



Maieutic Poetry

By
Art McKenna

4/27/20



Maieutic Poetry

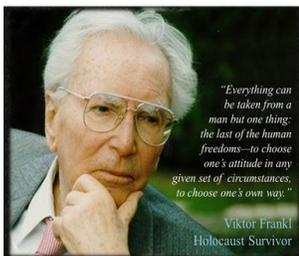
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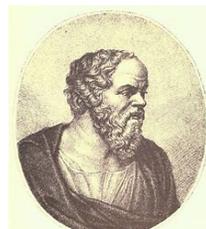


Introduction: Make Meaningfulness Possible: Maieutic Poetry



Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy uses the maieutic method. This method refers to bringing out some latent knowledge that is inside you. It is a method to teach people what (in a sense) they already know, but don't know they know. The maieutic method assumes a certain level of innate knowledge and understanding, separate from experience. The maieutic method is different from the Socratic method. This Socratic debate (the elenctic way) is a form of a cooperative argumentative dialogue between individuals. It is based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to draw out ideas and underlying presuppositions.

The maieutic method involves asking a series of questions that were considered by Socrates, a practice of "giving birth" to the truth, and a related word, *maieutic*, defined as "relating to or resembling the Socratic method of eliciting new ideas from another. *Maieutic* comes from "maieutic," the Greek word for "of midwifery." In one of Plato's "Dialogues," Socrates applies "maieutic" to his method of bringing forth new ideas by reasoning and dialogue; he thought the technique analogous to those a midwife uses in delivering a baby. Tradition tells us that Socrates' mother was a midwife. In using the maieutic can be thought of as an intellectual midwife who assists the person in bringing forth ideas and conceptions previously latent in his or her mind.



Plato did not like poets and teachers (Sophists), so how can we develop the idea of maieutic poetry and stories? If we consider poetry as the language of the heart, then the lines of a poem can compress thoughts, feelings, and the essence of the writer and the reader. If you agree with Frankl that each moment has a singularity and meaningfulness, then poetry and short stories can express the writer's uniqueness and the reader's spirit. *Maieutic* Questions – From the Greek word for mid-wife uses in Socratic dialogue, maieutic questions help a person to see life differently. A difference that helps to discover meaningfulness. *Maieutic* questions are often challenging, but they are non-invasive; they aim to bring deep inner knowing to conscious awareness.

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The Letter Y

Our alphabet has given us small y's and big Y's.
The little y's help me make excuses
I love excuses and sometimes they love me
Little dogs bark at me and I just laugh,
But furious dogs growl and then I run.
These little y's can make me tremble or
bring a smile to my suspicious eyes.



The big Y's are sneaky – I know that they're there – but where?
The big Y's call to me and demand a purpose,
But y do I have to show resolve and determination?
I have none of them nor
do I want them.
Give me a growling dog anytime.



Life has given me little y's and big Y's
The little y's are noisy and demand so much damn attention.
The big Y's are important and demand that they be one of a kind.
But life asks me to be specific, and I'm uncomfortable.
So uncomfortable that I rather be with biting dogs.
For life is not about waiting for the barking dogs to be silent,
But learning to find the big Y's in every moment.



June 20, 2019

Singularity



The wind growls.
When I was young, I wanted to change the world.
When I grew older, I wanted to fix the world.
I didn't see fate's old face,
So, the world remained broken.

A tree sighs.
When I was young, I tried so hard to change.
When I grew older, I just wanted to ease my pain.
I couldn't move fate, so it knocked me down so hard,
So hard - I couldn't get up.



I don't think about
What I can change or what I can fix.
I only see meaningfulness in the moment.
Moments that flow by –
Moments that I will never see again.



The river whispers.
I don't worry about my foolish youth,
It is past and gone.
I don't concern myself with the rocks,
I flow over and around them.



September 2, 2019

There are A Lot of “The One Thing”

Inspired by Viktor Frankl

Re-inspired by Art McKenna



The one thing that is true of life is that there is more chaos than serenity.
The one thing that is true of life is that there is more worry than peace.
The one thing that is true of life is that there is more conflict than harmony.



You need to have a sanctuary – somewhere to flee to in times of pain.
You need to have a sanctuary– somewhere you can be alone, but you’re not alone.
You need to have a sanctuary – somewhere you can find yourself again.



With depression, all you have is yourself, and it’s your inner self.
With depression, all you have is yourself, and it’s the only thing that confronts you.
With depression, all you have is yourself, and you are only interested in yourself.



But when you move away from depression, you begin to grow into a person again.
But when you move away, you begin to accept others for themselves.
But when you move away, you can give, you can love, and you can live again.

Once away from depression, you can make love possible each day.
Once away, you can make life meaningful.
Once away, you can embrace life with hope in every day.

April 26, 2020

Circling Sorrow

**Youth finding it easy to remember those glorious beginnings,
Beginnings completed with no ending.
A grieving widow is finding it threatening to forget,
To forget the anguish of loneliness.**

**Youth discovering adventures and brilliant memories,
Memories filled with the first love found.
An inconsolable soul saddened by images,
Images of lost love that will never fade.**

**Youth realizing ideas overflowing with inspiration,
The inspiration that motivates, excites but never exceeds hope.
A heartbroken mother finds it dangerous,
Dangerous to finish stories hijacked by grief.**

**Love circling its beginnings never to be found,
Found in the inspiration that neither begins or ends.
Circling sorrows with tragic endings lost,
Only lost to those who have never loved.**



February 27, 2019

A Thanksgiving Blessing

May others speak well of you,
And may you be thankful of what others don't say in jest.
May others see goodness that surrounds you,
And may you accept that goodness with gratitude.

May others have trust in you,
And may their trust encircle your passions with love.
May others give you a gentle wink when a mistake finds you,
And may that wink bring a smile to your face.

May others bless you – keep you,
And confer happiness upon your time together on this day.
May others grant you the time that allows joy to embrace you,
And may that joy free you to be yourself.

May others be kind to you,
And give you the gentleness that you sometimes you run from.
May you appreciate the favor and help that God gives you,
And may you give love to others on this day of Thanksgiving

November 2018

A Blessing for Thanksgiving Day

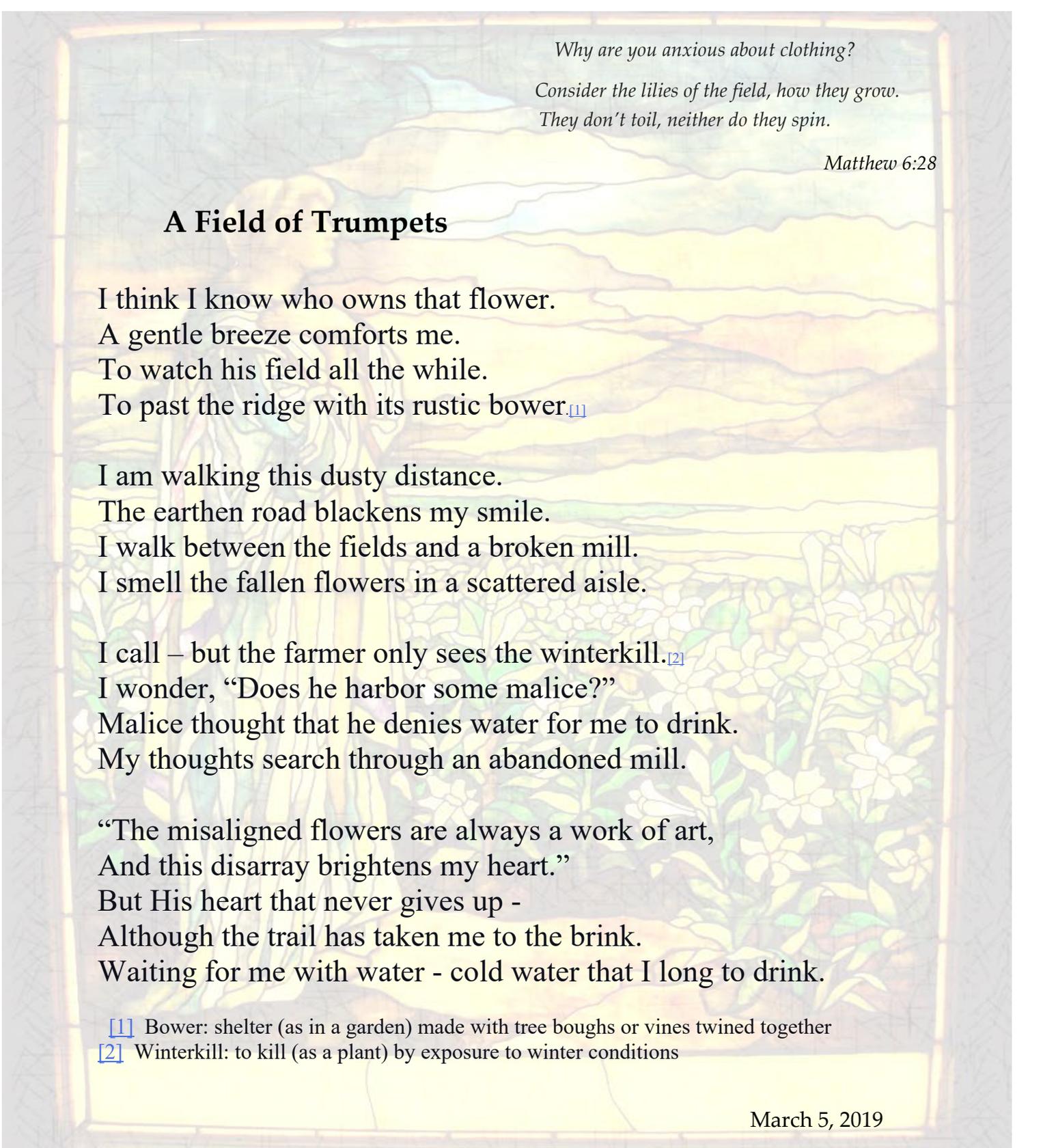
**May fields of unlimited opportunities grow all around you.
So, you are blessed by them,
And not cursed by them.
For today we give thanks to them.**

**May rivers of possibilities flow next to you.
Allowing you to see each other.
Allowing you to be with each other.
For today we give thanks to each other.**

**Angels or rulers can never weaken you.
For they can never make love possible,
But sharing your gifts makes love possible.
For today we give thanks for those gifts.**

**May His blessings nurture you.
May you have moments of love to strengthen you.
May God's endurance help you to understand each other.
For today we give thanks for that love He has given to each other.**

November 2019



*Why are you anxious about clothing?
Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.
They don't toil, neither do they spin.*

Matthew 6:28

A Field of Trumpets

I think I know who owns that flower.
A gentle breeze comforts me.
To watch his field all the while.
To past the ridge with its rustic bower.^[1]

I am walking this dusty distance.
The earthen road blackens my smile.
I walk between the fields and a broken mill.
I smell the fallen flowers in a scattered aisle.

I call – but the farmer only sees the winterkill.^[2]
I wonder, “Does he harbor some malice?”
Malice thought that he denies water for me to drink.
My thoughts search through an abandoned mill.

“The misaligned flowers are always a work of art,
And this disarray brightens my heart.”
But His heart that never gives up -
Although the trail has taken me to the brink.
Waiting for me with water - cold water that I long to drink.

[1] Bower: shelter (as in a garden) made with tree boughs or vines twined together
[2] Winterkill: to kill (as a plant) by exposure to winter conditions

March 5, 2019

The Lost Dancer

Swirling and folding the dancer dances.

The candles flicker past the blood-stained tables.

Her step averts the onlookers' eyes, so not to mangle their soul.

As she darts past the filthy windows, her steps rejoice virtue and death.

She crosses the floor like leaves of grass moving across a field – descending and bending.

The dancer's bewildering eyes creep past the wooden tables.

The guitarist's rhythms become the witnesses' rhymes,

Her movements capture the onlookers

Her verses vibrate in oneness.

A oneness with their spirit,

A unity with her body.

The dancer screams.

Her past splashing up - crashing down - her screams jolt memories.

Her sweat flings from her body; the past of the cantina remains.

The barkeep watches the swirling movements as the one becomes one.

Possibilities smash and crash as onlookers cannot see, but their souls desire the divine.

Her whirling blurs of reds and blues bleed into patterns of expanding possibilities,

A divinity they cannot hear - a rhythm that no guitarist can find,

But a single blade of grass blending and bending to a song.

A song that never ends, so the dancer dances on.

February 7, 2019

Pilgrim, A Soul

by Art McKenna

**There's forever
There's your forever.
A forever
Not one to be realized.
A lie, a truth
A truth I cannot see or want to feel.**

**There's forever
There's my forever.
Plain, unadorned.
The plain truth - not felt, not seen.
An endlessness
Her endlessness - not felt, not seen.**

**Crying children
Fallen tears, a child
A forever
She's gone- she's gone forever.
A lie, a truth
A truth whispered -your mother is gone.**

**Gone forever
There's her forever.
A young soul
A wanderer's soul
A pilgrim, a soul - not wanting
A truth, a lie
A truth that crushes each other's heart - forever.**

5/15/20

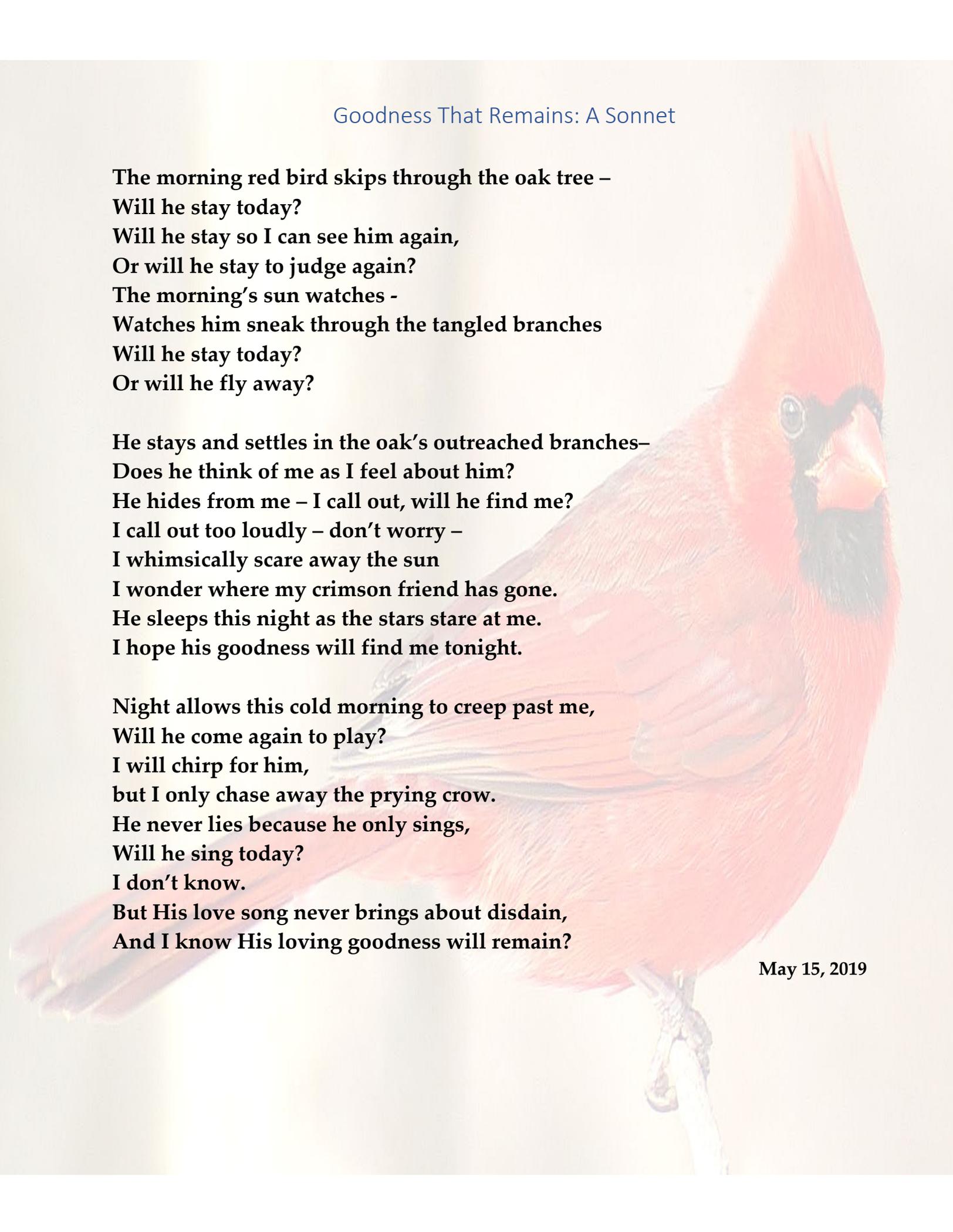
Goodness That Remains: A Sonnet

The morning red bird skips through the oak tree –
Will he stay today?
Will he stay so I can see him again,
Or will he stay to judge again?
The morning's sun watches -
Watches him sneak through the tangled branches
Will he stay today?
Or will he fly away?

He stays and settles in the oak's outreached branches–
Does he think of me as I feel about him?
He hides from me – I call out, will he find me?
I call out too loudly – don't worry –
I whimsically scare away the sun
I wonder where my crimson friend has gone.
He sleeps this night as the stars stare at me.
I hope his goodness will find me tonight.

Night allows this cold morning to creep past me,
Will he come again to play?
I will chirp for him,
but I only chase away the prying crow.
He never lies because he only sings,
Will he sing today?
I don't know.
But His love song never brings about disdain,
And I know His loving goodness will remain?

May 15, 2019



Mislead

See and read.

Betting on the future is not a good bet.

Betting on words and hopes will always mislead.

See and feel – my feelings are always to wet.

Experience is the only we perceive.

See and read.

Feel a slender reed.

Picked, plucked we only want to grieve.

Words and hopes mislead.

Recall forgotten misdeed.

Misdeeds that never conceive.

See and read

Touch a heart - long to disagree.

Ranting and raving I never believe.

Words and hopes mislead.

Words never recede.

Promises and memories are only to be retrieve.

See and read.

Words and hopes will mislead.

Appreciating the Unacceptable

Would I want to change the past?

Sure – but not today.

Will memories stop haunting me?

Unlikely.

Should I feel the present?

Yeah – but who is to say.

Will this pain stop “rattling” around in my head?

Improbable.

Could I hope for a future?

A promising idea – but time will take that away.

Will guilt stop me from spinning around and around with self-accusations?

Doubtful.

So, will I be left with accepting the unknowable?

Most likely.

Will I ever accept the unacceptable?

Who knows?

Can I appreciate the unknowable?

Why not!

January 10, 2018

Appendix 1: Worksheets

Maieutic questions

1. As you look back on your life, what were the moments when you were most yourself?
2. What is a goal you would like to accomplish in one month? In six months?
3. How do you find courage?
4. What is a fear you'd like to be free of?
5. What challenge do you have before you right now?
6. What is something you'd like to celebrate?
7. What is a dream you'd like to have come true someday?
8. What is life asking of you at this time, even in all your suffering?
9. When do you feel the most renewed?

Maieutic Poetry – Letter Y Contemplation Technique – (to view as contingent or probable or as an end or intention); connect disparate meanings

1. As you look back on your life, what were the moments when you preferred to ignore the meaningfulness of the moment because you were angry, afraid, or upset at yourself?

2. How do embracing your excuses restrict your sense of uniqueness?

The Letter Y: Worksheet

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>The Letter Y</p> | | |
| <p>The little y's help me make excuses I love excuses and sometimes they love me Little dogs bark at me and I just laugh, But furious dogs growl and then I run. These little y's can make me tremble or bring a smile to my suspicious eyes.</p> | | |
| <p>The big Y's are sneaky – I know that they're there – but where? The big Y's call to me and demand a purpose, But y do I have to show resolve and determination? I have none of them nor do I want them. Give me a growling dog anytime.</p> | | |
| <p>Life has given me little y's and big Y's The little y's are noisy and demand so much damn attention. The big Y's are important and demand that they be one of a kind. But life asks me to be specific, and I'm uncomfortable. So uncomfortable that I rather be with biting dogs.</p> <p>For life is not about waiting for the barking dogs to be silent, But learning to find the big Y's in every moment.</p> | <p>I prefer the little question because I can't see myself as knowing how to answer the big questions.</p> | |

Singularity: Worksheet

Maieutic Poetry – Singularity Comparison Technique -- The delivery of meaning rests heavily on the comparison and the invitation to the listener to *see the situation in a different way*; messages see change differently

| Singularity | Moments are never repeated | |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| <p>The wind growls slowly, saying. When I was young, I wanted to change the world. When I grew older, I wanted - to fix the world. I didn't see fate's old face, So, the world remained broken.</p> | | |
| <p>A blending tree sighs. <i>When I was young, I tried so hard to change.</i> <i>When I grew older, I just wanted to ease its pain</i> <i>I couldn't move fate, so it knocked me down so hard,</i> <i>So hard - I couldn't get up.</i></p> | | |
| <p>The river whispers. I don't worry about my foolish youth, it's past and gone. I don't concern myself with the rocks, I flow over and around them. I don't think about what I can change or what I can fix. I only see meaningfulness in the moment Moments that flow by – moments that I will never see again.</p> | | |
| | | |

Circling Sorrows

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Circling Sorrow | | |
| Youth finding it easy to remember those glorious beginnings, | | |
| Beginnings completed with no ending. A grieving widow is finding it threatening to forget, To forget the anguish of loneliness. | | |
| Youth discovering adventures and brilliant memories, Memories filled with the first love found. An inconsolable soul saddened by images, Images of lost love that will never fade. | | |
| Youth realizing ideas overflowing with inspiration, The inspiration that motivates, excites but never exceeds hope. A heartbroken mother finds it dangerous, Dangerous to finish stories hijacked by grief. | | |
| Love circling its beginnings never to be found, Found in the inspiration that neither begins or ends. Circling sorrows with tragic endings lost, Only lost to those who have never loved. | | |

A Field of Trumpets

| <p>I have taken this poem from Matthew 6:28: "Why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don't toil, neither do they spin." It is an image of a man walking down a road, and he wonders who own the land and the flowers growing on the land.</p> | | |
|--|--|---|
| A Field of Trumpets | My Thoughts | Your Thoughts |
| <p>I think I know who owns that flower. A gentle breeze comforts me. To watch his field all the while. To past the ridge with its rustic bower.¹</p> | <p>a man walking down a road, and he wonders who own the land and the flowers growing on the land; he pauses and looks at the field of lilies, and he notices a shelter (as in a garden) made with tree boughs or vines twined together</p> | |
| <p>Walking this dusty mile. The earthen road blackens my smile. I walk between the fields and a broken mill. I smell the fallen flowers in a scattered aisle.</p> | <p>He is walking on a dirt road and his mouth is filled with dust from the road. Wishing for some water he thinks about a mill that has not worked in years, but the flowers retain he attention.</p> | |
| <p>I call – but the farmer only sees the winterkill.² I wonder, "Does he harbor some ill-will?" An ill-will that denies water to drink. My thoughts search through an abandoned mill.</p> | <p>As he walks, he sees a farmer and calls him to see if he has any water to share, but the farmer is preoccupied. The man thinks that the farmer has some prejudiced against him, and he believes he'll never get any water; he hopes the stream that use to work the mill is still running.</p> | <p>Ever feel abandoned by someone who states that he cares about you?</p> |
| <p>"The misaligned flowers are always a work of art, And this disarray brightens His heart." His heart that never gives up - Although the trail has taken me to the brink. He waits for me with water - cool water that I long to drink.</p> | <p>He attention returns to the flowers, and he realizes the farmer must have planted those flowers, and he must work very hard to keep his farm in some working order. The man is very tired and hopes he'll find some water soon. To his amazement the farmer provides him with the needed water.</p> | |

¹ Bower: shelter (as in a garden) made with tree boughs or vines twined together

² Winterkill: to kill (as a plant) by exposure to winter conditions

The Last Dancer

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Reading the poetry of Walt Wittman, you are struck by his movement in his poems. While he was alive, his poetry was not widely accepted or appreciated. His LEAVES OF GRASS XXXX</p> | | |
| <p>Swirling and folding the dancer dances. The candles flicker past the blood-stained tables. Her step averts the onlookers' eyes, so not to mangle their soul. As she darts past the filthy windows, her steps rejoice virtue and death. She crosses the floor like leaves of grass moving across a field – descending and bending.</p> | | |
| <p>The dancer's bewildering eyes creep past the wooden tables. The guitarist's rhythms become the witnesses' rhymes, Her movements capture the onlookers Her verses vibrate in oneness. A oneness with their spirit, A unity with her body. The dancer screams. Her past splashing up - crashing down - her screams jolt memories.</p> | | |
| <p>Her sweat flings from her body; the past of the cantina remains. The barkeep watches the swirling movements as the one becomes one. Possibilities smash and crash as onlookers cannot see, but their souls desire the divine. Her whirling blurs of reds and blues bleed into patterns of expanding possibilities, A divinity they cannot hear - a rhythm that no guitarist can find, But a single blade of grass blending and bending to a song. A song that never ends, so the dancer dances on.</p> | | |
| | | |

Mislead

Gertrude Stein One sees and reads what one sees and reads – experiences are greater than words

| | | |
|--|---|---------------|
| Mislead | Thoughts and words often mislead; words can lead us in a wrong direction or into a mistaken action or belief, words themselves do not deliberately deceive. | Your Thoughts |
| See and read. Betting on the future will deceive Words and hopes mislead. | All we can say about seeing and reading is that we are simply seeing and reading; to give the work its autonomy independent of both writer and reader – memories and projections come into play; flowery words and betting on the future will deceive us and introduce bias to our perceptions | |
| See and feel - I can't concede. Experience is the only we perceive. See and read. | It is what it is – no more no less; seeing and feeling is what you read; you can acknowledge what you see and read; words are like spilling water from an aqueduct - words never reach their destination; the experience of seeing and reading is simply seeing and reading; | |
| Feel a slender reed. Picked, plucked only to grieve. Words and hopes mislead. | Thinking misleads because our thoughts can easily change and people influence our thinking – we pick our thoughts and choose what they believe; our feelings are like reeds in the wind – they can help us and help us to be resilient in times of stress, but the vicissitudes of a situation can make us feel like you have been picked and plucked | |
| Recall forgotten misdeed. Misdeeds that never conceive. See and read | Recalling misdeeds of the past is a waste of time; I think about when my words fell short; it is difficult to measure how much I have past; deduct: to take away – you can't go back and change the past; but you can't stop thinking about your mistakes; it is more important to see what you see and read what you read then to give a deep analysis of each and every word. | |
| Touch a heart - long to disagree. Ranting and raving I never believe. Words and hopes mislead. | Touching moments can mislead; If we never disagree, we feel better about each other; Saying a lot of words loudly & passionately – doesn't help; what I say and write can be misleading; exchanging pleasantries makes us feel better, but betting on the future will deceive and introduce bias to my perceptions | |
| Words never recede. Promises and memories retrieve. See and read. Words and hopes will mislead. | Many words delude what we truly feel; one tender word is worth more than a poem with many lines; silky and elegant-sleek promise get in the way of experiencing the moment of a single word can get in the way of our relationship; A tender word here and there is more important than promises we made in the past; | |

Villanelle

| Form: Villanelle | | |
|--|---|--|
| The Waking (1953) Roethke Theodore | Faithful Infidelities (2019) March 13, 2019 Art McKenna | Do not go gentle into that good night (1937) Dylan Thomas |
| I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow. I feel my fate in what I cannot <i>fear</i> . I learn by going where I have to go. | I make to live, and take my hopes to give. Dreaming, drifting through severe citations. I look for the day for her to forgive. | Do not go gentle into that good night, Old age should burn and rave at close of day; > Rage, rage against the dying of the light. |
| We think by feeling. What is there to know? I hear my being dance from ear to <i>ear</i> . I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow. | A burning shiv of sorrow is to relive. A burning thought becomes obsessing quotations. I want to live, and take my hopes to give. | Though wise men at their end know dark is right, Because their words had forked no lightning they < Do not go gentle into that good night. |
| Of those so close beside me, which are you? God bless the Ground! I shall walk softly <i>there</i> , And learn by going where I have to go. | Past dreams I can never hope to re-live. Longing for words to sooth her narration. I look for the day for her to forgive. | Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay, > Rage, rage against the dying of the light. |
| Light takes the Tree; but who can tell us how? The lowly worm climbs up a winding <i>stair</i> ; I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow. | Infidelities I am to misgive. Forsaking life as a cruel frustration. I make to live, and take my hopes to give. | Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight, And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way, < Do not go gentle into that good night. |
| Great Nature has another thing to do To you and me; so take the lively <i>air</i> , And, lovely, learn by going where to go. | Faithful is the hour – an hour long to forgive. Sitting wearily to pray with elation. I look for the day for her to forgive. | Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay, > Rage, rage against the dying of the light. |
| This shaking keeps me steady. I should know. What falls away is always. And is <i>near</i> . I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow. I learn by going where I have to go. | Faithful infidelities I can't outlive. To lie is to flee from my liberation. I make to live, and take my hopes to give. I look for the day for her to forgive. | And you, my father, there on that sad height, Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray. < Do not go gentle into that good night. > Rage, rage against the dying of the light. |

