

**A REFLECTION OF THE POETESS' DEATH DRIVE IN *LADY  
LAZARUS* POEM BY SYLVIA PLATH**

**TERM PAPER**

**Submitted in part-fulfilling for obtaining**

**Strata One (S-1) Degree**



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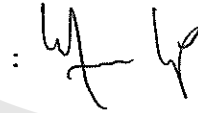
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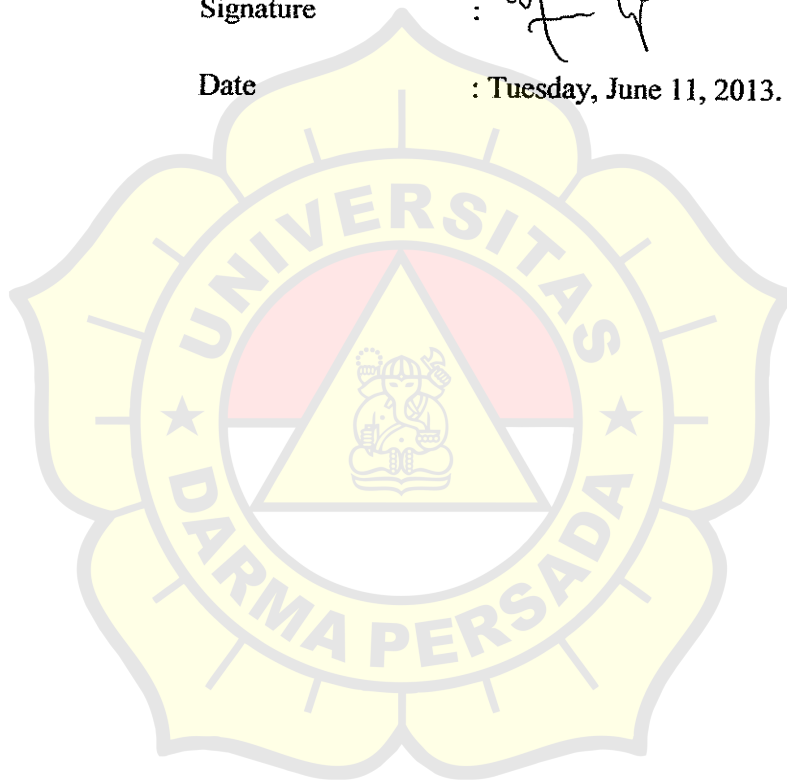
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POEM BY SYLVIA PLATH

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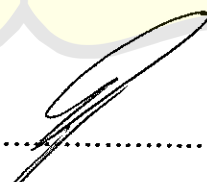
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## PREFACE

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, all praise and thanks be to Allah SWT, the Supremely Exalted and the Most High, who has been giving His loving and grace to me to complete this term paper entitled *A Reflection of the Poetess' Death Drive in Lady Lazarus* poem by Sylvia Plath. This term paper is submitted in part fulfilling for obtaining Strata One (S-1) degree in English Department, University of Darma Persada.

The memories and the experiences I have got during my education for four years study in this university are indeed extremely splendid and precious. I am so grateful to all my lecturers in English Department who have guided me. In finishing this term paper, I do really give my regards and thanks for the people who have helped and supported me.

1. Agustinus Hariyana, SS, M.Si as the Advisor who has spent his time to discuss and guide me in finishing this term paper. He did help me. He has shared his knowledge about American stuff and literature, especially poetry. All his advices, critics, and suggestions are really improving my last work.
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remember that. Furthermore, he taught me about discipline that very affected on me.

3. Syamsul Bachri, SS, M.Si as the Dean of Faculty of Letters.
4. All beloved lecturers, in English Department who have taught me since in the first semester in this university until I graduate, thank you for everything; for sharing and discussing, and the knowledge for sure. I will never forget.
5. My dearest family, my mama, Aminah, my papa, Arwani, my big sisters; Septi and Naomi, my brothers-in-law; Virga and Rizal, my adorable nieces, Cleo and Hanin, my aunties, Made and Mira. I am very grateful and over the moon having all of you in my life, because you are my life. Thank you for the love, the prayer, the time, the support, the advices, and the others things that I cannot mention one by one. You are the most beloved and precious people. I do love all of you.
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8. My abang-abang (brothers), my lovely seniors, Ilham, Nauli, Coky, Argon, Gilang, Wenda, especially Rowland and Osmon. I miss us gather and discuss about politics, religions, cultures, economics, history, philosophy, music, literature, and anything. You are damn clever, dudes.
9. My fitness friends, Maya, Ida, and Neni, thank you very much for the prayer and support, also the sharing of your experiences in education and career, and every joke in every conversation. You are like my second mother.

10. My Spanilian, Roberto Carlos, thank you for the prayer and support. I cannot wait for the special surprise, also thank you for your mother, Madre Maria, who is always caring about my education.
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13. My Finnish friend, Artturi, and my Indian friend, A. Budhathoki, thank you for the discussion about literature and our Sylvia Plath.
14. My superior at Tomo and Son Company, Donny A, thank you for the prayer and support. I am ready to join in your new company after I graduate.
15. For Rendang Ibnu, thank you.

*Dream what you want to dream, go where you want to go, be what you want to be. Because you have only one life and one chance to do all the things you want to do. Do not make cold in every opportunity.*

This term paper is far from perfection that needs suggestions, also constructive criticism is welcomed to improve this term paper.

Jakarta, June 2013

The Writer

Intan Listiyani Putri

## ABSTRACT

Name : Intan Listiyani Putri  
Study Program: English Department S-1  
Title : A Reflection of the Poetess' Death Drive in *Lady Lazarus* Poem  
by Sylvia Plath.

The term paper discusses about the theme of a literary work of poem with applying using the intrinsic and extrinsic approaches. Through the intrinsic approach, the critic is mainly concerned with the literary terms: 1) poetic devices; allusion, theme, imagery, symbol, anaphora, antithesis, and point of view 2) figurative languages; metaphor and simile 3) rhymes; perfect rhyme and internal rhyme 4) poetic form; free verse. The extrinsic approach applied the concept of Historical Biographical Approach and Psychological, Death Drive by Sigmund Freud. This term paper is categorized as a quality based research that combines *Lady Lazarus* poem by Sylvia Plath as the primary source and is supported by some of the literature related to theories, concepts, and definitions which relevant as a secondary source.

Keywords:

Lady Lazarus, Death Drive, Suffering, Resurrection, Suicide.



## **ABSTRAK**

Nama : Intan Listiyani Putri  
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Judul : A Reflection of the Poetess' Death Drive in *Lady Lazarus* Poem  
by Sylvia Plath.

*Skripsi ini membahas tema karya sastra berupa puisi dengan menggunakan pendekatan intrinsik dan ekstrinsik. Melalui Pendekatan Intrinsik yang berkaitan dengan ketentuan kritikus sastra: 1) perangkat puitis; alusi/kiasan, tema, citra, simbol, anaphora, antitesis, dan sudut pandang 2) gaya bahasa; metafora dan simile 3) sajak; sajak sempurna dan sajak internal 4) bentuk puisi; sajak bebas. Pendekatan ekstrinsik digunakan konsep Pendekatan Historis Biografis, dan Naluri Kematian oleh Sigmund Freud. Skripsi ini termasuk riset berdasarkan kualitas yang mengkombinasikan teks karya sastra dari puisi yang berjudul *Lady Lazarus* oleh Sylvia Plath sebagai sumber primer dan didukung oleh beberapa literatur yang terkait dengan teori, konsep, dan definisi yang relevan sebagai sumber sekunder.*

*Kata kunci:*

*Lady Lazarus, Naluri Kematian, Penderitaan, Kebangkitan, Bunuh Diri.*

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Problem

All of human beings, who exist in this world, must have dreams to reach their goals in their own life. Life is reality that consists of people, problems, dreams, laws, religions, logical, feelings, and so on. We wish our life would be easy if we have anything we want, but unfortunately, when problems come, sometimes we could not face them, or even do not want to face them. Think that we are in the bad situations and conditions that make us feeling uncomfortable and terrible. One case, if we lost someone that we love, and then we are sincere, believe that everything happens for a reason, it is a sign that we can move on, because we know that whatever happens, life must go on. In another hand, if we keep dreaming that he or she still alive, means that we cannot accept the reality. We live with his or her shadows that make us getting worse or even depress, because we cannot forget many things, like the memories, and the experiences. Our life is in our control. We must handle and solve any problems, because we have power and faith. Do not let the feelings itself control us. If it happens, we will get depressed that makes us do not want to live a life, such as suicide. Like Plath did, we can kill ourselves. It is an extremely brave decision that she chooses.

Sylvia Plath was the one of the most important female American authors in 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since she was a kid, she was already published her first poem in the *Boston Herald's* children's section. *In addition to writing, she was a model daughter, popular in school, earning straight A's in every subjects, always winning the best prizes, and by the time, she won a scholarship to Smith College in 1950.*<sup>1</sup> Plath was an intelligent person at writing, such as a novelist, a short story writer, also a great poetess with her stunning poems.

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<sup>1</sup> "Plath's talents"; May 31, 2013; available from <http://www.sylviaplath.de/plath/bio.html>

On June 16, 1956, at the age of twenty-four-year-old, she got married to English poet laureate, Ted Hughes. They had two children named Frieda and Nicholas. Unfortunately, the ending of their marriage was unexpected. *In the summer 1962, Hughes had begun a relationship with a mutual acquaintance, Assia Wevill, so that, Plath decided to separate. It happened from mid-July until Plath committed to suicide in February 1963.*<sup>2</sup> Sylvia Plath wrote *Lady Lazarus* poem in October 1962. The one of the most outstanding poems that is about a woman who has death experiences for three times, which are suicide attempts. From the first stanza, the speaker wants to tell us that in every ten, she manages her death. She keeps trying to kill herself, but failed, because she is always found and helped. When she is back to life, she feels dejected. Furthermore, she often identifies herself with victims of persecution in the Nazi Holocaust era, because of mental suffering that she experiences.

The reason why the writer chooses this poem because of the title of *Lady Lazarus* that makes interested. The name of Lazarus itself means a poor man in the Thesaurus dictionary. Therefore, the writer thinks that the speaker of *Lady Lazarus* is related to Lazarus in the Bible. Another reason, because the writer likes reading Sylvia Plath's works since in the third semester in university. Her works are so splendid, excellent, and controversial, and several poems sound horror like this one. Most of her poems are connected to her personal life, which are about her suicides, angry, hatred, marriage, and other blackness things. All of those feelings make the writer wondering what happened on her, until she tried to kill herself more than once. That is why the writer really wants to explore and analyze this poem, because this poem is extremely interesting. There is curiosity with the word of "it" in the first stanza that makes us to keep reading until finish.

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<sup>2</sup> Gill, Jo. *The Cambridge Introduction to Sylvia Plath*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008),p. 9.

## B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of problem above, the writer identifies the problem of the research is: the speaker of *Lady Lazarus* has a great depression which came from the men in her life that had the most effect on her; her father, Otto Plath and her husband, Ted Hughes, who began having an affair. The effects of these men on her were mostly negative, making her poems full of loathing and suffering. I assume the theme of this poem is “A Reflection of the Poetess’ Death Drive.”

## C. Limitation of the Problem

Based on identification of the problems, the writer limits the problem in analyzing “A Reflection of the Poetess’ Death Drive.” The theories and concepts the writer uses are: 1) intrinsic approach; allusion, theme, imagery, symbol, anaphora, antithesis, point of view, metaphor, simile, perfect rhyme, internal rhyme, and free verse, through 2) extrinsic approach; historical biographical approach and psychological approach, death drive theory by Sigmund Freud.

## D. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problems, the formulation of the problem is that whether the theme of this poem is *A Reflection of the Poetess’ Death Drive*. To answer the questions, there are some steps that the writer takes:

1. Can the versifications of intrinsic be used to analyze the theme?
2. Can the concepts of historical biographical and psychological approach of death drive be used to analyze this theme?

3. Can the theme be built through the results of the analysis of the literary work by using the result of analysis of the intrinsic and extrinsic approaches?

#### E. Objectives of the Research

Based on the formulation of the research, the objective of this research is to prove whether the theme of this poem is *A Reflection of the Poetess' Death Drive*. To fulfill this purpose, the writer has to take some steps:

1. To analyze the intrinsic approach in this literary work.
2. To analyze literary work by using the concepts historical biographical and psychological approach of death drive.
3. To reinforce theme by using the intrinsic and extrinsic approaches.

#### F. Framework of the Theories

Based on the above mentioned, in this research the writer uses the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic approaches. For the intrinsic, the writer uses literary approaches. Meanwhile, for the extrinsic approach, the writer uses the historical biographical and psychological approach, death drive.

##### 1. Intrinsic Approach

Intrinsic elements are very important in understanding literature. Through this approach, the writer uses the concepts of allusion, theme, imagery, symbol, anaphora, antithesis, point of view, metaphor, simile, internal rhyme, perfect rhyme, and free verse.

a. Allusion

A literary allusion is a brief reference to a person, place, phrase, or event drawn from history or literature. The use of allusion allows poets to reinforce an argument by illustration, to compress complex ideas into brief phrases, and to suggest thoughts they may not wish to state directly. Names are the most common forms of allusion and the easiest to identify.<sup>3</sup> We could also refer to the poet's allusion to the *Bible* (biblical allusion).<sup>4</sup>

b. Theme

In literature, theme is the central idea or statement about life that unifies and controls the total work, whether it takes the form of a brief and meaningful insight or a comprehensive vision of life, can be said to represent the vehicle an author uses to establish a relationship with the larger world in which he or she lives and works.<sup>5</sup>

c. Imagery

Imagery in a literary text occurs when an author uses an object that is not really there, in order to create a comparison between one that is, usually evoking a more meaningful visual experience for the reader. The elements in a literary work used to evoke mental images, not only of the visual sense, but also of sensation (touch, taste, smell, sound, orientation) and emotion.<sup>6</sup> Poems without imagery are like people without vision or hearing. Both exist in darkness and in silence, struggling for understanding in a world of inexpressible abstractions.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> James H. Pickering, and Jeffrey D. Hooper. *Concise Companion to Literature*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1980), p. 118.

<sup>4</sup> Reaske, Christopher Russel. *How to Analyze Poetry*. (New York: Monarch Press, 1961), p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Pickering and Hooper, *op. cit.*, p.61.

<sup>6</sup> "Imagery"; March 25, 2013; available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imagery>

<sup>7</sup> Pickering and Hooper, *op. cit.*, p.136.



d. Symbol

A symbol is something that represents an idea, a physical entity, or a process but is distinct from it. The purpose of a symbol is to communicate meaning. For example, a red octagon may be a symbol for "STOP". On a map, a picture of a tent might represent a campsite. Numerals are symbols for numbers. Personal names are symbols representing individuals. A red rose symbolizes love and compassion.<sup>8</sup>

e. Anaphora

Anaphora involves the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses or sections. Think of an annoying kid on a road trip: "Are we there yet?/Are we going to stop soon?/Are we having lunch soon?" Not a poem we would like to read in its entirety, but the repetition of the word "are" is anaphora.<sup>9</sup>

f. Antithesis

Antithesis is figure of speech where contrasting words or ideas are placed in close proximity. Hell is the antithesis of Heaven; disorder is the antithesis of order.<sup>10</sup>

g. Point of View

Point of view, quite literally refers to the way in which the author views her subject; from what point is his or her view? From what angle is he or she observing his or her subject? Is the poet regarding something that has happened or existed in the past, or rather something that still is to happen or exist in the future? In other words,

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<sup>8</sup> "Symbol"; March 25, 2013; available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbol>

<sup>9</sup> "Anaphora"; March 25, 2013; available from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anaphora\\_\(rhetoric\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anaphora_(rhetoric))

<sup>10</sup> "Antithesis"; March 25, 2013; available from [http://www.poetsgraves.co.uk/glossary\\_of\\_poetic\\_terms.htm](http://www.poetsgraves.co.uk/glossary_of_poetic_terms.htm)

when we consider point of view we must ask as many question as possible about the poet's attitude toward her material.<sup>11</sup>

#### h. Metaphor

The figure of speech which compares one thing to another directly. Usually a metaphor is created through the use of some form of the verb "to be." For instance, if we say, "Life is a hungry animal," hungry animal has become a metaphor for life. The metaphor in other words establishes an analogy between objects without actually saying that it is establishing this contrast.<sup>12</sup> Where a metaphor asserts the two objects in the comparison are identical on the point of comparison.

#### i. Simile

A simile is a direct comparison between things, which are not particularly similar in their essence. A poet introduces a simile through a connecting word, which signals that a comparison is being made; the most frequently used connectives are "like" and "as," but "than" is also used.<sup>13</sup>

#### j. Perfect Rhyme

Sometimes, perfect rhyme called exact rhymes. Occur when the stressed vowels following differing consonant sounds are identical- slow and grow-and any following sounds are identical-fleet and street, buying and crying, bring and sing. The sound, not the spelling, determines whether or not the sounds are identical.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>12</sup> Reaske, Christopher Russel. *How to Analyze Poetry*. (New York: Monarch Press, 1961),p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

#### k. Internal Rhyme

Most poems are written with end-rhyme. This means that the rhyming sound are found at the ends of the lines. Sometimes we find internal rhyme where the rhyming words are found within the line, often a word in the middle of a line rhyming with the last word or sound in the line.<sup>15</sup>

#### l. Free Verse

Free verse is an open form of poetry. It does not use consistent meter patterns, rhyme, or any other musical pattern. It thus tends to follow the natural rhythms of everyday speech. It is particularly associated with both the imagist and modernist movements.<sup>16</sup>

### 2. Extrinsic approach

#### a. Historical Biographical Literary Criticism

The historical and biographical approaches have been evolving over many years; its basic tenants are perhaps most clearly articulated in the writings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The author is the context in which the work is studied and is the cause of the work's meaning. In order to study the author as context, it is necessary for the historical critic to examine the work against its historical surroundings and determine how these surroundings worked with the individuality of the author and the individuality of the age to create and define the text. Historical Criticism assumes that the relationship between art and society is organic. Biographical Criticism assumes that by examining the facts and motives of an author's life, the meaning and intent of his or her literary work can be illuminated. The historical biographical approach combines the two methods for interpreting texts. Using this critical

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> "Free Verse"; March 25, 2013; available from [http://www.poetsgraves.co.uk/glossary\\_poetic\\_terms\\_f.htm](http://www.poetsgraves.co.uk/glossary_poetic_terms_f.htm)

lens, readers will fruitfully analyze a text by making connections between the content, its author, and his or her historical context (values and events).<sup>17</sup>

Analysis based on the idea that a person's life and times influence his or her work. When considering biographical theory, look at the following aspects of an author's identity: class, race, ethnicity, sex, and/or gender, sexual orientation, family history, religious and/or political beliefs, education, nationality.<sup>18</sup>

b. Psychological Approach of Death Drive by Sigmund Freud

In classical Freudian psychoanalytic theory, the death drive(s) is the drive towards death, self-destruction, and the return to the inorganic: "The hypothesis of a death instinct, the task of which is to lead organic life back into the inanimate state." It was originally proposed by Sigmund Freud in 1920, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, where in his first published reference to the term he wrote of the "Opposition between the ego or death instincts and the sexual or life instincts." The death drive opposes the drive for life, the tendency toward survival, propagation, sex, and other creative, life-producing drives. Freud actually refers to the "death instinct" as a drive, a force that is not essential to the life of an organism (unlike an instinct) and tends to denature it or make it behave in ways that are sometimes counter-intuitive. The term is almost universally known in scholarly literature on Freud as the "death drive." Freud himself was of course well aware of such possible linkages. In a letter of 1919, he wrote that regarding "The theme of death that I have stumbled onto an odd idea via the drives and must now read all sorts of things that belong to it, for instance Schopenhauer." Indeed, that "Freud seemed to have

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<sup>17</sup> "Literary Criticism"; March 25, 2013; available from <http://pendientedemigracion.ucm.es/info/siim/siim2/2.HistoryLiteraryCriticism.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> "History Theory"; March 25, 2013; available from <http://hhh.gavilan.edu/ecrook/1B/LiteraryTheory.htm>

landed in the position of Schopenhauer, who taught that death is the goal of life.” In the closing decade of Freud's life, it has been suggested, his view of the death drive changed somewhat, with “The stress much more upon the death instinct's manifestations outwards.”<sup>19</sup>

#### G. Methods of the Research

Based on the theoretical framework, the writer uses the research method with variety of qualitative; type of research literature, the research tendency is interpretative or analyzing by method of data collection from literary texts.

#### H. Benefits of the Research

Based on the methods of research, the benefits of this research are firstly it could be beneficial for students or general readers who want to explore more deeply about *Lady Lazarus* poem. Secondly, this research may be beneficial because it has been done through the new perspective by applying the concept of historical biographical literary criticism, also psychological approach, death drive, so it can show something new for further researches.

#### I. Organizational Presentation

Related with the title of this research, the systematic presentation is written as follows:

**CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION.** It consists of: Background of the Problem, Identification of Problem, Limitation of the Problem, Formulation of the Problem, Objectives of

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<sup>19</sup> “Death Drive Theory”; March 25, 2013; available from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death\\_drive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_drive)

the Research, Framework of the Theories, Method of the Research, Benefits of the Research, and Organizational Presentation.

CHAPTER TWO : THE ANALYSIS OF *LADY LAZARUS* POEM BY SYLVIA PLATH THROUGH INTRINSIC APPROACH. It consists of: allusion, theme, imagery, symbol, anaphora, antithesis, point of view, metaphor, simile, perfect rhyme, internal rhyme, and free verse.

CHAPTER THREE : A REFLECTION OF THE POETESS' DEATH DRIVE IN *LADY LAZARUS* POEM BY SYLVIA PLATH. It consists of analysis of theme by using the result of intrinsic and extrinsic approaches.

CHAPTER FOUR : CONCLUSION. It consists of conclusion, which shows that the theme of this poem is A Reflection of the Poetess' Death Drive presented an overview of the research subjects in the previous chapters as well as implications from studies of other variables.

Attachments:

Bibliography

Scheme of Research

Biodata

*Lady Lazarus* Poem