

Over 21 - Poetry

Hush! - Angela Beyer

Little is clear in the ballad 'Hush!'; and the promise made in the second of thirteen stanzas ("*I'll tell you in a second*") is followed by bare facts only, – not a hint of an explanation. Tense, chilling atmosphere instead.

A wolf haunts a family. Father and son set out to hunt him. They fail. The son gets killed. The wolf gets away. The woman, who followed, kills the man and is free. Has the man been 'a tyrant all these years', as the last stanza suggests? Is the woman punishing her husband for his failure to protect her son?

Does she use the wolf in order to thoroughly emancipate herself?

Is the wolf one big metaphor?

Is the woman the wolf?

Everything makes sense to a certain degree; then theories collapse. The ballad tells an archetypal story, whose thrill and impact and magic lies in the inexplicable. The poet creates his own ballad stanza to convey this; three lines, as terse as can be, two-footed, three-footed, two-footed; no rhyme; never an enjambment, never a 'because'.

Imagery (*in the sense of metaphors and other poetic devices*)?

Very little. Pictures arise through graphic description, not rhetoric.

Emotion?

Lots. But it's pent up beneath words, not expressed in them. Only, and perhaps typically, when the wolf's velvet fur is described (*with oh so silver streaks*), does feeling become audible. Such cruel conciseness is archaic again. Of course it's also modern. And it's able to soak up the traditional ballad style. A skilful, forceful poem, – haunting and simply great.

PMS Poem of Half - Alien Single in Love - Melanie Selck

Must poetry overrepresent the self-pitying, overly serious, near suicidal regrets and morbid solutions of unrequited love? This poetess is a hopeless romantic trapped in the computer age. Even after the desperate attempt to entrap True Love by decorating her homepage in Feng Shui, she still cannot give up hope but feels herself forced to develop yet another strategy.... A playful, romping, but bittersweet outpouring, rich in colors and allegories, redeeming poetess and listener alike with self-irony as a new virtue in a (*overly modern and*) globalized world.

soundscapes - Susanne Jung

The reader floats through a dreamlike kaleidoscope of sights, sounds, even smells, snatches of memories weaving the past with the present, pictures of the city and nature entwining. And all rejoined in a new picture, insight or even a new question.... a very entrancing journey of the senses which imparts the poet's/ poetess' imagination to us very gently but with a crystal clarity.

Over 21 - Prose

Picklocks - Silke Hartmann

"Picklocks" is an intriguing piece of literature that offers the reader a complex insight into a fundamental human experience: the finding and losing of love. The story begins with a break-in to a flat - a vivid metaphor of intruding into someone's life. The burglar's senses are magically attracted by the atmosphere that, to her, seems to mirror the occupant's character. Later, she observes him, she meets him, they exchange telephone numbers, she does not call him, they meet again at a party, they are in love. Then she is about to leave, maybe just for one night, maybe forever.

It is not what the characters do or say that makes "Picklocks" outstanding – most probably there are no new love story plots to be told anyway. What makes "Picklocks" unique is its clever

treatment of space, time and point of view that in the course of the story become parameters of profound uncertainty.

The fluctuation of feelings that shift from fascination and sensuality to disappointment and boredom is conveyed by an expressive language of great clarity, on the one, hand and a multi-layered structure on the other. Thus, the author creates an atmosphere that is both familiar and new at the same time and meshes a net of ambiguities and ambushes the reader cannot evade. For a short, valuable moment we catch a glimpse of what is happening to us when we are in love: We might lose it the very moment we have found it.

Trip Down Memory Lane - Julia Scheit

“Trip Down Memory Lane” is not a short story you will forget about easily. It is the moving report on an incurable mental illness, on suffering and bereavement. The narrator, telling the story of his wife’s irreversible mental prostration, avoids sentimentality. The matter-of-fact style seems more effective than elaborate imagery could ever have been. The reader feels with the husband, cannot help noticing how more and more painful it becomes for the narrator to repress his emotion. Elliptical structures, the predominance of main clauses and means of contrast mirror the protagonist’s self-imposed calm only too well. The circular structure of the short story is remarkably effective. We know the ending, yet we cannot stop reading.

Witnessing and trying to conceal the consequences of his wife’s more and more alarming forgetfulness, the narrator finds consolation in a “Trip Down Memory Lane.” Dialogue, interior monologue and flash-backs are expertly interwoven and create the “unity of effect” that Poe intended his stories to convey

Movements - Sandra Tinter *(comments will follow)*

Under 21 - Poetry

A break from a walk in the park (collection) - Stephan Krohn

The poems express emotions and ideas in playful and unusual images and metaphors that are woven together through a regular rhyme scheme that does not seem to be forcefully constructed; instead the arrangement of the words seems quite natural and catches the reader’s attention immediately. The author has a good ear for rhythm and an impressive vocabulary.

Blurred Home - Claudia Mey

With just a few descriptive words, this wistful poem spirits the reader away to several different countries, while at the same time taking him into the narrator’s past. The regular rhyme scheme winds around the alternating stops of a life’s journey, physical movements are contrasted with a recurrent state of mind and invite the reader to take a break and reflect upon his or her own “blurred home” for a moment.

Ode to Pons / The comprehensive (W)rap - Johanna Germer

The poems combine thoughts about life with everyday trivia in an original and witty manner. The easy use of language and a mostly regular structure of the poems direct the reader to well-known places where he/she is able to discover some new perspectives and reflections about things we often no longer pay attention to.

Under 21 - Prose

Night Ships - Charlotte Galinat

At first “Night Ships” masquerades as an ordinary love story, but as the narrator’s date takes an unexpected turn, the story evolves into something more poignant and insightful. In the end, the reader gets to share an almost magical moment with the narrator. The jury was impressed with the atmosphere of the story, its mood of tranquillity, which lingers long after the night ships have passed by.

The New Colour - Samira Khodaei

A story of a painter grappling with inspiration - or its absence - , “The New Colour” convinces with unexpected twists, clever theatrical effects, and excellent character voices. The play’s snappy, well-timed dialogue buzzes with speed, the characterisation steers away from stereotypes, and the tension builds until the surprise ending. This play truly is a dramatic exploration of the artist’s mind.

Angel’s Wings - Jaha-Sophie Jaugsch

This is a story for the angel in all of us. Didn’t we always suspect that being an angel isn’t just about floating around peacefully while munching Philadelphia sandwiches? This story reveals that patience and reason are not as abundant in heaven as one might think. Shifts in perspective, clever word plays, vivid dialogue and an “airy” atmosphere make this a highly enjoyable reading experience.