

## “Five Stories” Lydia Davis

*Born in 1947 in Massachusetts, Lydia Davis is a writer most well known for her very short stories, or “flash fiction.” She has published a number of collections of her work, many of which have won prestigious awards. The stories here are a sampling of some of her shorter fiction.*

### Vocabulary...

venture (v)

scavenge (v)

### Reading Questions...

1. According to Davis, can something ever truly be lost? Explain.
2. How does the narrator feel about the mice bypassing her kitchen? Why?

### Discussion Questions...

1. Why are these five stories grouped together? Is there something common among them?
2. What is the tone of these stories? Do they leave the reader with a particular feeling or emotion? Can you identify one common tone across all of them, or is there a shift from one story to the next?

### Activities and Assignments...

1. In many of Davis’ stories, readers are left wondering because of a lack of details. This forces readers to fill in the blanks themselves, imagining a backstory for her few, carefully selected words. Write the missing parts of the story for “The Outing,” “Odd Behavior,” or “Fear”. What do you imagine as the context for the story?
2. Davis plays with the idea that although things may be lost to us personally, it does not mean they cease to exist. (Think: ‘If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?’) Keeping this idea in mind, write a short essay about something you have “lost” and its life without you.

