

Poetry Series

Chelsey M. Smith
- poems -

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Chelsey M. Smith(11/27/1992)

A Real Poem

She says

"Today I finally finished a poem."

" Congratulations."

I say.

She says

"It took me two months."

"Really? "

I say.

On my face is a look of admiration.

So much dedication for a simple poem.

But my heart wears a face of puzzlement.

So much work for a poem?

A poem is free writing.

A poem is thoughts, feelings, emotions.

You write what thy heart feels, not what thy brain thinks.

Maybe –

If you want to get a message across-

You revise it.

But truly,

A real poem does not take two months.

A two month poem

Is like Galileo's work revised by the Church.

A two month poem

Is like a three hundred page story being submitted for a paragraph of an encyclopedia.

A two month poem

Is not a real poem.

In a real poem,

You have something to say.

The words flow and after a moment of thinking,

They are before you on the page

A narration of your thoughts, your feelings.

Some real poems

Are meant to change something.

And then,
They may turn into a
Two day poem.
But never a two month poem.

Because a two month poem
Is not a real poem.
It is what you want everyone to read
Disguised as stanzas.

A real poem
Is what you want to say
That flows from the heart
And that every now and then
Breaks for the occasional stanza.

Chelsey M. Smith

Darfur

The deep brown eyes shine with tears as they look up at the moon
Hoping beyond hope that they will be saved soon
Across the sand the brown feet walk
The body that they carry to exhausted to even talk.
Away from the village attack these feet must flee
They walk on, waiting to find reprieve.
The bones stick out in the dry and haggard skin.
It does not seem as if the right side will ever win.
In the distance an all consuming fire burns
Taking with it another beloved town for which its inhabitants will always yearn.
Across the Savannah gunfire crackles so loud
How the Janjaweed have destroyed a race so proud.
AK-47's and torches so violently bright
Are not supposed to be a natural part of the night.
AK-47's and torches so violently bright
Are NOT supposed to be a natural part of the night.

Chelsey M. Smith

Hands

Hands are a story.
They tell the story of times gone by
The life of someone special
The loss of that special someone too.

The grandfather –
Hands browned by the sun
Wrinkled but defiant against age.
Hands that tell of the thrill of a simple life
With scratches given by hay and smudges of grease from fixing the tractor.
They curve around the wheel of a tractor driving up the hill
But just as easily curve lovingly around the steering wheel taking grandkids to
Sunday School.
These are the grandfather's hands.

The Aunt –
Hands paled by the long hours of work, chipped nail polish from the computer
keys and spare copier parts.
Long, slender fingers.
Fingers that you know she doesn't need –
Because she doesn't need a special tool for reaching;
She reaches deep down into your heart with ease and there
Is where she leaves her handprint.
Hands that tell of power – the power to be unique and still have control.
Hands that are better at any man's at fixing things
While simultaneously being better than any woman's to give her niece her sweet
caress.
Once so pink with life
And then yellow with loss.
Those were the aunt's hands.

The father –
Hands browned just like his own father
From hard work.
Rough pads that still grip the daughter in a tender hug.
Hands with scars from burn, cuts.
That pass over other burns and cuts on the other parts of the body.
Hands that are trying so desperately to make a change
Hands that the daughter knows one day will permanently recycle cans.

Longer fingers that tap the cigarette on the ash tray
But also wave away the smoke
Hands that intertwine with the new bride's
Hands that excite the family.
These are the father's hands.

The friend's hands.
Nails uncut from the frivolous life of college
Callused with work but not close to a grown man's.
Hands that grip the controller
But sometimes throw it down in disgust
Knowing it is time for homework.
These are the friend's hands.

The grandmother's hands –
Wrinkled like the husband's but full of more life than any toddler's hands could be.
Having the capacity to wear marvelous rings –
But on a daily basis only wear the wedding ring –
The story of her endless commitment to her family.
Hands that cook every evening
That pay for anything that someone needs
That save so little money because of it but wipe no tears because
They are too busy holding themselves to the chest of the grandmother in "Mercy!
"ful laughter The hands that pick up the book
But just as quickly can put it down to play a game with her family.
Hands that labored for years
But never wavered in disgust for the labor they did.
These are the grandmother's hands.

The uncle's hands –
Showing splotches of dirt
From a day of work in the potato field.
Hands that despite hard work,
Have soft pads from running over his bald head
In repetitive, endearing strokes.
Hands that adjust the glasses
That have always worked in order
To have the personal pleasure of handing money
To someone who needs it less than him.
Hands that rub the mouth
That so often calls his niece a "model."

Hands that can't WAIT to put the keys in that Lincoln.
These are the uncle's hands.

The mother's hands –
Slender and beautiful
Unpainted long nails
That show of no time for beauty –
But show it anyway.
Hands that type away day after day
On the keyboard
That drive hour after hour in relentless pursuit of perfection
Hands that mindlessly work to knead the stress muscles from the shoulders
In spare moments
But that can always create spare moments
To knead the muscles of her husband
To pet her beloved dog
To dial her far away children.
These are the mother's hands.

The girl in class's hands-
Adorned with long pink nails
Clicking on the desk top
In simultaneous time of smacking of her bubble gum.
Hands that run through her hair during speeches
Hands that try so hard to seem uncomplicated and valley girl
But that every night clutch at her heart in pain
Hands that itch to hold the geeky boy's
But that shy away from that kind of imperfection.
These are the girl in class's hands.

The brother's hands-
Show youth
But also struggle.
Also covered in scars
And also brown from the sun-
Both as a result of fun adventures.
Hands that made so many mistakes
But had the power to open the doors to correct them.
Hands that reach for someone, anyone – through questionable acts
But for whatever reason can't seem to latch on to the ones outstretched to him.
These are the brother's hands.

And finally –
The girl's hands.
The granddaughter's, niece's, sister's, friend's, classmate's, daughter's hands.
Nails with chipped nail polish
That tell the story of the interest of fashion
That don't have the time to pursue it.
Hands that work late into the night
Doing assignments to the best of their ability
That will shake with any stranger's hands
Or open the door to save anyone else's hands the trouble.
Hands that wipe away tears for silly things
But cover the mouth in laughter twice as often.
Hands that will write about anything
And pick up any piece of literature
Hands that want to touch people
Not physically, but hopefully meaningfully.
Hands always willing to pick up the pen to correct a friend's essay
Or to grip in a hug.
Hands that ache from bad anxiety habits
Like scratching and cracking.
Hands that clutch the throat while trying to make strange sounds in foreign
languages
But that clasp in excitement with the chance to learn a new one.
Hands that hang up posters and type emails to nasty people
In their way of trying to achieve success.
Hands that work with the ultimate goal
Of changing someone's life significantly
That want to make a profound impact on the world.
These are MY hands.

Chelsey M. Smith

I Dream Of War

I grew up where a creek flows
And across the street corn grew in rows.
We walked every night to the ice cream store.
We listened at the bridge, pretending to be at the sea shore.

This is what peace is to me.
Peace is innocence. Peace is free.

Life isn't like this anymore.
I go to bed and dream of war.

Soldiers roam the earth in combat boots.
Down rain the bombs and they go kaboom.
The other side watches without remorse
While I sit here and cry myself hoarse.

This is what war is to me.
War defeats innocence. War captures the free.

This is what life's like this year.
I go to bed and dream of war.

Now life's not about the creek flowing.
And life sure isn't about the corn growing.
I don't go to the ice cream store anymore.
And I really don't care about the sea shore.

This is what life's like to me.
There is no innocence; we're not all free.

This is what life's like this year.
I go to bed and dream of war.

Chelsey M. Smith

My History Book

I open the cover of my history book
And flip through all the pages.
I open my eyes to what they might see, I take a gander; I take a look.
As I flip through these pages I flip through years of wars
Of years of scores
Settled by those in distant lands, in far away places.
But also those in my own
All those wars that left so many without a home
Without shelter, without care.
Gassed soldiers gasping for air.
Children in high radiation areas that can no longer grow their own hair.
Now I start to not flip through this text but look at each page...
And the numbers start to count not pages but those crying in the night
Wishing their family members home. Hoping that they might
Return not in a bag or in a coffin but by their own free will.
That they were the ones not killed but those who had the chance to kill.
I close the cover down upon the book.
But still my mind flips through each snap shot took.
And gone is not the chill
That has set in upon me.
I cry for all those soldiers and all those innocents.
For If I do not, are there any who will?
For the rest of the world believes history is but a book.
In reality it signifies so much more...
So many lives took.
So many chances gone.
So many futures destroyed.
So little peace.
Maybe you should take a look
At my history book.

Chelsey M. Smith

Writing

My hands itch
To put words down on paper,
To express my thoughts
Through pen,
Through language and verse.

My skin crawls with the need
And before I know it,
The need is overtaking me until I can think of nothing else.
I start to tremble
And slowly, as I touch my pen to the paper,
I find fulfillment.
A satisfaction that to no other can be compared.

Writing.

Chelsey M. Smith