All that is uncared for

“Let me tell you this: if you meet a loner, no matter what they tell you, it’s not because they enjoy solitude. It’s because they have tried to blend into the world before, and people continue to disappoint them.”

― Jodi Picoult, My Sister’s Keeper

 No one in the world enjoys living alone. Sometimes it may be better for loners’ life. However, deep inside their heart, they can never feel their real happiness. One of the famous poets Linda Gregg is considered as a woman with a perfect life of freedom. Gregg taught in many different institutions and traveled to many places as she desired (Poetry Archive, 2014). Nevertheless, did she really satisfied by this kind of life? In 1990, Linda Gregg and a poet Jack Gilbert divorced after they had been in their relationship for several years (Poetry Archive, 2014). Since then, more than a half of Gregg’s poems are about a woman’s life. A poet W.S. Merwin described Gregg’s poems “They are original in the way that really matters: they speak clearly of their source. They are inseparable from the surprising, unrolling, eventful, pure current of their language, and they convey at once the pain of individual loss, a steady and utterly personal radiance.” (Poetry Foundation, 2016). She reflected the opinions toward her life in her poems. They reveal her pain, her loss, and specifically, her loneliness. Since she was once divorced, she might feel lonely at any time. Linda Gregg expressed the struggling of loneliness in her poems by using a mood of atmospheres, reflecting on a weather, a warmth, and nature.

Firstly, Linda Gregg used a cold weather in the winter to represent her feeling of loneliness. The poem “Winter Love” introduced this mood by telling a completely white colored environment. According to “Winter Love”, Gregg (1999) stated “I would like to decorate this silence, / but my house grows only cleaner / and more plain.” Considering as a stereotype of the word clean, her house was needed to be white and clear, without any stain. Along with the imagery of winter, a land covered with white snow, the main picture of the poem became white, plain, and insignificant. This kept the reader focusing on the author who lived alone among these stuff. She became an only thing having warmth, an only thing that was different from other factors. From another part of the same poem, she stated “I waited too long to drink my tea. / It was not hot. It was only warm.” (Gregg, 1999) Even there was a thing that should be at the same temperature with a human body, it quickly lost its warmth. The whole poem finally leaved the author as a separated being. This created the mood of loneliness. Moreover, in a cold weather, there were many ways that a person can gain a warmth. To make a contact with another person, have some hot food, use a heater, or sit near a fireplace were choices for this situation. However, the author chose to drink a tea. This might not because she prefers a tea. This was because she was alone, so she didn’t have anyone to share the warmth. She didn’t think it is necessary to use a heater or a fireplace to make the whole room warm since she was living alone, too.

Furthermore, Linda Gregg used a warmth which is created by a living thing as a love that one had for another. According to poem “The Weight”, Gregg (2008) wrote “They slept standing, / their throats curved against the other’s rump. / They breathed against each other, / whinnied and stomped.” This stanza gave a mood of truthfulness and beloved by giving a picture of two horses. This could symbolize a couple. From Gregg’s biography, she had divorced once in 1990. For this reason, the two horses’ relationship could represent her married life in the past. From the Oxford dictionary (2016), loneliness means sadness because one has no friends or company. When Gregg wrote “The Weight” in 2008, she was already living alone. Considering this point, “The Weight” gave a mood of loneliness of missing a beloved person from the past. Adverselyto the previous paragraph, the poem “The Weight” represented a different temperature that affected an individual in a physical way. When a living thing had other to share its warmth with, they knew, accepted, and paid an attention to each other more. From “The Weight”, she also stated, “The privacy of them had a river in it. / Had our universe in it.” (Gregg, 2008). Paying full attention to another, they neglected the environment and became a separated being. They separated themselves from the society, moreover, the whole world. However, in this case, it was not an environment that leaving them, but they chose to separate themselves. This was completely different from the author’s identity in the poem “Winter Love”. Even both cases presented an idea of separation, calmness, and peace, they gave a contrasting mood.

In addition, by showing the stillness of nature, Linda Gregg expressed an idea of how the struggling of loneliness occurred. In one of her poem “Elegance”, she stated “Leaks for light. Raw where / the tin roof rusted through. / The rustle of weeds in their / different kinds of air in the mornings, / year after year.”(2008). This stanza gave a mood of loneliness by showing small details in an environment. She told that the silence in a life was the factor that offering human a chance to sense it. Hence to focus on such these details, a person needed to spend his or her time alone in the calmness of nature. In her poem “Elegance”, Gregg (2008) stated “Accurate / and unexpected beauty, rattling / and singing. If not to the sun, / then to nothing and to no one.” This stanza compared an individual to a beauty. Gregg showed a beauty of nature. Rattling and singing meant to try to attract other. The sun represented the society, desire, and conformity, as it was the brightest thing. However, when a beauty of just a small part of nature could not compete or had accepted by the sun, it became meaningless. No one cared of it. She also wrote in the same poem “All that is uncared for. / Left alone in the stillness / in that pure silence married / to the stillness of nature.” This absolutely told about the struggling of loneliness. Comparing the uncared nature to a loner, he or she never desired to be alone. He or she already tried hard to be accepted like how the uncared nature trying to singing and rattling, telling its beauty to the whole world. As a result, it left alone in its stillness.

To conclude, Linda Gregg felt the loneliness. She expressed the struggling of it in her poems by using a mood of atmospheres, reflecting on a weather, a warmth, and nature. One of her poems “Winter Love” used a weather to create the mood of separated being which leaded to the loneliness. As well as her another poem, “The Weight” used a warmth to give a mood of loneliness of missing a beloved person. Lastly, by showing the stillness of nature and comparing an individual to a beauty in “Elegance”, she expressed an idea of how the struggling of loneliness occurs. Linda Gregg is one of the poets who believes that loneliness is a struggle of life. When you found someone living alone, how can you believe he or she would like to?

References

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