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English 3280

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Reading Journals

Entry for *An Duanaire* –

The first two poems, “It’s Best Be a Total Boor” and “The High Poets Are Gone,” seem to go together. Both reflect the speaker’s disappointment with people who do not appreciate poetry. He calls them boors who are blindly ignorant and more interested in clothes than something meaningful like poetry. He jokingly suggests that he would rather be a boor so he did not have to struggle with his art. In our second poem, he does not use the word boor, but it is exactly what comes to mind when he talks about Cúchonnacht’s sons who leave his books untouched in the corner. He laments them not taking up their father’s work. He does not call them blindly ignorant this time, but it reads just the same.

It was hinted that we should read these love stories as allusions to the flight of the Earls with the woman being Ireland, and it seems quite obvious in “Brightness Most Bright” and “Son of the Redeemer.” The connection is not so obvious to me in “I’ll Cast My Spell,” so I will be curious how we discuss this one in class. Is it just a bawdy tale as it suggests, or does it also relate to Ireland and the Earls?

Entry for *The Midnight Court*, Part 1 & 2 –

I have to write this journal entry immediately, so I can read the rest of this epic, comic poem. Everything we have read in this class has been absurd, which is fine, but this is absurd and hilarious. This guy is just minding his own business, enjoying nature, when he gets summoned for this ridiculous trial – and I love

every second of it. At every twist, I cannot predict what will happen next. This poor woman, who presumably has never met the defendant, takes the stand and delivers what I feel like is compelling testimony. Why can this poor girl not find a man? I feel for her. She wants so badly to be married. She seems comely enough, but no one will love her. She is becoming so desperate that she is going to resort to witchcraft. Part 1 is great, but it only gets better in Part 2. This man rises out of the crowd, as if he himself has been attacked, and provides his counter testimony. He provides his eye witness account of the woman not accurately representing her virginity. Then he goes into his own story of woe, where he marries his wife who is secretly pregnant with some other man's child. His woes make him wish he was never born. He seeks a different outcome from the court. What will happen in Part 3 and 4? I have not predicted one thing that was about to happen, but from the first two parts, I do expect it is going to be hilarious and absurd and that I will love it. As a nearly forty-year-old bachelor, I also feel invested in the outcome of this trial.

Entry for *The Midnight Court*, Part 3 & 4 –

Parts 3 and 4 did not disappoint. Obviously, this poem feels a lot more relatable than our previous story of Superman protecting his kingdom's prize bull. I love the final twist – that this is Brian Merriman's nightmare. This is super relatable. I can think of nothing scarier than being pursued by a mob of women and being physically coerced into marriage. I will say, however, that it might be even timelier for the young women in our class. These women have probably been going about their lives, like our poet here, and perhaps they even have a cat. And then all of a sudden, we get a vice presidential candidate who wants to put them on trial for their crimes of not starting a family. I am very interested in which direction the class discussion will proceed. Perhaps it is possible that women could relate to these concerns of men not being willing to commit to their biological duties. As a 39-year-old bachelor, and perhaps I am an exception, but I have not felt pressure from anyone to get married. But again, maybe

that is more me than society, so I am interested in everyone's take. I think my final take away is that this poem alone justifies this class for me. It is perfect.