dependent on a substance.)

remorseful: Lucy thinks cities name places for “green” because they feel remorseful.

ASK STUDENTS why the cities might feel remorseful. (They might feel remorseful for destroying green places.)



NOTICE & NOTE

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Annotate: Underline the complex sentence that appears in paragraph 6.

Analyze: In that sentence, what are the subjects and the verbs that agree with them? Where is a comma placed to set the subordinate clause apart from the independent clause?

addiction
(ə-dik'tʃən) *n.* An addiction is a habit upon which a person becomes physically or emotionally dependent.

ANALYZE THEME

Annotate: In paragraph 9, mark the new names that people create for places in cities.

Connect: How do these names relate to the message conveyed through Lucy’s story?

remorseful
(ri-mɔrs'fʊl) *adj.* If you are remorseful, you feel very sorry about something that you have done.

median
(mē'di-ən) *n.* A median is a dividing area between opposing lanes of traffic on a highway or road.

MONITOR COMPREHENSION

Annotate: Mark the name of the singer mentioned in paragraph 10.

Identify: How would you find information about the singer so that you can clarify this reference?

people could not see green from the windows of the hospital, the hospital might fall down. She believes this.

- 4 Once she starts making a list, it will not stop.
- 5 Green has had a terrible summer. Threatened by the longest drought and highest heat in recorded history, green has had many second thoughts.
- 6 Lucy’s family could only water with a sprinkler on Wednesday evenings between eight and ten. When she and her mom wash lettuce, blueberries, peaches, they carry the plastic tubs of fruit water outside to pour onto a plant. It’s ritual now. It’s holy water. The city had a water waster hotline. It made the national news. You could turn people in for excessive watering.
- 7 Last semester, when asked to write a paper on **addictions**, Lucy wrote about trimming and got a C. Her teacher scrawled across the top of the paper, “What is this?” But Lucy often feels happiest with pruning shears in her hand, heading toward an overgrown jasmine vine.
- 8 It’s a clear task, trimming. The longer you’ve done it, the more you know how it encourages green, in the long run. Also, you can have fine ideas while trimming. Queen’s crown, germander, plumbago. *Snip, snip, snip.*
- 9 She knew it had been mentioned before, but thought she ought to include how cities assault their green for two reasons: money and greed. Later, feeling **remorseful**, or sickened by the new view, they name everything for green—**Oak Meadows, Lone Pine.** You could find it almost anywhere now.
- 10 Lucy’s father demonstrated against developments when he was in college. She had a faded black and white picture of him holding a NO! sign, his hair bushy and wild. Highways slashing through green space—he now drives one of those highways almost every day, feeling guilty. He plants free trees in scrappy **medians**, as an apology. Sometimes people steal them. When he planted four little palms in pots as a gift to Freddy’s Mexican Restaurant, they got plucked from the soil overnight. Obviously some people were desperate for green. And surely, with all the population issues now, some developments were necessary, but look at what happened before you knew it—hills sheared, meadows plucked, fields erased, the world turns into an endless series of strip centers—yo, Joni Mitchell! Joni sang about parking lots when the world had probably half the number it has now. Her dad told her that. She likes **Joni Mitchell.**
- 11 The boulevard wakes up when a strip of green is planted down its center.

median: The author says that Lucy’s father plants trees on medians as an apology.

ASK STUDENTS to explain what he is apologizing for and why he chooses medians for his planting. (He is apologizing for driving on the highway every day. Because the median runs down the middle of the highway, he is trying to at least make the space a bit more beautiful.)



- 12 The sad room smiles again when a pot of green is placed on a white tablecloth.
- 13 No one goes to Seattle to see the concrete.
- 14 An exhausted kid says, I'm going outside—sick of her mother's voice, she knows she will feel better with bamboo.
- 15 In Dallas people run around the lake or refresh themselves at the arboretum.
- 16 San Antonians send their kids to summer digging classes at the botanical gardens. The kids come home with broccoli. After a while.
- 17 Patience is deeply involved with green.

arboretum

(är'bə-rē'təm) *n.* An *arboretum* is a place where many trees are grown for educational or viewing purposes.

TEACH

ANALYZE THEME

Explain to students that a theme may imply how a person should live but should not be confused with a **moral**.

(Answer: The first question reflects Lucy's attitude about respecting growing things; the second question reflects the thinking of people who don't see how important respecting growing things is.)

AGAIN AND AGAIN

Remind students that, when a word, phrase, or other text element is repeated, this is often a sign that the writer wants the reader to pay attention to something important. **(Answer:** The repetition emphasizes Lucy's strong feelings about the effort to make things green.)

ANALYZE THEME

Encourage students to talk about what they think of when they hear the word *tend*. Say, A shepherd tends sheep, a gardener tends a gardener, and on a camping trip someone has to tend the campfire. Talk about what these people are doing and what they have in common. **(Answer:** If you tend something, you take care of it. The author's choice to focus on that idea at the end of the story helps the reader remember the story's theme.)



NOTICE & NOTE

ANALYZE THEME

Annotate: Mark the two questions that appear in paragraphs 18 through 20.

Analyze: How do the different points of view in the questions help show a theme of the story?

AGAIN AND AGAIN

Notice & Note: In paragraphs 22–25, mark the things that Lucy loved.

Critique: How do you think the repetition of *loved* is meant to affect the reader?

obituary
(ō-bīch'ōō-ēr'ē) *n.* An obituary is a public notice of a person's death.

ANALYZE THEME

Annotate: Reread paragraphs 26–28. Mark the verb that Lucy found especially important.

Interpret: Why do you think the story ends by focusing on this verb? What idea does it leave readers thinking about?

- 18 It's required.
- 19 So, why don't people respect green as much as they should?
- 20 This was the serious question growing small fronds and tendrils at the heart of Lucy's paper. She knew her teacher might turn a snide nose up at it. Oh, blah blah, isn't this rather a repeat of what you wrote last semester?
- 21 People took green for granted. They assumed it would always be skirting their ugly office buildings and residences and so they didn't give it the attention it deserved. Somewhat like air. Air and green, close cousins.
- 22 Lucy truly loved the words *pocket park*.²
- 23 She loved community gardeners with purple bandannas tied around their heads. She loved their wild projects—rosemary grown so big you could hide in it.
- 24 She loved roofs paved with grass.
- 25 She loved the man in New York City—Robert Isabell—who planted pink impatiens on the metal overhang of his building. He had started out as a florist, at seventeen, in Minnesota—green state in the summer, not so green in December. Then he moved to New York City and became a major party planner, incorporating flowers, lighting, tents, fabrics, to create magical worlds of festivity. He didn't attend his own parties. He disappeared once he got everything set up. Sometimes he hid behind a giant potted plant to see what people liked. Lucy found his obituary in the newspaper, clipped it out, and placed it on her desk. She wished she could have worked for him just to learn how he put flowers together on tables, how he clipped giant green stalks and placed them effectively around a tent to make Morocco, Italy, the French Riviera. Transporting. Green could take you away.
- 26 Save you. But you had to care for it, stroke it, devote yourself to it, pray to it, organize crews for it, bow down to it. You had to say the simple holy prayer, rearranging the words any way you liked best—"Dig, Grow, Deep, Roots, Light, Air, Water, Tend."
- 27 *Tend* was a more important verb than most people realized.
- 28 You had to carry a bucket.

² **pocket park:** a small park accessible to the general public.

CRITICAL VOCABULARY

obituary: The author tells us that Lucy clipped Robert Isabell's obituary, or death notice, from the newspaper and kept it on her desk.

ASK STUDENTS what Lucy might have learned from Isabell's obituary, and why she kept it on her desk. (She

IMPROVE READING FLUENCY

Targeted Passage. Explain to students that unlike the shorter paragraphs in this selection that are concerned with simpler subjects, paragraph 25 is longer than the other paragraphs and is also about someone who is important to Lucy. Have volunteers read aloud this paragraph. Point out the humorous element in paragraph 25, and model to read the paragraph so the humor comes across to the audience. Remind Students that reading aloud longer paragraphs requires extra care with pacing and emphasis—they must hold listeners' attention throughout the reading.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these questions before moving on to the **Analyze the Text** section on the following page.

- 1 Early in the story, the statement That's how everything starts is meant to show that —
 - A being "green" is essential to the character of Lucy
 - B belief in "the color green" should begin in childhood
 - C the world could not survive without its plant life
 - D talking about the environment leads to arguments

- 2 The author mentions Seattle, Dallas, and San Antonio to suggest that —
 - F only a few cities are taking steps to care for the environment
 - G cities are in great danger of having developers take over green spaces
 - H places have different ideas about how to care for the environment
 - J people in many places appreciate green spaces

- 3 Robert Isabell is important to Lucy because —
 - A he was a party planner known throughout New York
 - B his life represented a skill that she would like to have
 - C his beliefs about the environment are similar to her own
 - D he traveled the world in search of interesting plants