



Poetry Investigation by Student in 9C

23/03/20

To start off with a sad topic, death, however I will write about how death is a peaceful thing not to be afraid of. In Asian cultures, where Buddhism thrives, there is no deity and death is considered just a normal part of life.

To keep this a short explanation, death in Chinese, Japanese and Korean is 死 (pronounced as "shi") is also a homonym to the number 4. This creates the superstition about 4 being an unlucky number similar to how 13 is an unlucky number in western societies. However, the language is not comprised of letters but symbols and the symbols are created from symbols itself so death is comprised of 歹 (pronounced as "dai") meaning malevolent and 人* (meaning person) combined to mean death.



* note how the symbols often look like the character they are meant to represent.

Back to poems, death poems were very common an example of the one I am going to use is:

Falling ill on a journey

my dreams go wandering

over withered fields

— Matsuo Bashō

This poem is written by a man fallen ill, I interpret the first line as the journey being life, this was his last and final work. "my dreams go on wondering" suggests how his memories will live on after he has passed away, this links in with the next line "over withered fields" which suggests that even plants must have their time to go and start a new cycle of life. "dreams go wondering" in this line, you could also infer the dreams and ambitions he never succeed in fulfilling. Although grim, many poems often include

techniques such as irony and word play; I would like to introduce a death poem which is light-hearted.

"Ware shinaba

sakaya no kame no
shita ni ikeyo
moshi ya shizuku no
mori ya sen nan"

"Bury me when I die
beneath a wine barrel
in a tavern.
With luck
the cask will leak"

A more humorous poem written by Moriya Sen'an. notice how the last line in the original version is a play on words with his name. This poem is about having as much fun you can and not caring about the end, only about the present. These poems interest me as a topic all together and why I enjoy the concept of them. These death poems are treated like yearbook quotes from a school, some being sentimental and some being a last way to be remembered in their best form they could be.

My attempt to write a poem:

Quarantined and war it seemed,
What occupies us is the life we lead,
focused on the mark we predestined to make -
but not the mark we have made or what it means.