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Sonnet –66

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Satisfied with all these, for they do breathe me life,
As, to sense connection at first find.
And new love born be free of strife,
And old love strong throughout all time.
And introspection void of jury,
And heart let free from pen and paper.
And love be not a cause of worry,
And chains be gone, absolved to vapor.
And though my love resembles a song,
And her heart holds close to mine.
And I do my job as a man who is strong,
And I show a face that is all fine.
Satisfied with all these, for they make the hurt worthwhile,
Despite, in pain, and through a broken smile.

Shakespeare’s Sonnet 66 inspired the sonnet I wrote, but I wanted to take a more modern approach to tackle and challenge the original piece. In Sonnet 66, Shakespeare writes about a love that is separated by societal expectations. He is forbidden from loving that person and lists his issues; with a peaceful couplet stating that the love he has is enough to keep him happy. Context from the sonnet indicated that it was a same-sex love, as it was forbidden at the time. In contrast, my piece tells the story of a man that is in love with a woman, a love so strong that it “resembles a song” of love, but despite having the world he cannot be happy. I wanted to keep the writing structure like the original piece, so it starts with a line that is partially repeated in the final couplet, and that starting two lines starts the list of positives in my case.

The list that I have constructed gives the story of a man who does what is expected of him: he falls in love with a wonderful woman, stays strong, and presents as emotionless. Despite acting as he is supposed to and having a love that supports him, the speaker struggles to find happiness. The theme of this sonnet can best be described as “It is okay for a man to show his true emotion and feelings, and expecting him to hide his sadness will hurt him more over time.”

The speaker tells the reader that he is unhappy, but also that he is struggling with the expectation that he has to keep that feeling to himself. Shakespeare’s original piece suggests that love is enough to keep someone happy, whereas the speaker here has the perfect love but still cannot be happy. The second quatrain tells that the speaker feels some burden taken off through his love, as he is not held down by judgment and his love gives him a sense of freedom. The third quatrain is where the concepts of gender start to truly form. It is as though he is asking the question, “I’m doing what is expected of me, shouldn’t I be happy?”

From a young age, I was always told to be the strong man in my family, and I never really understood why it was the man’s job to be the strong one. It is as though older generations did not expect women to be able to be strong, and that they were going to be always unpredictable and emotional. If there were anything to be taken from my sonnet, it would be that it is okay for any person to not be okay.
About the Author

Christopher LaVallee is a senior studying Computer Science at Bridgewater. His project was completed as the final poemt for his Sex and Shakespeare course under Professor Katherine Alix-Gaudreau. He enjoys spending time with his significant other and their cat, as well as playing video games with friends. After his degree is complete, he plans on pursuing a career as a software developer.