

REBORN

by Petroula Stefanidou

When I first read Eugene O' Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* I was fascinated by the way the playwright depicts a real-life issue, that of addiction. The Tyrone family live in a world of passions, lies and guilt, they try to escape from reality seeking happiness and hope in pipe dreams where there is no salvation since they do not seem willing to acknowledge the terrible truths of their existences. Later on, I read about more dysfunctional and problematic families like those in the plays of Sam Shepard where the actions of the members of a family can lead to the destruction and the catastrophe of the whole family. In Shepard's *Curse of the Starving Class* the members of the Tate family long for a better life, they struggle to prove themselves that there is a glimpse of hope and even revival but they seem unable to break free from the vicious circle of failures and disappointment they have indulged themselves in. Weston, the alcoholic father, is at some point confronted with the realization that there are no miracles anymore: "What's everybody hoping for, a miracle! IS EVERYBODY HOPING FOR A MIRACLE? ... THERE'S NO MORE MIRACLES! NO MIRACLES TODAY! THEY'VE BEEN ALL USED UP!" (Shepard 157).

What I felt reading these plays was the psychological suffering of those individuals who have lost their way in life and try to survive by relying on the world of addiction. All these people who long for communication, normality, a settled life and beloved people around them. However, most of them appear to be devastated in the end and they destroy not only themselves but also the other people who happen to be with them and especially their beloved ones.

With this in mind, Sevan, the main character of my play, came into being. It may appear initially that Sevan has given up hope, that he sees no future or prospect in life and that he has got himself in a tangle, in a dead-end situation where the only thing he does is to hurt others but when he sees some light at the end of the tunnel, he begins to think that there may be some hope and that things can actually change for him. It is a second chance what Sevan wishes for and the question here is whether people deserve a second chance in life and what is ultimately the price for it. What are the consequences of our actions for the people around us and what is the price we have to pay?

On the other hand, George, the father, seems never to lose hope and this is due to his love for his offspring. He would like to have a son like all the other sons. He needs to rest; he has grown old and tired. He does not want to admit that his son is a drug addict, he cannot face the reality, he initially refuses to open his eyes and see who Sevan really is. However, parental love is stronger than pain, suffering or even embarrassment and decides to do his best to help his son. He is the one who leads Sevan in the office of the strange doctor who promises to save him and drag him out of the fake and illusionary world of addiction. But there is a price; Sevan will forget everything about his former life, even his own father. At this point, the roles are reversed, and the loving and caring father appears selfish because he does not want to lose his son, he thinks forgetting is losing, oblivion is a kind of death. But does he have the right to deprive his son of the opportunity to live?

As I mentioned above, there is a price for everything we do in life and George is the one who will pay a high price after all. He has been suffering the consequences of his son's actions and decisions all these years and now he is called again to sacrifice himself in order to save his child. Sevan is reborn through his father's sacrifice who will pay with his own life. While George descends into the dark, Sevan rises to the light, rises to life again.

Works Cited

O'Neill, Eugene. *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1984.

Shepard, Sam. "Curse of the Starving Class". *Plays, Two*. Faber and Faber, 1997, pp. 135-200.