



The Society of

CLASSICAL POETS

The Poetry of Bruce Dale Wise

One Has To

One has to keep on striving even when
no one believes in what one is doing,
nobody cares what one has achieved—then!
One must go on scheming and construing.
One has to keep striving all the time,
when one's spirit flags, when one's doubt rises,
when one seems so distant from the sublime¹,
even in the midst of one more crisis.
One has to keep on striving when even
the whole world disregards all that one does,
including passing away and leaving.
At just one moment before what one was,
as long as there's one second of living
left to do, one has to keep on striving.

A Herder Near the Sea

A dream, a dream, is our life on the Earth here.
Like whitecaps in the surf, we lift our eyes and peer.
Like shadows on the waves, we drift and disappear.

We measure out our dragging steps by space and time,
and are (although we know it not) in the sublime,
as round us rolls eternity's amazing mime².

Late Summer Tweet: 2013

Poet Fu Ying,
of Liaoning,
labeled wrong
for practicing
Falun Gong,³

¹ Sublime (adj): very beautiful or good : causing strong feelings of admiration or wonder

² A form of entertainment in which a performer plays a character or tells a story without words by using body movements and facial expressions

³ A peaceful spiritual practice currently persecuted by the Communist regime in China.

was arrested
in Shenyang,
molested
again
for daring
to believe in
Zhen-Shan-Ren.⁴

To a Fellow Traveler

I came upon the Shrine of Incense Stored⁵,
below that gorgeous valley's tow'ring peaks,
along the hidden tracks of men, and poured
my spirit to that beauty each soul seeks.
Deep in that ancient wood I heard a bell
and woke to find a waterfall's harsh voice
there in the mountains—oh, I cannot tell.
I was not sad, but I did not rejoice.
I saw some larches line a lake's round rim
and sunlight sparkles on the surface shake.
I knew that only meditation's dream
could tame the deadly dragon in that lake,
who stirred beneath its surface, wan and gray,
as if to say, "You now are on the Way."

Haiku

As I drive my car,
an eagle flies overhead.
How far have I come?

A man's eyes tear up.
He is eating hamburgers
with sliced white onions.

⁴ The three main principles of Falun Gong: Truth, Compassion, Tolerance

⁵ Ancient Buddhist shrine

A robin pauses
atop a neighbor's link fence,
a moment's respite.

Mount Saint Helens was,
in my youth, as perfect as
Mount Fuji now is.

The Queen of Night *Aria*

The aria of Mozart's *Magic Flute* Queen of Night is beautiful; but horrifying too. She sings of hell, revenge, death and despair. The fiend, then launches into bloodcurdling, bird-call abuse. But hear, hear, hear. The music is so beautiful it carries one away with its high-flying view of th' human voice. How can a shrieking be that full—a mother's curse and filled with so much loveliness? It seems unreal, unfathomable, crude but cool, a powerful arpeggio⁶ of vile vengeance, as if all bonds of nature had been broken free forever and were left in utter emptiness.

The Ring

"My precious." –Gollum, *The Hobbit*, J. R. R. Tolkien

I only knew but one tall dude who had a ring
with magic powers. He had one large, silver ring.
Although still visible when he put on his ring,
it gave him strength. I know, because he used the ring
on me. I was at peace, not thinking of a ring,
when he burst in all tough and macho with his ring.
He pushed me down and shoved me flat with his round
ring,
and slammed me hard again, again! with that damn
ring.
I fought. It hurt. Oh, then my ears began to ring.
But he continued on—two fighters in a ring.
It left a scar. I would not soon forget that ring,
oh, even now some decades past, remembering.

⁶ Arpeggio: a musical technique where notes in a chord are played or sung in sequence, one after the other, rather than ringing out simultaneously

Nobody in Particular

I wonder if I'll ever see
a banished piece of Poetry
of mine in print. I hope and pray
and squint; but yet, I have to say,
that I may not live long enough.
The Frogs are ugly, stark and gruff.
The Bog is ominously steep.
To step inside one has to creep.
The Scum upon the pond, like gauze,
does cover all with Ooze and Oz.
It's filled with so much Muck and Sludge,
the wonder is one dares to trudge.
Perhaps someday, when I decay,
my Corpse will see the Light of Day;
but till that time, I wonder still
if I will seep into the Swill⁷.

Key Terms

Sonnet: Fourteen-line poem

Haiku: Three-line poem with a syllable pattern of 5-7-5

Alliteration: The repetition of same beginning sound in consecutive or closely aligned words.

Epigraph: A quotation placed at the beginning of a work.

Figurative Language: Language, such as similes or metaphors, that goes beyond the literal meaning.

Questions

1. Identify the two **sonnets** and their rhyme pattern.
2. What words are repeated in "One Has To"? What effect does this have?
3. Find an example where the poet uses **alliteration**? What is the effect it has on the piece?
4. Which poem contains an **epigraph**? What effect does it have?
5. The poet in "Nobody in Particular" is using **figurative language** to refer to what?

⁷ Swill: food for animals (such as pigs) made from scraps of food and water

