

# Dictations

## A Woodcarver

There in a secluded spot, at the confluence of two small mountain streams, stands the humble home where a woodcarver and his wife had dwelt in uninterrupted happiness for upwards of a quarter of a century. Two fair-haired, clear-eyed children, with cheeks that rivaled the Alpen Glow, had romped away a blissful childhood chiefly among the chips and shavings in the cozy workshop, where the father changed logs of pine and oak and cherry into wondrous shapes and curious figures. The old man was prince of carvers in a region where every second man is an adept in wood.

“The boy shall be a woodcarver, too,” the father had said from the beginning. Hence as soon as the chubby hands could grasp a diminutive mallet and draw with safety a tiny blade through soft wood, the little boy was given a miniature bench beside his father’s knee, there to undergo a long, arduous apprenticeship.

Edmund Walsh

## The Work of a Town

There are no professional fishermen in Arcangel; but the men and the boys who fish on the river, on a good day, catch enough to provide the whole town with fish. Whenever that happens, the market, just a block away from the plaza, becomes even noisier than usual. The bargaining and the laughter echo through the narrow streets, bouncing from house to house, an epidemic of sounds spreading from the stalls to the balconies and traveling upwards to the blue sky above.

The earth of Andalusia, where Arcangel lies, is part of the people who live not only on it, but with it, form part of it, seem to merge with it, to share with it their poverty and their joys, their struggles and their good luck.

The life of the people of Arcangel takes the rhythm of seed time and harvest. Fields stretch away, beyond the olive groves. They have been cultivated by generations of Andalusians who have plowed and sowed and harvested the vegetables and the wheat.

Maia Wojciechowska, *Shadow of a Bull*

### ***Thought Questions:***

1. Why is the bargaining and laughter described as an “epidemic”?
2. How can the earth of Andalusia be “part of the people who live on it”? How can the people live “with” the land, “form part of it, seem to merge with it”? How can they “share with it their poverty and their joys, their struggles and their good luck”?