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Honors English II-8th Block
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I Listen to Words, but Perceive no Sound

I listen to words, but perceive no sound.
My mind, away, amidst a creation,
I hear near, soft cries, yet remain unfound.

Seclusion, by these worthless tears, is crowned
Victor just ahead of desolation.
I listen to words, but perceive no sound.

The sheep by the dogs are steadily hound,
While no one comes to cause me vexation.
I hear near, soft cries, yet remain unfound.

You come and go, while here I remain drowned.
I, to move, am detained in slow motion,
To listen to words, but perceive no sound.

My lone heart lies on a decrepit mound.
I no longer am capable of sensation.
I hear near, soft cries, yet remain unfound.

Ropeless binding makes anxiety abound.
Doubt prevails, but not exempt from question.
I listen for words, but perceive no sound.
I hear myself cry, and pray to be found.

Explanation

I wrote this poem thinking of Oskar Schell from *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. The poem has a feel of loneliness and isolation, the feelings most prominent in Oskar. Although he feels alone, he does not show his desire for someone to take care of him. Instead, he takes care of his mother and grandmother after his father's death.

First Stanza:

The narrator of the poem has lost all concern for the world going on around him. Oskar constantly mentions that he wants to stop inventing things in his brain because it is too much thinking for him. However, he cannot stop making new inventions, or "creations." He is too absorbed in this that he does not even notice that he is the one crying.

Second Stanza:

"Seclusion, by these worthless tears, is crowned/Victor just ahead of desolation" means that crying is only admitting the truth, similar to how saying something makes it true. In this case, the truth is that the narrator is alone, more so than even sad.

Third Stanza:

Annoying someone is admitting that they exist. The narrator feels inferior to the sheep because even their existence is confirmed to the world.

Fourth Stanza:

In this stanza, "you" is referring to everyone. The narrator feels that he is the most unfortunate in this world, drowning in the tears of some stranger's tears. He feels that even if he cries, he will feel nothing. However, he is making slow progress in coming out of his depression, but he is impatient and views this moving in "slow motion" to be torture and a form of punishment.

Fifth Stanza:

The reason he cannot feel anything is that he has gone numb from being exposed to the intolerable cruelty of the world and his heart has withered.

Sixth Stanza:

"Ropeless binding makes anxiety abound" demonstrates that the narrator would rather be physically bound by rope than facing the uncertainty of what the future has in store for him, making him anxious. At last the narrator shows a glimpse of hope: "Doubt prevails, but not exempt from question." He means that even doubt will be doubted. Why he doubts his future and whether or not there is any good in the world are the thoughts going through his head. He also finally realizes that he is the one crying. The first step of solving any problem is identifying it. By realizing that he is crying he acknowledges his loneliness and is now open for help. This is just like Oskar when he finally tells the owner of the key the secrets about his father's messages. He lets the burden out and is finally "found."