3. Be The Best

A1X6U2

Be The Best
If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill,
Be a scrub in the valley — but be
The best little scrub by the side of the rill;
Be a bush if you can't be a tree.

If you can't be a bush be a bit of the grass,
And some highway happier make;
If you can't be a muskie then just be a bass —
But the liveliest bass in the lake!

We can't all be captains, we've got to be crew,
There's something for all of us here,
There's big work to do, and there's lesser to do,
And the task you must do is the near.

If you can't be a highway then just be a trail,
If you can't be the sun be a star;
It isn't by size that you win or you fail —
Be the best of whatever you are!

— Douglas Malloch

Glossary

scrub bush **rill** small stream, brook **muskie** big fish **bass** small fish **crew** person working on ship **trail** narrow path

Comprehension

C. 1 Tick mark the nearest meaning.

1. There is something for all of us here.
   (a) Everybody has a scope to become something. ☐
   (b) If we become something, we get something. ☐
   (c) God has reserved some space for us here in this world. ☐
2. And the task we must do is the near.
   (a) It is certain that we must become something. ☐
   (b) We must do something in our neighbouring area. ☐
   (c) Decide what we should do or become at the earliest. ☐

3. Be the best whatever you are.

(a) We should do our work in the best possible manner. ☐

(b) Put in your best. Don't feel ashamed even if you are a small person. Just do the best. ☐

(c) We should be the best amongst all. ☐

C. 2 Fill in the table using the words / expressions from the poem.

You cannot become	You can become	Big sized thing(s)	Small sized thing(s)
a pine on the hill	a small plant by the hill side	a pine tree	a small plant

C. 3 Answer these questions.

1. What advice does the poet give to people in the first stanza of the poem?
2. Why does the poet say “We can't all be captains”?
3. What, according to the poet, decides our victory or failure?
4. What is the message of the poem?
5. Who, according to you, is a best person? Discuss.
6. Think of someone in your village / town / neighbourhood who has very good qualities. Tell about him / her to the class.

HOMEMADE INVISIBLE INK

Mix one spoon of baking powder with one to two spoons of cold water.
Dip a toothpick or cotton bud in the mixture and use it to write your message on a piece of white paper.
Wait for the ink to dry.
Hold the paper up to a light bulb and the message will appear. Alternatively, paint the paper with purple grape juice to reveal the secret message.