**As One Listens To The Rain**

Summary

The speaker talks in first person and seems to be human when he mentions simple things such as, "entering my forehead" and "all five senses awake" and compares himself to rain, to "listen to me as one listens to the rain." In my opinion he seems to talking to a loved/female character seen by the words choice, such as “you are you and your body of steam, you and your face of night, you and your hair, unhurried lightning.” By experience when you hear the rain you acknowledge it and you know it’s there without needing to focus or see it, which is what I believe the author is trying to get through from the poem; however at the end of the poem the speaker is teary as he repeats to "listen to me as one listens to the rain."

Imagery/Figurative Language

Throughout the poem there is a lot of repetition such as “listen to me as one listens to the rain.” Octavio includes plenty of metaphors, in the 15th line he compares rain to light footsteps, “it's raining, light footsteps” giving the poem a lighter touch and comparing himself to something soft, since he compares himself to the rain. “steam rises and walks away, night unfolds and looks at me” this part of the poem compares steam going away as a human and night appearing as if in look for him. The metaphors go along with the contradiction pattern, how the speaker is rain and how other elements of nature are human alike in a way. The poem contends a lot of imagery such as “ eyes open inward", “ wet asphalt is shining, steam rises and walks away, night unfolds and looks at me” most of the imagery contradicts with itself, which makes the poem a bit more complicated, but gets the message straight to the point.

Tone

With the repetition of the quote “ listen to me as one listens to the rain”  it gives the poem a stronger tone, sort of in a begging,  wanting or in lust, but gets lighter and in a admiring or compassionate feel when the speaker begins to describe the loved one.  Until he asks/pleads one last time to "listen to me as one listens to the rain" and ends with him in discontent and in tears.

Theme

The poem doesn’t really have a deep message, but a sad story of someone who’s yearning for a loved one, in my opinion a female, and she’s not really listening or he wishes to know here more,depends on how you interpret it, and he wishes to have that connection with the person, like how one listens to rain and acknowledges its existence with no need to see it or hear it but by feeling.

After thoughts

After looking through the poem a thousand times, one can interpret the poem many ways and the one thing that stick out the most is the fact that he’s talking to a loved one. Whom he wishes for them to understand him but certain quotes in the poem stick out the fact that he can’t have them or was playing him in a way, the quote “ you are you and your body of steam.” The loved person is there but not complete and he wishes to know them more or to have more of them in a way that they’ll listen to them as if he were rain. “you cross the street and enter my forehead.” This quote makes it seem more likes it’s a lover or someone they lust for but can’t have, because they seem to be leaving them and yet when they “ cross the street” the lover enters their forehead (in other words, their thoughts) and it ends with “footsteps of water across my eyes, listen to me as one listens to the rain.” The Speaker is once again left and discontent knowing he can’t have this mystery person.

**"MEN IN DARK TIMES" BY HANNAH ARENDT**

One of the books that has traveled with me, from Vancouver to the Netherlands, to Cambodia and now to Montreal, is Hannah Arendt's Men in Dark Times. It's a book unlike her more renowned works, and its subject is other people and other lives. Published in 1968, Men in Dark Times Times is a collection of essays on writers and philosophers, from Erich Lessing and Walter Benjamin, to Bertolt Brecht, Hermann Broch and Isak Dinesen.For me, the book is about poetry and the writer, der Dichter. As Broch writes, "poetry, if it is to lead to the purification and self-identification of man, has to plunge into the depths of man's antinomies, quite in contrast to philosophy, which remains on the brink of the abyss." Arendt sets her sights on these antinomies--the paradoxes that inhabit us, and the disharmonies that shape our lives and our relationships with one another.

In my own life, these antinomies have drawn me back, again and again, to storytelling. In stories we know that many truths can exist at once, say the truth of Zerline in Hermann Broch's anguished, brilliant masterpiece, Zerline's Tale, alongside the truth of her lover and her lover's lover. Zerline's motivations, innocent, malicious or mad, break against each other like glass fragments, no longer able to cohere but still part of the same entirety. Broch shows us, as Arendt says, how "storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it."

In Men in Dark Times, Arendt folds together narrative, criticism and rhetoric. First, there is the biography she is telling (Brecht, the genius, capable of telling us the most unwelcome truths, carving out his life from Augsburg to Svendborg to Santa Monica and finally to East Berlin), then literary criticism ("There is not a shred of sentimentality left in Brecht's beautiful and beautifully precise definition of a refugee: 'Ein Bote des Unglücks' "), and finally the rhetoric ("It was precisely this extraordinary intelligence, breaking like lightning through the rumble of Marxist platitudes, that has made it so difficult for good men to forgive Brecht his sins"). Through Brecht, through his plays, poetry, and the trajectory of his life, she focuses, bit by bit, on goodness. How did it come to pass, she asks, that a good man, no, the best of men, lived in comfort in East Berlin, under a regime that had killed his friends? Is it true that "it will be of greater consequence to leave behind you a better world than to have been good?"

These antinomies are what Arendt excels at illuminating, and she unfurls these contradictions with her particular savage intellect and her intense, moving compassion.

Often, these days, I worry about my own love of literature and my belief in the writing life. In Hermann Broch's acceptance of the "ultimate insufficiency of literature", I hear my own doubts magnified a thousand times over. Men in Dark Times remains in me like a corridor branching off to many unlit rooms, and in each room there is a person thinking to him or herself, a person creating work, a person in constant engagement with the ideas of others. The beauty of this book is, for me, that we are all in these rooms, and only in the discourse, in this passionate engagement, can we find our way to one another.