

# Eavan Boland and the poetry of human experience

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Upon encountering Eavan Boland's poetry, readers will discover representations of human experiences that are largely accessible, as such facets of existence are expressed in a sincere manner. In the poem 'Love,' for instance, Boland explores the experience of love in her own marriage. Boland often uses a personal experience to reflect on an issue of universal importance, as she does in 'The War Horse' and 'Child of Our Time'. 'In 'This Moment' she manages to give such personal moment's universal significance and depict such events in an honest way. Thus, her poems appeal to me as they offer valuable insights into life which are both accessible and thought-provoking.

The life of a suburban wife and mother is not generally regarded as the stuff of great poetic inspiration; however in 'This Moment' Boland manages to find themes and images which are largely accessible. The ordinary setting of a housing estate where things were "getting ready / to happen / out of sight" is an essential aspect of the poem's relevance to the reader. The poem celebrates the love between a mother and her child. A child runs into its mother's arms and the moment is so full of love, so beautiful, that "Stars rise / Moths flutter / Apples sweeten in the dark." It seems as though nature is in harmony with this simple yet universal gesture of love when a child is swept up in its mother's loving embrace. Boland shares with us the importance of motherhood and the simple yet memorable experiences entailed, in a genuine way.

In the poem 'Love', Boland openly writes about her relationship with her husband. The poet makes use of vivid and sensuous images to depict the beauty and strength of their past love. "And we discovered there/love had

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the feather and muscle of wings." Boland continues to present themes which are both personal and universal. Her observation of how it can be often difficult to express intense emotion is largely relatable, for a variety of readers, as it deals with a widespread issue which many people face. " Their mouths opened and their voices failed." She reminds us that love can grow and change over time due to such issues, as she highlights the common fragility that underlies human relationships. The poet seems to dwell on the past throughout this poem which is a universal fixation, yet she recognises the impossibility of returning to the past " You walk away and I cannot follow." However at the close of the poem, Boland accepts the inevitable change and suffering that all marriages endure. Boland provides the reader with a sincere life lesson, which I found to be highly significant and empathetic.

In ' The War Horse,' Boland uses an incident when a stray horse invaded the gardens of her suburban estate. Again, especially admirable is her use of a personal experience to reflect on an issue of wider importance. The destruction done by this " rumour of war" becomes a symbol of the violence in the North, while the image of the neighbours using " the subterfuge of curtains" to hide, represents our uncaring attitude towards external crises. " But we, we are safe/why should we care." Boland's blatantly honest manner effectively underscores our selfish indifference. This metaphor is dramatically accurate in relation to many people's experience with foreign epidemics, as it is common to disregard such issues that do not affect us directly. Boland uses this personal memory to construct an extremely frank and political poem, which conveys a general motif of human experience.

'Child of our Time' is similarly a powerful and thought-provoking poem which revolves around the violence of war. This is a poem that really sets us thinking about the violence in our own country and about our responsibility for that violence. Boland examines the irony of the adult population learning from a child. "We who should have known how to instruct/must learn from you dead." Boland does not sugar coat the situation as she depicts the cruel circumstances in an open manner. This poem is greatly significant in our modern day society, as it's often that we must learn from the tragedies that have occurred. This poem reflects the shocking event of a recent victim of war, the deceased Syrian child whose body washed up on the shore. This image prompts to reader to share the hope expressed in the poem's poignant closing line, which calls for the need to change. "Sleep in a world your final sleep has woken."

Overall, Boland's poetry is relevant to many readers, as she highlights moments of universal importance. Boland has said that, as a woman poet, she found it difficult to find her own life reflected in the poems she herself read, and that she made a conscious effort to include her own domestic and emotional experiences in the poems she wrote. She succeeds in presenting these ordinary experiences in a sincere and open manner, which is largely accessible to the reader. Her poems explore personal themes such as her own marriage, her experience of motherhood and her interpretation of war and violence, and yet she is able to expand these themes to become those of universal concern.