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If Literature Has No Music and No Art Within It, It Is Not Literature

People have always spoken about the connections and influences between different artistic media. This conversation has taken place throughout the whole history of artistic endeavor.

Nature has given people various kinds of talents and skills. Because art has arisen from these many diverse gifts, we talk about different forms of talent, but in fact, all of these talents come from one source. Indeed, the Universe is one. It is united. The Universe is the birthplace of all beautiful and ugly things. As artists, we are trying to express the beauty and meaning of existence. Truly talented writers can draw pictures and create melodies with words.

Great music does not consist of only one note. One small motif can suggest as much as a complete novel. When we see a beautiful, intelligently created picture, we feel as if we are listening to wondrous music. And when we hear good music, we feel as if we are looking at a lovely painting.

In life, great artists, particularly writers and painters, have many-sided talents. For example, in Mongolia, a place which nobody knows or takes into account, we now have many young writers who are gifted in this multi-faceted way.

Some writers everywhere complain: "I can't make my writing as visual as a picture, or I can't make my verse as aural as a melody." Such abilities come from talent. However, in general, if literature has no music and no art within it, it is not literature.

You have probably already forgotten about my little poem, which I read during my first reading: "Picture of steppe" In that poem, I had not intended to paint the steppe's portrait exactly in the way that a painter would. However, I wanted to see the steppe as a painter and hear its melody as a composer. I don't know if I fulfilled my wish, but I hoped that the readers would be able to glimpse and hear something about the steppe from this poem.

In the first stanza, when the narrator hears a foal whinnying, he also remembers his own childhood. This memory sounds like the melody of a *morinbuur*. A *morinbuur* is a Mongolian string instrument, at the top of which is the carved figure of a horse head. Every Mongol is moved by its melodies. Even Chinggis Khan, when he was a little boy named Temujin and, afterwards, when he became the ruler of a vast empire, was moved by these melodies. Because I am Mongolian, I believe Chinggis Khan really felt that way.

In the second stanza the writer, who remembered his childhood and heard the sound of a *morinbuur*, sees a mirage ripple in the far distance. Now, the child in his memory becomes as small as a wordless baby, and the *morinbuur*'s song becomes like that of a small flute. Everything begins from this beginning. The origin is like a mirage, undefined but still capable of calling the thoughts and spirits. The writer hopes that the reader will see this wordless baby and hear the music.

In the third stanza, looking into the steppe's distance, the writer sees some isolated hills loom up like meditating philosophers. It's difficult to talk about things that are very small and far away. Maybe the smallest and most simple images contain immense and mighty things. Maybe the smallest and most simple image is itself a great universe--like our grandfathers and grandmothers who, when they speak, say neither too little nor too much.

The writer does not have enough courage to speak of this great universe. However, he begins to hear the melody of an opera that he may never know and that may never be knowable. The hills, like philosophers in the steppe's distance, send him this melody.

Within this tiny poem, I combine the steppe's portrait, the melodies, and the thoughts that arise from them. My poem arose out of this synthesis. When the writer looked at the steppe, it became like a beautiful painting; this painting evoked many memories; and these memories led to many melodies. I hope that the readers will notice all of these elements.

In this example, I have tried to show how a poet can fit all kinds of art inside one creative work. Now, I will read the poem.

Picture of a Steppe

In the steppe a foal whinnies--
 Memory of my childhood--
 Melody of a morinhuur

A spirited mirage ripples in a pattern--
 A wordless baby sings--
 Sound of a small flute

Some monad hill looms up dim--
 An undared exclamation—
 The soul of an unknowable Opera

In my opinion, a poet should not write poems in an external or a declarative manner, but should, instead, paint and compose with his or her words. We talk about reading a painting; therefore, it's understood that paintings can speak. In music, likewise, when we hear a lot of melodies, it's as if we are hearing stories. But, whereas what cannot be painted can be expressed in music, and what cannot be expressed in music can be painted; poetry can articulate that which neither painting nor music can.

I think that the word "fiction" means expressing the inexpressible. Today, painting, music, and literature are approaching philosophy. We know that philosophy requires speaking of simple things in a profound way and profound things in a simple way. Permeation between different kinds of art helps literature become philosophical.

In conclusion, I wish that the people sitting in front of me would absorb all forms of art and become, themselves, like unsolvable riddles.