

Harka

March
1968

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The Harka is a monthly opus (if possible) which is printed by and for the Peace Corps Volunteers in Morocco. Its views are those of the writers, and in no way reflect the views of the Peace Corps, the United States of America, or the Foreign service. All criticism, praise, contributions or threats should be addressed directly to the Editor- 43 Avenue Hassan Souktani, Casablanca or to the Peace Corps office, 21, Rue Van Vollenhoven, Rabat. Apologies for this late issue due to lack of contributions.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: Those Volunteers interested in editing or helping to publish the Harka should contact the Editor.

DRAPER IN AFRICA

I must begin every letter now days with "Sorry to have been out of touch for so long but there was too much sun and too much newness and no motivation whatsoever to put pen to paper, beggin' your pardon." The jungle, the savannah, the steppe country. And the Sahara, which had filled my mind for two years, always the Big Thing, which turned out to be a flat lot of sand, the only interesting part being the people-- the Touaregs and the Arab truckers who pilot 20-ton snarling hunks of metal through a country still staggering in its huge emptiness, and have pñaces of infinity in their eyes. But it's true anywhere, that it's the people in a country or town that are interesting, that the sperm and the egg that formed you in the U.S.A. would have been the seed of a savage had it developed in the rain forest, or that in the fishing village of the Niger would have been shaped into something still different.

You tell more about the forest, get a better feel for it, by seeing the little stocky guy trotting along with his machete and poison arrows than by looking at bone-white trees in the rank greenery. You see a piece of the Niger river, water and bank and hippos, but the long Bouzou an intricately-worked black needle pirogue which seems an extension of his body, heavy with cargo, or used as a pointed mobile stage for the flinging of a circular net, is an intensification and quintessence of the river past and present; the distillate of the whole scene, what's left in the bottom of the centrifuge tube after everything has been concentrated.

I was dead afraid when I bounced off the boat at Abidjan from Casa. The jungle and heat were overpowering, at that point mainly the heat. I gobbled a salt tablet. I couldn't move or breathe. The animals and birds looked as if they had been assembled by an insane child, armed with an infinity of feathers, scales and colors. I was dizzied by the colors on the women's dresses and by the fresh pineapple and mangos and birds. My toes rotted in my boots, had to buy sandals. Heard of some missionaries in town so I stayed with them because I was afraid to put up the tent in the jungle and because there were no clearings there in the solid mass of green and thorns. I could see why authors call the jungle malignant. The green is too green, the animals are insane. God knows what could be lurking three feet away and who would know. Little guys with poison arrows. Man.

A devious route up to Bobo Dioulasso miles and days on "mille-kilos" and Peugeot taxis to my rendez-vous at the big French research center with the tse-tse fly boys in Bobo. Plunged into a life of super-color for a couple of weeks, fantastic food served and prepared well, the first-class seats in the movie (second-class? Oh, what's for them...) really an evil sort of unhappiness for most of the French there; the middle class, always the source of racism, always searching for reasons for their miserable lot, weaving "C'est ça, les Africains", incredible looms of boredom. Bobo, in the savannah, not so overpowering as the forest or the desert, because there's neither the absolute closedness nor the too-open-ness. It's just when you get upon a hill and look out and see the same twisted thorn bush and head-high grass stretching and folling out to infinity that you say God, we'll never get there, the truck will break and there is nothing here. You can't eat these thorns and dry grass. Fear.

Then it happened, a flat and then another. No tire-repair kit on a back road, sun sucking the moisture out of every pore. The Africans? Nothing. The chauffeur takes a bicycle off the top of the truck, puts a boy on it, sends it off towards the south down the endless washboard. Two very tall men amble off into the brush with very big knives. The chauffeur takes out inner tubes, finds the

ho le, kind of primitively trial-and-error-like, trying several ways of getting the tire off of the rim before succeeding. The two lanky guys get back dragging large branches which they lay beside the chauffeur; they sit under a shrub, cleaning their teeth with chunks of twigs, turning their eyes inward. The chauffeur takes an old river tube, makes a patch, sticks it on with the sap from the hacked off branches, puts the tube in the tire, the kid shows up with a pump he borrowed from a village off the road somewhere, they pump up the tire, leave, after leading me to my seat because I was saying: "Wha?" and standing around with my mouth open.

After having gone through an hour of "I used to work in an American filling station, bums, want me to show you how? the sight of a bouncy, healthy tire was too much. I have preserved dried leaves of the "tire-repair" tree.

Most of the nights I was lodged in with the Africans in whatever village we were at when night fell. Sometimes, though, I stayed with missionaries, who were more than glad to feed me and have me listen to them, satisfied with a sleepy nod now and then at random points in their monologue, breaking out dusty bottles of spirits hidden away for medicinal purposes. One good old boy was from Memphis, Tennessee, and after praying together we threw place names at each other (we had no common acquaintances). Grits and gravy for breakfast. "Bye, now, write us a letter..." Teenage daughter looks like Candy, going to Bible College in Nashville, ministering to the pagans along with her father. Asking for the good lord's help in a heathen land.

Next random impression: The sexual freedom of all the natives I saw outside of the Arabs. Many of the Europeans working in the African bush have mis tresses supplied them by their villages, with the understanding and maybe an occasional present is the only payment required. After dinner in one household three beautiful girls walked in, sat down, were greeted and started to leaf through magazines. Wild colored dresses. Chattering in a local language but quietly with grace. Equally as quietly going off with their men, one of whom, as I learned later, was soon going to marry his girl. The others would go off leaving presents and maybe a baby, of which the girl and the village would be proud.

I will write now of the two modes of transportation possibly the least used by most tourists in Africa and possibly the cheapest and most interesting.

1. Boat on the Niger: bi-weekly Mopti -Timbuctoo-Gao. \$25 2nd class, five days good food. Hippopotamuses and crocodiles. Fishermen and nomads at the stops. Old cities along the river, notably Timbuctoo, Gao, Djenne and Mopti. Beautiful people. Feels at times like the womb of the earth, the constant fertility in the middle of the desert. Traditional evening baths each evening in the shallows for everyone.

2. Truck on the desert: Gao-Adrar (western trail) or In Salah- Tamanhrasset- Agades (eastern trail). Western trail- constant traffic (dates and tobacco down, sheep up) never a wait of more than a few days for a truck. \$16, 1500 km., 5-8 days, good food. Take a chapstick and a sleeping bag, cigarettes for trading with the Touaregs for milk or with the truckers for dates. Clean, dry air.

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Enough, because if anyone is going there they're welcome to get more information of general or specific nature by sitting down with me over a coffee somewhere, and those that aren't, aren't, regardless of how much is written. The important communication is that it's no big thing, no pilgrimage to the wilderness, no ordeal, no masochism. The trip was a pleasure and not at all hard. No problems, Coca-Cola partout. Everyone everywhere loves tourists including in Mali and Algeria, even though the only books I saw in Mali were "Pensees de Mao" and slogans on schools, the usual thing, "Work hard you brats"--all had the little "Mao" underneath. Skinny Chinese cats nervously smiling and bowing to hotel clerks as they paid their bills. Worthy of note is a widely distributed poster in Algeria of the "watch out for deviationists and revisionists" ilk, on the bottom of which you see in bold-face "except, of course, for our tourists to whom we should extend the traditional warm welcome."

Surprisingly, the total trip Casa-Abidjan-Bobo Diolasso-Gao-Bechar-Fran-Oujda was cheap, \$290 for 12,000 km. eating well, frequent beers, travelling slowly. The trick is to always to plead poverty and refuse to stay in the hotels, or at least the European ones, which are all \$10 or so a night minimum. I stayed 1/3 of the time with Africans, some with European and American missionaries. (Only two small non-violent cases of diarrhea the whole way- Polymagna-controllable)

The only bit of proselytizing I'll do is to say that there's a certain amount of value in exposing yourself to a third primitive culture (after American and Moroccan). I found I had made certain generalizations about under-developed countries which did not hold water outside the Arab world. And, on a much simpler level, I enjoyed the trip because I left the rain and cold and sinusitis behind and swam and played in the sun, and lost (temporarily, to be sure) sight of the Peace Corps and the realization of selfless service and the lousy job and could just wonder a while. It's kind of nice.

Bob Draper

OUM KALTOUM

The cafe is already overcrowded. Hardly an empty chair for the diva's last concert. The bulldog of a proprietor blocks the door grimacing no entry. A friend inside coaxes him and we slide in through the back door. Shoved into a seat, I adjust to the bright screen.

She stands in the center, Oum Kaltoum. From two tiers of ruffles at the foot of her long dress rises the matronly form. In her left hand she holds a thin veil. Both elbows bend at right angles, both held tight to her body. Her middle and index fingers point; sometimes they tap the beat. On her breast is a large diamond brooch and pendant diamonds dangle from her ears. A proud head crowns the body of a proud woman. For a few moments I take her in, feeling in telescoped time the more pronounced hypnotic effect on the rest of the audience.

My host interrupts, "You understand a little?" "No." "She is saying, 'The day goes on after the length of day' It's not hard to comprehend because she speaks so clearly in the highest literary Arabic." - that may be one reason why it is so difficult. I am trained instead to buy food in the market with the fatimas and to scatter shoe-shind boys.- "and she repeats everything many times." - I am beginning to agree with that but it doesn't help.

My friends know the words by heart. It is an old song of hers first sung in the late forties. The lyrics come from the last poems of Omar Khayyam. The melody has a base note, what we call a key. The mode is recognizably Egyptian. She loses me in the soaring and descending arabesques. At a point when I think I am sharing the emotions and anticipating the climaxes and the codas, she catches me off guard again.

The contralto voice sings on with scant trace of vibrato, flat by western standards. Her range is not outstanding; the range of dynamics, not dramatic. Her control is good and her stamina excellent. Some people marvel more at her endurance than her dexterity and sensitivity. "She can go on singing for hours without a pause and not a drop of water to soothe her throat. She can go on for five hours." Am I there to witness a marathon or to hear music? What can I gain from sitting here?

I remember David Randolph writing, " 'Music is a Universal language'...is a misleading adage...Our response to music is largely conditioned by social and ethnic factors." How could I understand in one night or even one year in Morocco what the Arab boy has heard since childhood. We have been taught something contrary. We consider glissandos which graze notes between half tones unmusical. Egyptian violins sound like whining. The emotional fuses in her music do not ignite us. Likewise play Bach's Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring or some other familiar melody to the uninitiated Moroccan. To such a simple melody we react readily but does he? Then play it in a slightly varied rhythm. He won't even notice it is "wrong."

To think I could seize the emotion of Oum Kaltoum was deceptive. Without words came only a vague idea: sad or joyous, grave or playful. Yet are we totally inadequate to appreciate the vocalist both musically and extra-musically? My mind stops wandering.

Around and below her sit the orchestral minions: eight violins to her right, three cellos, one plucked bass, bongos and tambourine to her right, and nearest her a horizontal harp instrument and a long vertical flute. The flutist blows sideways; the twitchy harpist eyes her anxiously every moment. The unsynchronized strings bow slithering downward runs. 1 2 3 4 5. Their intensity and pitch ~~count~~ after she concludes a stanza. 1 and 2 and 1 and 2 and 1 and 2 she climbs the jerky rhythmic stairs. The audience boils. Applause batters her embellishments. She makes a reserved flourish of the hands.

The violins shimmer and she becomes pondersome and she says, "And if I die, where do I go? I want to go... but where? I am in the world without being consulted." (In the song Omar Khayyam asks pardon for not being pious before. He was first an atheist and converted to Islam in later life.) The joyful tone melts into the seriousness of an affirmation of faith. Gone is the coquettishness.

She repeats of her own will this time, not at the audience's demand. Often they call on her to repeat again and again, but they insist she never does it the same way. Thus she deserves to prolong each song. A change of key is infrequent and changes of rhythm create almost all the increased and reduced tension.

This time she tempo slows to a ripple on the harp. Almost a cadenza, but it is brief and never detracts from the virtuosity of the singer. The cameras make no secret of the fact that she dominates the stage. She has wonderful stage presence. At that instant to most everyone she is sublime. * * *

An hour after the concert began the crowd first becomes restless. Fatigue grows on the faces of the musicians. They question expectantly where and how long she will lead them. In the cafe it is no sacrilege to forget Oum Kaltoum for a minute. Distractions whistle around the smoky glass cage.

A veiled whore knocks at the door but the patron balks. Insisting, she breaks into a scream. She lashes and scratches. He strikes and his fist lands hard. Now she is loose; he dashes out after her by the side way. She disappears. Back to the song. Half an hour later the clientele smirks as she glides by in tow in the other direction.

Another fracas flashes mutely through the panes. A chase. Shadows pass in the dark. The shoe-shin'd boy, frightend eyes agog, presses his nose white against the glass to glimpse an idol. She has finished. Hush! They announce an hour break. That undercuts a little the legend of her stamina.

Midnite. Oum Kaltoum herself sang, " Staying up into the night never killed anyone; sleep never lengthened anyone's life." Question the depth of that if you wish. Why not stay for the second song?

Intermission--The News--Another parable in adoration. The king is in Marrakech. Watch him parade through the streets. How broad the avenues, how infinite the crowds. They hail him endlessly. How skillful the cameras. Cut.

A lesson in boredom. A well-intentioned American describes American space ventures in quite good dialect, abominable accent. He takes so long. The viewers pity him. "So long, fellow." they say when he is phased out to the Tetuan Conservatory orchestra playing andalusian music with western scales and no harmony. Stiff and correst they saw. So does the endless violin solo. Watchers clamor for their lady.

Her time comes. The curtain parts, she crosses her legs a few times and stands. Her song..." Is it true that love is the victor?" the question she asks her lover. "I don't know, I just don't know." She stirs with excitement. She pivots restlessly on her feet like a well-fed ladybird, rooted like a sibyl, too. Sometimes she bobs like a grandmother bird. She is trying to evoke the frustration of a lover. Her gestures are truncated and choppy. Unnoticed the veil changes hands. When she stops the high-pitched string birds all flutter to protect her.

She wields a full arsenal of vocal tricks not to say musical ones. Can the men find a sixty-four year old dowager erotic? Surely it is the heightened suggestion. Lots of nasal m's and n's, tantalizing as the end of the line exudes. An unexpected syncopation ..gasp..she wriggles back.

The tenth repetition oozes forth amid wobbles and breathiness. "Aii,Aii " they cry, "weely, weely, weely. " They are aroused, dechainés, drunk on the last rendition. Troubled listeners shift position, upset by the extravagant reactions attacking her dignity; For she is revered. Every word is haloed and quoted. They say she is being paid 47 million for the three concerts...invitation of His Majesty. The price of the tickets cannot cover. The poor country, the rich music.

"She must have repeated that ten times." "Sixteen to be exact." corrects my prompter. Oh...is it so remarkable that she never repeats the same way? Has she stretched the medium beyond its limits? Do the words become trivial or richer through repetition? "Is it true love conquers? I just don't know. Is it true love conquers? I don't know." Which side are you on : infinite variety or diminishing returns?

Conclusion on page

"She's dead!" says one. True the pitch can only fall. The orchestra now uninspired follows on a leash. The cameras enlarge the shadows on the backstage curtains. She will not take an encore. She will take only overflowing accolades and frozen roses to her bosom.

To the door of the cafe swings a cripple on crutches. He stares in. Everyone else's face is vacant, too. They do not see him. He is fast on crutches; that is what he can do. He's off after a fat man with a pipe. He pleads and clings until he is brushed off like a sticky caterpillar into the street.

By then the creature of charisma has stopped singing. Stranded people soon scatter across the cobblestones. 2:30 in the morning. The night is over as far as they are concerned. No love at this hour. There are many other ways to be conquered. Thank the lady for her spell and the cast of characters of the night.

IN MEMORIAM

A SOURCE OF AGONY AND ECSTASY IN THE PEACE CORPS (PART TWO)

After much careful research, I have been able to find nobody in Morocco, Peace Corps or otherwise, who has any knowledge of cannabis sativa. Therefore, the promised second installment of this article, as it was to be based on firsthand reports, cannot appear. Sorry.

Christie

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN MEKNES: Guide for those taking spring vacations in central Morocco

I. SIGHTS

1. Bab el Mansour--Large gate built around 200 years ago, located in medina (of all places).
2. Tomb of Moulay Ismael
3. Dar Jamai Museum-- located at opposite end of Place El Hedim from Bab Mansour
4. 17th century prison-- located behind Bab Mansour. Contained 200,000 prisoners in over 50 kilometers of underground passages.
5. French girls--a must for those even slightly interested
6. Medina proper-- small, compact, clean, various artisans. Good jellabas, blankets, carved wood, brass, etc.
7. Chez Fraley--furnished in "early PCV."
26 Blvd. Gouraud
en face de l'Hopital Mohammed V
Nouvelle Ville
Telephone at Hopital Sidi Said: 300-21

ENVIRONS

1. Volubilis-- Roman ruins some 20 kilometers from Meknes.
2 DH by bus
2. Moulay Idriss-- holy city perched on hills within view and walking distance of Volubilis. Also site of pilgrimage in September.

II. ACCOMODATIONS

1. Hotel Nice 14 DH/nite
2. Majestic Hotel 11DH
3. Transatlantique 30 DH
4. Chez Fraley Donations accepted
(Note: only one sex at a time allowed)

III. RESTAURANTS

1. Hacienda--finest French cuisine in Morocco (20 DH?)
2. Grambrinus (10 DH)
3. Several 4,5, or 6 DH places
4. Chez Fraley Donations collected upon entrance

IV. COMMENTS

Meknes is by far the most Moroccan of the larger cities, while offering the "comforts" of a European city. The people are friendly. The country is a beautiful green (until the end of March), and 2 days could easily be spent enjoying the city, Volubilis, and PCV company.

Those coming through should send advance notice because I only come home in order to sleep.

Please stop by and make a point to see this area soon.

Je vous servirai volontiers de guide.

Dave Fraley

SUMMER AND VACATION TRAVEL HELP

Send one Dollar, a photo, and a letter from Danni affirming your PC status to:

National Student Association
265 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10016

You get an ID card (almost immediately) which gives discounts on theater and museum entrance in some countries--Austria, England, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal. Also you get some special transportation rates in Germany, Greece, Israel, And you can stay in student hostels.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ed.

O.K. now you've done it. Not only did you imply that I had attempted to quote Candide (I didn't. Those words were my own.) And not only did you include a game conceived and born under the influence of. But you had the audacity to print the observations of a trainee still wet behind the ears. You stated and I quote: "One of them walked into the Rue Van Vollenhoven office and commented later that he was not impressed with the caliber of Volunteer he saw there."

Agreed I don't know exactly what he meant by caliber, but I can imagine he has a conception of PCV's gleaned from the "Peace Corps Handboo..," Peace Corps advertisements on TV and in magazines, clean-cut RPCV's freshly arrived in the wonderful United States from an OH! so romantic sojourn in a delightfully underdeveloped country in Africa, and possible some warped opinion from that wonder of wonders-training.

That his opinion should be paraphrased by you in an editorial which goes on to praise the high intelligence level of Morocco X is a gross contradiction.

What, I'd like to know, does he think PCV's are, and just exactly what does he understand or know of the frustrations and problems PCV's have in Morocco?

Trainees who have not been in Morocco more than a few weeks or months have not had occasion to meet most of the problems that only crop up after several months of in-country service. Some of these problems are the inshallah complex among Moroccans and officials of all nationalities, adjustments of language and living habits, isolation. More problems and frustrations could be listed by volunteers in their special fields if they took the time or had the time to think about them.

continued....

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For a trainee, who has not had the chance to meet these problems first hand, to deplore the caliber of volunteers he has met only briefly, is ridiculous.

Please spare us any more of these weighty observations of newly arrived trainees. Meanwhile I extend an invitation to this new arrival to come to Beni Mellal a year from now to discuss his views on the Peace Corps and PCV's in Morocco.

Also, I withdraw my threat to cancel my subscription. Where else can one find matters of such earth-shattering significance?

Yours in Peace,
Tom Wheaton, Beni Mellal

.....
This is the true Miss

This letter was given to me by a student on a day when I was pre-occupied after class--and I just tucked it in my notebook. Later I finally happened across it. It's hard to explain my feelings. It was given to me as a confession and I send it to you as my confession.

My dear teacher, in our last English lesson, you asked us in the classroom one by one about the profession of our fathers; when you asked me I said to you that my father is a farmer. He has a big farm with many animals; and during that you asked me: "Is this a true?" Then I answered you, "Yes."

But my venerable teacher that is not a true, because Miss my parents are all dead, and they didn't have neither big farms, neither much animals.

However Miss I didn't mean with that the true, but I only meant a practice of my English conversation.

Last Miss I pray you excuse me if I say to you in the classroom things that aren't a true.

Good bye Miss
Your student: Ali

Yours in contrition , Lynne Burnham

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TEFL Notes

1. Although the "formal" 2-year termination date is June 22, it looks as though all teachers will be obliged to remain at least until classes end June 29. At some schools the "sign-out" time may not come until July 5. If in doubt, ask your Directeur/Proviseur when the sign-out date is.

2. Mr. Pessô has agreed to reiterate his and the Ministry's policy that "American" and "English" accents are equally acceptable in the classroom and for bac exams. This pronouncement should come with the bac exam instructions. Any of you who have been having a hard time should stand by for the final word, isn't it?

3. Bertha Potts at USIS has some books which would make good prizes.

Anyone have any ideas for a workshop or seminar or local meeting PC might sponsor for English teachers?

5. I would like some Volunteers for giving bacs this spring, with the proviso that PC/Morocco will reimburse you for travel and per diem expenses if you have to go out of town.

6. Re: previous bac "histoire": May I ask those of you who are owed money to please send me a statement of expenses, dates, times, places, etc. Reimbursement from the Ministry is still delayed, I will see about getting PC/M to help out in the interim since you need the money now and not after you have left Morocco.

7. The TEFL termination conference is confirmed for June 8-10 in Rabat.

Ken Kurze

%%%%%%%%%

Words for the Bled

The farmers have two periods of planting in which they plant two separate sets of crops. The following is the names of those periods and what is planted. The spelling is mine but you can test the accuracy with usage.

weqt dyl'bnqri

gema
farina
sâir
forage

weqt dyl'mazozî

dra
hamoos
zilbana
lediss
lubia
full
hilba

Also, the verb used for weeding is "nqi", i.e. l'fellaha kaynaqiuw

ll'rba ya min zra," "The farmers weed (clean) the grass from the grain." The same verb is used for shelling peas, shelling nuts, and peeling an orange. The word for "shell" or "skin" is gasra.

Ed. Note: Excuse the untimeliness of this advice, Hope the weeds have not overpowered you in the meantime.

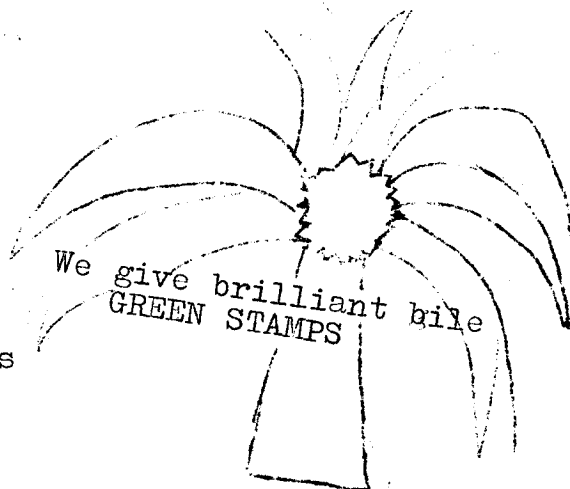
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HARKA ADS

2 heaters 1 electric
 1 gas

2 mattresses
1 stove with oven
2 bicycles 1 girl's
 1 boy's

1 large Moroccan couch and cushions
blankets
3 tables
3 midas (low round tables)
straw mat
curtains
other assorted household goods



Reasonable prices to rock-bottom ones
Will haggle

Contact Editor

+++++

For their second trimester the students of the fourth year at College de l'Hermitage were given these instructions for the final question on their English examination: "Describe your English teacher." Here are some of the responses: He is a yellow beard and the face is a little red. He has a red free fix. His bird is gold. The English teacher is a long man. He goes to the her house. He writes the most beautiful lessons. He **studys** the students english and everyday is glad. The teacher is a good actor. His nose is as long as short. Our teacher is a best man. Mr. Christie is bigger than the classroom. When he is lazy and does not work well he is punished. He plays fat bull. The teacher is strange in Morocco.

AM I PEOPLE?



NO, YOU ARE
A CHICKEN



DO CHICKENS
COME FROM PEOPLE?



NO, CHICKENS
COME FROM EGGS



ARE EGGS BORN?



NO, EGGS
ARE LAID



ARE PEOPLE LAID?



NO, SOME PEOPLE
ARE CHICKEN

