TO A DAUGHTER LEAVING HOME

The poem “To a Daughter Leaving Home” (by Linda Pastan) is a very emotional poem about what you can assume: a daughter leaving home. The voice in the poem is of a parent who seeks to explain how special times can be, and how easily a daughter can be lost. In this case the special time is the time when the parent was teaching the daughter how to ride a bicycle when she was eight in a park. This poem’s deeper story is about the life of the daughter and how quick the daughter’s life went by until they say goodbye. This poem is addressed to “a Daughter Leaving Home” and the poem is written to make the daughters that are leaving their homes, reflect upon their own lives, how they have gone through them and how they have kept in touch with their parents.
In this poem poetic devices help translate this story into the actual message. In the poem the parent goes beside the daughter as she rides her bicycle, and the daughter “wobbled away”. This example of imagery has generated an image of the daughter not in full control of how she is riding the bicycle. As she goes the parent is surprised to see that the daughter has gone down a “curved path of the park”. The poet Linda Pastan has used “curved path” as symbol to represent life. Linda Pastan has used a “curved path” to symbolize life as a fun, dangerous and unpredictable path, that is not does not go in one straight line. “I kept waiting for a thud of crash” this quotation can tell us that the parent is worried and panicked about the daughter getting hurt, which in this situation seems likely. The parent goes sprinting after the daughter. “smaller, more breakable” This quotation is explaining how the daughter in the parents eyes is fragile. Also the daughter is not in reach with the father. But the daughter continues to go independently on her bicycle “pumping, pumping”. She goes on with her life “screaming with laughter”. This is making the parent feel as if they are the only one that realizes that the daughter is in danger, because the daughter is on a bicycle that she has barley learned how to ride she can easily fall and hurt her self. The deeper meaning in that is, as she got older she was going through life independently, a life the parent thought she was risking, but to the daughter it was only a joy. The daughter goes on without the parent. The daughter goes with “the hair flapping” which to the parent is a “handkerchief” waving “goodbye”. The simile “the hair flapping like a handkerchief” ties the poem together making the parent left behind sad, and the daughter having to say goodbye. The mood this creates is very emotional. It is very sad that the parent has had to say goodbye when the parent had not managed to be in touch with the daughter. This poem can make daughters who are leaving home reflect and maybe spend sometime with their parents.

THE WIFE

This story is instructive as a pure example of Victorianism, reduced in literary value by its adherence to the conventions of popular culture: “The Wife” was politically correct in 1819. It is like an embroidered sampler on a cozy wall of home sweet home. Irving wrote to please genteel married women, the great majority of his readers. He caters to their view of themselves, introducing his story with a quotation exalting “women’s love” and the bliss of domestic life. He follows that with an opening paragraph heaping more praises on “the softer sex” for their strength, fortitude, resilience and “intrepidity”--their ability to survive “disasters which break down the spirit of a man and prostrate him in the dust.” Men fall prostrate while women have such an “elevation to their character that at times it approaches sublimity.” This imagery, in the tradition of Medieval chivalry, defines the Victorian paradigm of gender roles in marriage: attributing “sublimity” to the wife, who is idealized as an iconic Angel in the House. Just as modern readers are conditioned by political correctness to make stock responses, Victorians were conditioned by stories such as this one. After the 1960s, the Victorian paradigm was replaced by the Feminist paradigm of gender roles. The new political correctness turned many traditional values into taboos, such as the mutual dependence of husband and wife. Consequently, most readers today are disconnected from the Victorian deification of women and are shocked and offended by the second paragraph of this story. Some readers are so unfamiliar with the past they cannot imagine it. Gasping, they infer that the second paragraph just has to be satire. On the contrary, a Victorian wife would not have resented being represented in metaphor as a clinging vine, because she was also empowered in marriage with the moral authority of an Angel: As the vine, which has long twined its graceful foliage about the oak and been lifted by it into sunshine, will, when the hardy plant is rifted by the thunderbolt, cling around it with its caressing tendrils and bind up its shattered boughs, so is it beautifully ordered by Providence, that women, who is the mere dependent and ornament of man in his happier hours, should be his stay and solace when smitten with sudden calamity, winding herself into the rugged recesses of his nature, tenderly supporting the drooping head, and binding up the broken heart. This second paragraph is a single periodic sentence, a branching metaphor that expresses mutual dependency, with emphasis on the emotional dependence of a husband on a wife. This is the message wives wanted to hear. And still do. That they are needed, that they are indispensable, even that they are divine. The metaphor is drawn from Nature, which is “ordered by Providence”--by Almighty God--and is the basis for Victorian gender roles. In the real world of 1819, women on the whole were in fact dependent on men, the great majority of whom were farmers. Wives and husbands are business partners on a farm. Crèvecoeur records in

Letters from an American Farmer (1782) that whereas European women worked alongside men in the fields, as soon as they could American farmers freed their wives from hard labor to make the home a heaven on earth. Irving's "The Wife" is not a farm wife with modest agrarian values, she is urban upper class. The story is a soap opera that dramatizes the conflict between pastoral values--simplicity, peace and love in the countryside, the Garden (or suburbs)--and the puritan values of money and status attained through competition and dedication to business in the City. Like soap operas in the 20th century, this one is pitched mainly to a middle-class audience of women who aspire to be upper class. Accordingly, the worst disaster they can imagine is a loss of status. Most women secured and improved their status through marriage like the wife of Leslie in the story. He has an "ample" fortune, but she has none, like Lily Bart in The House of Mirth (1905) by Edith Wharton. The second paragraph expresses the perspective of an ideal Victorian husband: Prostrate before his wife's sublimity in the first paragraph, in the second he is a strong oak tree that lifted her into sunshine. The Victorian husband was expected to be a strong provider outside the home, chivalric and attentive to his wife inside. Like too many husbands, the one in this story has been inclined to undervalue his wife during their prosperity, as "the mere dependent and ornament of his happier hours." He should know better. Irving agrees with both his Victorian readers and with the modern Feminist about male condescension and he teaches the husband a lesson, the moral of the story: "No man knows what the wife of his bosom is--no man knows what a ministering angel she is--until he has gone with her through the fiery trials of this world." [italics added] Victorian women collectively increased their status and political influence by promoting marriage, which secured, protected and empowered them. Their provinces became the home, the schools and the churches. They dictated morals, manners and ministers. They created and largely controlled American popular culture while men were busy with competitive business. Wives provided "a little world of love at home…Whereas a single man is apt to run to waste and self-neglect, to fancy himself lonely and abandoned, and his heart to fall to ruin like some deserted mansion for want of an inhabitant." The home is the metaphor of the heart, also embodied in the wife. The husband is the head in complementary relation to his wife, deferring to her within her sphere of responsibility. This husband, Leslie, is a "romantic" in a chivalric popular culture and carries his responsibility to protect his wife to an unrealistic extreme: "'Her life,' said he, 'shall be like a fairy tale'." But then he loses all his money. The narrator, or Irving, advises him to be realistic: "But how are you to keep it from her?" Persuaded, Leslie breaks the news to his wife. "And how did she bear it?" "Like an angel!" … "You call yourself poor, my friend; you were never so rich--you never knew the boundless treasures of excellence you

possess in that woman." The couple move out of the city into a small cottage "humble enough in its appearance for the most pastoral poet, and yet it had a pleasing rural look. A wild vine had overrun one end with a profusion of foliage; a few trees threw their branches gracefully over it…flowers…a wicket gate." This lovely cottage in the country is the American Dream, for most people. Most readers would love to live in a place like that. Yet Leslie feels ashamed that his wife has been "reduced to this paltry situation--to be caged in a miserable cottage--to be obliged to toil almost in the menial concerns of her wretched habitation." Ironically, he sounds like a modern Feminist complaining about housewives being caged at home. Irving sets up a polarity between the City as the place of prosperity and the country or Garden as the place of material "poverty" and spiritual wealth. The values of the heart embodied in the wife and imaged in the pastoral cottage are implicitly divine. That is the lesson the husband learns, that he should give the highest priority to his wife and the spiritual and domestic values she represents. Yet as soon as possible, by implication the couple moves right back to the City, giving a higher value to status and money than to all that is glorified in the wife: "The world has since gone prosperously with him." [italics added] Catering to his audience Irving gives no evidence that he realizes the contradiction. Victorians wanted virtue to be rewarded. The story ends in the old Puritan tradition of belief that God rewards the virtuous elect with prosperity. Later in the century, in The Rise of Silas Lapham (1885), Howells depicts Silas the successful businessman heeding his Victorian wife as a conscience and retreating from corruption in the City to his family farm. Today the Postmodernists who dominate American culture are atheist urbanites who scorn rural values, especially traditional marriage and religion. Art in a culture unified by a common ideology and consensus about values tends to be iconic, like Medieval and Victorian art. Icons are images with fixed meanings commonly understood, as in religions. Irving and Hawthorne in particular use cultural icons and conventional motifs: in this story the virginal Victorian wife is an angel, she plays a harp, her name is Mary, she makes their home a heaven on earth, she wears a white dress with flowers in her hair and she serves him strawberries and cream. The story is a conventional allegory of iconic signs: The husband (head) learns the true value of his wife (heart), their union is strengthened and they are both rewarded for their virtue.

THE COP AND THE ANTHEM

In The Cop and the Anthem by O. Henry we have the theme of freedom, determination, class, change and hope. Set at the turn of the Twentieth Century the story is narrated in the third person by an unnamed narrator and after reading the story the reader realises that Henry may be exploring the theme of freedom. Throughout the story Soapy is prepared to sacrifice his freedom in order that he no longer has to live homeless on the streets of New York. Every action that Soapy takes is an action of hope. Whether it is to be sent to the Island (prison) or to finally turn his life around and get the job he was once offered Soapy never gives up and remains determined. Even if the consequences may be unpleasant to most people – going to prison. It is also interesting that Soapy as he is walking through the city is waiting for opportunities to get arrested and when they arrive, he never is arrested. It is possible that Henry is placing a spotlight (humorously) on the police themselves and suggesting that they may be ineffectual. Despite acting drunk, Soapy doesn't get arrested. Also when he breaks the store window and admits to it, he also doesn't get arrested.

It is also interesting that at no stage in the story does Soapy lose hope. This may be important as not only does it display a level of determination as previously mentioned but it also shows that he is committed to his cause of going to the Island. It being clear to the reader that Soapy is being driven by his life on the streets of New York. Prison for Soapy is better than being homeless. Though some critics might find that hard to believe, Henry's description of life for Soapy on the streets makes it easier to understand. He is reliant on charity, he is cold and he has the look of an individual who has seen better days. This is in contrast to the other characters that Soapy encounters during the day. All who are very well to do and appear to live successful lives. This may be important, the differences between Soapy and the other characters, as Henry may be placing a spotlight on the contrasting lives of those who live in New York. Some are wealthy or well to do and some like Soapy are down on their luck and looking at prison as being a better alternative to living on a park bench.

There is also a religious element to the story which may be important. While Soapy is listening to the church organ he has an epiphany or moment of realisation. He decides against going to the Island and begins the process of changing or at least trying to change his life. He recalls a job offer that was once made to him and he vows the next day to make enquiries about it. Whether Henry is suggesting that Soapy's faith has been restored is difficult to say. Some critics suggest it has been for a brief moment. The sound of the anthem playing on the organ motivating Soapy to change. Either way it does highlight again Soapy's determination to change his circumstances. What is also interesting about Soapy listening to the anthem is that we learn he had a life prior to becoming homeless. When things were better for him. Though we never learn as to exactly what the trigger may have been that lead to Soapy

being homeless. Henry telling the reader of Soapy's 'degraded days, unworthy desires, dead hopes, wrecked faculties and base motives.'

The title of the story is also interesting as in many ways it suggests there are two paths that Soapy can follow. The Cop obviously represents the Island and a life in prison. Something that Soapy is choosing at the beginning of the story. However the anthem played at the end in many ways represents not only who Soapy was but who he could be again. If anything the anthem is aspirational to Soapy. It represents a good honest life that Soapy can live on his own terms. Leaving behind his old life and the troubles that come with it. The anthem empowers Soapy to live behind his old life. The reader aware that Soapy's reason for wanting to go to the Island in the first place is so that he has somewhere warm to live for the winter. Though he knows he must commit a crime to get to the island. The anthem represents hope to Soapy.

The end of the story is also interesting as Henry appears to be introducing further irony into the story. After Soapy decides to make enquires about his previous job offer he is arrested by a policeman for loitering. Despite all his previous attempts to get arrested and being unable to do so. Now when Soapy is on a path of change he gets arrested when he doesn't want (or need) to. In many ways this is ironic because all the aspirations that Soapy has are lost. Where previously he wanted to go to the Island and then changed his mind he still ends up being sent to the Island for three months. Any chance Soapy has to change his life appear to be lost. He has succeeded in his goal of going to the Island, though the reader is also aware of his real aspirations and hopes. To reclaim his old life. Something that has been triggered by listening to the anthem being played on the church organ.

NOT WAVING BUT DROWNING

A dead man complains that he was further out than anyone thought and not waving at them, but instead drowning. Well that's tough luck, because nobody hears him.

Other people remark that it's too bad he's dead, especially since he was a bit of a goodtime guy. They think of reasons that he might have died, including the coldness of the water and heart failure.

But the dead guy ain't havin' that. He tells them (not that they're listening or anything) that he was struggling all his life—not just at the moment of his death.

Line 1

Nobody heard him, the dead man,

- Welcome, gentle Shmoop reader, to a Stevie Smith poem. Nothing's here to greet you, except a dead man. Well, that's festive.
- Okay, the speaker is here, too. Who is the speaker? It's too soon to tell, but we're putting feelers out.
- Right away, we learn the dead man must have made a noise that no one heard. Did he call for help?
- What did he die from anyway? Is he talking after death? Or did no one hear him *before* he died? Sorry to bombard you with questions, but we're just not sure yet. Hey, Shmoop doesn't know *everything*.
- "Heard" is past tense, so maybe the speaker is about to detail the events of the man's death.
- Let's stay tuned.

Line 2

But still he lay moaning:

- Okay, now this is just weird. The dead man continues making noise, "moaning" in fact—all zombie-like.
- "Still" could mean "not moving," though, so that rules out the walking dead. Unless you take "still" to mean that he continues moaning, even though no one's listening. The word's tricky like that, what with the double meanings and all.
- Often when a word has two meanings, a poet wants you to think of both. Let's do that: the dead guy is moaning continually but not moving. At least he got being dead half right.
- There's also a suggestion that his moaning isn't a new thing. Maybe he was like this when he was alive, too.
- Not only is he still, but this line says he "lay." Where would you imagine the dead man lying? At the scene of an accident? On a table in the

morgue? In his coffin? We don't really know yet, but at least he's not running around after anyone's brains.
- The colon at the end of the line suggests something closely related to this line is about to happen. *Phew*. That's good news because there's a lot of basic information we still need about this situation.

Line 3

I was much further out than you thought

- Now there's an "I" in the poem for the first time. Is it the same voice that spoke lines 1-2? Dead man talkin'.
- Remember the colon from the previous line could signal that a list, an explanation, or even dialogue is about to occur, so this line could be what the dead man says.
- He's not just making a moaning noise, he's complaining.
- That sounds a little judgmental. Is the speaker of lines 1-2 giving us a peek at how he or she feels about the dead man? Maybe the speaker thinks the guy's a bit whiny. Then again, maybe not. What do you think the speaker's tone is here?
- The dead dude's speaking about a past event, when he was much further out. We're not sure about what this event was, specifically, but we'll roll with it.
- Look, there's someone else in this poem! The dead man speaks to "you"; he seems to have someone in mind. Is it us readers? Is it the speaker of lines 1-2?
- Whoever it is didn't know how far out he was. So they were either oblivious or really bad at measuring.
- Poor guy. He's dead and he doesn't know that nobody's listening to his complaints. On top of that, his intended listeners were already clueless about where he was when he was alive.

Line 4

And not waving but drowning.

- Ah, we're finally getting down to it. Here's the line that becomes the title. We now have enough information to infer a scene: this guy swims too far out in a body of water, signals for help, other people think he's waving, and then he drowns.
- This is why you always use the buddy system, folks.
- Note that the poem itself doesn't directly mention water. We're guessing because of the drowning. We mean, it's not like you can drown in maple syrup. Strictly speaking.
- We've also seen enough to know something about the poem's meter and rhyme. Take a look at our "Form and Meter" section to learn more about how strange they are. For now, it's enough to know right now that this stanza is what's known as a ballad stanza. Sort of.

- Ballads are songs (but they can also be poems) that tell a story. They tend to rhyme the second and fourth lines of every quatrain (a four-line stanza) and alternate lines of four stresses and three stresses.
- But wait a second. The ends of lines 2 and 4 don't rhyme exactly. Not to worry. Technically they do. Although "moan" and "drown" don't sound the same, they're pretty similar. And that "-ing" at the end of each of those totally *does* sound the same, it's just not the stressed syllable in the words. When an end rhyme lands on an unstressed syllable, we call that a feminine rhyme.
- Notice the contrast of moods between "waving" and "drowning." One is merry, and the other pretty grim. Why couldn't the mysterious "you" see what was really going on? Shmoop would like to think we could tell the difference between the two.
- How specific is the setting so far? We don't exactly get the name of the beach or the sea involved, and water is never actually mentioned. That might mean that we're talking about a metaphorical setting here, rather than a real one.
- We're still curious what killed the man. Why did he drown? C'mon Stevie, let's get to the heart of this mystery.

Line 5

Poor chap, he always loved larking

- Apparently he was a fun-loving guy before he drowned. "Larking" means goofing around or playing.
- Okay, we got that. But wait, who's telling us that he loved larking? It doesn't sound like the dead man still. "Poor chap" doesn't seem like his style. Could it be the speaker from lines 1-2? Whoever it is sounds more sympathetic than the voice that told us the guy was a whiner. Maybe it's the folks who thought he was waving, and now they're pretty sad he turned out to be drowning all along.
- This voice's tone doesn't quite match the occasion. "Chap" is a very informal word for man, and larking is an activity that lacks seriousness. But the dude *drowned*. Doesn't get more serious than that.
- A neat Greek word for this mismatch between situation and tone is bathos. It means a kind of sinking from the serious to the ridiculous. From the dramatic and sad first stanza, we move to a chatty, informal statement.
- To sum up, someone is saying, it's a bummer this dude died, because he really liked to party.

Line 6

And now he's dead

- At first glance, it's hard to dig much more out of this line. Dude's dead. We get it. But let's milk this line for all it's worth anyways. Just for fun.

- Besides being a statement of the obvious, this line also works with line 5 to set up another contrast of moods. Larking is lively and fun, while being dead is boring and sad and pretty much the pits. This echoes the contrast between waving and drowning in line 4 and the title.
- It's a hard truth that someone can be here enjoying life one minute and be gone the next. The transience of life is a serious theme of religious and philosophical thought. You often hear a priest or minister say something to this effect at a funeral.
- Hmm… could the scene here be the dead man's funeral or wake? Remember from line 2 that he lies there, still. Maybe this statement is what a religious figure or the man's friends say over his body.
- Usually that would be an occasion to get poetic or emotional, but this line is very blunt. Its obviousness and lack of feeling emphasize the silliness of line 5.
- Whoever's speaking isn't doing a great job of memorializing. The man's dead, for Pete's sake! Can't he get a more heart-felt eulogy?
- If you're not mad at this voice's insensitivity (or even if you are), you could be forgiven for laughing at this point. Maybe just a giggle. We here at Shmoop are amused, anyway. And if that makes us insensitive, well, we think Stevie would approve.
- That's because we're caught up in the contrast between the tragic tone of the first stanza and the informal, obvious statements of this stanza. When you expect something and get its opposite, laughter is often the reaction, even if it's a wee bit distasteful.
- Notice that this is the shortest line we've seen so far. To learn more about how the poem plays with line length and meter, check out our "Form and Meter" section.

Line 7

It must have been too cold for him his heart gave way,

- The voice moves from lukewarm lament to trying to rationalize the death. We assume again that "it" means the water, wherever it is that the dead man drowned. "Must" is used in a way that shows uncertainty about the cause. Basically, we can imagine the folks he left behind saying this, hoping to understand the tragedy.
- Huh, this is a run-on sentence. What's the poet up to here? Did she just forget a period after "him"? Why squish those two clauses together?
- Something was too cold, and his heart stopped. Without punctuation between these rationalizations, it's hard to tell if this is a description of cause and effect or just two different reasons. To be fair, we can't even say for sure if the same person is saying both things.
- Whoever's speaking, running the reasons together this way makes them seem like careless excuses. Even though the speaker or speakers seem sympathetic to the dead man, they don't care enough to take their time and figure out what really happened.

- This is by far the longest line in the poem, almost as if it stole some words from the lines around it. Try reading the poem out loud. What happens to the speed of your reading when you reach these lines? You start to rush, right?
- Click through to "Form and Meter" for more discussion of how this long line plays with the differences between spoken and written poetry.
- One final note: check out the alliteration in this line. "[…] him his heart […]" repeats the h-sound, in quick succession. Head on over to the "Sound Check" section for more on this and some other cool sonic techniques.

Line 8

They said.

- This wins the Shortest, Most Obvious Line of the Poem award.
- But it's still important because it confirms that everything else in this stanza comes from a particular voice: not the speaker of lines 1-2, not the dead man from lines 3-4, but instead a mysterious "they."
- Remember the equally mysterious "you" that the dead man talks to? "They" could be the same people he was trying to address. Instead of listening to him and his complaints, they chat idly over his corpse, rushing their way through the possible reasons he croaked.
- It could be that the different statements in this stanza come from individual speakers, but they're presented as if coming from a singular voice. Line 7 could even represent two speakers talking over each other or responding to each other.
- Let's recap: we have three voices in the poem so far: the speaker of lines 1-2 (and probably 8), the dead man in lines 3-4, and whoever "they" are in lines 5-7. There's a lot of people talking in this short poem. Do they hear each other?

Line 9

Oh, no no no, it was too cold always

- Someone hears, anyway, and disagrees strongly. But disagrees with what? "They" already suggested it was too cold.
- "Always" seems to be the difference. This voice suggests the coldness wasn't a one-time thing but a constant condition. Of course the poor guy drowned. It was only a matter of time.
- How long was he in the water, anyway?
- One more thing: the tone of these lines is quite the change. The repetition of no suggests conviction and belief. Whoever's talking here knows what's up, unlike the "they" from line 7, who was spouting off possibilities without really knowing anything at all.

Line 10

(Still the dead one lay moaning)

- Here's a slightly reworked echo of line 2, suggesting that the speaker of line 9 was the dead man again.So he's the one who objected that it was always too cold. Notice he remains still—again, continuing not to move. (His remains still remain still, you could say, but you probably shouldn't.)
- But who's the speaker of this line? It sounds like the speaker of lines 1-2 (and probably 8) returning for a brief cameo. Apparently this speaker, the one who presents all the other voices, doesn't do much more than set the scene.
- There's that word "moaning" again. Does it sound as judgmental this time around?
- Notice that this line is in parentheses, as if it were an afterthought or an interruption. The speaker of this line tries to get out of the way, but still needs to show us that the rest of the stanza is the dead man speaking again. Think of it as a little heads up.
- So he, the dead man, is the one responding to the idle chatterers in the previous stanza, disagreeing with their ideas about how he died. Do they hear?

Line 11

I was much too far out all my life

- This is another echo, this time of line 3. Why does the poor guy have to repeat himself? Oh, right, line 1 told us nobody hears him.
- There's also another difference this time: he insists he was *always* too far out, for his entire life, even. He's building line 9 to give us a picture of himself as always exposed to cold and always too far from help.
- Plus, his skin must have been getting really pruney (which admittedly might be a smaller concern than being dead).
- Because it's hard to imagine that he literally spent his entire life in the water, we think he might be talking about more than just swimming at this point.
- Maybe swimming is actually a metaphor in this poem. What could it represent?

Line 12

And not waving but drowning.

- This line is one last repetition, returning to line 4 and the title.
- Lines 10-12 and 2-4 are so similar that we can go ahead and call this type of repetition a refrain.
- Ballads and other songs often have a part that repeats itself several times, sometimes changing slightly. Just think of the refrain as the chorus of a pop song.

- We already know whatever information this line gives us, so it must be here for emphasis, not further explanation.
- But combined with the rest of this stanza, we at least get a correction to the speakers of the second stanza, who think that the man's death was an unexpected accident.
- He was always out of their reach and was always signaling for help as he drowned. He was most definitely *not* goofing around and waving at them.
- It sounds like they were wrong about his loving "larking." In fact, they plumb misunderstood him. Probably for years. So can we trust anything they say about him?
- With friends like these, you'd be better off with a flotation device.
- We're left pondering what the dead man means by drowning, but we have a pretty good idea that he's not just talking about a single failure to keep afloat. It sounds like a life-long, isolated struggle of some kind. The tone has definitely changed back to the tragic.
- To make things even grimmer, here he is dead and still complaining about it. What sort of after-life is that?