



Kissing and Horrid Strife

I have been defeated and dragged down by pain
and worsted by the evil world-soul of today.

Claim

But still I know that life is for delight
and for bliss
as now when the tiny wavelets of the sea
tip the morning light on edge, and spill it with delight
to show how inexhaustible it is:

Counter-claim
which goes on for
five stanzas all
linked by the
parallel "life is for"
constructions;
one interesting
thing to note is
that usually the
out-construction
counter-claim
comes around
the middle of the
poem or even
towards then end

And life is for delight, and bliss
like now when the white sun kisses the sea
and plays with the wavelets like a panther playing with its cubs
cuffing them with soft paws,
and blows that are caresses,
kisses of the soft-balled paws, where the talons are.

And life is for dread,
for doom that darkens, and the Sunderers
that sunder us from each other,
that strip us and destroy us and break us down
as the tall foxgloves and the mulleins and mallows
are torn down by dismembering autumn
till not a vestige is left, and black winter has no trace
of any such flowers;
and yet the roots below the blackness are intact:
the Thunderers and the Sunderers have their term,
their limit, their thus far and no further.

assonance

a triplet of
parallels

note the parallel
but-constructs
that subvert the
main thrust of
each stanza

Life is for kissing and for horrid strife.
Life is for the angels and the Sunderers.
Life is for the daimons and the demons,
those that put honey on our lips, and those that put salt.

another triplet of
parallels--note
the repetition of
the "the blank
and the blank"
but elsewhere in
the poem, too.

four lines of
parallel "of"
constructions

But life is not
for the dead vanity of knowing better, nor the blank
cold comfort of superiority, nor silly
conceit of being immune,
nor puerility of contradictions
like saying snow is black, or desire is evil.

Life is for kissing and for horrid strife,
the angels and the Sunderers.

His concluding stanza
amalgamates the the light and
dark themes in his vision of life
using repetition and variation

And perhaps in unknown Death we perhaps shall know
 Oneness and poised immunity
 40 **But** why then should we die while we can live ?
 And while we live
 the kissing and communing cannot cease
nor yet the striving and the horrid strife.

note the lovely variation of the title and the parallel "and" construction, with kissing and horrid ending up on two different lines

rhetorical question

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perhaps, perhaps

So the poem has form, but not a conventional form; a form that Lawrence made up. It consists of an assertion followed by a counter-claim, and the counter-claim includes 2 sets of 2 parallel stanzas. At the end there is a concluding stanza which "alludes to" or reweaves elements of the earlier parallels including a "but" and a "nor yet." The form here is built on an obsessive repetition of elements, multiple parallel construction and several but-construction.