

CHAPTER 7

A. Redemption – George Herbert

In this dramatic biblical parable sonnet, the “I” of the story told has been for a long time the tenant of a wealthy landlord. His affairs have not prospered, and so at last he plucks up courage to go to ask his lord to cancel the current lease and to make a new one which will demand a lower rent.

Going to heaven, to his lord’s manor, he is told that the lord had recently gone away on business, to take possession of some land which he had bought at great cost, long ago.

The man returns at once, and, considering the high rank of his lord, he looks for him in the great resorts, cities, theatres, gardens, parks and courts. Eventually, he hears the sound of a crowd of poor people, and the laughter of thieves and murderers. There, he sees his lord, who immediately grants the man’s suit, and dies.

“Redemption” is dramatic. Herbert uses a conversational, colloquial start (Having been tenant...), but his conversation is a quiet, gentle one that tells a story, to compress an introduction, action and resolution into his fourteen lines with the simple, clear language. Nevertheless, the relationship between the characters is clear. The rich lord, often absent on business, would be expected to frequent theatres and parks. The tenant is dependent on the generosity of his lord for his own well-being and indeed his livelihood. The lord can either accept the tenant’s suit or reject it out of hand, and the tenant is threatened with the failure of his crops and animals and to throw himself on his lord’s mercy.

The drama of the poem lies also in the sudden change to direct speech at the end without introduction, four words are spoken, “your suit is granted” by the rather remote landlord are directed to the story teller producing an immediacy startling in its effect, a conclusion. The reader knows not only where the lord will be found, but what his response will be.

There are two “background” sections which form the octet, (abab, cdcd), the “turn” at the start of the sestet to the subsequent action (effe) and the resolution in the final couplet (gg). Herbert draws the story of man’s redemption and God’s grace.

B. Song: To Celia – Ben Jonson

This song: To Celia is a compliment to a lady put in language more graceful, more wealthy with interesting sounds. A figure of speech—the metaphor that love is wine, implied in the statement that one lover may salute another by lifting eyes as well as by lifting a cup the hyperbolic tributes to the power of the lady’s sweet breath, which can start picked roses growing again, and her kisses, which even surpass the nectar of the gods.

The lines rhyme (with an additional rhyme sound on thine) the proximity of the words *kiss* and *cup*: the repetition (or alliteration) of the *k* sound attracts our interest, too. The rhythm of the lines has become regular; generally every other word (or syllable) is stressed.

Drink to me On-ly With thine Eyes,

And I will Pledge with Mine;

Or leave a Kiss but in the Cup,

And I’ll not Ask for Wine.

All these devices of sound and rhythm, together with metaphor, produce a pleasing effect-more pleasing than the effect of "Let's not drink; let's look at each other.

C. To..... – Percy Bysshe Shelley

In this poem, Shelley depicts for us three images to represent his sense of feeling toward his late lover. He draws a comparison by describing music, her voice still vibrates in his memory, her odours, like the sweet violet, is still in his senses, and the rose leaves which are like her belongings are heaped on her bed. These images still appeal to his senses. Whenever he senses these he still remembers his love for her, though it is an intangible feeling.