
Pablo Neruda: A Dilemma of Lost Love

Pablo Neruda wrote in a variety of styles such as in his collection of love poems, surrealist poems, historical epics, and political manifestos. In 1971 Neruda won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez called him 'the greatest poet of the 20th century in any language'. Pablo Neruda was one of the first to use surrealism technique in his poetry. It added a sense of supernatural phenomena. No living poet is as famous today as Neruda was in his lifetime. His poetry had an enormous influence throughout Latin America.

His first two books were rather self-published and traditional but it brought little attention from the public. His third book, *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* (1924), was not considered worthy of publishing because of its frank celebration of sex. The frank eroticism brought attention and his striking images capture the ecstasies and torments of young love:

Body of woman, white hills, white thighs, you look like the world in your posture of surrender.

My savage peasant body digs through you and makes the sun leap from the depth of the earth.
(From 'Song I')

In his last 20 years he produced an amazing amount of work much of his love poetry was inspired by his passion for his third wife, Matilde Urrutia (his first two marriages ended in divorce). This collection allows us to follow the evolution of his romantic sensibility over five decades.

As the purpose of this paper is to study dilemma of lost love of Neruda, he wrote many poems about his lost love like *The Song of Despair*, *Tonight I Can Write the Saddest Lines*, *Don't Be Far Off*, *When I Die I want your hands on mine* and *Here I Love You*.

In the poem *The Song of Despair*, poet's beloved had departed from him. He is in despair as he knows that she can no longer come back to him. His love and fascination dominate his mind and thought. So he experiences emotional attachment with her but knows well that she is not going to experience again the pleasant moments of life spent together in joy. He is sad to remember that she had departed for ever. They are never going to meet again.

The poem is an elegy written as a memorial of poet's dead love. The poem narrates deep sorrow that has engulfed him when he is feeling that his end is near. He remembers how he spent his life with her in perfect harmony and profound joy. There is nothing permanent in life of man on earth. His joys, love, memory of pleasant relations, songs of love and beauty are transitory. A river is a symbol of nature which is going through mountains and rippling through green and pale landscape ultimately loses its form and movement in ocean. The poet feels this is destiny of man's love. His birth and death are fixed and loses his identity or memory in mystery of nature. The poem is full of love but the love is physical and sensual. The description of landscape is natural and realistic. The poet laments that man's life is not endless. Everything even the memories are forgotten. The parting is so complete that not only physically but also in thought and songs move away from each other farther and farther:

“It is the hour of departure, the hard cold hour which the night fastens to all the time tables. Oh farther than everything oh farther than everything, It is the hour of departure oh abandoned one!” (Stanza 26 & 29)

The poem *Tonight I can Write the Saddest Lines* the speaker's feelings of loneliness lead to immense sadness. The opening line establishes the mood of this poem and the incredible sense of loss the speaker feels. In this poem, the sorrow does not diminish, but intensifies. The constant images of night can present internal darkness, sadness, and lost romance. At night we think about something that tortures us, unable to be comfortable and to sleep. This is a breakup poem, so night represents the emptiness he feels after she left.

“This is all. In the distance someone is singing. In the distance, My soul is not satisfied that it has lost her.” (Stanza 8)

The loneliness of night is immense without her. She has gone, but he still can't accept it. It is hard to forget someone you love. You feel like your lover is still with you. The poet wants to forget her, and he is trying to convince himself he doesn't love her anymore, but he clearly does. The speaker is so upset that he starts to ask himself if they ever truly loved each other or if it was all a figment of his imagination. In short, he discovers how sometimes she loved him and other times he loved her, but that his love was not enough for her to stay with him. While he might not write about his lover anymore, it doesn't mean he will forget her.

In the poem *Don't be Far Off* speaker simply can't live without his lover—not even for a day! One day without someone you love can be devastating. Neruda uses the metaphor of an “empty station,” where the trains wait quietly for the morning (when the passengers will return). This is when they will come to life, just as Neruda will come back to life if his love were to return. Neruda uses gradation to describe his feelings, saying,

'Don't go far off, not even for a day/ Don't leave me, even for an hour / Don't leave me for a second.'

His pleas continue throughout the poem, becoming more and more desperate. By the end he would wander the entire earth seeking his love if they were ever separated. It is clear from the first line that the speaker has a listener in mind. This person is very dear to him and makes him feel as if he is soon to be alone. He is emotionally tied to this person and is begging them not to “go far off.” Neruda's speaker does not want his listener to leave him, “even for a day”. He says that it is difficult to come up with the words to express himself. As he waits for this person to come back to him the day will be “long” and he will be “waiting.” There is nothing else he can do to occupy his time aside from sitting, waiting and hoping this person will return to him. He will never stop and never rest. His wanderings will appear maze-like in their complicated patterns and crisscrossing sections. Throughout this imagined, distressing time in his life, he will be asking for the listener's return.

The poem *When I Die I Want Your Hands On Mine* is an incredibly emotional love poem. In this poem, the speaker talks about wanting his spouse to remember him after he passes, but he doesn't want her to mourn his loss so much that she doesn't continue living her life. The poet wants his lover to remember him after his death. His last wish is to feel her hands one more time. She was the reason for his happiness. He wants her to go on living after his death because he loves her very much.

“When I die I want your hands on my eyes: I want the light and the wheat of your beloved hands to pass their freshness over me one more time ... to feel the smoothness that changed my destiny.” (Stanza 1)

In the poem *Here I Love You* Neruda imagines kissing his lover, but she is not there. She is far away in another world. He passionately remembers the sweet moments he spent in her company. The poet speaks to his departed beloved. She has gone 'there' while he remains 'here'. Thus “here” refers to the dark pine wood, moonlit waters, snowy evenings and all those places the speaker travels alone with the memories of his beloved where as 'there' signifies the world where the speaker's beloved has already reached and now dwells. The grief of separation is immense in this poem because the speaker is alone here in this physical world. However, he still loves her as faithfully as before but the horizon hides her in vain. He looks at the ships sailing out of sight if he could send his kisses to his beloved. The sadness that echoes through the line

“Sometimes I get up early and even my soul is ... Far away the sea sounds and resounds. This is a port. Here I love you.” (Stanza 3)

He recalls the times he spent with her in the natural surroundings of the moonlit waters, snowy evenings in the pine forests and the coastal areas. So the speaker feels that he is alone in this world. He feels that days are passing monotonously. Sometimes he wakes up early. His whole body and even the soul is wet because of some kind of bad dream and feels as if he had no energy. He feels that he had heard the sound of the sea far away. He loves her while he is here in this world and she is in another world. Although she is there beyond the horizon in the other world he loves her. Sometimes he sends the message of love to her but gets no reply. He is forgotten like the old anchors. In the afternoon he feels sad. He is hungry and his life has no purpose. He loves her who is not with him. He finds difficult to pass the evening and hates it. But he likes the night because he meets her regularly in his dream. When the stars in the sky look at him, he feels that his beloved is looking at him and he hears the pine trees singing her name.

Through various poems it is analyzed that poet loves his beloved a lot. The pain of separation is immense and it can be seen in almost all his poems. He is unable to bear loss of his beloved and wanted to spend all his life with her but fate has another choice. Although one loves another person dearly, but they can't control decisions of God. Fate has a lot of important role to play in one's life. We can't fight with our destiny. Whatever happens in our life is in accordance with destiny written by God. Some people accept it and some remain in memories of their beloved forever like Neruda.

The importance of pure love is enormous and every human being can feel it. No matter who is the person, love always takes an important place in his or her life because love is defined as the most important indicator of happiness. Neruda was a dedicated lover. Even after his lover died he had an immortal love for his beloved. He will never forget his lover and always love her till his last breath and always cherish their memories that they had spent together.

Loss is a reminder of the impermanence of life and its pain of is unavoidable. When we open ourself to the pain, we open yourself to joy. When a loved one dies, the loss follows you from moment to moment. It is both permanent and ever present. The pain of loss is important, not just because it challenges us in ways but it has huge lessons to teach us. The pain is a

message about what is important in life. It not only tells us how to love; it also provides us with an opportunity to discover sources of strength and flexibility within us that help us prosper. Looking inside the pain expands us, encouraging us to become larger than we are and to live a life of meaning. Inside the pain is the opportunity to see all of our present moments in a way that helps us live life more purposefully and more fully. But we can't learn the lessons that loss contains while fighting or running from it. Neruda first run away from bitter reality of his life i.e the death of his beloved and dearly wishes her to come back so that they can spend their life happily ever but after some time he accepts the death of his beloved and reminisce the moments they spent together and wishes to die with their memories.

But in his poems from the 1950s and 60s, solitude is no longer unbearable. He had a lovely wife, and a beach house where he draws solace from the sea. These poems have an atmosphere of stillness and contemplation, especially in contrast to the turbulence of his youth. It is as if he is settling into himself as just a man, not a famous poet.

Thus, it is concluded that Pablo Neruda is one of the best poets of his time. He was famous for his love poems and poems on politics. His poems are sensuous, shocking, emotional, touching and full of love. Neruda was clearly a prolific writer. Neruda cannot be categorized by a single poetic style. No sooner had he mastered one poetic form or mood than he moved to another. The sensual poems of *Veinte poemas* are quite distant from the surrealist poems of *Residencia*, and the political, epical *Canto general* is conversational and colloquial. His poems range from painfully intense introspection to fiery political rhetoric, yet clarity of poetic vision and emotional conviction is found throughout his work. There have been few poets as prolific as Neruda and few who have sought after, and achieved, such high and diverse standards of excellence. The least that can be said of Neruda is that he was the greatest Spanish poet of the century.

Works Cited

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