Preface

The present thesis analyses and interprets the short stories of Audrey Thomas and probes into the predicament of women as depicted in the changing cultural scenario of Canada. It examines her concern with women’s experiences and perception of the world, female identity and the social constraints on its development, female subjectivity and self, the mother daughter relationship, and forces opposing women’s artistic self expression from a feminist literary perspective and also using psychological approach.

The introductory chapter introduces Audrey Thomas as one of the eminent Canadian women writers. It provides the necessary biographical details to better comprehend her works and also explores the major concerns and interests of her writing.

Chapter Two introduces the reasons for the failure of the traditional relations between men and women leading to the breakup of family. The most important reason is the misplaced and incapable men as men do not fare very well in Audrey Thomas’ feminist scrutiny. This incompatibility and disintegration in familial relationship turns the women rebellious and hungry for fulfillment and recognition thereby initiating the women to pursue their quest.

Chapter Three is devoted to the study of Thomas’ women protagonists’ search for their authentic self and identity. It concentrates on those women who try to forge new lives by breaking away from the men who design and control their lives. It further records the saga of self-discovery of her female characters and tracks the heroine’s journey towards female selfhood as they embark in the process of their quest and aspire towards a progressive future.
Chapter Four deals with the various facets of loss and loneliness and how her women overcome them and organize their lives. Despite having an established sensibility and feeling of self-assuredness, Thomas’ women also need human attachment.

Chapter Five addresses the quest of these women for familial relationships. It centers on those stories which have quest for love and connectedness as their central themes. It further examines the subtle nuances of contemporary familial relationships and the strong link between mothers and daughters.

Chapter Six concentrates on Thomas’ consistent theme of private fear. Her protagonists find themselves ineffective and terrified of their old age, coupled with their inability to cope with life. The difficulties faced by the women protagonists in encountering their fear is the focal point in this chapter. It analyses how Thomas’ women slough off their fear syndrome and make advancement in their process of quest.

The seventh chapter shifts the focus of the study to Thomas’ art of storytelling. It concentrates on how Thomas appropriates autobiography, repetition, parody, fairy tales, alternate stories, and other experimental forms to thematize the quest.

The concluding chapter seeks to recapitulate the observations and arguments made in the preceding chapters. It summarizes the analyses within the six chapters and establishes whether Thomas and her women protagonists have succeeded in their Quest for fulfillment.