

EDGAR LEE MASTERS AND THE "SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY"

Edgar Lee Masters lives between the end of the nineteenth (19th) century (1800) and the beginning of the twentieth (20th) century (1900).

He is American. He lives in Illinois, near the town of Springfield, where the Spoon river flows.

He is a lawyer and a poet. In his works, he wants to defend poor people, the rights of minorities, and he wants freedom and peace.

He writes a book of 244 poems, the "Spoon River Anthology".

Each poem is an epitaph (words written on a tombstone): dead citizens, from a small town near Springfield, tell their story. Many of the characters that appear in "Spoon River Anthology" are people Masters knew or heard of in the towns he grew up.

Nine of these poems have become songs by Fabrizio De Andrè.

DR. SIEGFRIED ISEMAN

*I said when they banded me my diploma,
I said to myself I will be good
And wise and brave and helpful to others;
I said I will carry the Christian creed
Into the practice of medicine!
Somehow the world and the other doctors
Know what's in your heart as soon as you make
This high-souled resolution.
And the way of it is they starve you out.
And no one comes to you but the poor.
And you find too late that being a doctor
Is just a way of making a living.
And when you are poor and have to carry
The Christian creed and wife and children
All on your back, it is too much!
That's why I made the Elixir of Youth,
Which landed me in the jail at Peoria
Branded a swindler and a crook
By the upright federal judge!*

IL DOTTOR SIEGFRIED ISEMAN (UN MEDICO)

Ho detto quando mi hanno consegnato il diploma,
Mi sono detto voglio essere buono
E saggio e coraggioso e utile agli altri;
Ho detto che avrei trasportato il credo cristiano
Nella pratica della medicina!
Ma, non so come, il mondo e gli altri medici
Sanno cosa si ha in cuore non appena si prende
Questa magnanima risoluzione.
E il sistema è pigliarvi per fame.
da voi non verranno che i poveri.
Voi vi accorgete più tardi che essere un medico
È solo un modo di guadagnarsi da vivere.
E quando siete povero e dovete reggere

Il credo cristiano e la moglie e i figli
Tutto sulla vostra schiena, è troppo!
Ecco perché ho fatto l'Elisir della giovinezza,
che mi portò nel carcere di Peoria
bollato come truffatore e imbroglione
dall'integerrimo Giudice Federale!

Comment

Doctor Iseman wanted to save people.
But soon he realizes that his ideals make him poor.
So he gives up his ideals for money.
But he ends up in prison.

FRANCIS TURNER

*I could not run or play
in boyhood.
In manhood I could only sip the cup,
Not drink -
For scarlet-fever left my heart diseased.
Yet I lie here
Soothed by a secret none but Mary knows:
There is a garden of acacia,
Catalpa threes, and arbors sweet with vines
There on that afternoon in June
By Mary's side -
Kissing her with my soul upon my lips
It suddenly took flight.*

FRANCIS TURNER (UN MALATO DI CUORE)

Non potevo correre o giocare
da ragazzo.
Da uomo potevo solo sorseggiare dalla coppa,
non bere -
perché la scarlattina mi aveva lasciato il cuore malato.
Ora giaccio qui
confortato da un segreto che nessuno tranne Mary conosce:
c'è un giardino di acacie,
di catalpe, e di pergole dolci di viti -
là quel pomeriggio di giugno
al fianco di Mary -
baciandola con l'anima sulle labbra
all'improvviso questa prese il volo.

Comment

Francis Turner has got a heart disease.
He lives a sad life because he has got many renunciations to do.
But he dies in happiness because he dies for love.