Tecla Stabile

The Unquiet Grave

“The wind doth blow today, my love,

And a few small drops of rain;

I never had but one true-love,

In cold grave she was lain.

“I’ll do as much for my true-love

As any young man may;

I’ll sit and mourn all at her grave

For a twelvemonth and a day.”

The twelvemonth and a day being up,

The dead began to speak:

“Oh who sits weeping on my grave,

And will not let me sleep?”

“’T is I, my love, sits on your grave,

And will not let you sleep;

For I crave one kiss of your clay-cold lips,

And that is all I seek.”

“You crave one kiss of my clay-cold lips,

But my breath smells earthy strong;

If you have one kiss of my clay-cold lips,

Your time will not be long.

“’T is down in yonder garden green,

Love, where we used to walk,

The finest flower that e’re was seen

Is withered to a stalk.

“The stalk is withered dry, my love,

So will our hearts decay;

So make yourself content, my love,

Till God calls you away.”

Oggi il vento mormora amore mio

e la pioggia cade lieve,

non ho mai avuto che un solo vero amore

e giace nella fredda terra.

II

Farò di tutto per il mio amore,

come ogni giovane innamorato farebbe.

Starò a piangere sulla sua tomba

per dodici mesi e un giorno.

III

Il dodicesimo mese e un giorno erano passati

e una voce parlò da sottoterra

“Chi è che si trova sulla mia tomba

e non mi lascia dormire?“

IV

“Sono io, sono io, il tuo vero amore,

che si trova sulla tua tomba

per chiedere un bacio dalle tue dolci labbra

e questo è tutto quello di cui ho bisogno “

V

“Reclami un bacio

dalle mie labbra fredde come la terra,

ma di terra il mio soffio respira, e se tu dovessi

baciare le mie labbra fredde come la terra,

il tuo tempo non durerà a lungo.

V (bis)

“Che i miei giorni siano lunghi o brevi,

domani od oggi,

possa Dio accogliere la mia anima in cielo,

e io bacerò le tue labbra (che sanno) di terra“

VI

“Guarda quel giardino verde,

amore, dove eravamo soliti andare.

Il fiore più profumato che sia mai spuntato,

è appassito sullo stelo.

VII

E’ appassito sullo stelo, amore mio

come i nostri cuori marciranno

stai sereno dunque, amore mio,

finchè la morte ti chiamerà.”

The ballads is the typical expression of the common people during the middle age. People were illiterate they could neither read nor write therefore their cultural expressions can be find in the “ballad form”. The ballad form was compose by anonymous composer who relied mainly on the sound level because it tends to transmit orally.

The present ballad is made by an anonymous poet.

The ballad is arranged into 7 stanzas and each stanza is a quatrain.

The intelligent reader may understand that there is a regular pattern and that the patter together with the rhyming couplets structure is made with the intention of create the sound level of the ballad.

The topic of the present ballad is a tragic love story and the supernatural. In the ballad the lover of the young man is dead. Since he is still in love with her he goes to her grave and stays there for one year.

The characters are simply scathed. The narrator doesn’t go deeper into the psychology of the different people in the narration.

*Just considering the title the reader may except the ballad to be about death.*

*Unquiet: mentally or emotionally disturbed*

*The reader should ask him or herself the reason why the grave is unquiet since it is an object.*

*Considering the layout, there is a regular pattern and there is the dialogue form.*

*In the dialogue a first person is speaking.*

*The use of the personal pronoun “she” makes the reader realized that the speaking voice addresses a woman and therefore I suppose the speaker is a male .*

*In the first stanza most words belong to the semantic field of winter weather (drops, field, wind). The semantic field of winter weather thus the reader may think that there is a sad atmosphere.*

*Right from the start the atmosphere created by semantic field of winter weather anticipate that the ballad is about a tragic love story indeed the speaker is a young man who is moaning on the grave of his love that is defined as true love.*

*In the second stanza the young man promises to sit and moan on his lover’s grave for longer than a year.*

*In the first to line of the third stanza the narrator is speaking and says that the death began to speak.*

*The death woman complains because someone is annoying her and doesn’t let her sleep*

The young man is living the loss of his first love. He is tormented by his lost and the narrator can understand that from the quote “The wind doth blow today”.

He feels so lonely that he hears the wind talking to him. It seems like the wind is the only one that gives comfort and keep him company.

The lover stays at her grave for one year and after a year he hears his lover’s voice.

That part drives to the reader mind he is desperate, at the point of hears what is not real.

The intelligent reader may suppose that the man needs to listen to this voice, so that his subconscious creates it.

And why he needs to listen to the voice? He needs to listen to the voice because he is still in the past, he can’t move on. And the only thing that may help him is his lover, that gives the strength.

His lover frees him from the memory and invites him to move on, to live his life especially because he is young.

This idea is convey in last quatrain thanks to the line that says “So make yourself content, my love,/ Till God calls you away”

In conclusion the ballad tells about a tragic love. It has the intention of reassure the lover and to give him hope about the future even if he has not his lover with him.