

TEN, WORLD!

Written and Illustrated
By
ELSIE ROBINSON

"PAIN"

By Elsie Robinson

LISTEN, WO

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After my mother died, I found this typewritten poem stashed in a book that had belonged to her. Finding it was deeply healing for me. The discovery also set me on the path to write, alongside author Julia Scheeres, the first biography of Robinson, *Listen, World!: How the Intrepid Elsie Robinson Became America's Most-Read Woman*.

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Why must I be hurt?
Suffering and despair,
Cowardice and cruelty,
Envy and injustice,
All of these hurt.
Grief and terror,
Loneliness and betrayal
And the agony of loss or death –
All these things hurt.
Why? Why must life hurt?
Why must those who love generously,
Live honorably, feel deeply
All that is good – and beautiful
Be so hurt,
While selfish creatures
Go unscathed?
That is why—
Because they can feel.
Hurt is the price to pay for feeling.
Pain is not accident,
Nor punishment, nor mockery
By some savage god.
Pain is part of growth.
The more we grow
The more we feel –
The more we feel – the more we suffer,

For if we are able to feel beauty,
We must also feel the lack of it –
Those who glimpse heaven
Are bound to sight hell.
To have felt deeply is worth
Anything it cost.
To have felt Love and Honor,
Courage and Ecstasy
Is worth – any price.
And so – since hurt is the price
Of Larger living, I will not
Hate pain, nor try to escape it.
Instead I will try to meet it
Bravely, bear it proudly:
Not as a cross, or a misfortune, but an
Opportunity, a privilege, a challenge – to the God that
gropes within me.

Get to know Elsie and what
inspired her poem here



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