



Thesis Report

On

Unveiling Existential Crisis: A Journey of Life and Death in
Jibanananda Das's Poem “Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin”.

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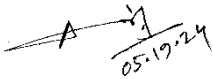
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Approval

I am requesting approval of the proposed thesis report titled "Unveiling Existential Crisis: A Journey of Life and Death in Jibanananda Das's Poems "Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin". The objectives outlined in the proposal are clear and promising, indicating a thorough exploration of Jibanananda Das's poetry and its existential themes.

The objectives of the thesis, try to understand Jibanananda Das's usage of imagery and metaphor in depicting life and death, to express the existential crisis portrayed in the poem "Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin" and to compare Das's philosophical views on life and death with those of Sartre and Camus, are all pertinent and academically significant.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A', with a date '05.12.24' written below it.

.....
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Acknowledgment

I would like to extend my heartiest gratitude to all those who have contributed to the completion of my thesis report titled "Unveiling Existential Crisis: A Journey of Life and Death in Jibanananda Das's Poem "Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin"."

First and foremost, I express my sincere appreciation to my thesis supervisor Ariful Islam Laskar sir for his invaluable guidance, unconditional support, and insightful feedback throughout the entire research process. His contributions have laid the foundation for my understanding of the subject matter and have guided my exploration of Jibanananda Das's poetry and existential philosophy. His expertise and encouragement have contributed a great deal to shaping this thesis into its final form. I am deeply thankful to my few faculty members for their enormous support, which has greatly enriched the quality of this work.

Furthermore, I am grateful to Daffodil International University for providing the necessary resources and facilities to facilitate my research work.

Declaration

This is hereby declared that This thesis is my original work completed during my studies at Daffodil International University. It contains no material previously published or written by another person without proper citation. Additionally, it has not been submitted for any other degree or diploma at any institution. I have acknowledged all significant sources of assistance in this work.



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Signature of Student

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Abstract

Jiabnanda Das is a detached soul who always finds out the inner words of humans' unspoken affairs with their own lives. Entirely his poem utter the most hidden emotion of the people where the ordinary people can not reach or figure out the meaning. His philosophy is charismatic country-wide and the popular narrative compared to the other existential writers like Satre and Alber Camus. Throughout his poetry, a mysterious smell is seen that always thinks about the philosophy of life and death. This paper delves into the best philosophical concept connecting Das's poetry specifically in "Aat Bocor Ager Ekdin". In his Poem, he deals with vivid imagery, metaphor, and the narrating story of an unknown personality who committed suicide for an unknown reason though he has everything to live his own life—following his story of how he dissociated with the real world. This existential crisis makes his poem very rich and deep. Throughout this paper, we try to find out the reason behind the poem and the philosophical approach that Das used in most of the poetry. At the same time, we will compare other philosophical views that existential writers used.

Keywords: Detached, Existentialist, Imagery, Metaphor, Dissociated

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Jibananda Das: A Mysterious Personality

Jibananda was an illusionist. He kept things in his thoughts that blended reality and fantasy. He could see life and death very closely. His poetry shows how deeply he could do it; very few poets could come close to such thoughts. After Rabindranath, Jibananda was one of the people who wrote his poetry using the time and atmosphere of prosperity. Even today, reading his poetry, it seems like he wrote it yesterday. Witnessing the conventionalism of life, he gave his poems a diamond piece. Throughout his quotes, the unspoken words of people are revealed. With the innovative power of Bengali literature, Jibananda gave Bengali poetry a new structure, content and presentation, changing several hundred years. He was essentially a nature poet. The essence of nature is expressed in his poetry. He has very subtle emotions in his poems. His presentation ability is different from the other ten poets. A unique feature of Jibananda Das's poetry is 'aesthetics'. His poetry uses imagery, metaphor, and simile to make those rich. He is perhaps the only poet whose poetry has a wide spread of simile and imagery. For this reason, Rabindranath called Jibananda's poetry 'picturesque'. His poems have great appeal to the modern people and the modern era. He introduced some home bred elements to the people. His poetry got self styled lyricism and imagism, this earns the title for him "*The Purest Poet*" the most defining phrase for Jibananda Das firstly coined by Annandashankar Roy and fitly used by Abdul Mannan Syed (2011).

Our surrounding environment of the world is threatening today. Humans and nature are acting opposite and contrastive today. Humans are destroying nature indiscriminately. People hinder the normal flow of nature. People have freely scattered the balance of nature, destroying species by prioritizing their selfishness. Jibananda is shocked by this destruction of nature. He said in his poetry.

Albert Camus, also known for his exploration of the absurdity of life and the search for meaning in a meaningless universe, provides a structure through which to understand Jibanananda Das's work. Like Camus, Das writes about the absurdity of human existence, portraying life as inherently devoid of inherent meaning or purpose. His poetry often captures the existential question and alienation experienced by individuals in a world that seems indifferent to their struggles and hopes. Albert Camus's statement-

"Man is the only creature who refuses to be what he is" (Albert Camus)

States the fundamental aspect of existentialist thought regarding human freedom and self-identification. In essence, Camus highlights human beings' unique capacity to go beyond their innate personal or social roles and define themselves through their choices and actions. Humans possess a consciousness and self-awareness that allows them to reflect on their existence and make deliberate decisions about who they want to be.

He argues that humans are not defined by any inherent nature or essence, but rather by the choices they make and the actions they take in the world. In other words, human existence precedes essence (Sartre, 15) – individuals exist first and then define themselves through their choices and surroundings.

Similarly, Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist philosophy, with its emphasis on individual freedom, responsibility, and the creation of meaning through personal choice and action, (Existentialism and Humanism ,1946) finds inspiration in Jibanananda Das's mysterious persona. Das's poetry reflects the existentialist notion of radical freedom, where individuals are confronted with the burden of creating their values and defining their existence in a world devoid of inherent meaning. Through his reflective and often introspective verses, Das invites readers to confront the existential dilemmas of human existence and to grapple with questions of identity, meaning, and mortality. Moreover, Jibanananda Das's enigmatic personality resonates with Sartre's concept of "bad faith," where individuals deceive themselves into believing they are not free or responsible for their actions. Das's poetry often delves into the complexities of human consciousness, exposing how individuals construct false narratives to shield themselves from the harsh realities of existence. By confronting readers with the rawness of human experience and the inherent contradictions of being, Das challenges them to embrace their freedom and take responsibility for their lives.

1.2 Problem Statement

Jibanananda Das, a well-known Bengali poet, goes beyond just writing poetry. He dives into big questions about life and death. Even though his poems are full of deep images and fancy words, they can still leave you feeling puzzled about life. This thesis wants to uncover the big existential crisis hiding in Das's poems, especially focusing on what he says about life and death.

In Das's poems, you can feel the struggle of being human. He talks about how life can be weird and uncertain. He also explores feelings like being left out, hating things, feeling disappointed, and knowing that one day we'll all die. His poetry acts like a magnifying glass, zooming in on the worries and complications of modern life.

This research wants to really understand Das's poetry. It wants to peel back the layers of crisis hidden in his work. By looking closely at his poems, this thesis hopes to explain what Das thinks about life and death. It wants to show how his poems can teach us important things about being human. Through studying his poetry, this research aims to give us a better grip on the big questions we all face, as shown by Jibanananda Das.

1.3 Objective of the Study:

1. To Understand the selected poem and analyze it as the philosophical view of life and death.
2. To explore the existential crisis in his poems “Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin”
3. To explore the philosophical concept of Jibananda Das's view on life and death by comparing Satre, and Camus.

Chapter 2

Literature Review, Methodology and Limitations

2.1 Review the Literature “ Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin”

The poem opens with a nostalgic tone, reminding about a past event in which a person committed suicide the previous night and was taken to a "Lasakata ghar" or a morgue house. The imagery of the moon setting in the darkness of the night suggests a melancholic atmosphere, perhaps indicating the end of something significant or the passing away of time.

*“Last night — in the darkness of Falgun's night
He was destined to die” (Das, 1944)*

In these lines, Jibanananda portrays the horror of a human soul. There are so many words, so many pains, or hidden words in people's lives that they cannot express. It may take a lifetime to reveal them. Jibanananda wanted to reveal this extraordinary word of man.

*The bride was lying beside—so was the child;
There was love, there was hope,
but he experiences absurdity in life.
Why did he wake up?
Or did not sleep for a long time - the dead body is now sleeping in the morgue house.
(Das, 1944)*

The poet describes a scene where a stranger's wife and child are sleeping peacefully, showing the closeness of family life. The bride represents marriage and starting a new family, while the child symbolizes parenthood and carrying on the family legacy. These things usually mean warmth, love, and feeling safe at home. But then, the poet mentions an absurdity, which makes the scene feel queer, strange, and uncomfortable. It adds a feeling of worry and tension to the poem, pointing out that there might be problems in the family or a dilemma in the soul of the person. When the poet wonders why he can't sleep, it adds to the feeling of unease. Sleep is usually a time of peace,

but in this case, it seems unsettling. It suggests there might be deeper emotional issues or memories causing trouble.

The phrase "Morgue House", repeats throughout the poem, showing the emptiness and decay of the place where the scene is happening. It emphasizes the feeling of loneliness and sadness, making the situation even more isolating and upsetting for the characters.

*"wanted to sleep like this!
The neck is like a rat with a bloody face
Darkness sleeps on the chest now;
Never wake up again." (Das, 1944)*

In these lines, the person thinks about how unsettling sleep can be, comparing it to the sight of blood and the creepy quiet of a spider's web in the dark. They don't want to wake up from this sleep, showing that they prefer not to think about reality or to be bothered by what happens when they're awake.

2.2 Methodology

This thesis will show an in-depth analysis of selected poems by Jibanananda Das, giving specific attention to his writing style, using metaphors that relate to life and death. It will also portray critical interpretations, biographical information, and relevant philosophical texts, including works by existentialist writers like Sartre, Camus, and Nietzsche. The research will utilize textual analysis, historical contextualization, and philosophical reference to express the existential depths of Das's poetry.

2.3 Limitations

To start this thesis, I had to look for some books on which there are very few English translations. Had to speed up to find them. Again, gathering references and collecting good data and research was kind of challenging. To find out the meaning of Jibanananda's poetry was also a unique challenge for me. The depth of his writing is challenging for all readers.

Chapter 3

Exploration of Life and Death Philosophy in "Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin"

3.1 Comparing life and death philosophy to “Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin”

“ Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin” poem captures the essence of life and death philosophy through its exploration of existential themes written by Jibananda Das. The nostalgic tone at the beginning of the poem sets the stage for reflection on the flowing nature of life and the inevitability of death. The mention of suicide and the imagery of the moon setting in the darkness reflect a sense of melancholy and the passage of time, highlighting the existential angst inherent in the human condition. The presence of the peaceful scene of the sleeping wife and child with the underlying sense of absurdity and unease reflects the existentialist notion of the absurd – the inherent conflict between human desire for meaning and the indifference of the universe. Despite the warmth and love symbolized by the presence of family, there is a pervasive sense of existential dread and unrest.

The repetition of the phrase "Morgue House" emphasizes the theme of mortality and the inevitability of death, underscoring the transient nature of human existence. It serves as a reminder of the impermanence of life and the emptiness that awaits us all. The scenario also remind us the Samsur Rahman Poems where the speaker finds himself trapped in the circle of life and the ordinary activities of people. (Shamsur Rahman, 1987)

The desire expressed by the speaker to remain in the state of sleep, away from the harsh realities of waking life, further explores existential themes of alienation, despair, and the search for meaning. It reflects the human urge to seek refuge from the absurdity of existence and the existential dread that accompanies it.

In this poem, the poet defines the lack of life energy of a stranger. It is not just a poet's imagination, it is the story of every human being's life. People cannot express some words or pain in their

personal life or their lifetime. The pain that the stranger carries for years and months after months. These unspoken words emerge in the poem and culminate in the man's current self-sacrifice. Even the man who had everything couldn't keep himself locked up in any single mental trap and could not survive the path of suicide. The poem not only conveys this tragedy but also the value of life or the immense debt that this life has to offer, the duty of which everything is practiced.

In our natural life, how many things do we do to run life, yet how many differences remain between them? How many words remain silent Standing at the threshold of life and death, people get an opportunity to think about their tireless life, remember the disappointment, remember the deprivation or lack of access. Still, people live, still they dream and hope for something better. Nature listens to the song of human existence, and thinks. That is why the poet mentioned in the poem-

Branch of Asvattha

Didn't protest? Jonaki's crowd came

A soft cluster of golden flowers

Didn't please you? (Das, 1944)

The poet stands here in the glory of the Ashwath tree year after year, age after age without any protest. Even with the storm, the blow, the deprivation, he stands like that. This horse could not prevent the death of the poet. Can this immense memory of life end in a flash? Even the softness of the golden flower was of no use to save the man. Where is this misery in human life? Why did man lose the battle with his inner mind? Why does life fail him?

3.2 Dilemma with Mortality: Das's view of inevitable of death

In "Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin," Jibananda Das talks about how people deal with the fact that they will die someday. He uses strong pictures and thoughts to show how scary it is to think about death.

The poem starts by remembering a time when someone died and was taken to a place where dead bodies are kept. The moon shining in the dark night makes the scene sad, like something important is ending. Das talks about how scary it is to have thoughts and feelings that we can't share with others. He wonders why the person who died couldn't sleep before their death, which makes us feel uneasy too. He describes a peaceful scene where a stranger's wife and child are sleeping, but the idea of death makes it feel strange and sad. The repetition of "Morgue House" makes us feel the emptiness and sadness of the place. (Das, 1944)

Comparing sleep to scary things like blood and a quiet spider web shows how we sometimes want to avoid thinking about death. The person in the poem wishes they could sleep forever to escape from reality and the sadness of knowing they will die.

The more people's world of thought, the more unhappy they are. A person who has no sense, who is not aware of what is happening in his environment, does not want to understand or cannot understand what is happening to him or not. These things do not bother him. So he is happy. Sense takes us into a world of lethargy. Feelings sometimes make us sad, sometimes think and sometimes give us food for thought. The poem is written in the light of that dangerous surprise or danger. The poet says,

*"Not dreams, not peace, not love,
A feeling was born in the heart
I can't avoid him." (Bodh, 436)*

A kind of similarity can be noticed between *Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin* and *Bodh* poetry. Two poems note instances where death is fixed. Mentioned as an inevitable matter.

In another poem he writes:

*Before facing death, what else do we long to comprehend?
Are we not aware that the grim visage of death looms like an insurmountable barrier before all
our fatal desires'*

*Once, a dream existed in this world - a dream adorned with gold that achieved a tranquil
serenity, as if by some mystical command.*

What else do we yearn to grasp?

Have we not heard the beckoning of wings as the sun descended?

Have we not witnessed the crow vanishing into mist-covered fields?

(Before Death; 74-75)

Overall, "Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin" shows how scary and sad it is to think about death. In Das's poetry contains the vibe of death that is "Death is not desired, there is only death that desires" (Anti- Oedipus 329).

Chapter 4

Confronting the Absurdity of Life

4.1 Explore absurdity in the text of Albert Camus and Jibanananda Das

Confronting the absurdity of life through the lens of Albert Camus and Jibanananda Das reveals two distinct yet intersecting perspectives. Albert Camus, a prominent existentialist philosopher, explored the concept of the absurd in his works, particularly in his essay "*The Myth of Sisyphus*" and novel "*The Stranger*." Jibanananda Das, a celebrated Bengali poet, delved into themes of existentialism and the complexities of life in his poetry.

For Camus, the absurd arises from the inherent clash between humanity's search for meaning in an inherently meaningless universe. Life, according to Camus, is devoid of inherent purpose or rationality, yet humans relentlessly seek meaning and significance. In "*The Myth of Sisyphus (1942)*," Camus presents the image of Sisyphus, condemned to endlessly roll a rock up a hill only to watch it roll back down, as a metaphor for the human condition. Despite the futility of Sisyphus's task, Camus asserts that one must imagine Sisyphus happy, finding meaning and purpose in the absurdity of his existence through his defiance and acceptance of his fate.

Jibanananda Das, on the other hand, explores the absurdity of life through the lens of existential anguish and alienation in his poetry. His verses often depict the fleeting nature of life, the inevitability of suffering, and the sense of estrangement from oneself and the world. In poems like "*Banalata Sen (1942)*," Das reflects on the transient beauty of existence and the melancholy of human experience, capturing the existential angst that permeates life.

Despite their different cultural and philosophical backgrounds, both Camus and Das grapple with similar existential questions and themes. They both acknowledge the absurdity of human existence, the inherent struggle to find meaning in a seemingly meaningless world, and the inevitability of suffering and mortality. However, while Camus emphasizes the importance of rebellion and defiance in the face of absurdity, Das's poetry often conveys a sense of resignation and contemplation.

In essence, confronting the absurdity of life through the perspectives of Albert Camus and Jibanananda Das offers a rich tapestry of existential reflection, inviting readers to ponder the

mysteries of existence and find solace, if not resolution, in the recognition of life's inherent absurdity.

The human condition, fraught with suffering and devoid of inherent meaning, has been a central theme in philosophy and literature for centuries. Two thinkers, Albert Camus and Jibananda Das, though separated by geography and culture, arrive at a strikingly similar conclusion: life is inherently absurd. However, their approaches to confronting this absurdity diverge, offering a nuanced perspective on navigating a meaningless world.

Albert Camus, the French philosopher, developed the concept of the absurd in his seminal work, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942). The absurd arises from the fundamental clash between humanity's inherent desire for meaning and order, and the universe's indifference to such desires. Humans yearn for purpose in a world that offers none. This dissonance, according to Camus, is the root of the absurd.

In *The Stranger* (1942), Meursault, the protagonist, embodies this absurdity. He feels detached from societal norms and rituals, finding them meaningless in the face of his mother's death and his eventual execution. Meursault's actions, defying societal expectations, are a revolt against the absurdity of a world that assigns no value to human life.

Camus and Das, though united in their recognition of the absurd, propose contrasting ways to confront it. Camus emphasizes revolt as a necessary response. In *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), he advocates for embracing the absurd, living authentically, and defying the meaninglessness of the universe through constant creation. Sisyphus, the mythical figure eternally condemned to roll a boulder uphill, becomes a symbol of this rebellion. Despite the futility of his task, Sisyphus finds freedom in the act of defiance itself.

Jibananda Das, on the other hand, seems to propose a more stoic acceptance of the absurd. His poems are filled with a sense of resignation, a recognition of the inevitable suffering inherent in existence. In the poem, **Kamla Lebu (the Orange)** the speaker reflects on the impermanence of human life and the futility of seeking solace in external forces:

"Once when I depart from this mortal coil,
Will I ever return to this world?
Will I return again,
On a wintry night,

With a pitiless mango blossom in hand,
By the familiar brink of a bed?" (Das, 1952)

Finding Meaning in the Meaningless

Despite their contrasting approaches, both Camus and Das acknowledge the human capacity to find solace and meaning within the absurd. For Camus, this comes through living authentically and embracing the present moment. In *The Plague* (1947), Dr. Rieux and his colleagues tirelessly fight a deadly plague, not for some grand purpose, but simply because it is the right thing to do. Their actions, devoid of any hope for ultimate success, become a testament to the human spirit's ability to create meaning in a meaningless world.

Jibananda Das, despite his bleak outlook, finds solace in the beauty of nature and human connection. In "Bodh", the speaker finds a fleeting sense of peace in the simple act of observing the inner

“Light — into darkness I go — within my mind
No dream, but some awareness works inside!
No dream — no peace — no love,
Within the heart, a consciousness is born!” (Bodh, 1930)

Even in acknowledging the inherent meaninglessness of existence, Das seems to suggest that moments of beauty and connection can offer a temporary reprieve from the pervasive sense of absurdity.

Camus and Jibananda Das, though separated by language and culture, arrive at a similar conclusion: life is inherently absurd. However, they both reject a life of despair. Camus proposes embracing the absurd through revolt and living an authentic life. Das suggests a form of acceptance, finding solace in the fleeting beauty and defiance possible within the meaningless. While the universe may offer no inherent meaning, both these thinkers urge us to create our own, to find joy and purpose in the face of the absurd.

4.2 Comparative analyses of Jean-Paul Sartre and Jibananda Das' philosophy

Jean-Paul Sartre and Jibananda Das, though different by geographical and cultural contexts but share a profound connection in their exploration of the human condition. While Sartre, a prominent figure of existentialism, searches into philosophical theory, Das, a Bengali poet, uses lyrical imagery to navigate existential themes.

Sartre's philosophy of existentialism emphasizes that *existence precedes essence*. (Sartre, *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, 1946). Humans are "thrown" into existence, devoid of an inherent purpose. We create our essence through our choices, constructing meaning in an otherwise indifferent universe.

Das, on the other hand, doesn't explicitly call himself an existentialist. Yet, his poetry pulsates with existential angst. His poems like "Aat Bochor ager Ekdin" capture the fleeting nature of life and the yearning for a deeper meaning. "*He was destined to die / The bride was lying beside—so was the child*" (Das, 1944) Lines evoke a sense of existential adriftness in an indifferent universe.

The Burden of Freedom: Choice and the Construction of Self

Sartre's concept of freedom is absolute. We are fundamentally free to choose our actions and, by extension, who we want to be. This freedom, however, is not liberating but daunting. Central to Sartre's philosophy is the concept of radical freedom. Humans, according to him, are "*condemned to be free*" (Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 1943). We are constantly hesitate with our choices, and with each choice comes the weight of responsibility. There are no external forces dictating our paths; the burden of creating meaning and defining ourselves falls solely on our shoulders.

Das's exploration of freedom is less overtly philosophical. However, his poems reflect an implicit understanding of individual agency. In "Shakti" (Power), the speaker grapples with societal pressures and internal desires. While societal expectations might limit choices, the speaker still possesses the agency to navigate a path towards authenticity. This internal struggle hints at a recognition of individual responsibility within the constraints of the social world. Sartre argues for authenticity, while Das's poems depict the struggle to achieve it.

Face of Absurdity

Both Sartre and Das grapple with the absurdity of existence. In Sartre's world, the universe offers no inherent meaning. We are responsible for creating our purpose. Das's poems echo the same sentiment. The line "*He was destined to die*" (Das, 1944) highlights the inherent meaninglessness of existence. Death is inevitable, yet the man wakes up, defying his supposed fate. This contradiction between the human desire for meaning and the universe's indifference creates the absurd.

Despite their cultural and stylistic differences, Sartre and Das converge on a core concern: the human condition in an uncertain world. Sartre challenges us to embrace our freedom and forge our own path. Through his distressful verses, Das invites us to confront the anxieties and yearnings inherent in the human experience. Together, they offer a different lens to understand the human struggle for meaning and authenticity in the face of an often-absurd existence.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Jibananda Das is a poet who thinks a lot about life and death. His poems, especially "Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin," show us how people can feel alone, confused, and like life doesn't matter. His ideas are similar to those of existentialist thinkers like Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre. Just like Camus, Das wrestles with the idea that people want their lives to have meaning, but the universe doesn't care. The poem "Aat Bochor Ager Ekdin," shows this by putting a peaceful home scene with a wife and child next to the scary image of a dead body in a morgue. This contrast highlights the absurdity of life, where death can come at a time and mess things up, even for people who seem safe. Similar to Sartre, Das believes people are free to choose how they live and what matters to them. While Sartre talks about this directly, Das's poems show characters struggling between what society expects and what they truly want.

However, Das is a bit different from Camus and Sartre. While Camus says we should fight against this meaninglessness, and Sartre says we should embrace our freedom, Das's poems often feel a bit sad and accepting. The beauty of nature and moments of connection can bring some temporary comfort, but overall, his poems are about facing the tough realities of life.

In the end, Jibananda Das is a special voice in Bengali literature. He uses powerful images and symbols to explore the anxieties and worries that come with being human. His poems make us think about the absurdity of life, the freedom we have to choose, and the search for meaning in a world that doesn't seem to care.

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