

There is Too Love in Oklahoma, Luke

The guy who gets up early will likely be the first one to see what's coming, good or bad. I'm one of those rooster-hearing octogenarians, so if I'm watching TV, it's usually muted with closed captions. Don't want to deprive my sweet wife of her full, eight hour beauty sleep.

Two days ago I read something truly amazing. It was the lyrics of a song by country star Luke Combs. I still have no clue what the music of Luke's tune sounds like, but I found the words actually poetic, unlike the inane drivel I usually hear on many pop and hip-hop stations.

I jotted down some of the words, but I missed a few, looking for a pen: "Ain't no love in Oklahoma/ Just the whistle of a long black train/ Ridin' on through the wind and rain/ Never feared nothin'/ But I'm scared to death/ I can't hardly breathe/ Till I catch my breath/ .. On the same Red River where I once got saved/ It's ridin' on in the wind and rain."

As those lines sank in, I suddenly realized Luke was singing about an oncoming tornado; this spring tornado alley was alive with those damnable things, wrecking ranches and towns almost nightly.

It was the line "Just the whistle of a long black train," that really woke me up. Many caught in twisters think they hear what sounds like a train roaring by. And against the lightning flashes, cameras often pick up the ominous black "train" itself. When twisters come close, people say they literally suck your breath away, making it impossible to breathe. I'm still looking forward to hearing the music of that song to see if it marries the music to the words like "Tumbling Tumbleweeds" does.

Hearing that song immediately reminded me of two other unforgettable western songs, "Cool Water," and Ghost Riders in the Sky." Both are pure classics, marrying their words and music to literally let you experience both dying of thirst in a 'barren waste/ Without a taste of water/ Cool water.'" and the nightmare vision of a cowboy" dreaming he sees "ghost riders, trying to catch the devil's herd/ Across the endless sky." I mean, dig this: "Their horns were black and shiny/ And there hooves were made of steel/ Their brands were still on fire/ And there hot breath I could feel."

With both of those classics the music perfectly creates what the words are showing.

I'm glad new song writers coming up, who are carrying on the tradition of lyricists like Bob Nolan, Dolly Parton, Hank Williams, Carol King and others, hungry for the perfect word. I'm surprised, given today's crazy world, that anyone can find much worth singing about, and frankly, the milieu of the country singer is a bit impoverished with its "Whiskey Rivers" and "one night stands."

But Luke combs, I think, is wrong about one thing: though the twisters scream, and the herds stampede, and the dust storms blind our eyes, God rests in the eye of the cyclone, and hears the lost traveler's cry." There IS still Love in Oklahoma and every other trouble spot on earth where Satan looses his "weapons forged against us." (Is 54:17) David said it pure and true: "I cried out unto the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." And. "Where trouble abounds, Loving Grace doth much more abound." and "Love never fails."

Gene Pinkney 24-06-14- for the Daily News