

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & CULTURE

MPI/GETTY IMAGES



BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG.

FAC-SIMILE PRINT BY L. PRANG & CO.

Of all songs from American wars, those of American Civil War top the playlist of titles remembered today. The Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania. The battle took place from July 1 to July 3, 1863.

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Listening to History: Songs of the Civil War and What We Can Learn

JEFF MINICK

Throughout American history, our wars have either popularized or produced songs that remain familiar to us today.

The American Revolution brought us many songs, but only “Yankee Doodle” has stood the test of time. Sung to an old tune and written originally as a song of English derision aimed at Americans during the French and Indian War, patriots of the Revolution took the song for their own, changed the words, and proudly played and sang it in their encampments. “Yankee Doodle” remains the state song of Connecticut.

The War of 1812 gave us our national anthem. World War I brought hits like “Over There” and “Pack Up Your Troubles.” American soldiers, sailors, and airmen in World War II knew the lyrics to such hits as “I’ll Be Home for Christmas,” “Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition,” “Lili Marleen,” and “The White Cliffs of Dover.”

The Vietnam War found more soldiers listening to music than singing it, but even then they had their favorites, like Barry Sadler’s “The Ballad of the Green Berets” and protest songs like “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-to-Die Rag” and “We Gotta Get Out of This Place.”

Continued on Page 4

Much of the Civil War music became an enduring part of our cultural heritage.

ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES



Music woke the soldiers in the morning, called them to mess, and put them to sleep at night. A postcard showing a musician of the U.S. Army Cavalry during the Civil War, circa 1861.

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FINE ARTS

Trompe L'oeil: The Delightful Art of Deception

Kazuo Torigoe's award-winning painting

LORRAINE FERRIER

Japanese painter Kazuo Torigoe creates incredible oil paintings on copper that make you wonder what in the painting is real. On Torigoe's website, lilies and hydrangeas seem to outgrow their frames. Luscious plums, apples, and two halves of a ripe fig look so appetizing that they make your mouth water. Some of his paintings contain carefully arranged playing cards, candles, and beetles, creating small allegorical worlds.

Trompe l'oeil, French for 'deceives the eye,' is an artistic technique whereby objects appear real on a two-dimensional surface.

Torigoe's painting "XIV III MMXIX" combines many of these elements, but all in one frame. It's a fantastical painting that won him the Best Trompe L'oeil Award at the 14th International ARC Salon (2019-2020).

Delightful Illusions

Trompe l'oeil, French for "deceives the eye," is an artistic technique whereby objects appear real on a two-dimensional surface. The technique has been used for centuries in painting, architecture, and the decorative arts to delight and astonish viewers, sometimes with comedic effect. According to Pliny, two painters in the late fifth century, Zeuxis and Parrhasius, competed to create the most realistic painting. Zeuxis rendered grapes so realistically that birds came to eat them. Zeuxis turned to Parrhasius and asked him to reveal his painting, which he believed was concealed behind a curtain. But Zeuxis had been fooled, for the curtain was Parrhasius's painting!

And according to the Renaissance art historian Giorgio Vasari, in the 13th century an Italian boy painted a fly on the nose of a figure that his master, the renowned painter Cimabue, had painted. The fly was so lifelike that when Cimabue came back to finish the painting, he kept trying to

brush the fly away. The talented boy was Giotto, who became one of the most celebrated painters of the early Renaissance.

Kazuo Torigoe's Award-Winning Trompe L'oeil

In Torigoe's painting "XIV III MMXIX," an antique wooden altarpiece contains small compartments packed with different curios, reminiscent of a gentleman's cabinet from the days of the 18th- and 19th-century European Grand Tour. There are glass test tubes with insect specimens; exotic shells and crystals from seemingly faraway lands; and three small corked bottles containing blue-, green-, and peach-colored minerals, to name a few items.

In many ways, art and reality overlap in Torigoe's painting. In a video of his artist statement, he said that he purified lapis lazuli to create ultramarine blue paint, and he finely crushed malachite to create green paint. Artists traditionally used these minerals in the past, and it appears that Torigoe depicted both at the bottom-left of the painting in the two small corked bottles. In addition, the frame is an altarpiece. It's real, not a painted illusion. It's an antique wooden altarpiece that Torigoe carefully restored.

To create his trompe l'oeil paintings, Torigoe first paints the illusion (in this case, the cabinet compartments) onto a copper plate. He favors copper for its relative stability and rigidity. Oil painting on copper was popular in parts of Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, he said.

In many ways, art and reality overlap in Torigoe's painting.

Torigoe then creates shadows in the painting that appear to be cast from the altarpiece frame. Connecting the composition and the frame gives the illusion of objects jumping into the viewer's orbit. In theater, they call this "breaking the fourth wall," where the action enters the audience space.

Torigoe hopes that when you view his paintings, you see them "as a homage to classical expressions and the materials once used."

To see more of Kazuo Torigoe's art, visit KazuoTorigoe.com



"XIV III MMXIX," 2019, by Kazuo Torigoe. Oil on copper; 16 3/4 inches by 10 1/2 inches. Recipient of the Best Trompe L'oeil Award at the 14th International ARC Salon (2019-2020).

POETRY

The Sonnet: How 14 Eloquent Lines Bring Clarity

LORRAINE FERRIER

"They are eloquent who can speak low things acutely, and of great things with dignity, and of moderate things with temper," Cicero wrote in "The Orator."

The traditional sonnet can allow this level of communication to occur. The rhyme and rhythm of a sonnet may even evoke the poem's meaning before the words are actually understood. This is due to the structural integrity of the sonnet.

If the structure is lost, so too is the harmony—of the rhyme and the reason. Like musical notation without its bars, it falls from grace into discord.

The two main types of sonnet are the Petrarchan sonnet and the English sonnet, also known as the Shakespearean sonnet, as this is the type of sonnet Shakespeare wrote. They differ in their rhyming schemes, but both encourage eloquent discourse.

How the Sonnet Came to Be

The first sonnets were thought to be written between 1220 and 1250, at the court of Emperor Frederick II of Sicily, in southern Italy. It was the emperor's notary and legal assistant, Giacomo da Lentino, who wrote the majority of these sonnets.

Sonnets were used as poetic dialogue in the court to convey arguments and counterarguments, explore ideas and concepts, and normally end with a solution. The sonnet gave the court poets a vehicle to demonstrate their wit, wisdom, and intellect.

In the 1330s, Francesco Petrarca, more commonly known as Petrarch, popularized the form. The Petrarchan sonnet is the Italian sonnet as we know it today. Petrarch's "Canzoniere," or "Song Book," written over 40 years, contains 317 sonnets along with other kinds of poems, for example, ballads and madrigals. Petrarch's "Canzoniere" inspired the love poetry of Renaissance Europe.

The Petrarchan sonnet uses a "volta" (turn) to divide the 14 lines of the sonnet into two distinctive parts. The first eight



(Above) Statue of Francesco Petrarca at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy.

(Above right) "Allegory of Lyric Poetry," 1753, by François Boucher. Oil on canvas. 45 1/4 inches by 62 3/4 inches. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wrightsman Gift, 1969.

Francesco Petrarca, more commonly known as Petrarch, popularized the sonnet.



lines (the octave) are an outpouring of a problem; the thoughts and feelings that need addressing. It's at this point in the sonnet that the volta comes, where the poet redirects or restates the idea, thoughts, or feelings. The last six lines (the sestet) address the issue, emphasize a point, and normally provide a solution.

The rhyming scheme of a Petrarchan sonnet is ABBA ABBA for the octave and CDE CDE or CDC DCD for the sestet.

Petrarch also stretched the sonnet into longer narratives by stringing several sonnets together, as seen earlier in Dante Alighieri's "Vita Nuova" written 1274-91.

How the Sonnet Came to England

In 1520, the sonnet came to England, to the court of King Henry VIII, when Sir Thomas Wyatt and Sir Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey, wrote the first sonnets in English. Wyatt became acquainted with French

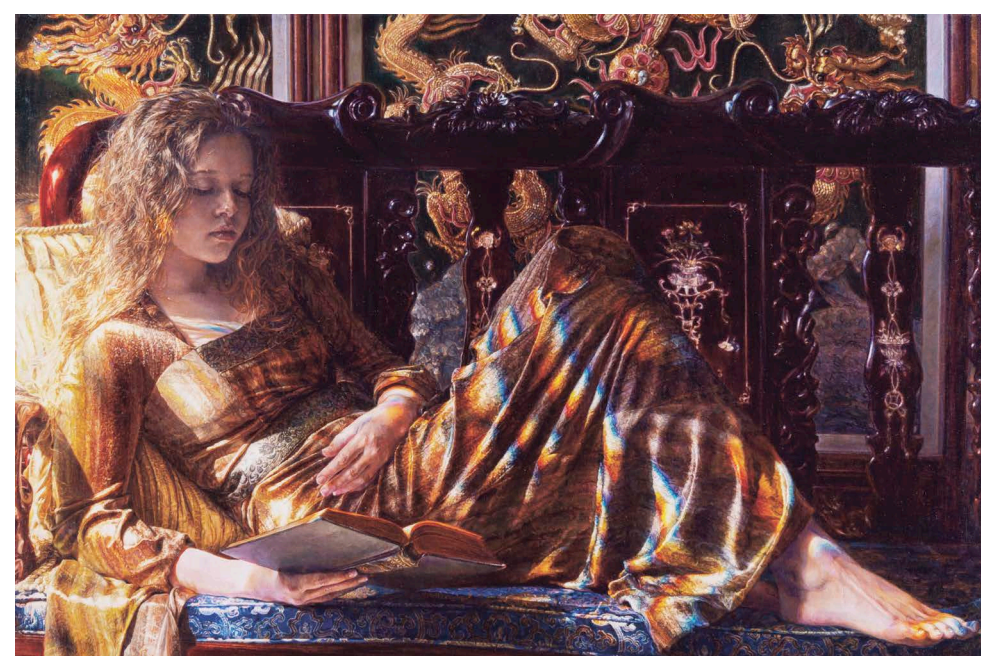
and Italian poets when he traveled to Italy and to the papacy on diplomatic missions. When he returned to England, Wyatt translated Petrarch's sonnets.

Wyatt adapted the Petrarchan sonnet to make the last two lines rhyme (the couplet), and Howard changed the octave to introduce more variation in the rhymes. The rhyming scheme of the English sonnet is ABAB CDCD EFEF GG.

In general, the rhythm of sonnets in the English language follow an "iambic pentameter," meaning each line must have five (penta) "iamb." One iamb is one unstressed syllable and one stressed syllable.

Shakespeare's couplet in "Sonnet 18" sums up the enduring romance of this poetic form:

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.



Ying and Yang by Sandra Kuck

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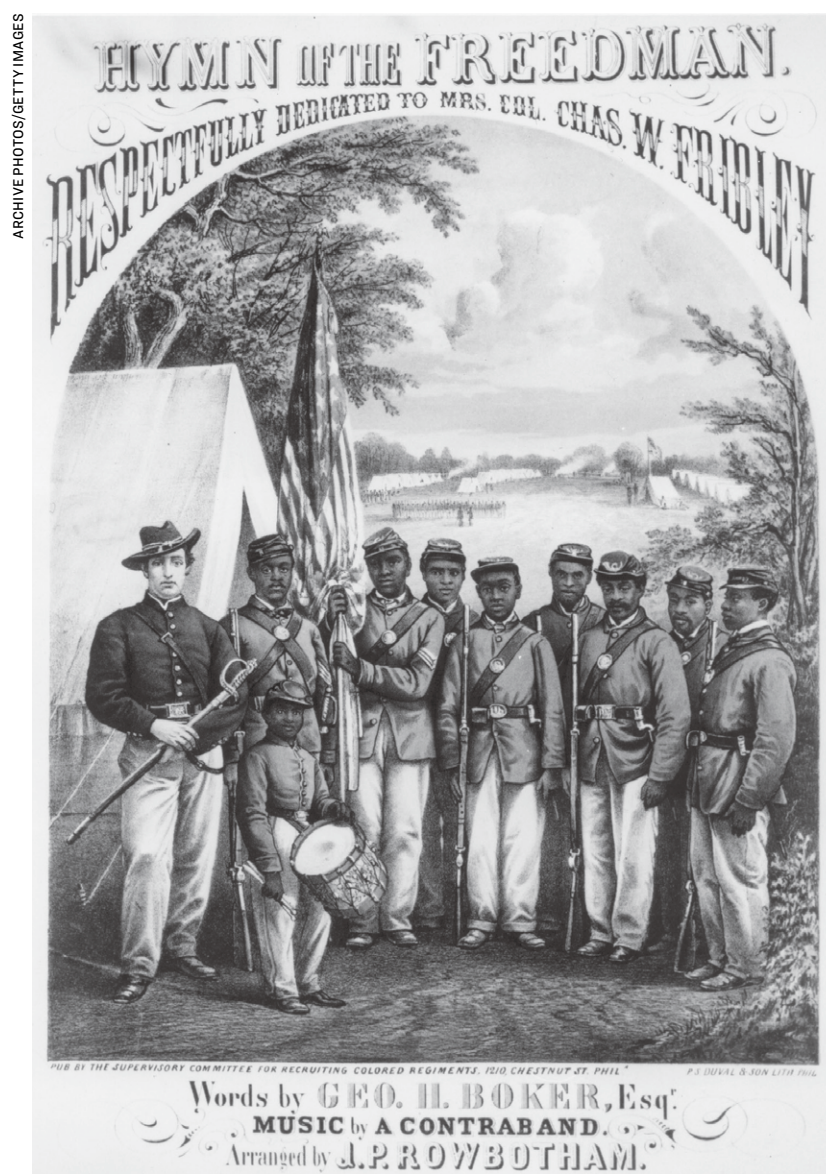
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Songs became a popular way to document the Civil War. The cover of "Songs of the War," circa 1865, written by Private Miles O'Reilly.



The lithograph cover of sheet music to "Hymn of the Freedman," depicting the Union 8th U.S. Colored Troops, circa 1864, during the American Civil War.



One of the themes used by both the North and South was that of a mother's love. The cover of the sheet music to "The Conscript Mother's Song," 1861.

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Listening to History: Songs of the Civil War and What We Can Learn

Continued from Page 1

But surely the songs of the American Civil War top the playlist of titles still remembered today.

Music Goes to War

The commanders and generals of the Union and Confederate armies valued music. Most regiments sported brass bands, and singing around the fires in the camps was a favorite pastime of the soldiers of both North and South. Several times, when their lines were close together, the bands struck up tunes for men on both sides to enjoy.

Music woke the soldiers in the morning, called them to mess, and put them to sleep at night. "Taps," for example, became popular after Union General Daniel Butterfield took an old version of the tune and shaped it into its present form. "Taps" was adapted by both the Union and Confederate armies, and it is played today at various military funerals and ceremonies honoring the dead.

Abraham Lincoln once wrote to George Root, who composed more than 30 songs about the war, "You have done more than a hundred generals and a thousand orators." Union General Phil Sheridan once said, "Music has done its share, and more than its share, in winning this war," and was seconded in this opinion by Robert E. Lee, who stated, "I don't believe we can have an army without music."

And much of that Civil War music became an enduring part of our cultural heritage.

Songs From My Childhood

When we were kids, my brother and I played "Civil War" along with some friends in the woods and fields near our house. We'd charge each other, shooting toy guns and throwing dirt clods and sticks at each other as bombs. Inside the house, we'd line up armies of the Blue and the Gray, and have our plastic soldiers do battle by throwing some small object—a wadded-up piece of paper, a broken pencil—at the enemy force, with the winner being the guy with the last soldier standing.

One Christmas, our parents gave us two record albums: "The Union" and "The Confederacy." Over and over again, we listened to these albums, learning the words not just to popular songs like the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Dixie" but also to pieces unfamiliar to us, like "The Invalid Corps" and "The Conquered Banner."

These albums also contained General Lee's "Farewell Address" to his army and Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address." Repetition put both speeches into my mind, and I can still stumble through these addresses 60 years later.

Some have criticized these albums and the man who arranged the music, Richard Bales, as being inauthentic with their cantatas and orchestral pieces, but for my brother and me the songs on these records were platinum gold.

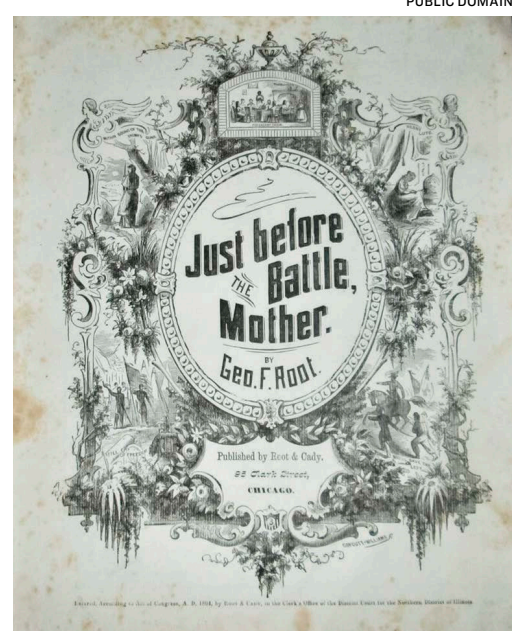
A Sad Story of War

We can see the enormous impact of music on those soldiers of long ago in an incident that took place in the winter of 1862-1863 at Fredericksburg, Virginia. In a booklet accompanying "The Confederacy"—I bought this boxed CD years ago at a library book sale—historian Bruce Catton describes the gathering one evening of some Federal bands on the banks of the Rappahannock River just across from the Confederate army: "The Northern bands played Northern war songs, of course—'John Brown's Body,' 'Rally 'Round the Flag,' and the favorite tear-jerker of the sentimental Yankee soldier, 'Tenting Tonight.'"

Catton then describes how the Confederates called across the river, "Play some of ours," and the Northern bands obliged by giving their adversaries "Dixie," "The Bonnie Blue Flag," and other Southern favorites.

But here's the part of this concert that always breaks my heart.

At the end of the evening, Catton tells us, all these bands broke into "Home, Sweet Home."



Popular with Northern troops was "Just Before the Battle, Mother."

"Federals and Confederates tried to sing the song, which spoke of everything that they had left behind—of everything that so many of them would never see again—while the smoke of the campfires scented the winter dark and all the guns were cold. They tried to sing but they could not do it, because they all choked up and sat there with tears running down their tanned cheeks while the trumpets reminded them of what lay on the other side of war."

Tenderness

Like their Victorian counterparts in England, Americans in the mid-19th century were unabashedly sentimental. Home, motherhood, and children were celebrated in their poetry, stories, and songs. Because death was more familiar in that era when young and old often took their last breath at home, poems and songs about that subject, particularly about the passing away of a child, were also favorites.

The soldiers of the North and South were no different from their contemporaries. These roughened soldiers were touched not only by "Home, Sweet Home" but also by many other songs that bore them in their imaginations away from the battlefield and carried them home to loved ones.

Here, for example, is the beginning of a song particularly popular with Northern troops, George Root's "Just Before the Battle, Mother":

Just before the battle, mother,
I am thinking most of you,
While upon the field we're watching
With the enemy in view.

And here's the chorus:

Farewell, mother, you may never
Press me to your heart again,
But, oh, you'll not forget me, mother,
If I'm numbered with the slain.

A Southern favorite was "Somebody's Darling":

Somebody's darling, so young and so
brave,
Wearing still on his sweet, yet pale
face—
Soon to be laid in the dust of the grave,
The lingering light of his boyhood's
grace.
Somebody's darling, somebody's pride,
Who'll tell his mother where her boy
died?

Fusion

American blacks added to this rich exchange of music. Many former slaves fled during the war to what were called contraband camps in Washington, D.C. We have accounts of Abraham Lincoln visiting those camps, joining in their prayer services, and singing such spirituals with them as "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," "Free at Last," and "Go Down Moses." Lincoln "wiped tears from his eyes at the singing of 'Nobody Knows the Troubles I've Seen.'"

In addition, by the end of the Civil War, nearly 200,000 African Americans had served in the Northern army and navy. They too sang these songs of freedom, introducing them to the white soldiers in other regiments.

One of the more popular songs among

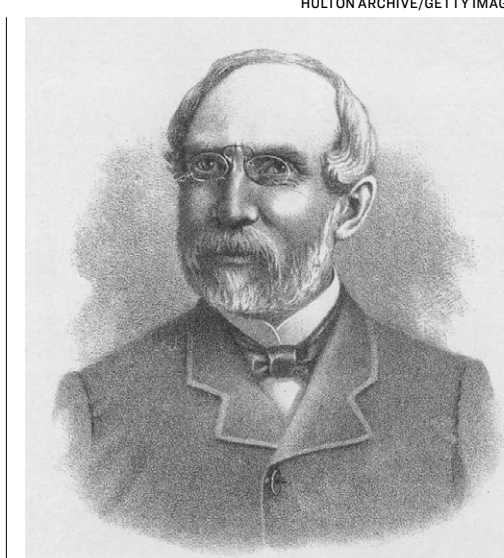


black and white troops of the Union armies was "Kingdom Coming," or "The Year of Jubilo" as it was also called. Though rarely sung today because it was written in dialect, the song mocked Southern slave owners and celebrated freedom for slaves. From the war there was born, I believe, the merging of black and white musical culture.

Learning From Our Musical Heritage

When I used to teach American history to seminars of homeschooling students, I had the students learn some of these songs as well as others from different periods of our past. I even considered teaching a course that would approach American history through song by listening, for example, to "Sweet Betsy From Pike" to study the movement of settlers westward or "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" as a kickoff to learning about the Depression. Kids love music, and it seemed a great way to approach the story of our nation, but I never followed through on this ambition.

Some more contemporary writers and performers have also given us marvelous songs about our past. Of these, Johnny Horton first comes to mind. His



An illustration of American composer George Frederick Root (circa 1870) who is most remembered for his Civil War song "The Battle Cry of Freedom" (1862).

songs about our history—"The Battle of New Orleans," "Johnny Reb," "North to Alaska," "Comanche," and others—could be brought into the classroom and would help students understand and remember people, places, and events.

The commanders and generals of the Union and Confederate armies valued music.

And the marvelous thing is that we live in an era when we can find all this music online. A few taps on the keyboard, and we can travel back in time to the War Between the States and listen to the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," or "I'm a Good Ol' Rebel."

Whether you want to help your young people deepen their knowledge of our American past or whether you yourself just want to go exploring our history, I can think of few better ways to accomplish these goals than by using music. Listen to the songs, read about them, their composers, and the times in which they were written and performed, and you'll be off on a special American adventure.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust On Their Wings," and two works of non-fiction, "Learning As I Go" and "Movies Make The Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

"The Spirit of '76," as Archibald MacNeal Willard's painting came to be known, is one of the most famous images relating to the American Revolutionary War. However, the role of song was more lasting since the Civil War.



Designed & Engraved by J. Martin Esq.

Satan Observes Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden

London: Published by Longman, Street 23, 43, Broad Street, 1825.

PROOF

Printed by J. Lubbock

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

A Question of God, Part 2: The Subtle Intentions Behind Satan's Questions

JAMES SALE

We saw in our previous article that the fact that God in the Bible asks questions does not imply that his omniscience is limited. On the contrary, we argued that his asking questions was a way in which he revealed to the one interrogated the true state of play, or reality, in other words. This invariably meant exposing humans' erroneous thinking and manipulative emotional states.

But it is interesting that God does not ask the first question in the Bible, which is also the first question to be asked "in the beginning." No, that dubious honor belongs to the serpent in the familiar tale of Adam and Eve, which British historian Richard Cavendish describes as "one of the key myths of European civilization." He says that it "lights up a whole network of reactions and connections in the mind."

Who is the serpent and what is the question? And why is it important, or in Cavendish's language, what is lit up in the mind by it?

The serpent who asks the question is generally considered to be Satan, the arch-adversary of God and of man. Let's consider the question he asks. There has been a whole ruckus of controversy that Satan's question in Genesis is addressed to Eve, not Adam, and that this implies that the woman is the weaker sex.

Certainly, Milton in his "Paradise Lost" put this spin on the story. But I think, in reality, neither sex was the weaker one. Both were dreadfully culpable as both were eager to defy the prohibition, and Adam did so, it would seem, without any scruples.

Satan's Misleading Question

Satan's question is very simple: "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?'" There are two things to notice about this question. The first is that the tone of the question implies a mild rebuke of God, as if some person had quite arbitrarily withheld

some good that another (Eve) was entitled to.

The second point is perhaps even more powerful. The quotation of what God says is deliberately falsified, but not by so much as one might easily notice. On the contrary, it invites the respondent—Eve—into that wonderful state which we have all doubtless experienced: We can eagerly correct somebody and, in doing so, feel as if we are slightly superior because we know more than they do.

What did God actually say to Adam? "You shall not eat of any tree of the garden" but quite the contrary: "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat." The consequence of eating from that particular tree is death.

This has a very different complexion: "not eat of any" versus "you shall freely eat" but with one specific prohibition. Of course, by misquoting God, Satan also gets to avoid reminding Eve of what the prohibition actually is. And in her eagerness to correct Satan, she too seems to not exactly remember what God had said. God's statement of finality becomes, in Eve's thinking, something "not to touch" rather than not to eat (so exaggerating the prohibition) and "lest you die." She is suggesting the punishment might be conditional; in other words, minimizing it.

The point is, for all this very fine linguistic analysis, it seems clear that Eve wanted to eat the fruit anyway—as did Adam, who doesn't have any qualms about joining her—because she wanted satisfaction ("good for food"), she coveted what she saw ("delight to the eyes"), and she would be wise like God himself ("to make one wise"). Her appetite, her lust, and her conceit or arrogance all conspired to drive her to take Satan's advice.

And as Cardinal Newman said in his "Apologia Pro Vita Sua": "And so I argue about the world;—if there be a God, since there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. It is out of joint with the purposes of its Creator."

There has been some "terrible aboriginal calamity" and this calamity is with us to this day. All religions testify to it—indeed, they would not exist without it—for all religions seek to address (and redress through acts of worship and devotion) the sufferings and purpose of the human race. The Christian religion has a special word for this "terrible aboriginal calamity"; it is called The Fall.

Satan Is Alive and Well

Is Satan alive and well today? The answer is an unequivocal yes! Satan is alive and well, and what this story, this truth, is telling us is exactly how Satan works. That is why it is so important to pay close attention to all truths as they appear in myths, but

especially those that are incorporated into sacred texts, for these reveal even deeper levels and layers of truth.

How, then, is this helpful in understanding Satan today and how Satan works? If we look at his modus operandi with Eve, we see that the Devil has three decisive steps. Three steps of the Devil:

1. Befriend the victim and position yourself as though looking out for their interests. We recall that Satan appeared to be helping Eve grow as a person: She would be wiser as a result of the experience he advocated; furthermore of course, while doing this, he is encouraging her to think that she knows best (more on this in step 3). And in pretending to be her friend, he is mimicking virtue.
2. Misquote or distort the facts of the situation to cause maximum confusion, yet seemingly provide an easy way out. This is done by encouraging her sense of knowing more and better through alternative interpretations of the facts or data—interpretations that conform more readily to her (and our) desires.
3. Encourage feelings of moral superiority in the victim that will easily enable her (and us) to feel superior and to virtue signal; enjoy the fact of her gullibility even as she begins to think about how good she really is.

A fourth step might well be to ensure, as your victim moves toward catastrophe, that you're not there to pick up the pieces!

How Satan Works Today

We see all of this methodology in all the "woke" ideologies that swarm around us today, threatening to beguile us with their (step 1) seemingly friendly intent, with their (step 2) pernicious misrepresentation of facts, and (step 3) their inculcation of feelings of moral superiority.

Robert Oulds and Niall McCrae, writing in their brilliant book "Moralitis: A Cultural Virus," gives us a good overview of this with regard to the UK (without, of course, mentioning the Satanic connection that I am making). They write: "The mission of liberal left parties today is no longer socialist. ... They claim to be fighting for equality, but really this is a self-serving campaign undermining traditional society." So, notice that "fighting for equality" (step 1) seems friendly; it's helping others, the underclass, so that they can be "equal."

But then, Oulds presents some actual facts to counter wokism's deceptions (step 2). In the UK, "Current feminism is more concerned with the gender pay gap in overpaid BBC presenters than the headline income of cleaners. ... The middle-class Women's Equality Party was launched at a time when girls outperform boys in education, and young women earn more than men of the same age. The notion of male privilege is also at odds with the homelessness gap, victims of violence gap, the prisoner gap, the suicide gap, and child custody gap. And the notion of white privilege is preposterous to the lower social classes in 'left behind' towns."

Finally, countering step 3 of woke agenda, which is the sense of moral superiority, Oulds comments that "the working class is not interested in identity politics and sanctimonious notions of 'white privilege,' 'toxic masculinity,' and ninety-nine genders." He goes on to contrast how the metropolitan and international elites have assumed a moral supremacy over ordinary, everyday, hard-working people who find it difficult to understand—let alone embrace—why only whites are privileged, why only men are toxic, and why we need to celebrate ninety-nine genders. Ordinary, down-to-earth people have invariably got more important concerns.

If we remember our discussion of God's questions in Part 1 of this article, we will see that there is a profound difference between the intention of God, which is to build human beings up, and the intention of Satan—to wreck humanity on the basis of misrepresentations, half-truths, and downright lies.

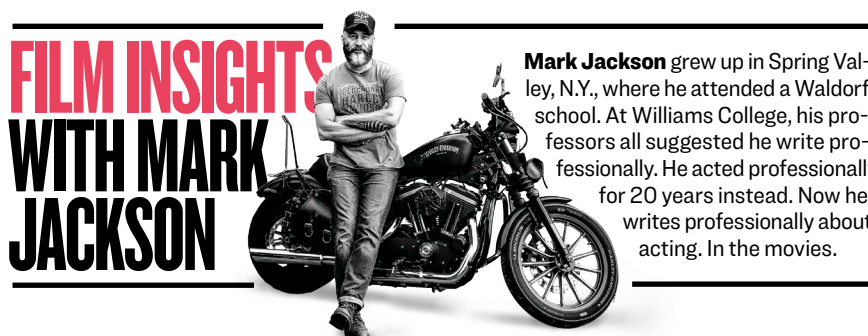
The old stories, as I regularly say on these pages, are the most profound and truthful of all. And perhaps if we all started paying more attention to how Satan works, we might be in a better position to cast him out of the gardens of our minds.

Part 1 of "A Question of God" explores the purpose of the questions that God of the Bible asks.

James Sale has had over 50 books published, most recently, "Mapping Motivation for Top Performing Teams" (Routledge, 2021). He won first prize in The Society of Classical Poets 2017 annual competition and performed at the group's first symposium in New York in 2019. His most recent poetry collection is "Hellward." For more information about the author, and about his Dante project, visit TheWiderCircle.webs.com



(Above) Burt Munro (Anthony Hopkins) with his super-fast, souped-up Indian Scout motorcycle, in "The World's Fastest Indian." (Top middle) The poster for the film. (Top right) Burt Munro (Anthony Hopkins) setting a motorcycle world speed record and (Right) then celebrating his victory.



Mark Jackson grew up in Spring Valley, N.Y., where he attended a Waldorf school. At Williams College, his professors all suggested he write professionally. He acted professionally for 20 years instead. Now he writes professionally about acting. In the movies.

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

Kiwi Coot Sets Bonneville Flats World Speed Record

MARK JACKSON

"The World's Fastest Indian" is not about Native-American Olympic gold medalist Jim Thorpe, but about the Indian motorcycle that set the world land speed record (for bikes with engines under 1,000 cubic centimeters) at the world's fastest speedway—Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats.

And it's not really about that 1920 Indian motorcycle either, because by the time the bike got to Utah, it had been souped-up, retrofitted, jacked-up, rebuilt, and tinkered into a two-wheeled hot rod of such epic, rocket-like demeanor that it could no longer really be called an Indian.

No, 2005's very fun "The World's Fastest Indian" is about New Zealand national hero Burt Munro, who set that world land speed record of 200-plus miles per hour ... wait for it ... in his mid-60s.

And here's the other thing: When I say muscled-up, you picture something like a shiny, neon-colored, nitro-burning, top-fuel-drag-racing funny car; every inch covered with endorsement decals.

No. We're talkin' a rickety-looking, decrepit, antediluvian thing held together with proverbial spit and baling wire. It's even got a wine cork as a gas tank cap. If that bike could talk, it would tell a heck of a story. Here it is.

Burt Munro

Director Roger Donaldson uses a very basic chronological storytelling format, which makes it a tad predictable, but it's master thespian Anthony Hopkins's performance that keeps it fun.

A quick Hopkins anecdote: As a young man, Anthony Hopkins (known to most Americans as Dr. Hannibal Lecter in "Silence of the Lambs") auditioned for Britain's National Theatre in front of its founder—the greatest stage actor in his-

'The World's Fastest Indian'

Director
Roger Donaldson

Starring
Anthony Hopkins, Diane Ladd, Bruce Greenwood, Christopher Lawford, Walton Goggins, Aaron Murphy, Annie Whittle

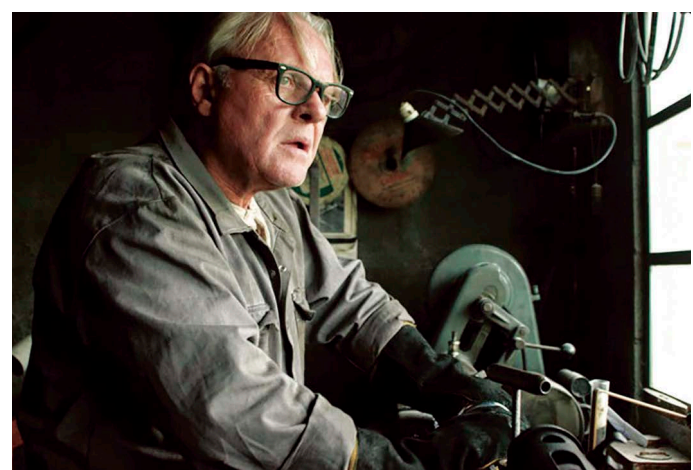
Rated
PG-13

Running Time
2 hours, 7 minutes

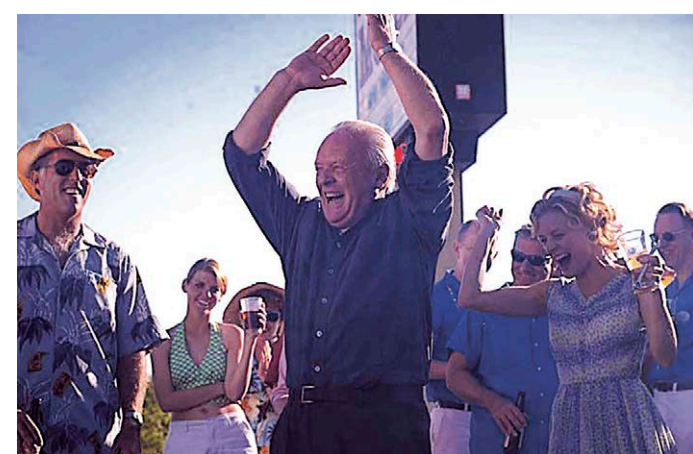
Release Date
March 24, 2006 (USA)

★★★★★

Young neighbor Tom (Aaron Murphy, L) and Burt Munro (Anthony Hopkins) have a bedtime story.



(Left) Burt Munro (Anthony Hopkins) in his shop. (Right) The 1920 Indian Scout that set the world land speed record for bikes under 1000cc at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF MAGNOLIA PICTURES

tory—Laurence Olivier. Olivier was currently in repertory, playing the lead in Shakespeare's "Othello." What role did Hopkins audition with? Othello. Said Olivier later, "The nerve! Cheeky (expletive omitted)." Hopkins was thusly accepted into London's most prestigious theater.

Hopkins portrays Burt Munro as an eccentric old coot living in a cinder-block shack in Invercargill, at the southern tip of New Zealand, where he keeps chickens and mows his lawn by sprinkling it with gasoline and throwing in a lit match. His shed is littered with shelves of worn-out pistons and other motorcycle detritus that he manually manufactured. It also contains the love of his life—that 1920 Indian Scout.

Local Life

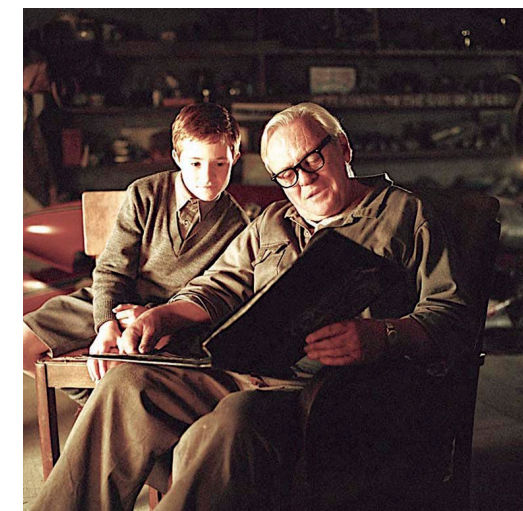
Tom, a young lad (Aaron Murphy), lives next door to Burt. He's got overprotective, nervous-Nelly parents. Tom knows a manly, mentoring elder when he sees one and spends as much time as he can with the very entertaining Burt, learning all about motorcycle engines and other excellent man-boy stuff like how to water one's bushes in the manner of dogs watering fire hydrants.

Burt goes on a date, gets challenged by the local motorcycle gang youth to a race, and nearly beats the pants off them in a well-attended beach race (lots of bets are placed) except his straight-ahead-designed rocket-bike doesn't turn too good and can't quite navigate the pylon indicating the turnaround point.

Eventually Burt knows he's gotta follow his bliss and live his dream, and so off he goes on a cargo ship to America. Never having cooked for multiple people before, he earns his keep as the galley's head chef. And while he's beloved in his neighborhood, and his friends (including the previously hostile biker boys) put up the money for him to take the trip, they never believe for two seconds that he'd stand a snowball's chance in hell, mixing it up on the world-class racing stage in the USA.

USA

And so in 1962, at age 63, Burt arrives in Los



Angeles. And immediately the very glibly, very naïve Mr. Munro is swindled right and left by con artist-piranhas, used-car salesmen, street hookers, and so on. But he cheerfully coasts right through the riffraff, cheerfully dispensing old-coder admonitions, such as "Smoking is bad for you, you know?!"

Also, the heavily made-up receptionist at his cheap motel takes a shine to him since he's always gallantly calling her "my girl." Tina the receptionist treats Burt to a diner breakfast, and eventually and demurely admits, "I'm not a girl. I'm a boy." To which Burt, with typical, blithe largesse replies, "Oh, ha, I thought there was something a little odd about you, but you're still a sweetheart." Everybody loves Burt.

Did I mention that Burt has a bad ticker? Oh yes. He's always on the verge of an actual heart attack, but he's not about to let a little thing like that stop him. His girlfriend (Annie Whittle) back in Invercargill manages to get hold of a bottle of nitroglycerin pills, and Burt views this whole heart-attack situation much as he does using a wine cork for a gas cap—whatever gets the job done.

'The World's Fastest Indian' is about New Zealand national hero Burt Munro.

Bonneville

Burt makes it to Bonneville! Whereupon he's promptly informed that he needed to have pre-registered (he had no clue), and furthermore his insane bike doesn't meet the safety requirements by a million miles. What to do? Will Burt's charm sway the balance? You betcha.

In a scene reminiscent of "The Right Stuff" (where legendary test pilot Chuck Yeager breaks his ribs horseback riding the night before a major test flight, and gets a mechanic to jury-rig a broom handle thingamabob so he can wing the plane door shut with one arm without the authorities noticing that he's in no condition to fly)—Burt notices at high speeds that the bike's exhaust is ... a tad toasty.

So Burt wraps his leg with asbestos (that'll fix it), but then he can't fit his leg into the streamlined exoshell of the bike. Asbestos be darned—and Burt's leg ends up looking like a well-done rib-eye steak, but guess whether or not that concerns the old Kiwi?

All in All

While motorcycle aficionados might have preferred more garage engine-tinkering, Hopkins and director Donaldson have really made the story more about the character's curious blend of provincial Kiwi innocence combined with world-class ambition.

Burt doesn't open up about his life's vision until he's standing on the edge of the impressive salt flats, far away from his small-town crowd. They'd have undoubtedly pulled his escaping crab back into the crab bucket had he really given them to understand that he always knew, deep down, he had what it took to compete at the very top level. "All my life I've wanted to do something big. Something bigger than the other jokers."

The real Munro set his final record in 1967, when he was 68. That's a real hero's journey: setting out into the unknown with a mission, vision, dream, passion, and infectious happiness.

REACHING WITHIN: WHAT TRADITIONAL ART OFFERS THE HEART

The Woes of Revenge: ‘Orestes Pursued by the Furies’



“Orestes Pursued by the Furies,” 1862, by William-Adolphe Bouguereau. Oil on canvas, 91 inches by 109 5/8 inches. Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Va.

ERIC BESS

WE sometimes come across people in our lives who cause us pain. It can be tempting to want to make them pay for the pain they cause us, but William-Adolphe Bouguereau’s painting “Orestes Pursued by the Furies” may provide visual insight as to why it’s better to forgive.

The Vengeance of Orestes

In Greek legend, Orestes was the son of King Agamemnon, who is best known as a military leader who guided the Greeks during their war with the Trojans.

After being exiled to Sparta by Aegisthus, Agamemnon married Clytemnestra with whom he had three daughters and a son, Orestes.

Agamemnon, however, angered the goddess Artemis when he killed one of her sacred deer and claimed to be a better hunter than she was.

To appease Artemis, he sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia. Some versions of the story state that Artemis saved Iphigenia at the last moment by replacing her with a deer. Other versions state that Agamemnon brutally sacrificed his daughter, who was still a child.

In sacrificing his daughter, Agamemnon provoked the hatred of his wife. Thus, while he was off fighting the Trojans, Clytemnestra had an affair with the very man who had exiled him, Aegisthus. Together, the lovers conspired to kill Agamemnon when he returned.

When Agamemnon returned home after defeating the Trojans, his wife and her lover carried out their brutal plan. Agamemnon’s son, Orestes, a child at the time, vowed to avenge his father’s death and kill his mother and Aegisthus.

After eight years, Orestes, now an adult, took his revenge and killed them both. For the crime of matricide, Orestes was haunted by the Furies, who were goddesses from the underworld and haunted people for their wickedness.

The Furies came in threes, and were often named Unceasing Anger, Avenger of Murder, and Jealousy. Orestes would spend the next part of his life trying to free himself from their wrath.

Orestes Suffers for His Vengeance

The 19th-century, French Academic painter William-Adolphe Bouguereau skillfully painted the moment that Orestes stabs his mother, and the Furies instantly come to haunt him.

The focal point is Orestes, who is painted in a field of darkness in front of the other figures. He wears a white cloth that partially covers him. The snakes in their hair, and the anger on their faces as they taunt Orestes. The Fury to the right holds a torch in her hand, while the Fury immediately to her left holds a snake in hers.

The Fury to the far left, however, supports Orestes’s dying mother with one arm. All three Furies point at the knife lodged in Clytemnestra’s chest. Even Clytemnestra uses the strength she has left to reach her hands toward the knife. With so many hands pointing toward the knife, it becomes a secondary focal point.

Avoiding the Wrath of the Furies
Let’s take a close look at this painting to see what moral lessons we might derive from it. Bouguereau depicted Orestes in the middle of the painting surrounded by the Furies and the darkness of his deed. He’s fulfilled the revenge he sought on his mother by taking her life. His success, however, brings him no joy; it instead brings him more pain.

Sometimes, revenge seems like the only course of action when we feel we’ve been wronged. We want revenge because we think it will make right the suffering we’ve endured. We want to cause pain to those who caused us pain in the hope that we will feel better afterward and that justice will be served.

But revenge does not make Orestes feel better; he feels worse. He tries to cover his ears to stop the Furies, and his body is positioned in such a way as to suggest that he wants to run from the pain.

But Orestes is unable to escape because the Furies are goddesses from the underworld. As goddesses, their power exists in their ability to spiritually haunt him wherever he goes. That is, Orestes will be unable to avoid the pain no matter how he tries because he now suffers spiritual pain for taking revenge. Pointing at Orestes, the Furies serve as a constant reminder of his deed, a deed that heightened his suffering instead of alleviating it.

Is it the case that seeking revenge only causes us more suffering? Does it ever really bring any satisfaction that makes it a worthwhile endeavor?

Could Orestes have approached this situation in a way that resolved the issues he had with his mother and prevented him from having to endure the wrath of the Furies? What could Orestes have done that potentially would have alleviated suffering instead of causing it?

Is forgiveness a better course of action? Both Clytemnestra and Orestes sought revenge because of their suffering, yet their revenge only begot more suffering. Would forgiveness have prevented all the pain caused by both Clytemnestra and Orestes, a pain that they both caused themselves by way of their acts?

A Broader Perspective

Outside of revenge, I find another layer of interpretation when I look at this painting as separate from the myth.

Orestes is the young man representing a new generation, with its own thoughts and beliefs. Clytemnestra, as Orestes’s mother, represents the older generation which has its thoughts, beliefs, and traditions. From this viewpoint, Orestes’s act is one of destroying tradition in favor of a new way of thinking: Out with the old and in with new.

Orestes’s unwillingness to learn from the past and build from it causes suffering he wasn’t able to foretell. The Furies represent the resulting pain that occurs in society when tradition is wholly destroyed for the novelty of youth.

Even if traditions contain within them unhealthy thoughts and beliefs, destroying them completely only furthers the unhealthy practice of destruction itself. Unwilling to learn from the past, Orestes risks bringing the most dangerous elements of the past into the future.

Is there a way that the generations can work together to learn from and build upon positive traditions rather than resist them? Is it possible to build cultures and traditions around forgiveness so that we may potentially avoid the wrath of the Furies?

The traditional arts often contain spiritual representations and symbols the meanings of which can be lost to our modern minds. In our series “Reaching Within: What Traditional Art Offers the Heart,” we interpret visual arts in ways that may be morally insightful for us today. We do not assume to provide absolute answers to questions generations have wrestled with, but hope that our questions will inspire a reflective journey toward our becoming more authentic, compassionate, and courageous human beings.

Eric Bess is a practicing representational artist and is a doctoral candidate at the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts (IDSVA).

What Good Is Poetry? An Introduction

SEAN FITZPATRICK

The series “What Good Is Poetry?” looks at poems that, once memorized, bestow a gift: an antidote to the cynicism of our age.

There is an old Chinese proverb: If a person does not learn poetry as a child, he or she will not know how to pray as an adult. A more arresting thing could hardly be said, especially in an age when poetry itself asks the question “to be, or not to be?” as it is either shrugged off with indifference or dismissed as unimportant.

Reality must be touched by the miracle of imagination if we are to escape from the straitjacket of logic alone and stay in tune and in touch with the invisible and idealized world that at once perplexes and perfects our logic. As a writer of poetry himself, the theologian and philosopher Thomas Aquinas knew well that, as Robert Burns wrote, “the best laid schemes o’ mice and men gang aft a-gley,” and that when logic and rhetoric fail, we must look to poetry—though our times threaten to look to it nevermore.

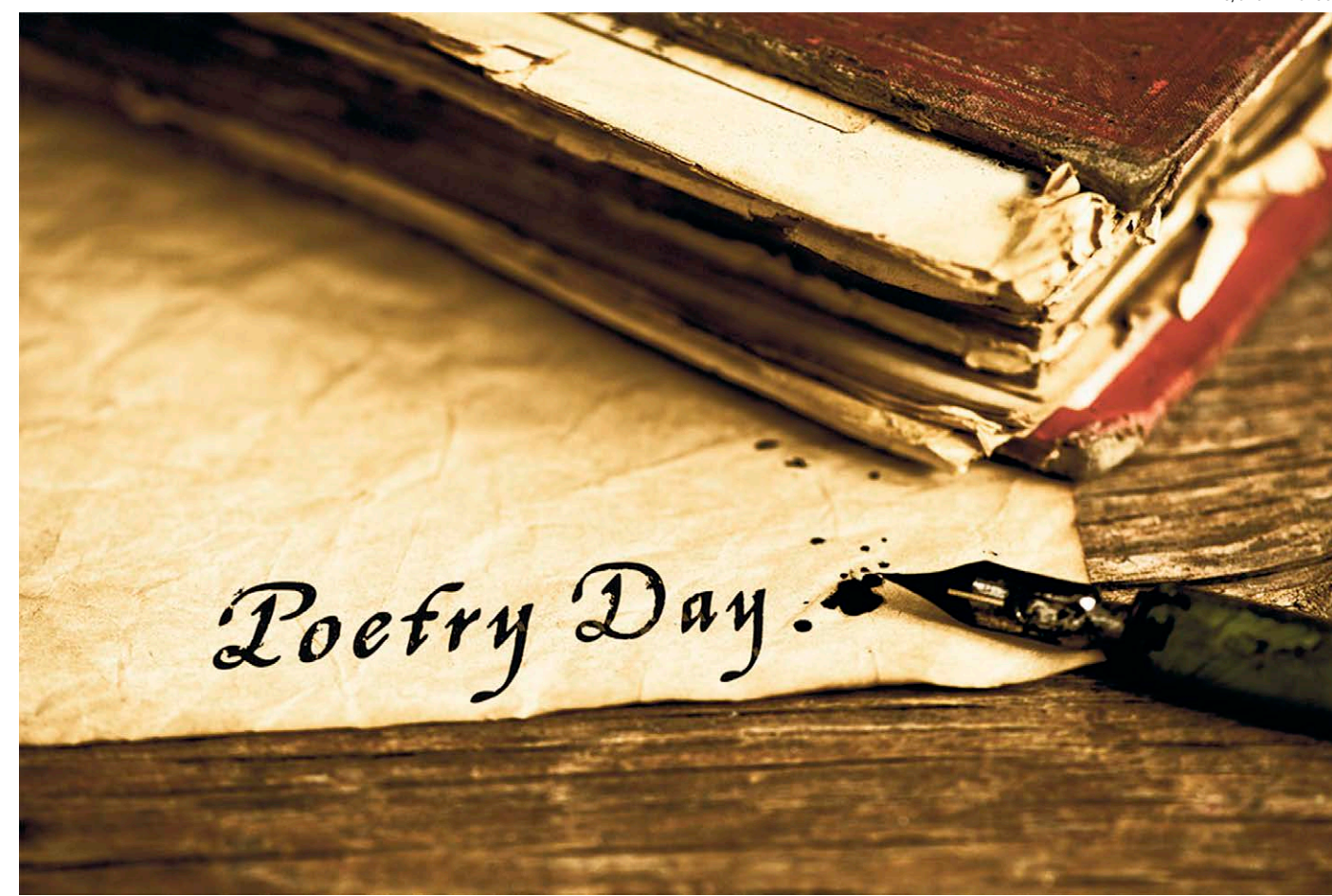
Poetry’s Good Gifts

“The world is so full of a number of things,
I’m sure we should all be as happy as kings.”

Considering how much unhappiness there is in the world today, there might be a temptation to dismiss this poem by Robert Louis Stevenson and its ilk as optimistic delusion—which is part of the cause of unhappiness. There is a sad tendency prevalent to view the world as a wasteland rather than a wonderland. This is, perhaps, one of the deepest errors of our time—the error of cynicism.

Keep, modern lands, your storied pomp.
What the world needs, what people need is a psychological and spiritual renewal: a renewal of politics, culture, parenthood, education ... and poetry. Of all these things that the world stands in need of, however, poetry should stand as a priority.

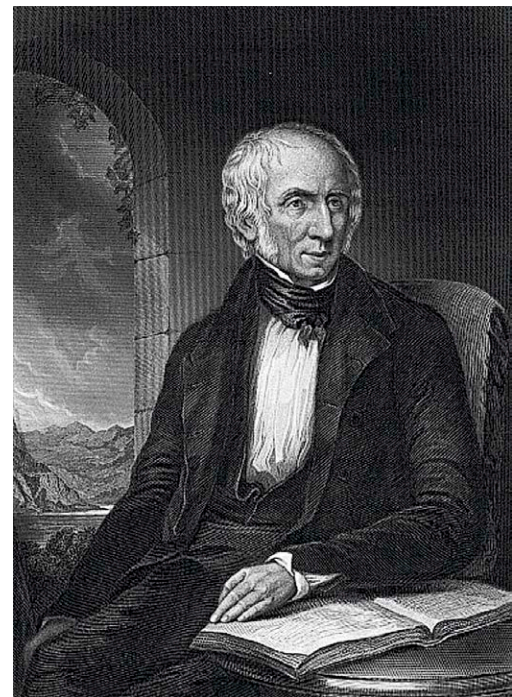
Without doubt, the world needs pragmatists like scientists and soldiers in the cultural and spiritual war zones to defend good, true, and beautiful things. But in as much as civilization needs professionals, so too does it need poets—and that for a very simple reason. Scientists without poetry can be slaves to systems. Soldiers without poetry can be barbarians devoid of chivalry. A people without poetry cannot be preservers of culture because the charm and glory of faith, life, nature, and art shine with poetry.



Make today Poetry Day. April is National Poetry month.

“
The world is
so full of a
number of
things,
I’m sure we
should all be
as happy as
kings.”

Robert Louis Stevenson



A portrait of William Wordsworth, said to be an 1873 reproduction of an 1839 watercolor by Margaret Gillies (1803–1887). The University of Texas–Austin.

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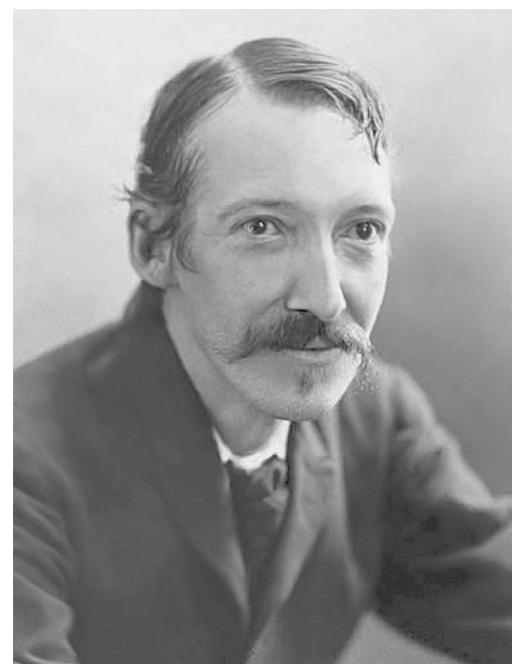


Photo portrait of Robert Louis Stevenson, 1893, by Henry Walter Barnett. State Library of New South Wales.

Without poetry, death is a bleak finality, instead of one to be not proud. Without poetry, without some intimation or expression of goodness, truth, and beauty, there is less hope of attaining the glorious ends of purpose and peace—whether through war, marriage, work, or any given Tuesday.

Poetry offers that primary knowledge, and thus offers us a window to view and begin to understand a world so full of a number of things. Poems should be lifelong teachers, and they should begin their lessons in the hearts of the young. Once there, they can give satisfying expression to those mysteries of childhood that are beyond a child’s ability to express. And in so doing, poetry can not only begin to introduce children to the outward world and inward emotions, but also give all things their proper place and relation, comparing just the right beauty to a summer’s day.

Dare to Lead

Perhaps the most significant obstacle to providing today’s children with the experience of poetry is that many of today’s parents and teachers have not had the experience of poetry themselves. It is never too late to mend.

Look on her works, ye Mighty, and do not despair. Poetry—that art which meditates on beauty, rest, perfection, and a small participation in the essence of things—is good for grown-ups too. No matter how old you are, or how busy you are, it is always important to be reminded of the aim of beauty and mystery that all our distracting means are for the sake of.

If you never thought about the importance of poetry, do not, by any means, let this article convince you. Go to the source in the bliss of solitude. Take the time. Read Shelley, Keats, and Byron. Read Wordsworth and Poe. Read the Psalms. Read Homer, Virgil, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Coleridge, and Hopkins. Write your own book inscriptions and Christmas cards to your loved ones in verse. Be attentive of eye and ear and heart. They also serve who only stand and wait.

Immerse yourself. Dare to engage the fearful symmetry. And above all else, enjoy it. Take the time. No parent or teacher can give their child or charge what they do not have. No pupil will take to heart what is brushed off by their parents or teachers. If parents and teachers want their children to be virtuous, they must be virtuous first. If parents and teachers want their children to be kind and hardworking, they must be kind and hardworking before them. If parents and teachers do not read and savor poetic works, neither will their children.

Let us, then, be up and doing. The first step to giving your loved ones the gift of poetry is to love it first yourself. The rhythms of poetry reflect the rhythms of creation, of life, and the human heart. They put profundities in the mouths of babes, fortifying them for those times when, as adults, they will cry out from the depths.

The reinforcements of beauty must not be lost. Like the coming of spring, the world will be saved by beauty, as Dostoevsky wrote. And a line of poetry may make all the difference in a person’s salvation. In the immortal words of John Keats:

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”

A Good Beginning

There is nothing like a poem held in the heart, like a fire in the hearth, to give the first and final context of earthly experience. There are many excellent poems—some of the best ever written in English, in fact—that are not hard to memorize. And they should be memorized, and brought along on the adventure of our lives, and taught to children, grandchildren, and students.

This article begins a series presenting a few very memorable poems. They are not long or difficult. It doesn’t take long to learn them, nor is it difficult to recite them on a walk, in the car, at the table, or in the living room. Take this series to heart. Teach your young minds and hearts the poems that will be presented in these pages and plant the power of poetry in their lives, and perhaps even the power of prayer and meditation.

They will be only a beginning, true, but any good poem is a good start. And that is one of the good things about poetry. It is always setting out on the right foot, seeking afresh, trying to arrive at some end, some destination, that we all have some inkling of but that we must ever strive for in this life even if we don’t get there fully.

And this is the paradox of all good poems and what makes poems good—that they must fail to capture their subjects, for their subjects are worthy of poetry only if they cannot be captured. And thus is the lovers’ elusiveness alive between the poem and the primal, bringing forth the truth that there are tears in things—tears both of inexpressible sorrow and inexpressible joy.

But even though they fail, poems such as the ones to come will not fail those who commit their hearts to poetry by committing poetry to heart. It is in the striving that poetry rejoices, and so must we.

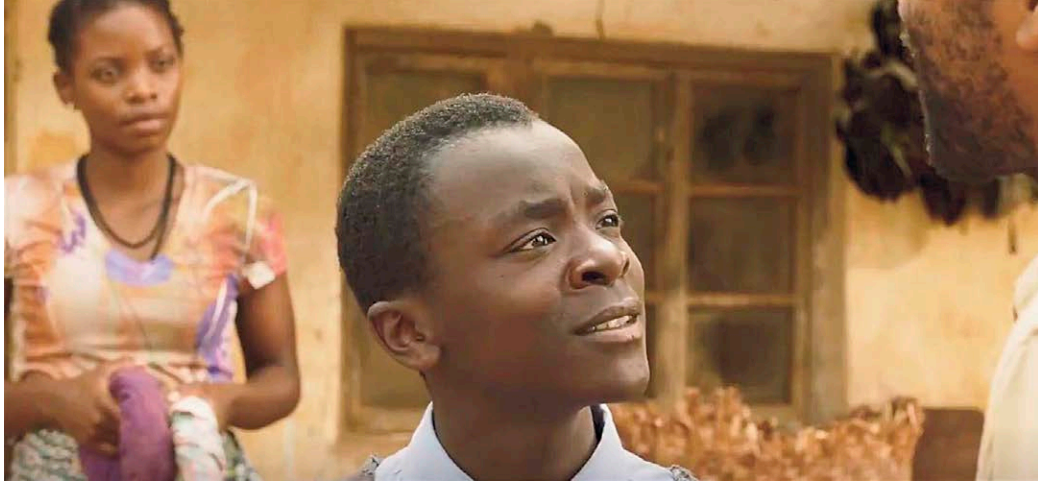
Sean Fitzpatrick serves on the faculty of Gregory the Great Academy, a boarding school in Elmhurst, Pa., where he teaches humanities. His writings on education, literature, and culture have appeared in a number of journals including Crisis Magazine, Catholic Exchange, and the Imaginative Conservative.

Did You Notice?

As you, dear reader, contemplate a poetic sojourn, remember to prepare your heart and mind to notice little gems of language that can change your life. For an exercise in attentiveness, or perhaps just some detective work, woven within this article are phrases from 12 immortal poems. Did you notice them?

“The Tyger” by William Blake
“Sonnet 18” by William Shakespeare
“The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe
“The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus
“The Aeneid” by Virgil
“I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” by William Wordsworth
“A Psalm of Life” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
“To a Mouse” by Robert Burns
“The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost
“Ozymandias” by Percy Bysshe Shelley
“Sonnet 19” by John Milton
“Psalm 8” the Bible

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William is a brilliant kid with a particular fascination of engineering and electricity.

(Left) William Kamkwamba (Maxwell Simba, C) earnestly wants to save his village from starvation, and he has an idea about how to do that, in "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind."

(Above) William (Maxwell Simba) watches a lumber company harvesting trees needed to protect the farmland.

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

A Sobering, Uplifting Film

IAN KANE

Life as a farmer can be unpredictable and sometimes fraught with catastrophe, especially in third-world countries. There, if a particular crop season fails due to drought or other adverse conditions, the farmers can't simply go and buy rations using their savings. Instead, things can quickly spiral out of control.

This is firmly evidenced in the 2019 TV film "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind," which is based on a true story. The film also functions as the directorial debut of actor Chiwetel Ejiofor, who also stars in it.

It's set in the village of Wimbe in the Southeast African country of Malawi, where a young boy, William Kamkwamba (Maxwell Simba), lives with his father, Trywell (Chiwetel Ejiofor), his mother, Agnes (Aïssa Maïga), and sister, Annie (Lily Banda).

William is a brilliant kid with a particular fascination of engineering and electricity. When he's not doing chores around the house, he has a side business of fixing radios for local folks. He also likes to sift through junkyards with his bosom buddy Gilbert (Philbert Falakeza) for anything valuable he can use for building materials.

William does OK in school and could do better, but he can't do his homework too well in the dark. His family uses what little kerosene they have for more critical things.

He soon discovers that his science teacher, Mr. Kachigunda (Lemogang Tsipa), is having a secret relationship with his sister, Annie.

The Kamkwambas are doing all right financially, so much so that they can even afford to send William to school. Soon, however, many of the villagers begin to sell their trees to a company interested in harvesting them. Trywell does his best to prevent this from happening but the allure of fast money is too much for villagers, and soon the company's timber workers are hacking down trees left and right.

Trywell had warned everyone against selling their trees because without them to act as a bulwark against rainwater, the farmlands around the village would flood. Of course, eventually, the rains do come and his warnings become reality.

The flooding sets off a chain reaction that leads to crop failure. Once the floodwater evaporates, the land becomes desiccated and worthless for planting crops, which in turn results in widespread famine.

As things deteriorate in the village, Trywell tells Agnes that he has to travel to a nearby city and join food shortage protests against the government, much to her consternation. Just after he jumps into the back of a pickup truck with other men headed for the city, a village man, desperate for food, invades the Kamkwambas' home and steals the food inside—literally grabbing a large bowl of it out of Annie's hands. Soon

after, other starving folks loot the backup rations from their food storage shed.

But as Trywell leaves the village behind, he notices as they travel that pandemonium is breaking out everywhere and gets the driver to turn back. After the looting subsides, their predicament starts to sink in: The family has no food and no potential crops to harvest.

But William has an idea. Although he can no longer attend school due to his parents' sudden inability to pay for it, he's been sneaking into the library to study by blackmailing Mr. Kachigunda. (He threatened to expose his relationship with Annie.) While there, he learns how to harness the wind to generate electricity.

Using some of the materials he'd scrounged from the junkyards, William manages to make a small (as in handheld) prototype of a wind turbine and gets the thing to work. He believes that he can construct a larger one that can link up to another contraption that could provide irrigation using their local well as the water source. The only thing is, he'd have to break down his father's most prized possession for materials—his bicycle—and pops isn't exactly thrilled about that idea.

A rift between father and son had been building for some time. Although Trywell did pay for his son's schooling, the father knows and sticks to the traditional ways of farming and has always preferred that his son follow in his footsteps.

Now, because of their desperate circum-

stances, the rift turns into a chasm. With father pitted against son, the family's outlook seems bleak. Will they be able to come together in time to realize William's plan?

One takeaway from this film is the realization of how much third-world families rely on agricultural seasons for sustenance and their very lives. Many are just one bad crop away from destitution or worse. It also illustrates that things we usually take for granted, such as Trywell's bicycle (which provides increased mobility), are treasures elsewhere.

In all, "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind" is an outstanding, sobering, and ultimately uplifting film.

Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To learn more, visit DreamFlightEnt.com

'The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind'

Director

Chiwetel Ejiofor

Starring

Chiwetel Ejiofor, Maxwell Simba, Felix Lemburo

Running Time

1 hour, 53 minutes

Rated

TV-PG

Release Date

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