

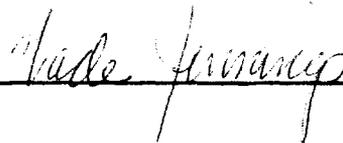
The Outcries of a Soul

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)

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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. (1962; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974), p. 136.

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 Imprecipient," 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

²Thomas Hardy, "The Imprecipient," The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Volume 2, M. H. Abrams et al., eds. (1962; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974), pp. 1717-1718.

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 ~~ex~~hausting or even very difficult process for me. When I feel the need to write down an emotion, episode, or discription, 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 MacLeish⁵

³Robert Frost, "Desert Places," The Poetry of Robert Frost, Edward Connery Latham, ed. (1969; New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1974), p. 296.

⁴John Keats, "When I have Fears," The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Volume 2, M. H. Abrams et al., eds. (1962; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974), p. 646.

⁵Archibald MacLeish, "Ars Poetica," Sound and Sense, Laurence Perrine (1956; New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1977), 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,
 never 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 Moment

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.
 Jealousy 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
 slone.

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

Rain.

Wet, damp rain.

It's fine
sometimes.

Rain.

Not a mist
but a true rain.

Not a downpour
but a simple rain.

Rain can be beautiful.

Not cold dampness running down one's neck.

Not with harm coming to anything or anybody.

Just a beautiful, simple rain.

The Sleeping Lover

As lighted candle flickers
 in the slight breeze
 from an open window.
I kiss hie 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.

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