The Outcries of a Soul

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)

By

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Preface

Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—
it is as immortal as the heart of man.

—William Wordsworth¹

Poetry is the music of written language. It plays a tune which
spans from the soul of the author to that of the reader. Poetry is
a creation of the soul; it encompasses every aspect of the human
form: body, soul and mind. It brings forth the hidden emotions
of mankind and bares them to the eyes of the reader, who, hopefully,
will understand.

In order for any proper definition of poetry to be understood,
the meaning of "soul" must be explained. The soul is that innate
quality of mankind to create and appreciate the creativity of others.
This creativity and its appreciation extends into music (from Bach
to The Beatles), poetry (Milton to Nash), prose (Emerson to Bradbury),
art (Hogarth to Picasso) and anything else which fulfills the cry of
one's soul.

The encompassing spirit of poetry is in the souls of both the
writer and reader, but a good poet will first be a good reader of
poetry. As a reader, I know what a good poem consists of to me.
It should be direct, easily understood, convey a truth (even if

¹William Wordsworth, "Preface to Lyrical Ballads," The Norton
Anthology of English Literature, Volume 2, M. H. Abrams et al., eds.
written from the viewpoint of fantasy) and yet continually have the beauty of language and semi-consistency of meter necessary to a poem.

When reading other's poetry, what strikes me most is the sorrow that seems to reach out in most of the poetry I prefer. In Thomas Hardy's "The Impercipient," the sorrow and pain reaches out in following lines:

Since heart of mine knows not that ease
Which they know; sincere it be
That He who breathes All's-Well to these
Breathes no All's-Well to me,
My luck might move their sympathies
And Christian charity. ²

Yet he talks only about how he does not believe in the same religion as others, but the feeling of sorrow exists even though he does not write the sorrow down in words.

Poetry seems to usually be written about the darker and sadder emotions of mankind such as pain, sorrow, hate, anger, disappointment, hopelessness, despair, and love. Those poems that do attempt to deal with the brighter aspects of mankind do not speak to the soul as well. There are a few poems that deal with the absurd. Ogden Nash has become famous for such poetry; but does not the absurd also bring forth the realization that a truth is there?

The use of description often includes human feelings, even though emotion is not described. In Robert Frost's "Desert Places" there is such an example in the following lines:

Snow falling and night falling fast oh fast
In a field I looked into going past

And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,
But a few weeds and stubble showing last.

The woods around it have it—it is theirs
All animals are smothered in their lairs.
I am too absent-spirited to count;
The loneliness includes me unawares. 3

In the following poetry, I offer to the reader a touch of my
soul and my hopeful immortality. John Keats put the latter hope into
words, in his poem "When I have Fears".

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain. 4

This need is also within me; and only through poetry can I release it.

What inspires the poetry I write is indeterminable. Writing has
never been an exhausting or even very difficult process for me. When
I feel the need to write down an emotion, episode, or description, I
do so, but not everything written down becomes a poem. If a few
sentences written now can later be worked into a poem, they are.
I cannot with only my mind and hand holding a pen, create a poem
that will reach out to another person, but my soul can cry out the
feelings and with the aid of my hand, allow a poem to write itself.

A poem should not mean
But be.
—Archibald MacLeish 5

3John Keats, "When I have Fears," The Norton Anthology of English
Literature, Volume 2, M. H. Abrams et al., eds. (1962; New York:

4Archibald MacLeish, "Ars Poetica," Sound and Sense, Laurence
p. 149.
Alone

Alone, even with others I am alone. There is no way I can avoid being alone. I am an entity unto myself alone. I can't share all of myself with others so I'm alone. I will forever be alone. Being a single entity I cannot merge completely with others. That part of me called Soul is always alone. Trying to create to bring forth some sort of being that is unique, uncopiable, intangible, and alone.

The face I provide for the world is not the face provided for me by my soul. So I remain alone. Feeling the immense gap between my soul and what is known as humanity.
The Darkness

"What is it like to be loved?"
I cry,
in the darkness
    of loneliness.
A darkness so black
    that I am blind
    to the worlds
    of others.
"What is it like to care?"
I weep,
    and in the darkness
    I am washed by my tears.
"Can love be received before caring given?"
I wonder,
    if not,
    then I am doomed
    to my darkness.
Depression

Feelings
   of sadness,
   inferiority,
   loneliness.
Lost
   in the complexity of my feelings.
Wishing for
   relief
   in tears.
The tears won't come.
   My eyes burn.
   My throat has a lump.
I am tired,
   not caring whether I live or die.
My life seems empty.
My soul is lead.

I walk
   not seeing,
   caring,
   desiring.
Hope
   has vanished from my thoughts.
My thoughts are bleak
   and black.
The pain will come soon.
   My heart will stop.
   My thoughts will cease.
All existence
   will no longer be inside of me.
My life will empty.
My soul depart.

I will die.
Four Walls

I'm alone.
No longer with someone.
Sitting in a room
  with four walls,
  shelves, books,
  a bed and
  other
  paraphernalia
  that belongs to a room.
But I'm alone
  and lonely.
Why did you go the way you did?
Misunderstanding
No communication
No life
  for mine left with you.
Now I wait.
Maybe I'll meet another
Or perhaps I'll stay
  isolated
  within my four walls.
High School

Papers missing
Teachers talking
   and talking.
Students praying
   that Mr. So-and-So
       will postpone the
           history test
               permanently.
Busy hallways.
Students shouting
   and yelling.
Due Friday:
   an essay for English,
       a book report,
           and don't forget
               THE TEST.

Bells clanging.
People hurrying
   while leaving.
Students saying:
 "Thank God!
   school is out.
 I'll do my homework
    tomorrow."
The House in Which He Lived

The sun rose
and set
over the house in which he lived.
People passed
by the house
never stopping,
ever seeing him there.
He would sit
upon his porch
watching
wondering
hoping for a hello,
good afternoon,
or even a curse
anything to show that his existence was noted.
He considered
his life
evaluated
his past
decided
that he had never done anything worthwhile
for mankind
or
himself.
He walked through his house
looked at the walls
and the things upon them
there was plaster chipping
slowly falling
from a corner
which he had mended
many times before.
He looked at this corner
and walked away.
He walked to the cabinet
where he kept his weapons
a Civil War saber,
a Smith-Wesson .32,
a B-B gun,
and more.
He picked up the .32
loaded it with bullets,
pointed it to his head,
and fired.
He is dead.
The plaster still falls.
People still pass without stopping.
The sun still rises
    and sets
    over the house where
    he once lived.
If All the Books

If all the books I'd ever read
were laid end to end...
I'd live in them and send
messages home again.
Today I'd be with the wizard, in that dear land of Oz.
  Tomorrow I'll be with Peter Pan,
or maybe Santa Claus.
Or I'd be in Europe
  during the Second World War,
or in bonny Scotland
  on some cold and windy moor.
But no matter where I'd be
  or how far from home,
I'd always see people I'd know,
  and friends to help me roam.
I Know a Poet

I know a poet who cannot write what she can feel and see.

I know a poet who has not seen the sight of love between a he and she.

I know a poet who has spent each night alone. And alone must she be.

I know this poet with little inner light. The poet is me.
Me

Me,  
I,  
Myself,  
A person  
Of the species  
Homo sapiens sapiens.  
I have a personality.  
I am me.  
Everything that is mine,  
Everything I do,  
Everywhere I go,  
Are parts of me.  
I belong to myself.  
Everything I am,  
I formed.  
No one can make me become anything else.  
I am myself.  
I am different.  
Different from everyone else in the universe.  
Out of the species  
Homo sapiens sapiens  
Came a person,  
Myself,  
I,  
Me.
The wind blew through the trees.
The leaves began to spin.
Time became immaterial.
Because I was with him.

A moment lasted forever.
A second seemed a day.
That kiss, it was immortal.
The future was held at bay.

I thought I was in paradise,
But soon the world returned.
That moment was not eternal.
This is what I had learned.

Is love the art of giving?
Is life the art of love?
Am I nought but human?
Questions only time can prove.
One Lonely Night

The wind blew a cloud
across the face of
a full orange moon.
The stars shone their lights
trying to outdo
the nearer and
seemingly brighter
lights.
The night was warm,
yet the slight breeze
made one wish for a jacket.
A boy and girl walked
hand-in-hand
through a wooded lane.
An older woman stood
and watched the couple
as they wandered
beneath the trees.
Fury raced through her soul.
Jalousy of what the two had.
Anger at what she had never had.
She clutched her purse,
wishing it were a gun,
wanting to kill the two
for daring to have
what she couldn't.
She turned away
with murder in her heart.
She walked
trying to forget the emotion
that had raced through her.
She stumbled
over a rock.
Righting herself
she continued to her car.
She got in,
started her car,
and drove to her home.
To an empty house,
where no one was waiting.
She went to the cabinet
poured herself a glass of wine.
As she drank she
prepared herself for bed.
She was ready—
    she finished her wine
and lay herself down
    for another fitful,
    sleepless rest
    alone.
The Path

His was the path that many men had trod,
The path that was made of a city's concrete sod.

His was the why that many men had asked,
The answer he believed was homely, barren and masked.

His was a lifestyle that many men did choose,
A lifestyle with which he had so very much to lose.

Why had he chosen such a sterile way of life?
All that he gained was two children, a mistress, and a wife.

Was he destined never to have the freedom he could have possessed?
The freedom he would have had is contented with a little less.
The Quiet

The quiet creeps through the night
and reaches those who
   do not want
   the quiet
   and the loneliness it brings.
The darkness screams,
   the stars shout,
   the din of the quiet
   goes round and round
reaching inside the young man's brain.
He grabs his head,
   trying to hide.
He weeps for peace
   but knows his is over.
There is no chance to repent
   for his time has come
and he is gone.
Rain

The Sleeping Lover

As lighted candle flickers
    in the slight breeze
    from an open window.
I kiss him gently
    upon the corner of his mouth.
I watch him as
    he sleeps;
    his breathing regular,
    his face peaceful,
    his mind at rest.
I gaze out the window
    and watch the trees
    fast become bare.
My mind spins
    with thoughts
    ideas,
    hopes,
    and dreams.
I lay back down
    beside my lover,
    slowly close my eyes,
    and sleep knowing
    that in the morning
    he would be gone.
Bibliography

