Elie Wiesel The Town Beyond the Wall

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Elie Wiesel:

(applause) Before reading, I'll tell you something else which you should know. I am a Hasid. You won't believe it, but it's true. Meaning I do belong to a movement which unfortunately almost disappeared or at least has been changed. And in a way, I'm still trying to catch up with it as a ghost.

Not so long ago I was in Israel. And I went to see the man who used to be my rebbe. He survived. He's the Rebbe of Vizhnitz, famous Hasidic dynasty. And when I came to see him 22 years after [00:01:00] we parted, he recognized me. And he said, "Well, it's you, the grandchild of Dovid Feige." And I said, "Rebbe, for the last 22 years I am working very hard to get myself a name, and here with you I am still the grandchild of Dovid Feige."

To which he answered, "So that's what you were doing for 22 years?" (laughter) Well, that's what I try to do. Then he asks, "What do you do?" And at that moment, of course, I really lost all my powers, and I said, "I really don't know." He said,

"But yet, what are you doing?" I say, "I am [00:02:00] writing." He said, "That's what you are doing?" I said, "I am trying."

"And what are you writing?" "Well," I said, "stories." "What kind of stories?" "Stories." "True stories?" I say, "Rabbi, what do you mean by that?" And he said, "Stories that really happened?"

And here I caught him. And I said, "Rabbi, you see, it's not so simple. Some stories did not happen but are true. Others did happen but are not." So he looked at me sadly, and he said, "Well, that's what you were doing for 22 years." [00:03:00] I'll try to show you what I've been doing for 22 years.

I'll read you a few pages of, I think, my favorite tale, *The Town Beyond the Wall*, which in French is called, *La Ville de la Chance*. I try in it first to describe my town under a different name. My town was called Máramarossziget, and I call it in my book Szerencseváros, the city of luck. It's a very simple town, although it has complex appearances with double personalities [00:04:00] with a Spaniard named Pedro, immortal people named Varady. They don't really exist, but then they are true.

Up against a range of high, impassable mountains, and flanked by two rivers as wide as oceans, Szerencseváros was a small city, happy and poor. Even the rich were poor there, and even the poor were happy. Happiness in Szerencseváros came down to its natural expression: enough bread and enough wine for the Shabbat meal. So the poor toiled six days by the sweat of their brows that they might have bread and wine for the seventh.

Like a mantle of purple silk, the Shabbat came to drape the city at sundown on Friday. The city's face change visibly. Merchants closed their [00:05:00] shops. Coachmen went home because there were no passengers. The pious proceeded to the ritual baths to purify their bodies. The Shabbat is compared to a queen. It is proper to have body and soul clean to merit her a visit.

Through half-opened doors and windows, the same song of welcome spreads through the deserted streets: *Shalom aleichem malachei hasharet*. Peace upon you, angels of peace. Peace upon you as you come and peace upon you as you go. Friday night in Szerencseváros no on goes hungry. Even the most impoverished family has something on the table covered with the snow-white cloth, bread, wine, and lighted candles, one for each living soul in the family. Whoever is alone, whoever is a stranger is

invited by the people of the city to come and break bread with them.

Friday night even Mad Moishe, the fat man who cries when he sings and laughs when he's silent, even he will taste [00:06:00] the holy joy of the Shabbat and its peace. He's much in demand. In choosing one invitation over another, Moishe behaves as though he were conferring the favor.

A family without its poor guests, the table feels uneasy, guilty. As soon as prayers end at the synagogue, the faithful rush upon the beggars, upon the strangers. In Szerencseváros the poor consider themselves important. They permit the rich to be happy without shame. When Friday night comes, Yankle the hunchback, who dies of famine all week long, becomes someone. People notice him, immerse him in kindness, battle for his favor. They are the angels of peace of the Shabbat, the poor, the dispossessed.

Mad Moishe came often to dine with Michael's family. Michael's father was his intimate friend. [00:07:00] The young boy had never quite understood what really linked those two men of whom one believed only the power of reason while the other resisted all clarity. Michael saw them chatting often. Moishe spoke and

Michael's father listened, now amused, now serious. One day Michael asked his father, "What do you find in him to spend so much time talking with him?"

"Moishe," said father, "I speak of the real Moishe. The one who hides behind the madman is a great man. He's farseeing. He sees worlds that remain inaccessible to us. His madness is only a wall erected to protect us, us. To see what Moishe's bloodshot eyes see would be dangerous."

After that Michael, too, tried to talk to the fat man who needed [00:08:00] two chairs to sit down. But Moishe would not accept the little boy as someone to talk to. "If you want to hear me sing, all right," he said. "Talk, no." "But I have questions I want to ask you," Michael begged. "Keep them to yourself," Moishe answered.

And that went on for months. The madman sang or was silent. He did not speak. And Michael, fascinated, burned with curiosity. He became convinced that Moishe bore a secret within him, an unknown message, perhaps an answer to eternal questions. So Michael never tried. Again and again and never stopped trying.

And then one evening the much-desired conversation took place. It was in winter. Michael was alone in the house. His mother and [00:09:00] father were in the shop. And then Moishe loomed in the doorway looking undone. Later Michael learned what had happened. The children of town, who bore him a cruel laugh, had made him drink urine, telling him it was wine, and he drank.

"Give me some wine," Moishe said. Michael opened the cabinet and took out the bottle. He set it before his guest. "I'll bring you a glass," he said. "No need." Moishe threw his head back and drank the bottle empty. "It is written," he said, in grieving tones, "that wine brings joy to the heart and felicity. It's false. My heart is empty of joy, empty of wine." Without a word, Michael opened a second bottle. This time, too, Moishe picked it up abruptly and drained it into his throat.

"I am not joyful," he cried furiously, flinging [00:10:00] the bottle against the wall. "The wine brings no joy to my heart. What is written in the book is false like the wine. The wine is false, too, like the heart. The heart is false, too." And tears gushed suddenly and were lost in his bushy beard.

"You," he said. "You, you don't know anything. You are too little, too young, but I know. I am a madman, and in this base

world only madmen know. They know that everything is false. Wine is false. The heart is false. Tears are false. And maybe the madmen are false, too."

Lost in thought, his eyes shut. He was silent for a long moment. Michael thought he had fallen asleep, but the tears were still running, red tears, wine colored. The boy took a chair and sat down, careful not to [00:11:00] wake the sleeper. "You can make noise," Moishe remarked. "I am not asleep."

Michael blushed as though he had done something discreditable. He would have liked to shrink to nothing, to disappear beneath the table. Eyes still shut, Moishe asked him, "You are afraid of me?" "No." "But I am Moishe the madman. Aren't you afraid of crazy man?" "No." "That's good," Moishe said. "You should never be afraid of other people, even if they are crazy beyond the pale. The one man you have to be afraid of is yourself. But immediately the grave question arises, who says that the others aren't you? Who says Moishe the madman isn't you?" Michael never budged. He clung to the chair [00:12:00] as if to keep from topping off.

"The others," Moishe cried, bringing a fist down on the table, "the others, by what right are they not crazy? These days

honest men can do only one thing, go mad, spit on logic, intelligence, sacrosanct reason. That's what you have to do. That's the way to stay human, to keep your wholeness. But look at them. They are cowards, all of them. They never say I am crazy and proud of it. But they jump at the chance to yell, 'Hey! He is crazy. Moishe is crazy. Keep away from him,' as if every one of them wasn't at some time in his life another man called Moishe, Moishe the madman."

Raging, the fat man breathed heavily. His powerful voice was full of fury, but his tears witnessed his sadness. [00:13:00] Suddenly, he half-opened his eyes to the boy who found infinite kindness in them. And Moishe leaned forward and tried to smile.

"You are still not afraid of me?" "No. The truth, I am afraid, Moishe, but not of you. I am afraid, but I don't know of what." "I like you," said Moishe. "You don't lie. You are nice. You are intelligence." He tucked at his beard as though he were angry, and shouted, "I am going to sing for you!" He put a hand over his eyes, the better to drop into the chasms of memory. Tears ran between his fingers. "I'll sing for you. What would you like to hear, a prayer for Yom Kippur, for Shavuot?"

No, an older song, a love song. [00:14:00] But first tell me the story of this song.

Listen, listen. Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac, the famous shepherd of Kalov, was walking in the woods one afternoon when his ear was struck by the words and melody of an infinitely sad, infinitely beautiful song. He followed the voice and discovered a singer. It was a young Hungarian guarding his flock. 'Sell me your song,' the rabbi said to him. 'I offer you 20 crowns. Will you accept?'

The young man stared at the rabbi, uncomprehending. 'Well, will you take it? Twenty crowns, 30, 40?' The young Hungarian stretched forward a hand, and the rabbi dropped 50 crowns into it. At that instant an astonishing thing took place. The song fled the Hungarian and was received [00:15:00] by the rabbi. The one had forgotten it while the other had learned it, and that in less than a second.

Later, Rabbi explained to his disciples, that this love song, composed by David the king, had wandered for many centuries waiting to be liberated." And leaping to his feet with surprising grace, Moishe paced the room chanting the "Sol a kokosh mar," a feverish, nostalgic song in which the lover

implores his distant mistress to wait, to wait even until God consents to unite their separated hearts.

Moishe had a hoarse voice full of warmth and chagrin. It seemed to search up out of the shadows, amazed by its own power. But when he had sung himself exhausted, [00:16:00] Moishe the madman sat down, wiped his wet beard on the back of his sleeve, and asked for a little more wine. Michael set a third bottle before him. Moishe looked up at the boy.

"It seems to me you have questions to ask. What are they?" "Some other time," Michael said. "You are tired." Without knowing why, Michael felt nervous. Even knowing that the chance might never come again, he hesitated. He examined his fingernails, head bowed.

"Go ahead," Moishe encouraged him. "Don't put things off until later. They change too fast." "I can't," the boy said. "You make me shy." "Look at me," the madman said. "I order you to look at me." As he turned, Michael raised his head slightly. "More than that." And when the boy did not obey, [00:17:00] he went on. "You must never be afraid to look a man in the face, even a madman. Ask your father. He will tell you."

“That’s his secret,” Michael thought. “He’s not crazy, but in that case the others are. And me, what am I, Moishe or the others?” “Look at me, I tell you!”

Michael wished to obey, but his head seemed heavy, heavy as if it had changed weight and shape, as if it were the head of a stranger. Michael went on looking, and finally Moishe had to take the boy’s chin in his hand and raise his head for him.

“Don’t close your eyes. Don’t raise your brows.” Michael saw such deep [00:18:00] shadow, such a concentration of night in Moishe’s pupils that he was dizzied. “Don’t look away!” the madman cried angrily whilst licking his lips. For a long moment, Moishe and Michael stared at each other without a word. It was Moishe who broke the silence.

“Now you will never forget me.” His voice had become calm again and was drifting towards silence. “I have no more questions,” Michael said. (applause) [00:19:00]

There was such a man as Moishe the madman, and I knew him. I knew him, and I tried to turn him into a legend. Actually, I think that before I was born, as everyone, I, too, had the choice to become what I wanted to become, even before that, a

storyteller or a novelist. And I chose storytelling, and my novels are nothing but tales, but legends. And whenever you see the word novel, it is simply because the angel up there didn't understand well my wish. [00:20:00] (laughter)

I ask no more questions Moishe the madman, but I ask questions other people, and they were my masters, my teachers. The text about Moishe was translated by Stephen Becker, and one that I am going to read was translated by Lily Edelman.

For some, literature is a bridge which brings childhood to death. While the latter engenders anguish, the former invites nostalgia. The deeper the nostalgia and the more complete the fear, the purer, the richer the word and the image. But for me writing is rather a *matzevah*, an invisible tombstone erected to the memory of the dead unburied. Each word [00:21:00] corresponds in reality to a face, a prayer, the one needing the other in order not to sink into oblivion.

This is because the angel of death too early crossed my childhood, marking it with his seal. Sometimes I think I see him, his look victorious, not at the end of the journey but at its starting point. It fuses into the very beginning, the first élan, rather than into the abyss, which cradles the future.

Thus, I evoke the solitary victor of it nostalgia, almost without fear.

Perhaps this is because I belong to an uprooted generation without cemeteries to visit the day after Rosh Hashanah, according to custom, when we can fall across the graves and commune with our dead. [00:22:00] My generation has been robbed of everything, even our cemeteries.

I left my native town, Szerencseváros, Máramarossziget, in the spring of 1944. It was a beautiful day. The surrounding mountains in their verdure seemed taller than usual. Our neighbors were strolling in their shirtsleeves. Some turned their heads away, others sneered. After the war, I had several opportunities to return. Temptations were not lacking or reasonable to see which of my friends had survived, to dig up the belongings and valuable objects which we had hidden the evening before our departure, to retake possession, even fleetingly, of our property, of our past.

I did not return. I began to wander across the world knowing that to run away was useless. All roads lead home. It remains the only fixed [00:23:00] point in this seething world. At times I tell myself that in reality, I have never left the place

where I was born, where I learned to walk and to laugh. The universe is just an extension of that little town somewhere in Transylvania called Máramarossziget. Later a student, a journalist, I was to encounter in the course of my wandering strange and sometimes inspiring men who played their part, or created it: writers, thinkers, poets of life, troubadours of the apocalypse. Each gave me something for my journey, a sentence, a wink of the eye, an enigma, and I was able to continue.

But at a moment of *cheshbon hanefesh*, in making an accounting, I recognize that my real teachers await me, to guide and push me forward not in wanders and far off places but in tiny classrooms filled with shadows [00:24:00] and with song, where a boy whom I used to resemble still studies the first page or the first tractate of the Talmud, certain of finding their answers to all questions, better, all answers and all questions.

Thus, the act of writing is, for me, often nothing more than the secret or conscious desire to carve words on a tombstone, to the memory of a town forever vanished, of childhood exiled, and of all those whom I loved and who, before I could tell them that I loved them, went away. My teachers were among them. The first was an old man, heavy set with a white beard, roguish eyes, anemic lips. His name escapes me. In fact, I never knew it.

In town, people referred to him as the teacher from Botiza, doubtless because he came from the village of that name. [00:25:00]

He was the first to speak to me lovingly about language. He put his heart and soul into each syllable, each punctuation mark. The Hebrew alphabet made up the frame and content of his life, contained his joys and disappointments, his ambitions and memories. Outside the 22 letters of the sacred tongue, nothing exists for him. He would say to us with tenderness, "Torah, my children, is what? A treasure filled with gold and precious stones. To open it you need a key. I will give it to you, and make good use of it. The key, my children, the key, my children, is what? The alphabet. So repeat after me, with me, aloud, louder, alef, bet, gimel. Once more and again, children, repeat with force and with pride, alef, bet, gimel. In that way the key will forever be part of your [00:26:00] memory, of your future, alef, bet, gimel."

It was later Zaide the Melamed, who later taught me Bible and the following year Rashi's commentaries, with his bushy black beard, this taciturn teacher, eternally in mourning, filled us with uneasiness mixed with fear. We thought him severe, if not cruel. He never hesitated to rap the knuckles of anyone who

came late or misunderstood a meaning of a sentence. "It's for your own good," he used to explain.

He flew into a rage easily, and whenever he did, we lowered our heads and trembled, waiting for the lull. But he was in truth the tormented and sentimental man. While punishing a recalcitrant pupil, he suffered. He did not show it because he did not want us to think him weak. He put his trust only in God. Why was so much slanders spread about him? Why? [00:27:00] Why was he credited with the meanness he did not have? Perhaps because he was hunchbacked, because he lowered his eyes when he spoke. The children who unknowingly frightened him, liked to believe that ugliness is the ally of meanness, if not its expression.

His school was in a ramshackle house at the end of the court, and contained only two rooms. He occupied the first. In the other his assistant, a young scholar named Yitzchak, opened for us the heavy doors of the oral tradition. We began with the tractate of Bava Metzia. It dealt with the dispute between two persons who found a garment. Whose was it? Yitzchak read a passage and repeated it in the customary niggun. At the end of the semester, we were able to absorb an entire page a week. The next year became study of Tosafot, which comment on

commentaries. And our brains [00:28:00] slowly sharpened, pierced the meaning of each word, released illumination it had contained since the world was world.

Who came the closest, the school of Shammai, the intransigent, or that of Hillel, his interlocutor and rival? Both. All trees are nourished by the same sap. Nevertheless, I felt closer to the house of Hillel. It strove to make life more tolerable, the quest more worthwhile. At 10 I left Yitzchak and became the disciple of the Selishter Rebbe, the morose character with wild eyes, a raucous, brutal voice. In his presence no one dared open his mouth or fall into reverie. He terrorized us. Whenever he distributed slaps, which happened often and often without reason, he did so with all his strength, [00:29:00] and he had plenty. That was his matter of enforcing discipline and preparing us for the Jewish condition. (laughter)

At twilight, between Mincha and Maariv prayers, he used to force us to listen as he read a chapter to us of Mussar literature. As he described the torture suffered by the sinner in his grave, even before appearing before the holy tribunal, sobs would shake his entire body. He would stop and hide his head in his hands. It was as if he in advance experienced the pangs of final judgment. I shall never forget his detailed descriptions of

hell, which in his naivete he situated in a precise spot in heaven. (laughter)

On the Shabbat day he became a different person, almost unrecognizable. He made his [00:30:00] appearance at the synagogue across from the little market, standing near the stove at the right of the entrance, looking hunted, he sank into prayer. Seeing no one, I would greet him, but he did not respond. He would not hear me. It was as if he no longer knew who I was or that I was there at all. The seventh day of the week he consecrated to the creator, and he saw nothing of what surrounded him, not even himself. He prayed in silence, apart. He did not follow the cantor. His lips hardly moved. A distant sadness hovered over his distracted gaze. Strange, but weekdays I was less afraid of him.

I had decided to change schools, and I became the disciple of three successive teachers. Natives, they too of nearby villages. [00:31:00] Their attitude was more human. We already considered ourselves big *talmidei yeshiva* who could take on a *sugiya*, even a difficult passage without assistance. Now and then, when at an impasse, we would ask them to show us how to continue. The moment a problem supposed into commentaries of the Maharsha or the Maharam were unraveled, their swift clarity

dazzled us. To emerge suddenly from the entanglement of a Talmudic truth would always bring me intense joy. Each time I found myself on the threshold of a luminous, indestructible universe, and I used to think that over and beyond the centuries and the funeral pyres, there is always a bridge that leads somewhere.

Then the Germans invaded our little town. And the nostalgic singing [00:32:00] of the pupils and their teachers was interrupted. I would give all that I possess, all that has been promised me, to hear it once again. Occasionally I sit down with a tractate of the Talmud and a paralyzing fear invades me. I have not forgotten the words. I would know how to translate them, perhaps even to comment on them, but to speak them does not suffice. They must be sung. And I no longer know how. Suddenly my body stiffens. My glands falters. I am afraid to turn around. Behind me my masters are gathered, their breaths burning.

They are waiting, as they did long ago at examination time, for me to read aloud and demonstrate to the past generations that their song does not die. My masters are waiting, and I am [00:33:00] ashamed to make them wait. I am ashamed, for they have not forgotten the song. In them the song has remained

alive, more powerful than the forces that annihilated them, more obstinate than the wind that scattered their ashes. I want to plead with them to return to their graves, no longer to interfere with the living. But they have no place to go. Heaven and earth have rejected them.

So not to humiliate them, I force myself to read a first sentence, then I reread it in order to open it, close it again, before joining it to the next. My voice does not rise above, above a murmur. I have betrayed them. I no longer know how to sing.

With the exception of one, all my masters perished in the death factories invented and perfected for the glory of the national German genius. I saw them, badly shaven, emaciated, [00:34:00] stooped. I saw them make their way one sunny Sunday towards the railroad station, destination unknown. I saw Zeide the Melamed, his too-heavy bag bruising his shoulders. I was astonished to think that this nomad had once terrorized us.

And the Selishter Rebbe, I saw him, too, in the middle of the herd, absorbed in his own private world, as if in a hurry to arrive more quickly. I thought, his face has taken on the expression of Shabbat, and yet it is Sunday. He was not

weeping, his eyes no longer shot forth fire. Perhaps at last he was going to discover the truth. Yes, hell exists, just as this fire exists in the night and the night exists. So for the tenth time I read the same passage in the same book, and my masters, by their silence, indicate their disapproval. I have lost the key [00:35:00] which they had entrusted to me.

Today other books hold me in their grip, and I try to learn from other storytellers how to pierce the meaning of an experience and how to transform it into legend. But most of them talk too much. The song is lost in words, like rivers in the sand. The Selishter Rebbe told me one day, "Be careful with words. They are dangerous. Beware of them. They beget demons or angels. It's up to you to give life to one or the other. Be careful, I tell you. Nothing is as dangerous as to give free rein to words."

At times I feel him standing behind me, rigid and severe. He reads over my shoulder what I am trying to say. He looks and judges whether his disciple [00:36:00] enriches man's world or impoverishes it, if he calls up angels or, on the contrary, kneels before demons of innumerable names. Or to Selishter Rebbe, with his wild eyes not standing behind me, I would perhaps have written these lines differently. It is also

possible that I would have written nothing. Perhaps I, his disciple, am nothing more than his tombstone. (applause)

I did not tell my rabbi in Israel [00:37:00] the real secret. Had I told him the real secret, he would have stopped believing that I am a Hasid or that I was his disciple. And the secret to him is that I write in French. (laughter) I shall read one page in French. Why? Because this is my language now, and secondly, for egotistic reasons. If you will not understand, at least I will know why. (laughter) (applause)

It's one page about my journey to Russia. [00:38:00] I've been there twice. I tried to bring back a witness account. And I think that -- I truly believe that what is taking place there must affect us. If not, we are unworthy of them and of us. In French it's called *Les juifs du silence*, and it's translated by nobody.

(French) Thank you. (applause)

I try to put in each novel a legend. In some I try to put more than one. The legends are more important than the novels. There is a story about the Baal Shem Tov which should be

dedicated to all novelists and storytellers and writers. [00:41:00]

A man came to him and said, "Rabbi, I sinned. I converted. I left my people. What should I do?" So the Baal Shem Tov gave him penitence and told him what to do. Then the man said, "But Rabbi, when will I know that I was forgiven for my sin?" And the Baal Shem Tov answered, "If one day someone will come to you and tell you your story without knowing that it's you, then you will know." So I am telling myself a lot of stories, waiting that maybe one day I recognize mine and be forgiven. [00:42:00]

This story takes place in Tangier at a meeting between Michael and Pedro. They meet, and they tell each other stories. And both are forgiven. The hero of my story, Michael, said, "It's neither fear nor hatred. It is silence." The silence of a five-year-old Jew. His name was Mendele. In his eyes the whole sweep of his people's suffering could be read. He lived in Szerencseváros, which means in Hungarian the city of luck.

One day the Germans decided to rid the country of what they called the Jewish plague. Feige, Mendele's mother, a beautiful and pious young widow, [00:43:00] had a visit then from an old friend of her husband, a peasant who owned an isolated farm on

the other side of the mountain. "Take your son, Feige, and come with me," the peasant said to her. "I work out two openings so you can breathe, but be careful. In heaven's name be careful. Don't move. Whatever happens, don't budge. And most of all, when we leave town at the sentry station, be careful, and tell that to your son, Feige."

The widow took her son's face in her hands, and as she stroked his hair very gently she said to him, "Did you hear? We must be silent. Whatever happens, it's our only chance. Our lives depend on it. Even if you are afraid, even if you hurt, don't call out, and don't cry. You can scream later. You can cry later. [00:44:00] Do you understand, son?"

"Yes, mother, I understand. Don't worry, I won't cry. I promise."

At the sentry station, two Hungarian gendarmes, black feathers in their hats, asked the peasant where he was going. "I'm going home," he answered. "I have two farms, two fields. The town lies between them. To move hay or wheat from one to the other, I have got to cross the city. I have done it so often that the horses know the way all by themselves."

“What are you hiding underneath?” asked the gendarme.

“Nothing, officers. Nothing at all, I swear it. I have nothing to hide.”

The gendarmes drew their longswords from their black scabbards and drove them into the hay from all angles. It went on forever. Finally, the peasant couldn’t stand it any longer. He let out a whimper and tried to smother it with the back of his hand. [00:45:00] Too late. One of the gendarmes had noticed. The peasant had to unload the hay. The gendarmes, triumphant, saw the widow and her son.

“Mama,” Mendele wept. “It wasn’t me who called out. It wasn’t me.” The gendarme’s ordered him off the wagon, but he couldn’t move. His body was run through. “Mother,” he said again when bloody tears ran into his mouth, “It wasn’t me. It wasn’t me.” The widow, a crown of hay about her head, did not answer. Dead. She, too, had kept silence.

Silence plays [00:46:00] an important role in legends, in storytelling. Things that are not said are as important, if I may quote George Steiner, as things that are said. Poems that were not written have the same impact as those that were

composed. Whatever I'm trying often to do is not to write. It's to achieve such a power in silence that words are useless.

It is late, so I think I will be silent soon. But before, I'll tell you something else. [00:47:00] Very short. It is said about Beethoven that when you listen to his symphonies, first movement, second, third, and fourth, in the end they all reach the apotheosis, and then it's finished, and then it's silence. The silence, too, belongs to Beethoven. I think in storytelling or in literature, the silence, too, belongs to the tale. Thank you. (applause)

M1:

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