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CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE POEM, "NIGHT OF SCORPION"

The poem, "Night of Scorpion", demonstrates a new and emerging tone. The poem was published at a time when Ezekiel was making an aesthetic sense in Ezekiel's poetry. The poem adopts a natural, colloquial meter deliberate attempt at formal innovation by using a loose, seemingly free verse structure for his narrative poems. Further, the poet stopped putting capitals at the beginning of each line, which allows his later poems and ideas to flow much more easily on the page.

In the poem, the poet makes deliberate choices about line breaks, enjambment, voice, chronology and tone in this poem which leaves the effect on the reader that made it so famous. To begin with, there is only one line break in the poem, which occurs right after the speaker's mother is released from her suffering:

"After twenty hours.....my children." (Line 44-48)

The line break is a literal break in the tension of the poem and endows the conclusion with a quiet depth. The tension in the poem before the line break comes from the two sources: first that the speaker's mother is suffering with little prospect of relief, and second, the tension that the speaker holds between personal crisis and mocking social observation.

While the personal crisis is clearly on the surface of the poem, the mocking social commentary is evident through the speaker's tone. The speaker in the poem, who inhabits a perspective between the little boy watching his mother suffer and the older man looking back upon that memory, relays the events of the crisis in a calm and detached manner. The casualness with which the speaker relays the scene is incongruous and even alarming for the reader. Even so, the speaker moves slowly through the events of the poem in one long manner without breaks-unhurried and it seems unbothered. This emotional detachment lets the poem speak directly to the reader, who understands right away what the poet means without having to juggle emotional pain over the suffering mother.

The point where the speaker is addressing the peasants, we find a tone that we often see in the collected works the poet's sardonic and mocking gaze which is the gaze of an insider that is nonetheless distanced from his subject. The poet's irony, in this poem, dramatizes the peasant's, as well as the speaker's father's superstition in their desperate attempts to save the speaker's mother. The speaker does not see the peasants in the positive light and instead compares them to "swarm of flies" in their desperation to help his mother. Their mixture of Christianity and Hinduism allows for slight confusion, as they pray to God for the mother's well being yet also hope for the best in her reincarnations. The speaker highlights how futile their spiritual efforts were in helping his mother:

"My mother..... on a mat." (Lines 32-33).

While this perspective does reflect a slight criticism the speaker is looking down on the peasants for believing what they believe-it also indicates the religious and cultural diversity that India holds. In

this way, "Night of the worlds through a sense of community ties after a specific disastrous event. Scorpion" is quintessentially an Indian poem in that, it shows the meeting of the worlds through a sense of community ties after a specific disastrous event.

Though "Night of Scorpion" does not use the strict formal structures that the poet had used in his earlier poetry, this does not mean that the poem is not rhythmic or musical. The punctuation and enjambment of the stanza help to build tension pleasant to read. For example, the descriptions of the peasants looking for the scorpions contain an easy internal rhythm.

"With candles..... not found". (Lines 11-14)

These lines start out in an even rhythm (with Can-dles and with Lan-tern) which is broken by the colon and the depressing revelation that the scorpion was not found. In this way, the careful variation of rhythm throughout the poem helps the poet achieve different emotional effects.

Finally, this poem communicates a tension between urban living and the natural world to which Ezekiel returns to again and again in this work. The speaker's community which lives close together and keeps itself informal about its resident, rose up in this work to surround the mother as she felt the burning sensation of the scorpion bite. The antagonist of the poem is the scorpion who is forgiven by the speaker very early on since he was indoors simply for the survival:

"Ten hours.... beneath the sack of rice." (Lines 2-4)

In this way, the true force of chaos and evil is the rain that drove the scorpion indoors and beats down upon the speaker and his family throughout their ordeal:

"More candles.....and less rain". (Line 30-31)

Like "Monsoon Madness", the natural world is a force of its own in the poem and is directly responsible for all the trouble of the characters.