

Notes for Art telephone piece

My jotted notes on the music I received

Poem 1 → Moonlight in a rural setting, The slumber and beauty and coldness of the moon all invoked. Mary (as in Mother) hears 'weep no more for me' while Sandy is at sea.

She sees ghost of drown Sandy, still wet. Three days they tried to save the boat but when they lost the battle his heart was filled with love of her

"the storm is past and I'm at rest" could be about the troubles in life are past and he is now calm in an metaphoric reading where the boat lost at sea is some struggle in his life that he has lost and come to grips with that and now it will not trouble their relationship anymore.

He says prepare yourself for eternity with me (presumably in heaven), it is coming soon. In the alternate reading it is make what good we can of this life left to us.

The tag line is about finding freedom from care about the bad things that happen to one you love.

Music starts with rain but is peppy and with tripping tinkling high parts for first half and while clearly in a mode or key that feels a little melancholy it follows the lyric and is somehow matter-of-fact about the events. After the poem 2 diversion it comes back a little sad but seems to end with a bittersweet feel.

Rain at the end.

Poem 2 → Rain on faded flower (a sense of arriving too late to help) wind through trees in fall's "tattered hours" with death for company.

More grey and raining imagery.

A ghost and a dream have sad things to say to each other: the bough that is broken (life image) heartbreak in the dead leaf. **Sorrow and sadness that can not be expressed.**

Music in this later middle section is that of a lingering, wearing, sadness and ennui. Reverb makes it feel a little haunted.

Notes on Heaven's Tears

Linked verse is a classical Japanese form often written by multiple authors contributing alternating Haiku (5+7+5 syllable scheme) and 7+7 syllable couplets, with a final additional couplet at the end. Often - but not always - there is a deeper meaning in some of the elements. The Haiku can often stand alone.

My overall goal was to transmit what I heard and felt in the piece I received, so there is first an emphasis on water/rain imagery, second a mix of sadness and happiness in love/life that evolves through the piece to end on an optimistic note, and finally a sense of conversation from multiple voices. The rain/water imagery is seen immediately in the first haiku of the linked verse. The tone starts both sad for the presumed dead sailor (the boat lost at sea) and yet tempered by the phrase 'weep no more for me'. However, the first couplet is definitely sad in tone. So from the start the formal structure is one

of multiple voices. I have tried to make the couplets a contrast to each proceeding Haiku, initially a sadder voice, but in the last couplets moving from being sadder to agreeing with the Haiku voice though in its own way. The mix of happy and sad in love and the alternate meaning I glimpsed in the music that I received I have written into this poem via both allusions and near quotes of the song's lyrics in the initial stanzas to a more philosophic statement (in the form of a question) at the end.

Going stanza by stanza, the first Haiku builds off the first set of lyrics in the song I received, and while Sandy and Mary are gone the core of the poem remains. It establishes the 'haiku voice' as the more optimistic one, feeling the sadness but remembering the love. The first couplet borrows the evocative word "tattered" from 'tattered hours' in the song, and adds it to the rain theme. In so doing it aligns the couplet voice with the musical piece's second poem in a feeling of ennui in a drear place, waiting for the company of death, where the only change is the atmosphere and that change spans only spans merely from drizzle to cold, annoying, sheets of rain (and never awe inspiring thunder). But at a deeper level in the first paired verses the (presumed empty) boat lost at sea is no longer a reference to a drown sailor but an image of some human effort that has failed after much struggle. In that interpretation then the second line in the stanza is about the struggler accepting the end that has been arrived at, and 'love' is the love of that idea or goal that drove us to struggle.

In the second haiku the first voice pushes back against the first couplet voice to say yes we fail in love but if we hold true there is a second chance or a rebirth. The Phoenix song just emphasizes the rebirth aspect, the Phoenix being the mythological bird that bursts into flame and is reborn from the ashes. The deeper meaning continues the theme of the first Haiku. The idea or goal is not lost just because the struggle was lost, for others may come to take up that struggle and they may succeed. The second couplet continues its suffering theme from the first couplet, agreeing that song is sweet (and here it picks up the deeper meaning as well), saying that the Phoenix song is sweet and can carry far, that is that the idea or goal can spread to many others. But the couplet voice none the less concludes on a grey note saying that the rain can still drown the song out. The word fades was chosen deliberately as the descriptor, playing off the second poem in the music I received and its feeling of ennui, because that which fades does not die in glory but rather perishes slowly, and disappears into quiet obscurity.

The third set of verse marks the turn in the poem – just as the music and the lyrics turn to a more optimistic tone near the end of the piece – with the two voices still bearing the hurts and scars of what they came through but now looking up. The Haiku is a simple one with the allegorical meaning very near to the textual meaning. In spring buds come forth and the flowers from them are both a nourishment for life (the bees) and a nourishment for the soul of man (the eye). The final line finishes in an iconic Haiku form where the first 5+7 syllable lines talk about the nature of some thing, and the last 5 syllable line tells you what the thing is. The only real point to emphasize here is the choice of the word 'radiant' which is not only alliterative but also marks the sun finally coming out from the rain. The couplet author at this point joins the positive march though it will continue to hold the scars of the battle. Here the couplet voice points out the negative, noting the flower dies (actually fades – a quiet lonely death- as in the earlier couplet), but for the first time the couplet voice sees some hope as it accedes to the point that in memory the flower is still a joy. With the rain and sea imagery gone we are now at least implicitly moving from the water to the earth element.

In the fourth group of stanzas the imagery changes to fire so we are firmly out of the drear and into the clear. The denotative point being that as the camp fire dies to embers and the boisterous singing or

laughter around it draws down to a quieter and more meaningful exchange or even a close shared silence; the people share a sense of oneness or at least closeness. The 'dying' of the fire is not a bad thing but rather a transformation to a new better thing; also note the tie to the earlier Phoenix image. At the deeper level of course, this is a later group who share the idea, who are building off the failed attempts that went before and pushing the fight onward. Though they also take damage, they come out the other side with some meaningful gains represented by the comradeship growing. The couplet voice is now fully onboard and seizes on the wood smoke (from the campfire) drifting up and mystically carrying our dreams and wishes; and indeed when things get quiet around a fire we often are immersed in our own dreams and wishes. Note though, while the Haiku author speaks of action the couplet author – presumably still held back by the scars received and the horrors seen – has only dreams and wishes. Incidentally, with the smoke drifting upward, the couplet introduces the last of the classic elements – air, to the water, earth and fire already in the verses.

In the final set of stanzas, the cycle of life and death is represented in the cycle of the day, with the sun roaring to life in the morning and solidifying the now upbeat outlook. While the sun is 'doomed' (a word freighted with the old gloom of earlier sections) to settle in the ocean, doom also can take the older and more hopeful meaning of simply being destined to some state as in 'he became the king as was his doom.' The fact that the sun 'nestles' in the sea – a comfortable resting rather than a drowning- leans toward the happier meaning while touching both the water imagery and just an echo of the earlier sadder stanzas. The closing line of the last haiku firmly emphasizes the positive aspect with the sun set enabling dreaming. Of course, in the deeper meaning dreaming is needed to generate new ideas worth fighting for, it is the necessary first step to moving forward. Additionally, in this last haiku the need for the cycle of life and death is underscored; there must be loss so that we may dream and in dreaming move forward. The couplet voice agrees fully and without any reservation this time, painting life and death in the pleasurable and romantic activity of dance, and stating clearly what was only in a deeper layer in the Haiku, the beauty is in the motion, in the cycle itself, in the possibility and reality of change. If one tries to hold on to some aspect of life then there is only sadness (as in the voice's earlier couplets), but in accepting the cycle and letting things go when it is their time (as in the first haiku's 'cry no more for me') the beauty can be seen clearly in the progress and the motion itself.

The finishing couplet reflects on the preceding verses as a whole (as is common in linked verse) and constitutes a third voice. In this work it is a philosophic voice. It goes even further in embracing the cycle of birth, motion, death, and rebirth by stating (in the form of a rhetorical question) that all things of any value are ephemeral and then essentially invokes the reader to embrace this by going a step further to say your experience will be what you make of the cycle, that you too can cry no more.

The title of the piece refers not only to the rain imagery but also to the fact that the tears of our personal loss are also a gift of heaven because the cycle of life and death and change that we in some parts mourn over is the beauty of the cosmos and at the very least the pain in loss validates the value of what we had.

Heaven's Tears

A boat lost at sea,
'dear, weep no more for me.'
Love so bittersweet.

All things must come to an end,
tattered rain will always fall.

And yet hope remains,
for death can not conquer love.
Phoenix song so sweet.

The sweetest song can carry far,
but fades quickly in the rain.

In spring the bud bursts.
it feeds the bee and the eye.
A radiant rose.

The bright flower once faded
in memory still sparks joy.

Around a campfire:
As flames die down to embers,
the comradeship grows.

Wood smoke drifts off to heaven
Carrying dreams and wishes.

The sun roars each morn,
doomed to nestle in the sea.
So that we may dream.

Life and death dance eternal
The beauty in the motion

What of value does not fade?
What we make of it is all.