

Shadows **D.H. Lawrence**

Lawrence was born in England, in 1885. In his adolescent years he worked at a factory, until he fell ill with tuberculosis. At the age of 23, Lawrence had acquired a teaching degree, and published his first story. He married in 1914, travelled and lived in various states and countries, then settled in the south of France. Just before his death from tuberculosis in 1930, he penned the poem "Shadows". This poem gives readers a look into the undying faith he had in God, how he used that faith to accept his impending death, and his belief in the new life that awaited him.

*And if tonight my soul may find her peace
in sleep, and sink in good oblivion,
and in the morning wake like a new-opened flower
then I have been dipped again in God, and new-created.*

Lawrence tells us he is ready to die at this exact moment, knowing there will be peace, tranquility, and contentment from the pressures of life. He will no longer have to deal with the pain and anguish that came with his illness. Because God has given him a taste of rebirth and everlasting peace, Lawrence knows that his mortal life will be replaced with immortal bliss.

*And if, as weeks go round, in the dark of the moon
my spirit darkens and goes out, and soft strange gloom
pervades my movements and my thoughts and words
then I shall know that I am walking still
with God, we are close together now the moon's in shadow.*

As each day passes, they seem to grow dimmer and shorter, and meld into a mass of blackness, a blackness that Lawrence knows he will slip into when his life comes to an end. He does not fear the blackness, for it brings an overwhelming sense of peace to him because he knows he is walking with God.

*And if, as autumn deepens and darkens
I feel the pain of falling leaves, and stems that break in storms
and trouble and dissolution and distress
and then the softness of deep shadows folding,
folding around my soul and spirit, around my lips
so sweet, like a swoon, or more like the drowse of a low, sad song
singing darker than the nightingale, on, on to the solstice
and the silence of short days, the silence of the year, the shadow,
then I shall know that my life is moving still
with the dark earth, and drenched
with the deep oblivion of earth's lapse and renewal.*

He feels his spirit waning, wanting to be released into the waiting hands of God, by the drifting sensation he feels when nightfall comes. With the days becoming shorter, and the season coming to an end, Lawrence feels his time is near. All the sadness, denial, and anger are now enfolding around his being like a soft, melancholy ballad being sung as an exit to his life. Lawrence acknowledges he is closer to the end of his human life, as the Earth moves closer to its death of the changing season, only to be reborn. He knows he cannot alter the changing seasons, just as he cannot alter the course of his life. He is aware that after the darkness has passed, he, like the earth, will be reborn through his faith in God.

*And if, in the changing phases of man's life
I fall in sickness and in misery
my wrists seem broken and my heart seems dead
and strength is gone, and my life
is only the leavings of a life:*

He penned his thoughts, ideas, pain, and hope on paper for all to read. Perhaps he felt others would find solace in the "shadows" of his life. Not long after his wrists became ravaged with pain, and his heart emptied of words, he no longer had the strength to continue his mortal life.

*and still, among it all, snatches of lovely oblivion, and snatches of renewal
odd, wintry flowers upon the withered stem, yet new, strange flowers
such as my life has not brought forth before, new blossoms of me*

Yet, through all the darkness he would catch glimpses of the "good oblivion" that God has promised to him. Lawrence had never experienced such an overwhelming sensation of peace as he did in the final stages of his life. He likened it to what a child would feel, blissfully wrapped in the arms of its mother. He believed going through his life course, and eventual death, was the way the higher power was preparing him for the crossover into his new life.

*then I must know that still
I am in the hands of the unknown God,
he is breaking me down to his own oblivion
to send me forth on a new morning, a new man.*

Faith is ever present in each and everyone of us, and how we use that faith is totally up to each person. Lawrence however, kept his faith close to him at all times, letting that faith guide him through his life and death into the hands of his Saviour to accept the gift that God had given him, everlasting peace. He left the poem "Shadows" for all to enjoy, and perhaps to help ease the pain and suffering of those afflicted with crippling, and terminal illnesses.

Lawrence speaks of the acceptance of his death, without fear. Instead of feeling sorry for himself, he writes about his faith in God, and how God is leading him to a new life once the pain and suffering of his mortal life is over.