

Linda pastan essay sample

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



Linda Pastan is a contemporary American poetess who speaks about social problems, influence of modern world on ordinary people and family relations. A unique interpretation of modern world created by Linda Pastan in her works is one of her style's determinants. Some of her heroes are alien, masculine, and frightening, while others are embarrassed by their own values and traditions.

Linda Pastan was born in New York on May 27, 1932. Her father Jacob Olenik and mother Bess Schwartz Olenik loved their only child trying to support her in every life situation. Linda Pastan spent her childhood in the Bronx and was influenced by Jewish family traditions. She began writing at the early age, but her first collection of poetry appeared only in 1971. Linda Pastan graduated from Radcliffe College in 1954, Simmons College in 1955 and received an MA from Brandeis University in 1957 (Pastan, 2001). At college, Linda Pastan won the Mademoiselle college poetry contest and some of her poems were published in school literary magazines (Linda Pastan, 2001).

When she got marriage, Linda Pastan devoted herself to her family and husband, and published her first collection only at the age of 39. With the collection "A Perfect Circle of Sun" the first success came. Since that time, she has published many collections of poetry including *Waiting for My Life* (1981) and *The Five Stages of Grief* (1981), and *PM/AM: New and Selected Poems* (1982). At the 1990s, she won several awards including famous the Dylan Thomas Award, The Bess Hokin Prize of Poetry magazine, the Di Castagnola Award, a Pushcart Prize, etc. From 1991 through 1994, Linda Pastan was a poet laureate of Maryland. Her recent collection of poetry "The Last Uncle: Poems:" appeared in 2002.

Linda Pastan was influenced by social norms of the 1950s and Jewish traditions which reflected in her poems. She states that “ The world’s expectations for the perfect 50’s wife kept me from writing for a very long time. I call it ‘ the perfectly polished floor syndrome” (Rubin, n. d.). To become a part of the world heroes maintain their individuality in accordance with the rules of the society, but this struggle with despair becomes one of destroying the ordinariness taking place around them. Linda Pastan admits that poetry of J. V. Cunningham had a great influence on her writing style and themes.

Critics underline deep emotional appeal of Linda’s poetry and explain that the reader should look closely at the content of the poetry to understand the commonplace and its role in ordinary existence. Critics admit that Linda Pastan proposes readers a unique vision of reality and modern world unveiling human relations and life struggle, depicting values and traditions of the modern world and its degradation. Critics note that some of the poems are full of sentimentality while others reflect pessimism and depression. Although, some critics suppose that Linda Pastan’s poems can be characterized as tragedies full of sorrow, emotional degradation, dullness and inanity of human existence (Wong, 2000).

Linda Pastan has devoted many of her poems to the problem of family life, family relations, mortality and aging. It is possible to say that she is a feminist writer, because some themes and topical issues of destiny of women are described in the poems. Domestic themes dominate in her

poems, but they deal with family relations and social problems rather than female oppression and inequality typical for pure feminist poets.

The main peculiarity of his style is minimalism expressed in accurate choice of language and acute stylistic devices, brevity and intensity. The theme of loneliness and isolation is explained by social changes and frustration experienced by the common person. The symbolic interpretation of the events, comparison and contrast between the meaning helps the poetess to hold a reader's attention.

Her spare writing style appeals to readers helping them to understand what hardship and sorrow mean. Metaphors play a special role in her poetry helping to “ link disparate entities and compare unlike things, even if this has to be done in an intellectually or emotionally violent way” (Jackson, 1983, p. 161). Her style is characterized as clear, unpretentious writing. Now, Linda Pastan lives in Potomac, Maryland.

References

1. Jackson, R. Acts of Mind: Conversations with Contemporary Poets. University of Alabama Press, 1983, pp. 158-163.
2. Linda Pastan. 2001. Available at: <http://www.nortonpoets.com/pastanl.htm>
3. Rubin, L. “ We Have Deeper Selves to Write From” n. d. Available at <http://www.literarymama.com/litcriticism/archives/000467.html>
4. Wong, C. Marrying Death to Beauty. 2000. Available at <http://www.qlrs.com/critique.asp?id=218>