THE VERY TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE THING CALLED LOVE

POETRY & EXEGESIS OF:

Linda Maree Malcolm

96 Anderson Street,

Lilydale, 3140

linda@lindamareemalcolmauthor.com.au

0402225456

1. LMM

I was waiting at the Melbourne airport with my children to board a flight to Queensland for our family

vacation when an older woman came bounding toward our group as if we had known each other

forever. It came tumbling out that her husband was recently killed in a car accident. This is a topic that

has always fascinated me: of course love will die at some point, either the partner dies or the love

fades away for whatever reason and the couple separate but – and here’s my point – as I have seen

time and again, love is still what life is really all about. We make all kinds of vows to ourselves and

others that we will never fall in love again and try to close ourselves to it not knowing that a healing

almost always inevitably takes place.

This study period we studied different forms of poetry. About alliteration, Sylvia Plath wrote; *I’ve*

*got a stubborn goose whose gut’s honeycombed with golden eggs yet won’t lay one*

(CWR110CreativeWritingForms&Structure2016) I was reminded of my admiration for her so I wrote a

poem (No.1) in letter form reflecting on how close love can bring one to death – and indeed, in her

case, it did. I also want to show with my words the natural world – the beautiful and sensual way we

experience it - as do my favourite poets.

We also studied *formal* and *free* verse. My poetry falls somewhere in between and in fact I have taken

on some of the habits of another great poetess, Emily Dickinson: ‘… *that perches in the soul, and never*

*stops at all’ (*CWR110CreativeWritingForms&Structure2016). She had an astounding ability with

metaphor and of writing poetry that *almost* rhymes but sometimes doesn’t, depending on what slant

the diction is given. I tried this in poem No. 2 which concentrates on the fantasy of what we think the

future love will be like, once we have grieved the previous love. Anticipation, excitement and

expectation - most of us will succumb to love once more. It is about Persephone and Hades as I feel

compelled to draw from the rich beauty of the mythological figures we all know.

John Keats rates a mention during this course’s study of poetry, naturally: *‘… be more of an artist and*

*load every rift of your subject with ore’ (*CWR110CreativeWritingForms&Structure2016). He is talking

of the ‘weighty metaphor’ of course. He was genius at writing each stanza of various beats, rhythms

and syllable counts – off, near, half and slant rhyme. As we are taught:

1. LMM

*‘…the less you concede to logic, the less you allow your internal critic to shut you up, the more likely*

*you are to produce startling, dead-on comparisons.…free write and let the strangeness in you*

*surface…’(*CWR110CreativeWritingForms&Structure2016).It seemed natural that I should

try a sonnet for poem No.3, a style that Keats was gifted with. No. 3 is my first traditional poem that

looks at the miracle of finding love again once we have forgotten the death and/or decay of the

previous love.

“So do you think you’ll ever get married again?” I asked the virtual stranger at the Melbourne airport

as we settled down for the long wait in the queue. “Oh no, never!” came her prompt reply. But we’ll

see, we’ll just have to wait and see! ☺

1. LMM
2. I know why you did it, Sylvia,

When the world becomes too painful to bear,

And seeking help means you'll be returned to the chair,

And it's all turned black & white and lost its flavour,

And each new mouthful is one less to savour,

Suddenly your mind has wondered back into the lair,

The clothes hurt so you don't dress, but remain bare.

I know *exactly* why you did it!

The passing seasons are out there but don't register in here,

And each new day - such work - you're overcome with fear,

And your hands do nought but are prone to fidget,

And you're invisible so no-one or thing can relieve it.

Suddenly you see the sickness has stolen months, nay years,

It's only when you make the plan, you can allay the tears.

I know also what you were feeling at the end,

That past innocence and future happiness have both gone underground,

And that the awful, wooden hollowness is all that can be found,

And there's no hidden bank of trust of hope from which you can lend,

And night's are long and days are empty with no trusted friend,

Suddenly you only feel relief when you are still and there's no sound,

The world mocks those with this as weak and feelings aren't allowed.

I know only too well how you felt,

You decided to get it down and so wrote the Bell Jar,

And overwhelmed with womanly duties it didn't get you very far,

And eagle talons ripping open your chest everyday as you knelt,

And convinced yourself with wrong thoughts the evil hand that you'd been dealt,

Suddenly, they love your name but you're gone by then, by far.

You only know relief from suffering when you're away from the tar jar.

I know it's all too much too late,

To tell you that I'm feeling better and maybe you would have too,

And marriage to a philanderer can send your mind askew,

And who cares that I see your and my interwoven fate,

And how we wished he'd be struck down and delivered to hell's gate,

Suddenly I saw that it's okay to try a different pair of shoes,

Let him go - good riddance, I say - your children could not lose!

1. LMM

I know you don't want to hear about,

My years of therapy and immense love affair with nature,

And how I sing with that old razzle dazzle now that I'm mature,

And that I made new friends and to the world I often did rowdily shout,

"... and thanks for putting up with me and not letting me check out!"

Suddenly I can flit about - the whole world is there to tour,

And those dark thoughts - those wrong thoughts - are no longer a lure.

I know I want to spread my joy:

It's the Creatives; we all have dark nights of the soul,

And I say, "look up, ask for help - don't fall into the hole,"

And take it out into the world with my words and life buoy,

And life - it's so precious - don't discard it like an old toy,

Suddenly you see, tomorrow is a new day without a toll,

We get to clutch what is left of life but only if our story is told.

1. Although he took,

My purity & innocence,

When my Hades came for me,

No-one knows this,

But I followed him willingly.

He took advantage,

Of my gullibility & naivety,

When I frolicked through,

The pasture of flowers,

To introduce myself to him, oh so shyly.

No-one knows that,

All alone at night I yearned,

In my secret chamber,

Although I was scared,

That during the rebirth I'd be burned.

He had spoken to me

In my dreams for ten years & 3,

Before ever I saw his face,

Turned me to his will,

Before he took me, or so it seems.

Being so proud,

When he held out his hand to me,

I refused,

1. LMM

I was curious about the Underworld though,

I dearly wanted to feel & see.

Down, down, down,

We plummeted, he & I,

There were many things,

That I saw that were shocking to me,

I can not lie.

But he would touch me,

In the small of my back to gently guide,

The flaming torch held aloft,

And I felt protected & safe,

When he smiled with twinkling eyes.

When we reached the wondrous, cavernous palace,

He gave me his seed,

And that's when I knew I had changed,

I belonged to him & would never permanently leave.

He used a song to speak,

To me of his love for me,

And planted himself there as romance,

Igniting my loyalty,

Trickling through my mind like honey.

Persephone of the Underworld.

OR Underworld Persephone,

I am Queen & rule with my King at my side,

We walk through the fires of hell as one,

United ... into Eternity.

1. The summer night & I share an exquisite secret,

Whirring mosquitos happily prattle on,

My euphoria shoots heavenward & deepens,

Starlit black velvet & sweet celestial song.

Many ants build up a nest one morsel at a time,

And in the same way, my hope & faith was restored,

Golden, azure drops run over black paint in a line,

Peeling here & there, reveals the face of L'amour.

1. LMM

Time slips away backward, cannot be recaptured,

Like tall buildings slipping down an earthquake crevice,

Remaining is the echo of the day in nature,

A wish to be less afraid, more adventurous.

I bask in warmth; a tender arm slips around me.

There's love in the world yet, he's finally found me.

1. LMM