CHAPTER-VI

The End of Horizon

More Pansies and Last Poems
It is quite interesting that two sets of poems i.e. 'Pansies' and 'Last Poems', found among Lawrence's papers were, published posthumously under the title 'Last Poems' by Aldington and Orioli from two note books containing manuscripts of poems of Lawrence in the last phase of his life. Including some of the rejected 'Nettles', the less important consist of the further verses of the 'Pansies'. There can be a little doubt that these 'Last Poems' embody Lawrence's most fervent religious expression as well as the final significance of his religious quest in the last days of his life. But there is no proof how Lawrence wished these poems to be published.

The poems in this volume are of most significant value from the point of view of form and thought. The mood was a dominant feature in these poems. In fact, in 1929, the year of its publication, was an agonising year for Lawrence as he was suffering from advanced tuberculosis, and mostly he was confined to bed.

Lawrence was least concerned whether his writing was good or bad, as it was just a part of living to him. To Lawrence, 'take it or leave it'. In the Introduction to the 'Last Poems' and 'More Pansies' (1932) R. Aldington says:

The poems printed here are a kind of diary of the last year of Lawrence's life. He followed his fluid ego to the verge of dissolution, always the adventure. In 'More Pansies' especially, but even in the other poems, you will find his daily moods and thoughts, often repeated and repeated. There is irritability of the consumptive breaking out all the time-irritations over the pretty annoyances of suppression by law and the stupidities of journalists, irritations with healthy people and the people of a different class and machines and men, in fact with almost everybody. You will find echoes of *Apocalypse*
and of his delight in his last fine days by the Mediterranean. And you will find the wonderful group of poems written as he entered into death and prepared himself for the last, the longest voyage.¹

But Aldington is not doing justice by commenting in such a way. As Lawrence, during that period may have suffered fits of depression, the stupidities of journalists and critics and the wild suppression by law. But the way, the style in which Lawrence projected human weakness miseries makes his poems profoundly characteristic and everlasting. But R. Aldington does not feel so:

‘that Pansies is anything but a decline from his earlier poems, while Nettles is about the worst and most trivial thing he ever published. It seems to me that nearly all these Pansies and Nettles came out of Lawrence’s nerves, and not out of his real self. They are one long hammer, hammer, hammer of exasperation. Sometimes they are like the utterances of a little Whitman, but without Walt’s calm sostenuto quality; and sometimes they are like a little Blake raving, but without the fiery vision. Yet it is always Lawrence speaking, even in the most disconcertingly trivial or spiteful, but to me at least very much the Lawrence of off days’.²

He further adds:

His verse springs sheer from the spontaneous sources of his being. Hence its lovely, lovely form and rhythm: the best. It is sheer, perfect human spontaneity, spontaneous as a nightingale throbbing, but still controlled, the highest loveliness of human spontaneity,
undecorated, unclothed to whole being is there, sensually throbbing, spiritually quivering, mentally, ideally speaking.... The whole soul speaks at once, and is too pure mechanical assistance of rhyme and measure. The perfect utterance of a concentrated spontaneous soul.³

The poems of this last section gives us the naive opening of a soul to life—pure jets and bubbling of unthinkable newness. Lawrence answers exactly Whitman’s definition of the prophet as one, whose mind bubbles up and pours forth as a fountain, from inner divine spontaneities revealing God.

We admire his poems for the quality and depth of the vision they spring from. Lawrence often agrees with R. P. Drapper’s View:

‘........ like a house on fire when his genius burns exhaustively, or rather a conflagration which spreads and gets brighter-and more unmanageable - the longer it burns. For a long time now the fire-brigade have stood in an aesthetic trance, admiring the flames, their water-hoses quite forgotten in their hands. All the winds of the earth fan the flame: the Sirocco of Italy, balmy breezes from India, a cold wind of the Rockies, Lawrence at the center of the conflagration, keeps on puffing lustily and shouting hoarsely to encourage the fire. As it does leap higher and costs up more smoke and ashes than ever’.⁴

Lawrence, no doubt, is more widely read as his work—how fluid, how personal, how imperfect, a series of inconclusive adventures only related because they all happened to the same person. There is nothing static about this - everything flows. There is perpetual intercourse with the Muse, but the progeny is as surprising to the parent as to anybody else. Lawrence adventured into himself for writing and by writing discovered himself, and this is not a conscious confessing, but an instinctive revealing.
From the very beginning, Mediterraneans were having much influence on Lawrence’s imagination. In the end, some poems of his life inspired some of his loveliest poetry. Even at the time of his death, Lawrence was working on a long poem, ‘The Ship of Death’, though unfinished yet a magnificent poem. The poem was too long and exists in several different version and this might be the reason that other poems under the same title appeared separately in the same volume and they were intended to be part of this larger poem. In the opening lines of this poem, ‘Middle of the World’ exposes, the Mediterranean and the myths which belong to the people who were a source of perpetual inspiration to the dying poet. The first poem on the Mediterranean opens intuitively:

The sea will never die, neither will it ever grow old
nor cease to be blue, nor in the dawn
cease to lift up its hills
and let the slim black sheep of Dionysos come sailing in
with grape-vines up the mast, and dolphins leaping.5

Going through these poems, figures such as Dionysos, Odyssens and Aphrodite haunt through each of the last fine poems acquired distinctively Lawrentian characteristics intuitively. Lawrence rises into beauty with, ‘The Man of Tyre’ which is among the finest, the very personal reworking of the story of Odyssens and Nausicca. The poem glides with the romantic sensuality of which Lawrence alone had been secretly involved for flesh perceptions. The poet visualizes the rational monotheistic Greek, face to face with the rich actuality of sexual experience.

The man of Tyre went down to the sea
pondering, for he was Greek, that God is one and all alone and
ever more shall be so.
And a woman who had been washing clothes in the pool of rock
where a stream came down to the gravel of the sea and sank in,
who had spread white washing on the gravel banked above the bay,
who had lain her shift on the shore, on the shingle slope,
who had waded to the pale green sea of evening, out to a shoal,
pouring sea-water over herself
now turned, and came slowly back, with her back, with her
back to the evening sky.  

The simple, everyday act of the woman washing herself links this poem to ‘Gloire de Aijon’ (under the Look! We Have Come Through!) and it is a celebration of the wonder and mystery of life in the flesh. Watching Greek, we are compelled to appreciate the poem. Through the middle of the stanza, the poet produces the ecstatic vision of the beholder as the figure of the bathing lady is brought before us in its complete natural appearance, painting a static picture in motion:

As she went deeper,
deeper down the channel, than rose shallower, shallower,
with the full thighs slowly lifting of the wader wading shorewards
and the shoulders pallid with light from the silent sky behind
both breasts dim and mysterious, with the glamorous kindness of twilight
between them.  

How imaginative Lawrence is in composing such poems “the dim blotch of black maiden hair” to “an indicator”, but the comparison is neither wanton nor weak but leads to the heart of the poem. The conclusion is the physical reality of life with the religious message that the lady has given to the speculative Greek. The poem realizes the simple but profound insight that God exists in life itself.

The last poems are overtly religious, as they represent the culmination of his religious thought, that we have seen in ‘Birds, Beast and Flowers’. The religion propagated is unorthodox, a rejection of Christianity and an acceptance of a primitive religion of wonder. Lawrence realises that Christianity destroys the strength of an individual, therefore Lawrence broke away from Christianity earlier. The doctrines hold good for every individual in a mechanical way and God appears as a machine. But Lawrence discovered new Gods who came from nature and entered the life of man intuitively but not rationally. In the real sense, it was his instinctive response of life
that threw light on morals and religion which he developed in this section of the 'Last Poems'.

D. H. Lawrence is also romantic in his treatment but he is also different from them. For the romantic the source of inspiration is external, for Lawrence, it is part of poet’s own being, and that of conscious. The total being of man is replete with mysterious ‘Dark’ instincts of which he is normally unaware. But dark region is ‘the dark forest of the soul’ and when dark region is illuminated with light of soul, it becomes the ‘known self’! Lawrence is the creator of such image of total man of ‘known self’ which is certainly different from the Romantics. It is noteworthy to quote Merrild:

All things are relatives and have their sacredness in their true relation to all other things. ¹⁰

Lawrence himself said,

A poem will not become a good poem simply by capturing an image of a thing or situation with perfect objectivity (according to the Imagist School) or by observing all the requirement of poetry. It becomes a good poem by virtue of the poet, being able to putting life, thrill, concentration of delight into it.

But it is possible when his conscious being is visited by strange gods from ‘the dark forest of his soul,’ which we may, consider as Myriad’s of mysterious instincts for which we are unaware of. The visitations like Shelly’s ‘Wind of Inspiration’ are uncertain and so poetry is not a matter of the intent of the poet, but depends on the will and mercy of the visiting gods.

Man is only observer of events taking place before him, but he is not a creator of poem. But when an encounter with strange gods happens, new sproutings of feelings are expressed through poetic art as Lawrence observed.
Lawrence feels that one should be serious about one's emotions. He wants us to keep up honest, feelings of love and laughter and that of a real trust.

Thus, 'vital and sincere' emotions which have 'the mind's connivance become the guiding force in both life and art'. Only when a poet is 'emotionally alive' and intellectually capable of giving us a true account of what he feels to poem can he be 'wholly alive'. After attaining complete wholeness, an individual must endeavor to establish a living contact with others and it will correspondence with resourcing and revivifying of art. The relationship between man and woman is vital to form a part of the animating perpetuity of the universe. In 'The Painter's Wife' Lawrence shows the difference of attitudes:

Tangled up in her own self-conceit, a woman, and her passion could only flare through the meshes towards other women, in communion; the presence of a man made her recoil and burn blue and cold, like the flame in a miner's lamp when the after-damp is around it. Yet she seemed to know nothing about it and devoted herself to her husband and made him paint her nude, time after time, and each time came out the same, a horrible sexless, lifeless abstraction of the female form, technically "beautiful", actually a white machine-drawing, more null than death.

Lawrence believes in an 'essential maleness' and 'an 'essential femaleness' both necessary to universal fruition. But Lawrence sees a lack of virility in the modern man and a lack of real femininity in the modern woman. The desired harmonious relation between the two is distorted by consciousness, religions and intellectualization. As a result both man and woman lead life directed at one extreme by the body and at the other by the mind. As a result, the care of individuality which leads us to respond spontaneously to others is wanting in the modern generation which he expressed through the poem 'The Egoists':
The only question to ask today, about man or woman is: Has she chipped the shell of her own ego? Has he chipped the shell of his own ego? They are all perambulating eggs going: "Squeak! Squeak! I am all things unto myself, yet I can't be alone, I want somebody to keep me warm".12

Lawrence feels that when we cease to be guided by our whole selves, we start laying more importance on one aspect of life at the expense of the other. Consequently, he rejected Shelly, Plato, Raphael, W. Wordsworth and Jesus for making one emotion supreme. When one tends to idealize one emotion, the passional inspiration gets distorted, pure maleness and pure femaleness are lost and this entails a constant conflict between the two. He expressed this fact through his beautiful poem ‘Search For Love’:

Those that goes searching for love
only make manifest their own loveliness,
and the loveless never find love,
only the loving find love,
and they never have to seek for it.13

Lawrence hankers after spontaneous passional adventure as a respite from the self-awareness that is sometimes, ‘like a madness’. The heightened state of consciousness is attributed to the influence of an eternal woman like Miriam in Sons And Lovers or Lydia Lawrence with her son, the feminine Mt. Etna inspires men to a peak of feeling but leaves them powerless, and Lawrence wants to escape from that trap. Lawrence also released that:

We have to know ourselves pretty thoroughly before we can break through the automatism ideals and conventions .... Only through fine delicate knowledge can we recognize and release our impulses.14
Lawrence’s finest literary achievement was probably distinguished by an extraordinary originality. He was too powerful a personality to take in direct or artificial rules.

He found formal convention of writing as a hindrance especially in his later poems. He does not like Macauley to honestly render his feelings and prefer scholastic design to a sincere and emotional statement. Lawrence sought in a true work of art, a true depiction of life, and his assessment of literature depending on how a particular piece of literature had honoured life. He demands in a work of art, an honest and sincere depiction like the 'Rainbow' changing it may be. He is insensitive to ordinary social morality. He fully believed solely on inspiration, the inner voice and instinctive response to life:

The Holy Ghost is the deepest part of our own consciousness wherein we know ourselves for what we are and know our dependence on the creative beyond.

So if we go counter to our own deepest consciousness naturally we destroy the most essential self in us, and once done, there is no remedy, no salvation for this, nonentity is our portion.15

In the poem ‘Healing’ he stresses the something in another way:

I am ill because of wounds to the soul, to the deep emotional self and the wound to the soul take a long, long time, only time can help and patience, and a certain difficult repentance long, difficult repentance, realization of life’s mistake, and the freeing oneself from the endless repetition of the mistake which mankind at large has chosen to sanctify.16

But his writings differ completely from the ‘confession of Rousseau’, since it is not a conscious confessing, but an instinctive revealing, or as a prolongation of his own life. It is a kind of parthenogenesis. Lawrence never cared for his writing if it was
'good' or 'bad'. He never accepted the implication of a fixed standard as writing. A real work of art was great for him if it communicates a genuine moral vision of experience through a complete imaginations of life. Lawrence had no sympathy for the aesthetic doctrines of Flabert and the symbolists values attached to verse form that Lawrence considered a threat to life. He was sick like the modern poets who make verse out of antipathy to life. He called them, 'artistic anarchists', and felt that if they used all their skill and effort to dress up a skelton because their 'lovely colour and design' was all empty or 'a dead nothingness'.

Again, Lawrence says that knowing or knowledge should not be mechanical or just mean to put a mathematical formula like two and two together. Knowledge should be pursued to help one in being oneself and in producing august emotion that has the mind’s Carte blanche. He is not dismissing knowledge as he says:

Thought I love Thought.
But not the jiggling and twisting of already existent ideas
I despise that self-important game.17

Lawrence wants a harmony 'between the intellect and emotions' so that instead of knowing in our mind, we feel them and feel them in our blood. He does not advocate a mere, anti-intellectual philosophy, or a boosting of the consciousness. Here he condemns Pluto and others even for the distinction they made between the body and the spirit:

Emotion by themselves become just a nuisance. The mind by itself becomes just a sterile thing, making everything sterile, so what to be done. You've got to marry the pair of them. Apart, they are no good. The emotions that have not the approval and inspiration of the mind, are just hysterics. The mind without the approval and inspiration of the emotions is just a dry stick, a dead tree, no good for anything . . . . 18
Lawrence judges a poem not by its rhythmic quality which may sound very
dear and pleasing to the ear, but by effect on our vital and sincere emotions. In this
way a poem cannot possibly stick to any fixed pattern of arrangement. In Lawrence’s
own view - a poem which has a prefect form may be beautiful, but it does not stir the
soul. A broken verse may be more beautiful, and moving than the one which
religiously follows set rules. Success of a verse or a poem confirms to no standards.
He felt discomfort in presence of any highly finished work of art because there is no
gems of the living plasm that he clears through his poem of two lines, ‘Non-Existence’.

We don’t exist unless we are deeply and sensually in touch
with that which can be touched but not known.¹⁹

He liked folk song because according to him, it was born of immediate
impulse, as the symphony oppressed him. In his view, ‘metre in a poem remind him of
a bird with broad wings flying and lapping through the air, as a poem based on the
hidden pattern can make one, in the very instance realize his peculiar individuality and
ingleness in the vast universe. It also makes him aware of the inevitable and invisible
bond between him and the whole living cosmos. Self-consciousness is fatal in life
according to him, and to literature also. Therefore, he hated all conscious rules for
material scansion. So in his view, the poetry of Poe is helplessly ‘mechanical’. He
believes that a truly moving poem should possess those essential experience that have a
real living contact with humanity. ‘A poem is the inner flow of a man in the process of
becoming aware not only of his feelings but also their implications to life. One can
catch this flow in all its immediacy only by the flexibility of verse form as he feels in
‘Behavior’:

It is absurd for me to display my naked soul at the tea-table.
If we are properly clothed and disciplined in the dining-room
or the street,
then the private intimacy of friendship will be real and precious
and our naked contact will be rare and vivid and tremendous.
But when everybody goes round with soul half-bared, or quite in
promiscuous intimate appeal
then friendship is impossible embraced an anti-climax, humiliating and ridiculous.  

Lawrence does not want any repetition of ideas, thought or emotions in a poem. As an emotional realist, he does not accept finish or precision or correctness as the essence of poetry so much over-prized by many. In the ‘Introduction’ to ‘New Poems’, he says:

To break the lovely form of metrical verse, and to dish up the fragment as a new substance, called vers libre, This is what most of the free-versifiers accomplish. They do not know that free verse has its own nature, it is neither star nor pearl, but instantaneous like plasm. It has no goal in either eternity. It has no finish. It has no satisfying stability, satisfying in those who like the immutable. None of this. It is the instant; the quick; the very zelting source of all will-be and has-been. The utterance is like a spasm, naked contact with all influences at once. It does not want to get anywhere. It just takes place.

The above statement clearly points out to the fact that Lawrence does not deviate from formatism in name of freedom. Free verse, has a form which is the instant and the quick and a direct mode of the thought and it is an adventure of exact language. ‘The instant’ and the quick impulse is in clash with poetic conventions. While remembering his young days (during his last days) he explains:

In those early days - for I was very green and unsophisticated at twenty - I used to feel myself at times haunted by something, and a little guilty about it, as if it were an abnormality. Then the haunting would get the batter of me, and the ghost would suddenly appear, in the shape of a usually rather incoherent poem. Nearly always I shunned the apparition once it had appeared.
From the first, I was a little afraid of my real poems - not my "compositions", but the poems that had the ghost in them. They seemed to me to come from somewhere, I didn't quite know where, out of a me whom I didn't know and didn't want to know, and to say things I would much rather not have said: for choice. But there they were.22

The poetry according to Lawrence is perfect and consummate.

There are no gems of the living plasm. The living plasm vibrates unspeakably, it inhales the future, it exhales the past, it is the quick of both, and yet it is neither. There is no plasmic finality, nothing crystal permanent.23

In Lawrence's views an artist is never in being an artist, an idealist. The artist derives from the life - mystery. He sees the creative unencompassable life in its wholeness, unmasked. He does not want to transcend life as Shelley does. Shelley stresses the bodilessness of beauty and does not, therefore, belong to life. Shelley, Franklin and Crevecoeur are the two halves of the one whole. To him Shelley and Franklin are preoccupied with pure abstraction, pure spirit and pure mathematical reality, whereas Crevecoeur and Rousseau exist in terms of emotion and sensation. Lawrence criticises Crevecoeur for he would not give up his self-made world where natural man is an object of undefined brotherhood. Lawrence was determined to see nature as sweet and pure, and considered universal brotherhood and life according to his own prescription. And obviously this approach is opposed to Lawrence's concept of duality in the nature. He calls Keats, Shelley, Brontes, Wordsworth as post-mortem poets in whom the essential instinctive - intuitive body is dead, who worshipped death, whereas he developed his own conception of the same which alone can make his vision of living, passiona- conscious existence as a reality.

The domain of Lawrence's thought was very vast. He can be seen and placed in relation to authors who wrote on practically all aspect of life. For his anti-materialistic inclination and anti-intellectual leanings, Lawrence has been associated
with the Victorians, the poetic novelists and the puritans of romantics. Also he has been grouped with those Victorians who attacked machinery like Arnold, Morris, Ruskin, Carlyle, etc. Infect, Lawrence stressed for the change not only in the mechanical character of society but in the entire social system. He was interested in seeking a spontaneous harmony between man and nature in all its facets as he says in ‘The Triumph of the Machine’:

So mechanical man in triumph seated upon the seat of his machine will be driven mad from within himself, and sightless, and on that day the machines will turn to run into one another traffic will tangle up in a long-drawn-out crash of collision and engines will rush at the solid houses, the edifice of our life will rock in the shock of the mad machine, and the house will come down.24

Lawrence always held the individual above society. But natural elements and man according to him are to be and can be brought into an instinctive harmony. To him, every individual or every natural phenomenon is a separate entity and a harmonious relationship will continue to exist between the two until his ‘Present-Otherness’ is denied.

Lawrence points out that individuals must fully realise themselves as individuals, before they can come into any true contract with the ‘otherness’ of other individuals. True love consists in realising this ‘otherness’ of the object of love and respecting it. Love should not be possessive and dominant, rather it should be considerate and sympathetic in the psychological sense of the word. Through the poem ‘Know Thy Self’, Lawrence utters:

What we need indeed
Is a new frame of society
Where the attention will be lifted off material things,
Money, machines, furniture-
And where we can begin to learn our great emotional lessons
Wherein we are now blind ugly boors.
The one eye of our cyclopean instinct put out
We grope and foam and lash around
And hurt, hurt ourselves and everybody,
Roaring and doing damage.
What we need is a long, long war-less epoch
Where we can learn to fulfill our new knowledge of material fairness
Justice, human decency in material things -
And where, with the slow patience of intuition
We can uncoil the ghastly snake-tangle of our unconscious emotion.  

Lawrence cannot be restricted to any particular tradition. He can be said to
belong to the tradition of writers and artists who do not accept art in isolation away
from life and who attach immense importance to the ‘whole’ being who is ‘alive’. He
is considered to be a puritan with a difference. In Lawrence, we can see the moralist as
artist and the artist as critic. He certainly has heralded an era of new dimensions
realising new forces of morality, mutual understanding and reverence, which had quite
for some time remained shrouded under clouds of mistrust, suspicion and reverence in
art that he expresses in the poem ‘Only the Best Matters’ :

Only the best matters, in man especially.
True, you can’t produce the best without attending to the whole
but that which is secondary is only important
is so far as it goes to the bringing forth of the best. 

Lawrence is of the opinion that the ‘vital’ and ‘sincere’ emotions which have
the mind’s connivance become the guiding force in both life and art. Only when a
poet is emotionally alive and intellectually capable of giving us a true account of what
he feels can be ‘wholly alive’ and after that he must endeavor to establish a living
contact with others as is the inexorable law of life that he says :

Man knows nothing
till he knows how not-to-know.
And the greatest of teachers will tell you:
The end of all knowledge is oblivion
sweet, dark oblivion, When I cease
even from myself, and am consummated.27

His attack on modern civilization is a sort of disconnection between life and art
that he presented in his last poems. He promoted the primitive life which was original
and natural in realizations. Hassle has pointed out about Lawrence’s mature poems of
this section as:

It is this ‘suggestive edge’ of his own verse, which at
first gives the appearance of a rough sketch, and instead
of exhibiting formal shape suggests a state of flux, a
flowing contour, where the body ‘suddenly leaves off,
upon the atmosphere’. 28

These last poems are religious ones and the religion which lies behind these
poems is that primitive religion of wonder which Lawrence has referred to the
Etruscans:

The natural flowering of life! It is not so easy for human
beings as it sounds. Behind all the Etruscan liveliness
was a religion of life, which the chief men were
seriously responsible for. Behind all the dancing was a
vision, and even a science of life, a conception of the
universe and man’s place in the universe which made
men live to the depth of their capacity.

To the Etruscan all was alive; the whole universe lived;
and the business of man was himself to live amid it all.
He had to draw life into himself, out of the wandering
huge vitalities of the world. The common was alive, like
a vast creature ....The whole thing was alive, and had a
great soul, or anima, and in spite of one great soul, there
were myriads roving, lesser souls; every man, every
creature and tree and lake and mountain and stream,
was animate, and had its own peculiar consciousness”.29
In these ‘Last Poems’ God appears sometimes as the creative urge in nature which does not follow any formula of ‘being’ or ‘non-being’. It is forever becoming, is fluid not static, incarnated in the flesh. God is an evolutionary life force, an urge:

God is the great-urge that has not yet found a body
but urges towards incarnation with the great creative urge.
And becomes at last a clove carnation: lo! that is god!
and becomes at last Helen, or Ninon: any lovely and
generous woman
at her best and her most beautiful, being god, made manifest,
any clear and fearless man being god, very god.  

There is no end to the birth of God as he says, in ‘God is Born’:

Behold, now very God is born!
God Himself is born!
And so we see, god is not
until he is born.
And also we see
there is no end to the birth of God.  

At other times Lawrence feels the presence of the Gods in the colours and shapes of the visible world which is related to Wordsworthian pantheism as it occurs in the following lines from ‘More Pansies’:

But all the time I see the goods
the man who is mowing the tall white corn
suddenly, as it curves, as it yields, the white wheat
and sinks down with a swift rustle, and a strange, falling flatness
ah! the gods, the swaying body of god!
ah the fallen stillness of god, autumnus, and it is only July
the pale-gold flesh of priapus dropping asleep.
Lawrence, here is a mythological poet, but his mythology is no elegant fiction or learned reconstruction. The Gods are realities to him as they were to a Greek poet and to Keats, the only English poet. In almost Keatsian language Lawrence intuitively repeats in the 'Last Poems' that man falls out of the hands of God through ungodly knowledge, that is self-centredness, self-analysis and self-will. And the same thing Lawrence explains in 'The Hands of God':

Save me, O God, from falling into the ungodly knowledge of myself as I am without God.
Let me never know, O God
let me never know what I am or should be
When I have fallen out of your hands, the hands of living God.

That awful and sickening endless sinking, sinking through the slow, corruptive levels of disintegrative knowledge when the self has fallen from the hands of God.\textsuperscript{33}

According to Lawrence, the ungodly knowledge is the disintegrative knowledge, when the rational or the ungodly mind overpowers a feeling of sinking into an abyss or a sort of darkness comes over man:

'.......... there is nothing else, throughout time and eternity but the abyss, which is bottomless, and the fall to extinction, which can never come, for the abyss is bottomless, and the turning plunge of writhing of self-knowledge, self-analysis which goes further, and further, yet never finds an end for there is no end, it is the abyss of the immortality of those that have fallen from God.'\textsuperscript{34}
In all these poems, Lawrence’s knowledge of God can be summed up as that Lawrence experienced nature’s divine process which was endangered by industrialisation, democracy, schools and Churches. So, Lawrence was unable to offer any political vision and unable to connect the mystical experience with any form of society. Man’s helplessness in the face of hostile circumstances created by industrialisation compelled him to create a God, who would help to his pent-up emotions. Lawrence is bewildered after seeing these white faced workers to be crushed under the hoofs of this industrialistic Satan and cries:

Oh Jesus, didn’t you see, when you talked of service
this would be the result!
When you said: Retro me, satans!
this is what you gave him leave to do
behind your back!
And now, the iron has entered in to the soul
and the machine has entangled the brain, and got it fast, and steel has twisted the lions of man, electricity has exploded the heart
and out of the lips of people jerk strange mechanical noises in place of speech.³³

This industrial Satan is unbearable for him and he asks the basic tenets of Christianity:

When Jesus commanded us to love our neighbour
he forced us either to live a great lie, or to disobey:
for we can’t love any body, neighbour or no neighbour,
to order,
and faked love has rotted our merrow.³⁶

As Christianity with strong and pious doctrine about loving one’s neighbor, is a grinning mockery as Lawrence explains:

I love my neighbour
but
are these things my neighbours?
these two-legged things that walk and talk
and eat and cachinate, and even seem to smile
seem to smile, ye gods!
Am I told that these things are my neighbours?
All I can say then is Nay! nay! nay! nay! nay! 37

The essential quality of poetry is that it makes a new effort of attention and ‘discovers’ a new world within the known world. ‘Trees in the Garden,’ one of the loveliest of the longer lyrics, beautifully exemplifies what Lawrence means. The poem successfully captures the atmosphere of stillness before the storm, the feeling of hushed expectancy which we all become aware of. The poem gives us that sense of unearthliness which we are also sometimes conscious of when we look at a landscape when the air is heavy with the approaching thunder. And lastly, it presents the separate existence of the different trees, the movement of the lives almost conveying a sense of the different mode of being of each variety:

Ah in the thunder air
how still the trees are!
And the lime-tree, lovely and tall, every leaf silent
hardly looses even a last breath of perfume.
And the ghostly, creamy coloured little trees of leaves white, ivory white among the rambling greens
how evanescent, veriegated elder, she hesitate on the green grass
as if, in another moment, she would disappear
with all her grace of foam!
And the larch that is only a column, it goes up too tall to see:
and the balsam-pines that are blue with the grey-blue blueness of things from the sea,
and the young copper beech, its leaves red-rosy at the ends
how still they are together, they stand to still
in the thunder air, all strangers to one another
as the green grass glows upwards, strangers in the silent
garden.\textsuperscript{38}

It is Lawrence’s fierce integrity, his instinctive response to the verse form that
makes him an intuitive poet. One can find \textit{Echoes of Apocalypse} and his delight in
last days by the Mediterranean. One can find the wonderful group of poems written
when Lawrence embraced death and prepared himself for “the longest journey to
oblivion”.\textsuperscript{39} He was of the opinion that a good poem is a product of the instinctive
imagination and poet’s deep instincts and true poetical works require the image seeing
imagination. Lawrence points out:

The great discoveries of science and real works of art are
made by the whole consciousness of man working
together in unison and oneness; instinct, intuition,
mind, intellect, all fused into one complete
consciousness, and grasping what we may call a
complete truth, or a complete vision, a complete
revelation in sound. A discovery, artistic or other wise,
may be or less intuitional, more or less mental; but
intuition will have entered into it, and mind will have
taken too.\textsuperscript{40}

He further adds:

The mystery of creation is the divine urge of creation,
but it is great, strange urge, it is not a Mind.
Even an artist knows that his work was never in his mind,
he could never have \textit{thought} is before it happened.
A strange ache possessed him, and he entered the struggle,
and out of the struggle with his material, in the spell of the urge
his work took place, it came to pass, it stood up and saluted his mind.
God is a great urge, wonderful, mysterious, magnificent
but he knows nothing before-hand.
His urge takes shape in the flesh, and lo!
it is creation! God looks himself on it in wonder, for the first time
Lo! there is a creature, formed! How strange!
Let me think about it! Let me form an idea!

The position that Lawrence adopts in this poem regarding the mind vis-à-vis the
creative act is at odds with his more usual position which grants the mind a subservient
role. In Lawrence's view:

True imagination, that is, the state of consciousness in
which intuitive awareness predominates, is responsible for all
human creativity, artistic and otherwise. Without it there can
neither be true and rich life nor true and rich art. If we have "no
imaginative life, we are poor worms who have never lived".

He is aware of the fact that the knowing process can also become a means to the
process of being. He, of course, lambasts the mere, "jiggling and twisting of already
existent ideas", as a bottomless pit and which force attention to the limits of self. He
again stresses that desire to know only tempts mind's interventions and swallows every
human relation:

I despise that self-important game.
Thought is the welling up of unknown life into consciousness,
Thought is the testing of statements on the touchstone of the con-science,
Thought is gazing on to the face of life, and reading what can be read,
Thought is pondering over experience, and coming to a conclusion.
Thought is not a trick, or an exercise, or a set of dodges,
Thought is a man in his wholeness wholly attending.

Here Lawrence considers man's original sin to be his grievous curiosity to know for the
sake of knowing:
When Adam went and took Eve, after the apple, he did not do any more than he had done many a time before, in act. But in consciousness he did something very different. So did Eve. Each of them kept an eye on what was happening to them. They wanted to know. And that was the birth of Sin. Not doing it, but knowing about it. Before the apple, they had shut their eyes and their minds had gone dark. Now they peeped and pried and imagined. They watched themselves. And they felt uncomfortable after. They felt self-conscious: So they said, The act is sin. Let’s hide. We’re sinned.  

Therefore, Lawrence is sure of the fact that all good creations are thought-adventures floundering in feelings. He insists that a good poem is a thought adventure producing a change in the vibration of the blood. ‘The Body of God’, along with ‘The Man of Tire’ are beautiful poems and Lawrence comprehends beauty through these poems and it is a personal re-working of the story of Odysseus and Nausicaa, with the touch of romantic sensuality of which Lawrence had the secret experience which kept his perception so fresh and clear. In another comprehensible poem ‘Apocalypse’, Lawrence explains that the moon is the mistress and mother of our watery bodies, the pale body of our nervous consciousness and our moist flesh. And so this invocation means that he was still desperately holding life. In the category of the Moon poem comes ‘Bavarian Gentians’, one of his lovely flower poems, which can be treated as Lawrence’s one of the most startling innovative successes where the ancient tombs are treated in mythological imagery. His style is symbolic and his individual voice directly expresses a state of consciousness, through metaphors and symbols which appear to be a first statement of the Death theme:

Reach me a gentian, give me a torch.

The world from which the poet is ready to depart is relegated to a subordinate level of reality, to a periphery of less intense consciousness. The elaborate modifications tend to dissociate darkness as a substantial complex quantity apart from
the flower. It is darkness which suggests fire, smoke, light of the underworld and the myth of the soul’s descent to oblivion and sensual experience in the deepest cavern of the earth. In fact, no other commonly known English poem achieves such equally direct, sustained expression of unalloyed subjectivism. In this poem, the world of fantasy becomes the substantive reality of the Nature in which we live.

It is clear from his ‘Last Poems’ that his sense of utter enclosure of death was his last connection with reality and he strove to remain aware of the experience he endured. He was conscious of the deliberate moral exercise required—this need for prayer—to see that death still linked him to the principle of life. In minor meditative poems—‘The Hands of God’, ‘Abysmal Immortality’, ‘Only Man’,—his prayer is the same in each: “Let me never know myself apart from the living God.”

He prevented his deterioration into complete solipsism that would separate him from even the symbolic cosmos:

For the knowledge of the self-apart-from-God
is an abyss down which the soul can slip
writhing and twisting in all the revolutions
of the unfinished plunge
of self-awareness, now apart from God, falling
fathomless, fathomless, self-consciousness wriggling
writhing deeper and deeper in all the minutiae of self-knowledge,
downwards, exhaustive,
yet never, never coming to the bottom, for there is no bottom.

He escaped none of the woe of dying, not—even when he could look confidently at his death as part of the universal process of growth, decay and new generation. Written in the prosaic spontaneous manner of his *Pansies* the poem ‘Difficult Death’ expresses a moment’s fear or misery:
It is not easy to die, O site not easy

to die the death.

For death comes when he will

not when we will him.

And we can be dying, dying, dying

and longing utterly to die

yet death will not come.

So build your ship of death, and let soul drift

to dark oblivion.

Maybe life is still our portion

after the bitter passage of oblivion.49

Lawrence, in this poem characteristically refers to death as a journey to a ‘dark oblivion’. But there is no feeling of futility or irremediable grief as he says:

So build your ship of death, and let the soul drift

to dark oblivion.

Maybe life is still our portion

after the bitter passage of oblivion.50

In another poem, ‘All Souls Day’ the same thought is expressed and the poem contains a deep sense of tender compassion:

Be kind, Oh be kind to your dead

and give them a little encouragement

and help them to build there little ship of death.51

The poet goes on to describe the dead, who have departed from ‘the walled and silvery city’ of the ‘now hopeless body’ lingering for a time in the shadow of the earth:

For the soul has a long long journey after death

to the sweet home of pure oblivion.

Each need a little ship, a little ship

and the proper store of meal for the longest journey.
Oh, from out of your heart
Provide for your dead once more, equip them
like departing mariners, lovingly.  

Lawrence’s preoccupation with the meaning of death can be seen powerfully and memorably in this volume of poetry that finally reflects his beliefs. These poems embody Lawrence’s most fervent religious expression as well as the final significance of his religious quest and his message. His preoccupation with the meaning of death can powerfully be seen in these poems, where Lawrence makes use of especially Greek mythology. Through the use of myth Lawrence describes the last journey of the soul. These are unmistakable mythic echoes and Lawrence, in these poems draws upon the fertility myth of the Greco-Roman World, the Christian myth of Resurrection to give expression to his vision of harmony and balance, that he hopes to find in a world already torn by machine, money and class. The starting two poems to the collection ‘The Greeks are Coming’ and ‘The Argonauts’ are appropriate to lead the collection as the poems reflect Lawrence’s ‘faith that looks through death’. In the first poem ‘The Greeks are Coming’ the present is an ocean liner from the Western World:

But it is far-off foam.
And an ocean liner, going east, like a small beetle walking the edge
is leaving a long thread of dark smoke
like is bad smell.  

The Beetle here is an image of abomination for Lawrence and the sea symbolises an ‘eternal sea’ the other side of life. Lawrence, as in the Greek myths, describes the last journey as a sea voyage. The sea is like a soul and:

This sea will never die, neither will it grow old
nor cease to be blue, nor in the dawn
cease to lift up its hills
and let the slim black ship of Dionysos come sailing in
with grape-vines up the mast, and dolphins leaping.  

...
The poet is not bothered about the smoking ships of the 'P & O and Oriental Line', may cross the Minoan distance like a clock-work as they only cross, the distance that never changes:

And the Minoan Gods, and the Gods of Tiryns are heard softly laughing and chatting, as ever;
and Dionysos, young and a stranger
leans listening on the gate, in all respect.55

Lawrence is optimistic of the time when people will live; so he hears laughter as the Greek heroes return:

Hark! the low and shattering laughter of bearded men
with the slim waists of warriors, and the long feet
of moon-lit dancer.56

Their faces glow like the Gods:

Oh, and their races scarlet, like the dolphin’s blood!
Lo! the loveliest is red all over, rippling vermilion
as he ripples upwards!
laughing in his black beard!
They are dancing! they return, as they went, dancing!
For the thing that is done without the glowing as of god, vermilion,57

Lawrence is of the firm view that:

The dawn is not off the sea, and Odysseus’ ships
have not yet passed the islands, I must watch them still.58

During his contemplation, Lawrence does not want any disturbance or interference for he feels good to happen and contemplate about the living God and his last days were spent such as he says:
Wait, wait, don't bring me the coffee yet, nor the
*pain grille*. 59

Lawrence's philosophy of dissolution and creation is best expressed in the short poem 'The Break of Life', where he believes that life renews from the dead as death and birth are inevitable processes, related to each other:

The breath of life is in the sharp winds of change
mingled with the breath of destruction
But if you want to breath deep, sumptuous life
breathe all alone, in silence, in the dark,
and see nothing. 60

In the first of Lawrence's death poems, 'Bavarian Gentians' (originally entitled 'Glory of Darkness' and written in Baden-Baden in 1929) with its mythological framework, is one of Lawrence's finest poems. The poem arises directly from the deepest part of the soul, from 'simple, sensuous passionate life'. In it the poet shows that death is a continuing part of a great mystery, transcending limitation of formal definition and academic exploration. Pinto, in the 'Introduction' to the 'Complete Poems', gives its geneology:

The immediate suggestion for this poem seems to have come from some gentians which he saw at Rottach in Bavaria, where he was staying in September 1929, just before he left for the South of France, where he died in the following March. The sight of the dark blue flowers seems to have evoked the memory of his exploration of the Etruscan tombs, in April 1927, as described by his friend Earl Brewster who accompanied him on that occasion: "From the jewelled splendour of these dark tombs we came forth into the brightness of an April day and a blue sky broken by hurrying clouds: the fields through which we walked were gay with red poppies:
our guide unlocked the door leading to another tomb and
we would descend again to behold the joyous scenes
with which the Etruscans of such a distant world chose
to adorn the homes of their dead. 61

As for Mr. Hassall has written, ‘Even the physical act of entering these
tombs…had become for Lawrence a symbol of death with that noble lack of bitterness
or protest which is so lovely an element in his ‘Last Poems’:

Reach me a gentian, give me a torch!
let me guide myself with the blue, forked torch of this flower
down the darker and darker stairs, where blue is darkened on blueness
even where Persephone goes, just now, from the frosted September
to the sightless realm where darkness is awake upon the dark
and Persephones herself is but a voice
or a darkness invisible enfolded in the deeper dark
of the arms of Plutonic, and pierced with the passion of dense gloom,
among the splendour of torches of darkness, shedding darkness on the
lost bride and her groom. 62

The poem begins with masterful and majestic restraint:

Not every man has gentians in his house
in soft September, at slow, sad Michaelmas. 63

We see the lovely but resolute figure of the religious seeker finding his way
into that sightless realm where darkness is awake upon the dark. Lawrence’s reference
to Michaelmas along with reference to Pluto, Demeter and Persephone shows
Lawrence’s characteristic synthesis of Christian and Pagan symbols. The religious
seeker’s impassioned appeal becomes symbolic of his journey into the dark and
unknown realm of death:

Bavarian Gentians, big and dark, only dark
darkening the day-time, torch like with the smoking blueness of Pluto’s
gloom,
ribbed and torch-like, with their blaze of darkness spread blue
down flattering into points, flattened under the sweep of white day
torch-flower of blue-smoking darkness, Pluto’s dark-blue daze,
black lamps form the halls of Dis, burning dark blue,
giving off darkness, blue darkness, as Demeter’s pale lamps give off
light,
lead me then, lead the way.64

In the early poems Lawrence does not try to give the reader an immediate
apprehension about the life of flowers and he uses them mythologically as the
miraculous torches lighting us down from stairs where the spring goddess goes to
embrace Hades the ‘arms Plutonic’ and makes us feel that she is the ‘anima’, the soul
of man going to embrace death which is august and God like and is not terrible. Like
Keats, in ‘The Fall of Hyperion’, as a means to lead the reader to ‘a world of wonder
and reverence’. Lawrence’s use of mythology is not as decoration or allegory. The
Gentians symbolic of the other world are present in the house of the poet that we find
in the following lines:

Reach me a gentian, give me a torch!
let me guide myself with the blue, forked torch of a flower
down the darker and darker stairs, where blue is darkened on blueness
down the way Persephone goes, just now, in first-frosted September,
to the sightless realm where darkness is married to dark
and Persephone herself is but a voice, as a bride,
a gloom invisible enfolded in the deeper dark
of the arms of Pluto as he ravishes her once again
and pierces her once more with his passion of the utter dark
among the splendour of black-blue torches, shedding fathomless
darkness on the nuptials.65

Philip Hobsbaum here precises Lawrence’s craftsmanship and by referring to
the Persephone, Demeter, Pluto-myth, he also indicates towards the cycle of seasons,
without which there can be no renewal of life and no ressurection. Persephone is the soul of the universe and the soul of man embraces death. Like the ‘Ship of Death,’ ‘Bavarian Gentians’ is the most famous and beautiful poem in the section of ‘Last poems’. Their motive is the immediate human problem in order to find the courage and the calm of mind for transcending speculations, regarding the coming darkness of tranquility and joy. Both are like an initiation ritual. By the use of symbols they seek for the peace of the mind with an utterly unknown experience which is unimaginable experience of darkness. In ‘The Ship of Death’ the symbol is an anthropological one in which people make a journey of the soul to another world. The symbol in the ‘Bavarian Gentians’ is the Gentian itself where the flower seems to glow in darkness like a torch of Pluto. It is a light within the absolute darkness which is unknowable spring where from the brightness passes through the world.

Death is like a great journey from the entanglements of life as he treats it in ‘So Let Me Live’:

So let me live that I may die
eagerly passing over from the entanglement of life
to the adventure of death, in eagerness
turning to death as I turn to beauty
to the breath, this is, of new beauty unfolding in the death.66

In some of these poems Lawrence differentiates between the dead who have departed for the new journey with a feeling of quiet contentment and those ‘unhappy dead’ who in actual life failed to affirm the creative meaning of being. Concerning the latter, he writes with some indignation in the beautiful poem ‘Death’:

They dare not die, because they know
in death they cannot any more escape
the retribution for their obstinacy.
Old men old obstinacy men and women
dare not die, because in death
there hardened souls are washed with fire, and washed and seared
till they are softened back to life-stuff again, against which they hardened themselves. 67

In another poem, ‘Two Ways Of Living And Dying’ Lawrenc writes but with a difference:

But when people are only self-conscious and self-willed
they cannot die, their corpus still runs on,
while nothing comes from the open heaven, from earth,
from the sun and moon
to them, nothing, nothing. 68

The latter are unhappy beings because they have denied creative life and a denial to life for Lawrence is one of the greatest evils. Painfully he has registered this feeling in the poem, ‘The Houseless Dead’. The poem describes the inability of those who have denied life to continue the mysterious and wondrous journey into the realm of death:

Oh, pity the dead that were ousted out of life
all unequipped to take the long, long voyage.
Gaunt, gaunt they crowd the grey mud-beaches of shadow
that intervene between the final sea
and the white shores of life. 69

Through next-verse, Lawrence continues, that such people who deny life force are really incapable of dying, for they have always been dead:

The poor gaunt dead that cannot die
in to the distance with receding oars,
but must roman like outcast dogs on the margins
of life! 70
Lawrence draws a close connection between the houseless uneasy, dead and dead-in-life through the poem, ‘Beware The Unhappy Dead,’ as he has hopes of transformation. The poem opens with a warning:

Beware the unhappy dead thrust out of life
unready, unprepared unwilling, unable
to continue on the longest journey.  

Lawrence intuitively seeks to show that the ‘lost souls’ and ‘angry dead’ who crowd ‘the long mean marginal stretches of our existence’ are in reality those living dead who never really died because they never really lived. As such, their presence disturbs the atmosphere and they haunt life with ‘disembodied rage’. Naturally the result is the perpetuity of a condition of living death:

‘Oh, now they moan and throng in anger’.  

He further adds:

Oh, but beware, beware the angry dead.
Who knows, who knows how much our modern woe
is due to the angry, unappeased dead
that were thrust out of life, and now come back at us
malignant, malignant, for we will not succour them.  

Lawrence, in one of his essays ‘On Human Destiny’, writes, ‘The exquisite light of ever renewed human consciousness is never blown out’, and in the next verse Lawrence shows that the human condition is surely not beyond hope of change:

Oh, on this day of the dead, now November is here
set a place for the dead, with a cushion and soft seat
and put a plate, and put a wine-glass out
and serve the best of food, the fondest wine
for your dead, your unseen dead, and with your hearts
speak with them and give them peace and do them honour.
Lawrence is not sure about the idea in absolute terms about the nature of life-after-death, and this account for his repeated use of words as 'darkness' and 'oblivion' throughout the death poems. In the poem 'Song of Death', his approach to death after life can be seen. Here, he speaks about the 'utter peace' that is gained in the 'oblivion' where the soul at last is lost. One can not define the mystery of death like the mystery of life in the absolute terms, as he explains in 'The End, The Beginning':

If there were not an utter and absolute dark
of silence and sheer oblivion
at the core of everything,
how terrible the sum would be,
how ghastly it would be strike a match, and make a light.75

Death, therefore, is not only a kind of utter and absolute dark, a 'silence', a 'sheer oblivion', 'a silent sheen cessation of all awareness', but also a form of sleep in which there is 'a hint of lovely oblivion' 'the sleep of God' in which 'the world is created fresh' and:

Once dipped in dark oblivion
the soul has peace, inward and lovely peace. 76

In the process of death Lawrence, therefore, sees the death of the old, knowing self, and the birth of a new man. This, he explains through the poem 'Gladness of Death':

I shall blossom like a dark pansy, and be delighted
there among the dark sun-rays of death.
I can feel myself unfolding in the dark sunshine of death
to something flowery and fulfilled, and with a strange sweet perfume.
Men prevent one another from being men
but in the great spaces of death
the winds of the afterwards kiss us into blossom of manhood. 77
The concept of decay and corruption followed by rebirth and renewal, can be seen in the beautiful poem 'Shadow', which begins with a longing for peace in the sleep of death and 'The Hands of God'. 'Shadow' is a lyrical poem with Keatsian overtones when the poet thus expresses:

And if tonight my soul may find her peace
in sleep, and sink in good oblivion,
and in the morning wake like a new-opened flower
then I have been dipped again in God, and new-created.  

And in the very next lines, these feelings are recounted in which the poet recognizes the ultimate meaning of the expression of death and birth:

And if, as weeks go round, in the dark of the moon
my spirit darkness and goes out, and soft, strange gloom
pervades my movements and my thoughts and words
then I shall know that I am walking still
with God, we are closed together now the moon's in shadow.  

Again, the lines that follow are endemic to most of Lawrence’s death poetry, with reference to autumn to 'the pain of falling leaves' to 'dissolution and distress'. Death is not some new experience in remote isolation, but one that is closely associated with Lawrence’s vital and magnificent ‘God’ whose presence is a crucial one in the process of death:

And if, as autumn deepens and darkens
I feel the pain of falling leaves, and stem that break in storms
and trouble and dissolution and distress
and then the softness of deep shadows folding, folding
around my soul and spirit, around my lips
so sweet like a swoon, or more like the drowse of low, sad song
singing darker than the nightingale, on, on to the solstice
and the silence of short days, the silence of the year, the shadow,
then I shall know that my life is moving still
with the dark earth the drenched
with the deep oblivion of earth's lapse and renewal. 80

Though tuberculosis had physically broken Lawrence but his courage was still indomitable:

And if, in the changing phases man's life
I fall in sickness and in misery
my wrists seem broken and my hearts seems dead
and strength is gone, and my life
is only the leavings of a life:
and still, among it all, snatches of lovely oblivion, and snatches of renewal
odd, wintry flowers upon the withered stem, yet new, strange flowers such as my life has not brought forth before, new blossoms of me-
then I must know that still
I am in the hands. [of] the unknown God,
he is breaking me down to his own oblivion
to send me forth on a new morning, a new man. 81

As usually, the characteristic of Lawrence's death poems, the above poem does not close in a note of despair as death is associated with God whose presence was crucial for the resurrection for:

"to send me forth on a new morning, a new man". 82

Another most instinctive poem in this series is 'The Ship of Death' which presents the pinnacle of achievement of Lawrence's poetic language when the imminence of death stirred the poet's imagination and capture a vivid splendour. The longest and most ambitious of the Last Poems was written when Lawrence lay dying in the opening months of 1930 in the South of France. The poem begins in a perfect elegiac tone:

Now it is autumn and the falling fruit
And the long journey towards oblivion. 83

Nevertheless, it is the triumph of Lawrence’s poetic art, combining a wonderful grandeur and tranquility with that free-breasted naturalness and spontaneity which he found in Etruscan art. By using simple unadorned language, he is able to talk above the grimmest facts of life in a natural way:

And it is time to go, to bid farewell
to one’s own self and find an exit
from the fallen self. 84

As during severe frost apples rot on the ground and leave seed for new germination, a new life, just as the soul is released from the body after death, though this is preliminary. The couplet brings in the central idea:

Have you built your ship of death, O Have you ?
O build your ship of death, for you will need it. 85

Here, Lawrence plays with the Shakespearean word ‘quietus’:

And can a man his quiets make
with a bare bodkin ?
With daggers, bodkins, bullets, man can make
a bruise or break of exist for his life ;
but is that a quietus, O tell me, is it quietus ?
Surely not so ! for how could murder, even self-murder
ever a quietus make ? 86

Though, for his long-long journey to oblivion, spiritual peace is needed very much, so the word becomes subdued into ‘quiet’ theme explicitly:

O let us talk of quiet that we know,
that we can known, the deep and lovely quiet
of a strong heart at peace ! 87
Therefore, the poet advances us to build the ‘Ship of Death’ in order to take the longest journey to oblivion. But the ship he advises must be furnished with food and little cakes and wine:

And die the death, the long and painful death
that lies between the old self and the new.
Already our bodies are fallen, bruised, badly bruised,
already our souls are oozing through the exit
of the cruel bruise.
Already the dark and endless ocean of the end
is washing in through the breaches of our wounds,
already the flood is upon us.
Oh build, your ship of death, your little ark
and furnish it with food, with little cakes, and wine
for the dark flight down oblivion.  

Over this sea of death, the fragile soul in the fragile ship of courage soars darkly, rudderless, having no port until all seems lost. But yet:

out of eternity, a thread
separates itself on the blackness,
a horizontal thread
that fumes a little with pallor upon the dark.  

The ending couplet once again optimistically repeat the concept of the renewal that has taken place as the sea-worn soul has emerged into new life. Here the image of the ‘thread separates itself’, presents dawn and:

The little ship wings home, faltering and lapsing
on the pink flood,
and the frail soul steps out, into her house again
filling the heart with peace.
Swings the heart renewed with peace
Here death remained an absolute-unbreakable mystery that can be experienced, but is inexplicable and Lawrence re-instates death which has become nasty and pervasive in the present world. The ship represents 'the ship of courage, the ark of faith' which provided 'oars and food, and little dishes and all accoutrements'. Ship is ready to sail, in the ocean of life:

> 'upon the sea of death, where still we sail
darkly, for we can not steer, and have no port.\textsuperscript{91}

The tiny ship of death that the Etruscans placed in their tombs for the soul's journey to another world was an entrancing symbol to Lawrence. Such image recurs in many of his last works, and it provides the controlling metaphors in his death poems. In ‘The Ship of Death’ he encompasses all his conflicting feelings about death and he connects his experience with his life long, complex vision of man’s place in the natural world. The poem instinctively crystallizes his sense of the delicate balance between man’s freedom in conscious action and his dependence on biological and psychic forces greater than his deliberate will. The subject of death enters the poem as a heavy gravitation drawing all of nature downward:

> Now it is autumn and the falling fruit
and the long journey towards oblivion.
The apples falling like great drops of dew
to bruise themselves an exit from themselves.
And it is time to go, to bid farewell
to one’s own self, and find an exit
from the fallen self.
Have you built your ship of death, O have you?
O build your ship of death, for you will need it.
The grim frost is at hand, when the apples will fall
thick, almost thundrous, on the hardened earth.
And death is on the air like a smell of ashes!
Ah! can’t you smell it?
And in the bruised body, the frightened soul
finds itself shrinking, wincing from the cold
that blows upon it through the orifices. 92

The first two sections establish both, the natural dignity and the individual pathos of the death experience, and the complexity of articulated feeling is an extraordinary technical achievement. The soul is 'frightened', 'shrinking', 'wincing' and pathetically reluctant to face the inevitable departure as a possible evasion of the difficulty of dying. Lawrence contemplates suicide in section III and IV. The travels over an unknown sea in section VII and VIII drawn into an increasing density of oblivion that is reminiscent of 'Bavarian Gentians'. But the flood of death subsides at the first thread of dawn over the sea, in section IX and X. The little ship returns and the soul re-enters the body like "a worn sea-shell / emerges strange and lovely". 93

The journey to the edge of eternity, which Lawrence experienced every night in solitude, darkness and sleep, renews his heart with peace. The morning 'a flush of yellow' and 'a flush of rose' - both crudely and gently gives him another day to prepare for his farthest Voyage.

The poem concludes with a parallel between emotions and final situations in his major writings. From 'The White Peacock' to his very last works, Lawrence's best art considers the plight of human individuality in an immensely powerful obscure universe. He wrote about the unconscious determination of man's relationship within a family, in marriage, in society and with the natural world. In his intuitive and highly symbolic art, he projected the tragic drama of his inner life into the world around him, and he progressively uncovered the deep motivations of his characters in context of natural life. In his death poems, more or less consciously in all his works-Lawrence highlighted above grieves of manhood or modernity. The isolation of the soul is the one dreadful obstruction in the way of vivid and perfect experience.

In Lawrence, however we find a poet who is keenly aware of the central indispensable function of poetry.
Again, there is a graceful allusion to death in the poem ‘Butterfly’ where the wind blowing sea-ward and it has a symbolism which recalls the later poetry of T.S. Eliot. Lawrence starts the poem as:

Butterfly, the wind blows sea-ward strong beyond the garden wall!
Butterfly, why do you settle on my shoe, and sip the dirt on my shoe,
Lifting your veined wings, lifting them? big white butterfly!  

The garden wall may refer to the body, as in ‘All Souls Day’ and the butterfly to the soul, as in Greek philosophy. Lawrence here asks:

Will you go, will you go, from my warm house?
Will you climb on your big soft wings, black-dotted,
as up an invisible rainbow, an arch
till the wind slides you sheer from the arch-crest
and in a strange level fluttering you go out to sea-ward white speck!  

Here, the image of the ‘sea’ symbolises the life-source and it will pull the butterfly away. Lawrence knows, the process cannot be stopped. Therefore he wishes the goodbye to butterfly:

Farewell, farewell, last soul!
you have melted in the crystalline distance,
it is enough! I saw you vanish into air.  

The ‘Farewell’ in these lines suggest that the poet has reached the point of saturation, the soul must leave, it had lived enough, in this world. Another beautiful poem ‘Invocation to the Moon’ which is like a prayer to the goddess who soothes and heals the spirit and it reflects Lawrence’s views on death. She is the:

“…… Great lady of the nearest
heavenly mansion, and last!  

The poet implores the great good lady to open her gate. Although her mansion is the nearest distance where soul can rest before death in the need of hour. She is the “far-off lingering lady who looks over the distant fence of the twilight”. Together with Mars, Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, Saturn and the Sun has given her gifts and wished her ‘good speed’. Therefore he implores her to open her gate:

...... of your silvery house
and let me come past the silver bells of your flowers, and the cockle-shells into your house, garmentless lady of the last great gift:
who will give me back my lost limbs
and my lost white fearless breast
and set me again on moon – remembering feet
a healed, whole man, O Moon!

So, not only in this poem, “Invocation to the Moon” does Lawrence show his significant poetic achievement but also in other poems as discussed above. How fluid, how personal, how imperfect a series of inconclusive adventure happened with the same man. Nothing is static as everything flows. Lawrence’s writing was not something outside himself, it was part of himself, it came out of his life and in turn, fed his life. He adventured into himself in order to write, and by writing he discovered himself. In the beautiful poem ‘Prayer’, from the first sentence to the last broken utterence, written by a dying hand, all this mass of writing forms one immense autobiography.

Give me the moon at my feet
Put my feet upon the crescent, like a Lord!
O let my ankles be bathed in moonlight, that I may go
sure and moon-shod, cool and bright-footed
towards my goal.
For the sun is hostile, now
his face is like the red lion.
The poem is not a conscious confession but an instinctive revealing and differs completely from the confessions of Rousseau.

Even up to the last period of his life, Lawrence never bothered about whether his ‘writing was good or bad’. He didn’t care for a fixed standard of poetry. For Lawrence, writing was just a part of living. Posthumously published, his last poems, reflect the shadow of death when Lawrence was facing death and was fatally ill. Now he was quite consciously building his ship of death with oars of peace and confidence so that his last journey could be undertaken:

Now in the twilight sit by the invisible sea
Of peace, and build your little ship
Of death, that will carry the soul
On its last journey, on and on, so still
So beautiful, over the last of seas
When the day comes, that will come.
Oh think of it in the twilight peacefully!
The last day, and the setting forth
On the longest journey, over the hidden sea
To the last wonder of oblivion. 101

Death is seen here as a natural process, as its pathos and mystery are not reduced. But there is no sense of fear or intolerable anguish. Lawrence’s sensuous mysticism reaches its maturity in these poems. Even while taking about the ‘long journey towards oblivion’, there is no decline in his sensuous acuteness and intensity and we can find the feeling of unbearable comparison between the living power and that of the forgetfulness that is just at hand. According to Lawrence, God only comes into being by actualizing himself in the separate identities of the visible and tangible world. This is the theme of ‘The Body of God’:

There is no god
apart form poppies and the flying fish,
men singing songs, and woman brushing their hair in the sun.
The lovely things are god that has come to pass, like
Jesus came.
The rest, the undiscoverable, is the demi-urge.\textsuperscript{102}

We can witness the same motive in ‘Red Geranium And Godly Mignonette’:

Imagine that any mind ever thought a red geranium!
As if the redness of a red geranium could be anything but a sensual experience
and as if sensual experience could take place before there were any senses.
We know that even God could not imagine the redness of a red geranium
nor the smell of mignonette
when geraniums were not, and mignonette neither.\textsuperscript{103}

It is the beasts that can never fall into self conscious knowledge of themselves apart from God but a man can fall away from God:

It is not easy to fall out of the hands of the living God:
They are so large, and they cradle so much of a man.\textsuperscript{104}

But can man fall:

And still through knowledge and will, he can break away,
man can break away, and fall from the hands of God
into himself alone, down the godless plunge of the abyss,
a god-lost creature turning upon himself
in the long, long fall, revolving upon himself
in the endless writhe of the last, the last self-knowledge.\textsuperscript{105}

Finally Lawrence ends the poem ‘The Hands of God’ with the prayer:

Save me from that, O God!
Let me never know myself apart from the living God!\textsuperscript{106}
Death is a part of the creative unknown mystery and life is its consummation that we can find in the last poems. Lawrence in his famous book ‘Phoenix’ explained as:

Do I fear the strange approach of the creative unknown to my door? I fear it only with pain and with unspeakable joy. And do I fear the invisible dark hand of death plucking me into the darkness, gathering blossom by blossom from the stem of my life into the unknown of my afterwards? I fear it only in reverence and with strange satisfaction. For this is my final satisfaction to be gathered blossom by blossom all my life long into the finality of the unknown which is my end. ¹⁰⁷

Lawrence never had visited India nor is there any record of his having read any of the Indian philosophical texts but it is often acknowledged that he was not unfamiliar with the Indian thought. But his sensitive thought reflects the Indian world view – happiness is not just pleasure and the material comforts do not lead to real happiness which in fact has to be looked from within. This is an integral part of Lawrence’s ethos as well.

Figures such as Dionysos, Odysseus and Aphrodite, haunt many of these last fine poems, though each of them acquired distinctively Lawrentian characteristics.

In the history of world literature, Omer Khayyam is an enigma. Khayyam is still loved in the world, and we remember his passionate praise of wine, love and lust and he offers a more delightful nectar of enlightenment and divine ecstasy which has the power to obliterate his woes forever. Similarly, Lawrence provides us a nectar of spiritual love which removes our pains and miseries such Divine Love is what Omar advises as a panacea for all woes and questioning through his ‘Rubaiyat’ (revered as the inspired Sufi scriptures) or the quatrains. Out of many we can take one for example:
Look to the Rose that blows about us – “Lo, Laughing”, she says, “into the World I blow:
At once the silken Tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw”.  

**Spiritual Interpretation:** "Fragrant and short lived as the rose, the pleasure of materiality mock human beings who do not understand their ephemeral nature. Delay not that understanding, lest you be trapped in the enfolding pleasure petals, entombed like the bee that tarries too long in the lotus closing at sunset.

Tear asunder with wisdom the stem of attachment that holds together your prison of passing pleasure petals. Fling them underfoot and press forward through the garden of life on your pathway to infinity.  

We can see such divine touch of poetry in Lawrence and Khayyam. So, not only this but pages and pages are flooded in Indian mythology who agree to Lawrence’s theory of death and love.

In an article written for ‘The New York Times’, Lawrence tried again to arouse interest in Indian culture as a creative influence which could shape the future. He argued that the Indians can offer to modern man no model for living but they can awaken Its consciousness as part of the self that has been denied in modern European and American culture.

Lawrence’s ‘Last Poems’ is a work of poet’s suffering and agony of departure of soul which turned into music and reconciliation as an essential part of his poetry. It reflects his emotions which are ‘instant and quick’. This is the real instinctive material of his poetry, which cannot be set in any form. This inner logic is quite as difficult as its older formal counter part. If any poet attempts he does not find himself writing in Lawrence’s style, as his emotions are transparent and undisguised. Lawrence thus, confesses himself: 

To this day, I still have the uneasy haunted feeling, and would rather not write most of the things. I do write-
including this note. Only now I know my demon better, and, after bitter years, respect him more than my other, milder and nicer self. Now I no longer like my “compositions”. I once thought the poem Flapper a little master piece: when I was twenty: because the demon isn’t in it. And I must have burnt many poems that had the demon fuming in them. The fragment Discord in Childhood was a long poem, probably was good, but I destroyed it. Save for Miriam, I perhaps should have destroyed them all. She encouraged my demon. But alas, it was me, not he whom she loved. So for her too, it was a catastrophe. My demon is not easily loved: whereas the ordinary me is. So poor Miriam was let down. Yet in a sense, she let down my demon, till he howled. And there it is. And no more past in me than by blood in my toes or my nose is past. 110

Lawrence was too weary to build his ship of death. But it is interesting to learn that the great and lovely spirit had always been there and it worked when he faced the great reality of life i.e. death which enriched his poetry with a new voice of grandeur and dignity.

Therefore, in Lawrence’s poetry especially in his last days, we can find ‘the insurgent naked throb of the instant moment’ and poetry is, ‘neither star nor pearl but instantaneous like plasm’. To convey such sort of experience with the greatest delicacy and the finest intelligence, his aim was honest, in expression. After many attempts and partly successful efforts Lawrence achieved such accumen in his ‘Last Poems’.

His poetry thus presents an unmistakable pattern of development. He began as a Georgian poet and ended as a poet advocating the ‘stark’, bare, rocky, directness. Karl Saphire finds the literal nature of Lawrence’s verses fascinating. Gordon thinks that ‘there is no fundamental recantation’ from Lawrence’s earlier stance. E M Forster
even more categorically affirms: "In a case he never developed. One can hear from the first what he is going to say".

In brief, his poetry has a great instinctive response to life which makes him a distinctive poet, seer, genius and philosopher of English literature. After the death of Lawrence Frieda wrote:

"What he had seen and felt and known he gave in his writing to his fellow men, the splendour of living, the hope of more and more life.... a heroic and immeasurable gift".\textsuperscript{116}
Notes And References


2. Ibid., p. 595.


6. Ibid., p.p.692-693

7. Ibid., p.693

8. Ibid., p.693

9. Ibid., p.693


12. Ibid., p.603

13. Ibid., p.661


16. Ibid., p.620

17. Ibid., p.673


20. Ibid., p.608

21. Ibid., p.185

22. Ibid., p.849

23. Ibid., p.182
24. Ibid., p.624
25. Ibid., p.p.833-834
26. Ibid., p.668
27. Ibid., p.726
28. Ibid., p.17
29. Ibid., p.17
30. Ibid., p.691
31. Ibid., p.683
32. Ibid. p.651
33. Ibid., p.699
34. Ibid., p701
35. Ibid., p.629
36. Ibid., p.654
37. Ibid., p.644
38. Ibid., p.p.646-647
39. Ibid., p.717
   *op. cit.* p.690
42. D. H. Lawrence, *Phoenix op. cit.* p.559
   *op. cit.* p.673
44. Ibid., p.673
   *op. cit.* p.960
47. Ibid. p.699
48. Ibid., p.701
49. Ibid., p.p.720-721
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62. Ibid., p.697
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67. Ibid., p.663
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84. Ibid., p.716
85. Ibid., p.717
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88. Ibid., p.718
89. Ibid., p.719
90. Ibid., p.720
91. Ibid., p.719
92. Ibid., p.p.716-717
93. Ibid., p.720
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97. Ibid., p.695
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100. Ibid., p.684
101. Ibid., p.964
102. Ibid., p.691
103. Ibid., p.690
104. Ibid., p.700
105. Ibid., p.700
106. Ibid., p.699
111. Ibid., p. 21
112. Ibid., p. 21
113. Ibid., p. I. (Acknowledgement)