

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

Feruza Shermatova-Omerani, Ph.D.

“The Home Village” (1958)

Tologon Kasymbek (1931-2011)

OVERVIEW

Author

Tologon Kasymbek was born on January 15, 1931, in Ak-Jol village, Aksy District, Jalal-Abad Region, Kyrgyzstan, as Kudaiberdi, the son of his father Kasymbek's second marriage. His father, an educated man, introduced him to historical narratives and oral traditions, which later influenced Tologon's literary works. Kasymbek's death when Tologon was fifteen forced him into a life of hardship, shaping his resilience and commitment to learning.

He studied Kyrgyz Language and Literature at Kyrgyz State University and began publishing fiction while still a student. After graduating in 1957, he held key cultural positions, including chief editor of *Ala-Too* (1960–1973) and later of the State Committee for Publishing under the Council of Ministers of the Kyrgyz SSR.

Kasymbek's literary career began with *The Little Horseman* (1952). He gained national recognition with *Alymkan*, later adapted into a film. His autobiographical novella *I Aspire to Be a Good Person (Adam Bolgum Kelet)*, (1965) reflects his own life experiences.

He is best known for historical novels. *Flourishing (Kelkel)* explores Kyrgyz life before and after Soviet rule, while *The Raid (Baskyn)* and *The Massacre (Kyrgyn)* depict historical events and figures such as Baytik, Shabdan Batyr, Kurmanjan Datka, Toktogul Akyn, and Jantay Khan. His most celebrated novel, *The Broken Sword (Syngan Kylych)*, (1966), was translated into all major Soviet languages and into English in 1980.

Tologon Kasymbek is a deeply loved and celebrated author in Kyrgyzstan, renowned for his mastery of historical novels. Through his works, he vividly brings to life the history, culture, and traditions of the Kyrgyz people, portraying their struggles, resilience, and values across generations. His novels combine meticulous historical research with compelling storytelling, offering readers both education and inspiration. Kasymbek's writings not only preserve the memory of important historical events and figures but also explore universal themes of honor, courage, and human dignity, earning him a lasting place in Kyrgyz literature and the hearts of readers.

Short Story

This short story, “*The Home Village*,” written in 1958, tells the story of a boy who moves with his mother to live with his maternal grandmother and uncle after his father's death. The author sets the story in his own native village, Ak-Jol, in the Aksy district of Kyrgyzstan. In his works, he often draws on his own region, using familiar landscapes and local life to shape both the scenes and the actions of his characters.

Genres of Short Fiction in Post-Soviet Literature: Angeme, Rasskaz, and Povest'

The Kyrgyz short story (*angeme*) genre followed the path of Russian literature. Unlike the European novella, a short story is a fully developed narrative driven by conflict and relies more on the author's imagination than on facts. In European literature, the genre began as the “novella.” Russian literature borrowed it as a calque but later developed it into a distinct short genre called *rasskaz*, although some scholars still use the terms interchangeably. Russian formalists note that a novella features a sharply rising plot with unexpected endings, while a short story emphasizes artistry and often has an unpredictable conclusion. Even in its brevity, a short story contains essential elements such as exposition, plot, conflict, climax, and resolution, unfolding with intensity and closely tied to the work's theme and message. In modern post-Soviet literature,

the *povest'* (novella or long short story) is usually compared to the novel. Its events cover less time, follow a single plot line, and involve fewer characters, conflicts, and issues. Unlike a short story, which focuses on a single incident, a *povest'* portrays a broader reality, often covering a significant period in the protagonist's life. However, genre boundaries can be unclear, and the same work may be classified as a short story, novella, or hybrid by different scholars.

Background

In Kyrgyz culture, *tuulgan jerdin topuragy altyn* (Turkish: *Doğduğun yerin toprağı altındır*), meaning "the soil of one's homeland is like gold," expresses the deep and enduring love for one's birthplace. Since ancient times, the connection to *ata yurt* (Turkish: *ata yurdu*), the paternal home, has been central, as lineage and belonging are traced primarily through the father. The maternal side, while important, is often considered secondary; there is a saying, *jeen el bolboit* (Turkish: "*Kızdan doğan çocuk, ailenin kendi çocuğu sayılmaz*"), meaning a child born through the daughter is not considered a full member of the maternal family.

In this short story, the author tells the story of a ten- or eleven-year-old boy who longs to return to his paternal home village, Ak-Jol, after his father's death. He moves with his mother to live with her family, but his heart remains tied to the village of his birth. Through this narrative, the author explores themes of home, memory, and the natural bond between a child and his native land, reflecting both personal experience and traditional Kyrgyz values.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Satykul – A 10–11-year-old boy

Tilegen – A young teacher

Seidene – Satykul's mother.

Granny – Seidene's mother, Satykul's maternal grandmother.

SYNOPSIS

In May, Tilegen, a young teacher, rides a tired horse through the green spring landscape toward the riverside, where he encounters a yurt and a black tent called an *alachyk*. There, he meets Seidene, the widow of Mamyrbai, and her mother, Satykul's maternal grandmother. Satykul, a 10–11-year-old boy, greets Tilegen joyfully, revealing his deep longing for his paternal home village, Ak-Jol, where he lived before his father's death. Despite his mother and grandmother's hesitation, Satykul insists on returning to Ak-Jol, the village tied to his childhood memories and his father's presence. Tilegen helps prepare for the journey, carrying Satykul safely on his horse. Along the way, they cross a shaky bridge and ride by the Kara-Suu River, surrounded by forests and high passes. When Satykul first glimpses Ak-Jol, his joy and nostalgia fill him, as he recalls the paths, houses, fields, and friends of his youth. Tilegen witnesses the boy's innocence, attachment to his homeland, and natural longing for his roots. The story concludes with their arrival in the village, where Satykul reconnects with the land of his birth, and Tilegen reflects on the boy's potential to grow into a person who will care for his village and preserve its memory.

SCENES

The Ride in May It was May. Green grass, bushes, walnut trees, and many other trees covered the land. Tilegen, a young man, rode a horse that was a little tired. As he rode, he sang a song, letting the melody drift into the warm spring air. Soon he reached the riverside. The place was full of life, with thick vegetation, berries, and bushes growing along the bank. Suddenly, he heard a dog barking loudly. Looking ahead, he saw a yurt and a black tent called an *alachyk*. Laundry hung on the bushes, swaying gently in the breeze.

Visitors at the Yurt A woman came out, then turned back, perhaps to tell others about his visit. The dog rushed toward the horse as if it wanted to attack. Tilegen whipped the dog, but it barked even louder. A middle-aged, dark-complexioned woman came forward and asked, "Who are you?" She was the wife of the

deceased man, Mamyrbai, from Tilegen's home village, Ak-Jol. "Seidene ene," Tilegen said, using the respectful address for an elder woman, "I am Tilegen." She recognized him immediately and tried to take his horse. Then another old woman appeared. She was over seventy but looked younger than her age. She was Seidene's mother.

The Noisy Yurt A boy ran up and hugged him. "Oh, Satykul, you are a big boy," he said. The old woman sighed and said, "Oh, poor boy. He is happy to see Tilegen as if his father were alive. He is happy for every person who is coming from father's village" She brought a mattress made of sheepskin and placed it under a tree. "Please, sit down," she said to Tilegen. The yurt and the tent were full of noise. Inside were silkworms eating mulberry leaves. The silkworms were big, and the sound of their chewing filled the air. There was also a strange smell in the yurt.

Conversation under the Tree Satykul, the boy, sat next to him and began asking questions. He wanted to know where he was coming from. Tilegen said he was coming from Kara-Kungoi village, where he worked as a teacher. "Oh, I see," Satykul said. Then Satykul asked more questions. "Where are you going now?" Tilegen replied that he was going to his native village, Ak-Jol. He added that he also had some matters to settle in the district. Seidene brought Tilegen some mulberry berries and a cup of ayran, fermented sour milk. Tilegen asked Satykul to drink some ayran as well, but the boy said he would go to Ak-Jol village. His grandmother looked at him and said, "Why? There is nothing to do there in Ak-Jol village."

Long Talk and Thoughts of Home They sat for a long time, talking with Seidene under the tree. She told him that they had moved from Ak-Jol village three years ago. After her husband, Mamyrbai, died, she left the village and came to live near her brother. Now she was busy raising silkworms, feeding them mulberry leaves and caring for them every day. Tilegen listened quietly. The place was peaceful, but his thoughts were already on the road. Satykul also said that he wanted to go to his home village. He missed Ak-Jol very much. He wanted to return to the place where he remembered his father. In that village were the paths they once walked together, the fields where his father had worked, and the places that still held his memory. A home village is not only a place where one lives; it is where memories remain and where the heart often wishes to return.

Satykul's Tears Satykul did not want to stay in the current village anymore. He wanted to go back to Ak-Jol. His grandmother looked at him with concern and said, "Oh no, where are you going?" But Satykul could not hold his feelings. He began to weep. "I want to go, I want to go," he said again and again. His voice was full of longing. He wanted to return to the place where he remembered his father, where every path and every tree reminded him of the days when his father was still alive. For Satykul, Ak-Jol was not just a village, it was the place where his memories and his heart still lived.

The Boy Who Wanted to Go The grandmother spoke firmly and almost threateningly. "No, stay here," she said. Tilegen came up to his horse, preparing to leave. The grandmother tried to hold Satykul back from going with him. The boy wiped his tears, but his eyes were still full of sadness. Tilegen stood there, confused, not knowing what to do. For a moment, he wondered if he should tell the grandmother something. Perhaps he should say that the boy's blood belonged to another village, because his father was from there. Maybe that was why Satykul's heart was pulling him toward Ak-Jol.

The Boy Runs Satykul was crying. In his desperation, he bit his granny's old and weary hands. The grandmother became angry and struck the boy on the head with her fist. The boy struggled and slipped out of his mother's hands. Without looking back, he ran toward Tilegen. His face was wet with tears, and his breath came quickly as he hurried forward, as if he feared someone might stop him again. Tilegen watched him in surprise, not expecting the boy to run to him like that.

The Decision "I will go," Satykul said firmly. His grandmother hurried after him, and Seidene followed as well. They tried to calm the boy. "We will go tomorrow," they said, hoping to stop him. Tilegen stood beside his horse, uncertain. He doubted whether he should leave now. Perhaps he should persuade the boy not to go with him. Or perhaps he should wait until the boy received permission from his grandmother and his mother. For a moment, he remained silent, unsure of the right thing to do.

The Pull of the Home Village Tilegen decided to hold the boy and give him back to his mother. Gently he said, “Satykul, come, darling. Let’s ride the horse.” But Satykul refused to go back. He stood firmly, still wiping the tears from his face. The grandmother sighed and said sadly, “It has been three years since the boy did not see his home village.” Her words were heavy with feeling. For three long years the child had not seen the place where he was born, the paths he once walked, and the land where he remembered his father. That longing had been growing quietly in his heart.

The Boy’s Longing The grandmother said sadly, “Poor boy. Whenever he sees someone from Ak-Jol village, he becomes happy as if his father has returned from the grave. He gets very excited.” Hearing this, Seidene began to cry. “My poor darling boy,” she said softly. “Come, get dressed.” But the boy shook his head. “No,” he said. “You will catch me and not allow me to go.”

A Promise to Go His mother spoke gently, trying to calm him. “No, my boy. You will visit your home village. You will ride Tilegen’s horse. You will sit behind him on the horse, and he will take you there safely.” But Satykul shook his head stubbornly. His face was still wet with tears, yet his voice was firm. “I will walk,” he said. The boy did not want comfort or an easy ride. He only wanted to go to his home village, the place where he remembered his father and the days of his early childhood. Even if the road was long, he was ready to walk every step of the way.

Permission to Go “You will really allow Satykul to visit his home village?” Tilegen asked, surprised. The mother nodded slowly. “I have no choice,” she said. “He should visit his father’s village. It is time he goes.” Tilegen turned to the boy and said gently, “Satykul, please, dress up. We will go, it is getting late.” But the boy shook his head stubbornly. His heart was full of longing, yet fear and excitement held him back. He did not want to go just yet, not until he was ready to take the first step toward the village that held all his memories.

Preparing for the Journey Seidene, the mother of Satykul, handed his clothes, jacket, hat, and shoes to Tilegen. Her hands trembled slightly as she spoke. “Tilegen, please take care of my boy,” she said softly but firmly. “Give my son a ride on your horse to his home village. Let him visit his paternal relatives. Let him enjoy his home village, he has missed it so much.” Tilegen nodded, understanding the weight of her request. He took the clothes carefully, looking at the boy, who watched silently. The moment was heavy with emotion, filled with hope, longing, and the unspoken bond between family and home.

Instructions for the Journey Seidene added more instructions, her voice gentle but full of concern. “Tilegen, make sure the boy does not stay under the sun too long. He will get sick if he does.” She paused, then continued, “And when the day comes for him to return, please bring him back on your horse. Make sure he travels safely.” Tilegen nodded, feeling the responsibility resting on his shoulders. Satykul listened quietly, his small hands clutching his new clothes. The journey ahead was not just a ride to a village, it was a passage back to memories, to family, and to the boy’s own past, carefully entrusted to Tilegen’s care.

The Journey Begins Seidene spoke softly to her son, “My boy, Satykul, Tilegen will bring you back safely.” The horse had rested and now walked steadily. Tilegen prepared a place behind the saddle for the boy. Satykul climbed carefully and sat behind him, holding on tightly. Together, they began to ride. The horse’s hooves moved steadily over the soft earth, carrying them toward the home village that Satykul had longed to see. The boy felt a mixture of excitement and nervousness, while Tilegen guided the horse carefully, making sure Satykul was safe and comfortable on the journey ahead.

Crossing the Unstable Bridge Satykul remained silent as they rode. Soon, they reached an unstable bridge. Tilegen’s thoughts raced. If the boy were asleep, he could fall off the bridge if the horse suddenly panicked or, as the Kyrgyz say, “*urkup ketse*”—if the horse got startled and ran. But Satykul was not sleeping. He sat alert and steady, watching the river below. In that moment, Tilegen noticed something striking: the boy’s face, his posture, and the way he held himself reminded him of his father. The resemblance was so clear that it felt as if the father was riding with them in spirit.

Along the River Shore After crossing the unstable bridge, they turned to the right and rode along the riverbank. The Kara-Suu River flowed fast and noisy, its waters rushing between the rocks. Thick forests

surrounded the river, and the riverside path was cool and shaded, offering a moment of relief from the sun. They decided to take a short rest. Tilegen let the horse graze on the fresh grass while they paused. From the high pass, all the valleys stretched out below, wide and green, revealing the beauty of the land. The sound of the river, the rustling trees, and the quiet of the valleys made the place peaceful, yet full of life.

First Sight of Ak-Jol Suddenly, from the high pass, the boy saw his village Ak-Jol spread below like a small, familiar picture. His eyes lit up with joy. "That is our village! That is our house!" he cried, his voice trembling with excitement. He pointed out his relatives' homes and his friends' houses. They were still the same, like memories painted in the land. He remembered playing with Nurkul, roasting corn together under the sun. Perhaps Nurkul was still there. The boy's heart leapt like a bird as he looked at the village he had missed for so long. Happiness shone on his face, simple and pure, like morning sunlight on the fields.

Memories of Ak-Jol Tilegen smiled and said, "It is too early to roast corn. The corn is just being cut now." "I know," Satykul replied, his voice bright with memory. "We used to catch fish in the river. Once we caught a big one! And in the afternoons, we would swim like fish, diving and splashing under the sun." He laughed softly, remembering the freedom of those days. The village, the river, the fields; they were alive in his heart. Every sight along the path seemed to whisper the stories of his childhood, simple joys he had longed for during the years away.

The Boy's Longing Tilegen looked at the reed-roofed houses, the trees, and the winding ditches. They seemed warm and beautiful, like a mother's gentle hands to the boy. Satykul's face shone with joy and elation. He had missed his village more than words could tell. Every path, every tree, every little ditch called to him from memory, like old friends waving from the past. He remembered the smell of fresh earth after rain, the laughter of children running through the fields, the songs his father once hummed. The village had lived quietly in his heart for three long years, a hidden garden of memories, and now he could finally see it again. His chest felt full, as if his happiness might spill over like water from the Kara-Suu River, rushing, bright, and unstoppable. The boy had come home, not just to the land, but to all the moments he had carried inside him.

Words of the Heart Tilegen turned to Satykul and asked gently, "Do you really miss your village?" The boy's eyes stayed fixed on Ak-Jol, shining with longing. "Yes," he said softly, "I miss it a lot." Tilegen asked, "And how is your life there now?" Satykul thought for a moment. "We live well," he said, "but my mother does not want to return to our Ak-Jol village." His voice carried a quiet sadness, as if part of him already belonged to the place he longed for, while another part remained bound to the home he had left behind. The village lived in his heart, vivid and alive, even if his family could not return.

A Song for the Village The boy spoke softly, remembering the days he longed for home. "I was singing a song when I missed my village," he said. "Will I ride a horse? If I ride a horse, then when will I come to my village? When will I see my people?" His words hung in the air, like a melody carried by the wind. Each question was full of hope and longing, a song of the heart that had traveled with him through years away from Ak-Jol. The village was not just a place, it was the people, the paths, and the memories he carried with him wherever he went.

A Gentle Embrace Tilegen was deeply moved. He held the boy close, giving him a gentle hug and a soft kiss on the forehead. Satykul was still little and innocent, and his longing for his home was pure and natural. As he looked at the boy, Tilegen thought to himself that Satykul would grow into a remarkable person, one who would protect his land and care for others. Not only for his own village, but for the whole Kyrgyz nation, he would do good and keep the memory of his roots alive. The boy's heart, full of love for his home, promised a bright future.

Returning to Ak-Jol Tilegen thought that the boy would one day stay in his own village and contribute to its growth and well-being. Together, Tilegen and Satykul rode toward their God-blessed village. Every house, every tree, even the stones along the path seemed sacred. A gentle breeze whispered through the fields, carrying the smell of earth and life. The village was full of warmth, hospitality, and the spirit of bread and salt, welcoming them home. Satykul's heart swelled with joy, and Tilegen felt the quiet power of a place alive with memory, care, and the promise of the boy's future.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Satykul

Satykul is a 10–11-year-old boy who was born in the village of Ak-Jol. After his father's death, he moves with his mother to her family's village. Despite the change in residence, he longs to return to his paternal home, carrying vivid memories of his childhood and his father. Satykul is a sensitive and reflective child whose identity and emotions are deeply tied to his paternal home. He experiences a natural and powerful longing for the village of his birth, where every path, tree, and house carries memories of his father and early childhood. His actions reveal a resolute determination to reconnect with his roots, even when faced with opposition from his mother and grandmother. Satykul's innocence allows him to express his feelings openly, showing a tender, unfiltered response to loss, nostalgia, and hope.

Longing Satykul's longing for Ak-Jol runs deep, rooted not only in the physical landscape but also in the memories and connections of his early childhood. Every path, tree, and house in the village holds a story of his father, his relatives, and his own small adventures. From the high pass, he delights in seeing his father's house, the homes of his family, and his friend Nurkul's house. He remembers how he and Nurkul caught fish, played in the pond, and roamed the fields together. This profound attachment shapes his thoughts, dreams, and emotions, making him restless in a place that is not his own. Even after years away, Ak-Jol remains vivid in his heart, calling him back with a quiet but unrelenting force.

Determined Satykul is a determined boy who acts according to the deep desires of his heart. Despite his mother's and grandmother's warnings and attempts to hold him back, he resolutely follows Tilegen to return to his paternal village, Ak-Jol. He defies authority when his heart pulls him toward his home, refusing to obey even his closest family. His determination is fueled by a strong attachment to his birthplace and the memories of his father, friends, and childhood. Even when faced with obstacles, scolding, or emotional pressure, he persists, showing courage, steadfastness, and a will beyond his years. This trait highlights his strong sense of purpose and the power of his connection to home.

Innocent Satykul's innocence shapes the way he experiences the world and expresses his feelings. His emotions are unfiltered, sincere, and free from calculation or pretense. From the pass, when he first glimpses Ak-Jol, he gazes at his home village as if it is the center of the entire universe, every house, tree, and path filling him with awe and wonder. He does not yet understand that his mother must return to her own village because she is alone; in his mind, it seems natural that they should all go back. His thoughts are guided purely by longing and affection, reflecting the pure, unguarded perspective of a child.

Tilegen

Tilegen is a young teacher who travels through villages, helping and guiding children like Satykul. He is compassionate, responsible, and attentive to the needs of those around him, often acting as a protector and mentor.

Compassionate Tilegen shows deep compassion toward Satykul, understanding the boy's longing for Ak-Jol and the pain of being separated from his paternal home. He listens patiently to Satykul's questions, fears, and memories, responding with gentle words and actions. Tilegen cares not only for the boy's safety but also for his emotional well-being, offering comfort through guidance and presence. His compassion allows him to connect with Satykul on a personal level, respecting the child's feelings and supporting him in a way that is both protective and nurturing.

Responsible Tilegen demonstrates strong responsibility as he undertakes the task of bringing Satykul safely to Ak-Jol. He prepares the horse carefully, ensures the boy is properly dressed, and follows instructions from Seidene to safeguard Satykul from sun or fatigue. Throughout the journey, he balances the boy's wishes with practical concerns, anticipating dangers like the unstable bridge or the river paths.

Tilegen's sense of duty reflects his reliability and integrity; he is fully aware that Satykul's safety and the trust placed in him by the family depend on his careful attention and actions.

Observant Tilegen's keen observation allows him to understand Satykul deeply, noticing not only his emotions but also subtle gestures, expressions, and moments of hesitation. He sees the boy's excitement when Ak-Jol appears from the pass, recognizes the resemblance to his father, and perceives the boy's determination despite opposition. By being attentive, Tilegen can respond appropriately, guiding Satykul with patience, reassurance, and wisdom. His observant nature ensures that he reads both the child and the journey carefully, creating a safe and empathetic space where Satykul feels understood and supported.

THEMES

Home / Belonging

"The Home Village" explores the profound bond between a person and their birthplace, showing that home is not merely a physical location but the center of one's identity and memories. For Satykul, Ak-Jol is more than a village—it is where his earliest experiences, relationships, and emotions were formed. Every path, tree, and house is connected to his father, his friends, and his childhood adventures, creating a landscape alive with memory. His longing to return reflects a universal human need for roots and a place where one feels true belonging. The story emphasizes that this connection shapes a person's identity, guiding their feelings, desires, and decisions. Even years of separation cannot diminish Satykul's attachment; the village lives in his heart, calling him back with an unrelenting force. Beyond physical familiarity, home represents family, heritage, and the continuity of life across generations. The narrative also highlights the cultural importance of the paternal home in Kyrgyz tradition, showing that belonging is tied not only to place but to lineage, memory, and emotional ties. Through Satykul's journey, the story illustrates that the essence of home is inseparable from the love, history, and experiences it holds, making it a cornerstone of human life.

Illustrative moment: "You will really allow Satykul to visit his home village?" Tilegen asked, surprised. The mother nodded slowly. "I have no choice," she said. "He should visit his father's village. It is time he goes." Tilegen turned to the boy and said gently, "Satykul, please, dress up. We will go, it is getting late." But the boy shook his head stubbornly. His heart was full of longing, yet fear and excitement held him back. He did not want to go just yet, not until he was ready to take the first step toward the village that held all his memories. Preparing for the Journey Seidene, the mother of Satykul, handed his clothes, jacket, hat, and shoes to Tilegen. Her hands trembled slightly as she spoke. "Tilegen, please take care of my boy," she said softly but firmly. "Give my son a ride on your horse to his home village. Let him visit his paternal relatives. Let him enjoy his home village, he has missed it so much." Tilegen nodded, understanding the weight of her request. He took the clothes carefully, looking at the boy, who watched silently. The moment was heavy with emotion, filled with hope, longing, and the unspoken bond between family and home.

Family / Lineage

"The Home Village" emphasizes the importance of paternal lineage and family connections in Kyrgyz culture. Satykul's attachment to his father's home village, Ak-Jol, reflects traditional values that prioritize ancestry and identity through the father's side. In Kyrgyz society, children are considered part of their father's lineage, and the home village of the father, *ata jurt*, holds special significance in shaping one's sense of belonging and identity. Sons are particularly valued as heirs. They are expected to protect the land, continue the family lineage, and remain in the home village, maintaining the family hearth.

If a person has only daughters, Kyrgyz often say, *kyz biroomun bulosu*, meaning the daughter will become part of another family, highlighting the unique role of sons in preserving family heritage.

Similarly, the saying *uulu jektun muunuu jok* reinforces that one without a son has no lineage. Satykul's happiness when seeing anyone from Ak-Jol shows his deep connection to his paternal roots and the significance of these ancestral ties. His longing to return is not just for a physical place but also for the traditions, bonds, and responsibilities that define his identity. Through Satykul's story, the narrative explores how lineage, heritage, and family connections shape a child's identity, emotional attachment, and sense of belonging.

Illustrative moment: The boy spoke softly, remembering the days he longed for home. “I was singing a song when I missed my village,” he said. “Will I ride a horse? If I ride a horse, then when will I come to my village? When will I see my people?” His words hung in the air, like a melody carried by the wind. Each question was full of hope and longing, a song of the heart that had traveled with him through years away from Ak-Jol. The village was not just a place, it was the people, the paths, and the memories he carried with him wherever he went.

Memory / Nostalgia

Satykul’s recollections of his father, his friends, and his childhood experiences reveal the power of memory and nostalgia. These memories shape his emotions and guide his decisions, showing how the past continues to influence the present. His longing for Ak-Jol is fueled by vivid recollections of familiar paths, games with friends, and moments shared with his father. At the same time, Satykul’s actions are guided by pure emotion rather than logic. His innocence allows him to express longing, determination, and love openly, reflecting the unfiltered perspective of a child. Memory, nostalgia, and emotional purity together define his journey, connecting him to his home village and his roots. They highlight how a child’s heart holds both the weight of the past and the intensity of present desires, shaping his choices and deepening his attachment to the land, the people, and the traditions he cherishes.

Illustrative moment: Suddenly, from the high pass, the boy saw his village Ak-Jol spread below like a small, familiar picture. His eyes lit up with joy. “That is our village! That is our house!” he cried, his voice trembling with excitement. He pointed out his relatives’ homes and his friends’ houses. They were still the same, like memories painted in the land. He remembered playing with Nurkul, roasting corn together under the sun. Perhaps Nurkul was still there. The boy’s heart leapt like a bird as he looked at the village he had missed for so long. Happiness shone on his face, simple and pure, like morning sunlight on the fields.

Author’s Retrospective

In “The Home Village”, the author writes with a reflective perspective, drawing from his own childhood experiences. Like Satykul, he lost his father as a young boy because of an earthquake, and for a time he may have lived with his maternal grandmother, separated from his paternal home. Through the story, the author revisits the emotional landscape of longing, displacement, and the deep attachment to Ak-Jol, his native village. He vividly describes the beauty of the village and its setting in the 1950s and 1960s, capturing the fields, trees, rivers, and houses with detailed and affectionate observation. This retrospective lens allows him to portray Satykul’s yearning authentically, blending memory with cultural observation. By reflecting on the boy’s feelings of loss, innocence, and connection to his birthplace, the author conveys how childhood experiences of separation and nostalgia shape one’s understanding of home, identity, and belonging. In his later years, the author frequently returned to Ak-Jol, and family members recall his visits with emotion. These journeys strengthened his bond with the village and enriched his storytelling, showing the enduring power of memory and the universal connection between a child and his homeland.

Illustrative moment: Tilegen looked at the reed-roofed houses, the trees, and the winding ditches. They seemed warm and beautiful, like a mother’s gentle hands to the boy. Satykul’s face shone with joy and elation. He had missed his village more than words could tell. Every path, every tree, every little ditch called to him from memory, like old friends waving from the past. He remembered the smell of fresh earth after rain, the laughter of children running through the fields, the songs his father once hummed. The village had lived quietly in his heart for three long years, a hidden garden of memories, and now he could finally see it again. His chest felt full, as if his happiness might spill over like water from the Kara-Suu River, rushing, bright, and unstoppable. The boy had come home, not just to the land, but to all the moments he had carried inside him.