

SHE ASKED ...

She asked if I ever wrote anything happy.
I had never thought about it ...
It seemed I was her personal Rorschach test ...
 me, an inkblot,
 which spoke to some perpetual sadness inside her
 which she projected onto me.
I mean, I wrote ... whatever I wrote.
No more rhyme nor reason to it than that.

But her question took me aback.
I paused. Reflected.
Was she right?
Was I deeply troubled ... and not even cognizant of it?

I didn't know. I didn't think so. But why, then, would she ask?
It wasn't mere curiosity.

Recently, I grouped my poetry into themes – or tried, at least.
I was now my own Rorschach test ...
 and here, in front of me,
 were 130, 40, 50 ink blots,
 of my own creation,

and did that give me pause ...

good god ...
 war
 death and dying
 loneliness
 sometimes anger – a feeling I didn't like in them ... or in me.

Did I write these? All of these?
From what wellspring of ... what ... did they arise?

Yet, in spite of it all, I don't feel sadness.
That inward-looking sensation is strangely comforting to me.
When I think of a woman's touch ... a child's unquestioning love ...
 the scent of lavender,
 the glories of some heaven above ...

I become calm ... and in that calmness, a quiet comes ...
and in that quiet, a voice begins to speak ...
of war ... of death and dying ... of growing old ... of loneliness
none of which blinds me to the beauty of a life well lived.