Unarmored and Unadorned

Mrs. Smith’s Personal Poetry Anthology



**From my Writer’s Notebook on October 2nd, 2013:**

Breaking it down,

I realize I’ve been chasing nothing.

I’ve got no foundation, no goal.

My motivation is a yawning abyss,

Devoid of value and worth.

What do I want?

Why do I do this?

The face in the mirror is smirking.

She knows I don’t have the answers.

Halting, I need to figure out what to change.

**Outside October 16th, 2013**

Like a ghost,

Unnoticed,

Unacknowledged,

Walking the hallways,

Making eye contact with no one,

I am on the outside.

I have always been on the outside.

I am accustomed to blank stares

Following my words,

To no invitations,

To references to jokes I missed.

Some people

On the outside

Build up walls

To protect them from the inside,

Or they grow

A thicker skin.

I wish I could.

I am exposed to the

Cutting wind of exclusion,

Unarmored and fragile.

**Fall Morning October 22nd, 2013**

The moon,

Just beginning to wane,

Glows a pale orange in the sky,

Almost a reflection of the pumpkins

That adorn porches and storefronts

At this time of year.

The chill in the air

Warns us of what is to come

In a matter of weeks.

It hints of snow and ice,

But it is not yet unbearable.

Standing outside in a morning not yet dawned,

I breathe in the sweet smell

Of fallen leaves trimmed with a hint of frost.

I cannot think of the winter,

The months of darkness and cold,

No.

This moment, this not unpleasant chill,

This is all that I can handle for now:

Nature’s slow preparation for rest and renewal.

**Haunted**

It could not be any more

Tragic or

Beautiful

If it were painted

By the hand of a master.

In the foreground,

A piano lies on its side,

Its strings exposed

To the rains, leaves, and snows

That blow in through

The shattered windows.

Debris: Dust, papers, and a cinder block

Are scattered across

The ballroom floor,

Where thousands of high heeled shoes

Have tapped, twirled

And fallen

In love.

The clock has been pried

From its place of honor

Up on the wall,

But the peeling plaster still screams out

The passage of time

Louder than any chime.

The echo of the roar,

Of the glitter and shine

Of Detroit in its prime

Rustles the dust in this room

With the whisper of a chiffon dress,

Spilling out through the empty windows

Of the Lee Plaza Hotel,

A constant reminder floating on the air

Of what this city has been,

And what it will never be again.

**The Red Wheelbarrow** by [William Carlos Williams](http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/119)

so much depends

upon

a red wheel

barrow

glazed with rain

water

beside the white

chickens.

**Critical Response**

“The Red Wheelbarrow” is one of my favorite poems because it goes against many of the expected conventions of poetry. It is short, simple, and not filled with flowery language. Williams does make some interesting choices even in his sparse poem, though. For instance, the word “glazed” is an interesting word. I would not normally imagine anything to be *glazed* with rain. Usually, I would think it would be soaked, or sprinkled, or some other term associated with wetness. *Glazed* makes me think more of pottery, shining and refined. The structure of the poem is also unique. It is one sentence, and it does not even begin with a capital letter. I think this adds to the simplicity of the image. The lack of capital letters also makes each part seem equally important. Some readers might wonder what makes such a short, straightforward piece of writing a poem. I would say that it comes from the pattern of the stanzas. Each one has a three word line followed by a one word line. It sets up a rhythm, and an expectation in the readers mind. I think all of this builds on the author’s message, that the bare necessities, like a simple wheelbarrow, can be important. Imagine what can be done with a wheelbarrow that couldn’t be done without it—moving bricks or hay, cleaning out a barn, and much more. The minimalism of the poem highlights the impact that basic, plain things can have on our lives.