

CHARLES SIMIC, *IN THE LIBRARY*

The following is a poem by the Serbian-American poet Charles Simic. According to the poet, the library is a sort of sacred place and librarians have special powers.

There's a book called
"A Dictionary of Angels."
No one has opened it in fifty years,
I know, because when I did,
The covers creaked, the pages
Crumbled. There I discovered

The angels were once as plentiful¹
As species of flies.
The sky at dusk²
Used to be thick with them.
You had to wave both arms
Just to keep them away.

Now the sun is shining
Through the tall windows.
The library is a quiet place.
Angels and gods huddled³
In dark unopened books.
The great secret lies
On some shelf Miss Jones
Passes every day on her rounds.

She's very tall, so she keeps
Her head tipped as if listening.
The books are whispering.
I hear nothing, but she does.



GLOSSARY

- 1 existing in great quantity
- 2 the darker stage of twilight, especially in the evening
- 3 densely packed

READING COMPREHENSION

● Answer the following questions.

- ① What was the Dictionary of Angels about?
- ② What did the poet discover about angels?
- ③ Why does the poet say that "the great secret lies on some shelf"?
- ④ What are some of the characteristics of the library described by the poet?
- ⑤ Who is Miss Jones?

ANTONYMS

● Read the poem again and find antonyms for the following words.

- ① Closed
- ② Few
- ③ Short
- ④ Noisy
- ⑤ Light
- ⑥ Everything

ACTIVITIES

