

**THE THERAPEUTIC ESSENCE OF DAVID'S BOOK OF PSALMS AND  
LISA MARK'S "JUST WAIT FOR THE SUN" AS POETRY**

**BY**

**BLESSING TEMISANREN ETCHIE**

**ART2106338**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERATURE**

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**BENIN CITY**

**NOVEMBER, 2025.**

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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS  
(B.A) IN ENGLISH.**

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## CERTIFICATION

I certify that this project entitled The Therapeutic Essence of David's Book of Psalms and Lisa Mark's "Just Wait for the Sun" was carried out by **BLESSING TEMISANREN ETCHIE** in the Department of English and Literature, University of Benin, Benin City, under my supervision.

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Dr. S. Eguavoen

Project Supervisor

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Date

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my ever-loving Father, God Almighty, whose unfailing love, guidance, and strength have been my anchor through every challenge, every difficulty while being in school. I dedicate this work to my late mother, Mrs. Fidelia Eterigho Etchie, whose words still guide me everyday of my life.

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## ABSTRACT

This research, titled *The Therapeutic Essence of David's Book of Psalms and Lisa Mark's "Just Wait for the Sun" as Poetry*, explores the intersection of poetry, psychology, and healing. It examines how poetic expression, particularly within sacred and inspirational contexts, serves as a tool for emotional restoration, self-reflection, and inner peace. Drawing insights from Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and the famous principles of bibliotherapy, the study affirms how poetry functions as a means of catharsis - helping individuals confront repressed emotions and transform pain into spiritual or emotional growth. The analysis of the Psalms reveals that King David's poetic laments and praises express a deep range of human emotions - sorrow, fear, guilt, gratitude, and hope - mirroring the psychological journey from distress to recovery. Similarly, Lisa Mark's poem "Just Wait for the Sun" reflects the therapeutic power of patience, light and resilience in times of despair. The study also extends to the role of music as spoken poetry, highlighting the case of King Saul and David, where lyrical expression and melody act as healing forces for mental unrest. Ultimately, this work underscores that poetry - whether in scriptural or modern form - is not merely an art form but a form of therapy, fostering emotional wholeness and spiritual renewal in a world marked by loneliness, anxiety, and mental strain.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0. Purpose of Study.**

Using the Book of Psalms and “Just Wait for the Sun”, this study aims to show how poetry helps in the same way medicine works for illnesses, and also for self motivation. The purpose of this study is to show how people can use poetry as a form of consolation during hard times.

#### **1.1 Scope of Study.**

This research is limited to discussing the impact of poetry in therapy, and also how people can express their ailments and woes through poems used in David’s Book of Psalms. It also seeks to show the power of hope and patience in overcoming adversity as seen in “Just Wait for the Sun” by Lisa Mark. These texts have been selected because they have enough data necessary for the topic to be discussed.

#### **1.2 Methodology**

This research adopts the qualitative method of research, precisely the textual method of analysis. It undertakes a thorough analysis of the primary texts”: David’s Book of Psalms and Lisa Mark’s “Just Wait for the Sun”, which includes identifying the ideology behind the poetic therapy, music as spoken poetry, and therapeutic literature,

poetry in view. The secondary data collected for this study are from online materials, and books related to the research.

### **1.3 Theoretical Background**

To understand how poetry can offer comfort and how humans can find solace through words, there is a need to understand the theoretical background of this research. The theories used in this research are Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic theory and Samuel Crowthers' Bibliotherapy. Sigmund Freud's studies and theories gave rise to psychological theories and therapeutic practices known as psychoanalysis. The concept that everyone has unconscious thoughts, feelings, memories, and wants is at the heart of psychoanalysis. A person's behaviour, attitude, and character is influenced by their unconscious desires. Emotional and psychological issues like hopelessness and distress are frequently caused by a battle between the conscious and unconscious minds. The Id, the Ego and the Superego, according to Freud, are the three aspects that make up the human mind. The Id is the source of all psychological energy. This personality is entirely conscious and includes instinctive and primitive behaviors. This part of the mind acts on impulse and wants to satisfy its urges as quickly as possible. It is incapable of delaying satisfaction since it does not have the ability to do so.

The Ego, on the other hand, is the conscience of the mind. This part is often in conflict with the Id, as it questions actions from a moral point of view. The Ego tries as much as possible to satisfy the Id's desires and inappropriate ways accurately. The Ego controls and directs the Id

like a chariot and its rider. Lastly, the Superego is the part that balances the other two. This part mediates for the Id and the Ego, making sure decisions are balanced. This is the part where we store the values and ideas we learn from our parents and society (our sense of right and wrong). The Superego is that part of us that attempts to make us more civilized.

Sigmund Freud believed that human beings often hide painful memories, fears, and feelings deep in their unconscious minds. However, these hidden emotions do not disappear- they can cause stress, sadness, or even mental breakdowns. Freud suggested that when people express these feelings (through talking, writing etc), they experience catharsis, which is a kind of emotional release. This release is what makes them feel lighter or relieved. In the Psalms, David often used poetry as a way to express his emotions. From Freud's perspective, David is not repressing his emotions. Instead, he brings them into the open through poetry, which helps him process the pain. The same can be seen in Lisa Mark's poem "Just Wait for the Sun", the poem addresses people who are depressed, anxious, or even suicidal. It encourages them to hold on, reminding them that light will eventually return. Instead of burying negative feelings, the poem acknowledges them openly, creating a space for healing. This fits Freud's idea of sublimation, where painful emotions are turned into something creative and meaningful- in this case, poetry that comforts others.

Bibliotherapy, on the other hand, means "healing through books". The term "Bibliotherapy" was coined by Samuel Crowthers in 1916. Originally, the practice of using books for healing has a long history. Crowthers, who was an American minister and essayist, first used the term to

describe literature to aid people with mental health issues. It is the practice of using literature to help people work through their problems, cope with trauma, and gain hope. The process typically involves three stages; firstly, identification. This is when readers see their own struggles mirrored in the text; secondly, catharsis. This is when readers experience an emotional release through the narrative or poetry; and lastly, insight. Readers gain new perspectives or coping strategies from the text.

Bibliotherapy is widely applied in counseling, education, and clinical psychology, particularly for people experiencing depression, grief, trauma, or identity struggles. When applied to this research, bibliotherapy highlights the therapeutic function of poetry. David's psalms served as a form of bibliotherapy for ancient Israel, giving voice to communal and individual pain while pointing toward faith and hope. In modern times, "Just Wait for the Sun" serves a similar function for modern readers, validating their despair while offering encouragement to endure until better days arrive. Both texts provide comfort, healing, and perspective, demonstrating that literature is not just art but also medicine for the soul.

Both Freud's psychoanalytic theory and bibliotherapy converge on the importance of expression and release. Psychoanalysis focuses on the internal process of uncovering unconscious pain, while bibliotherapy emphasizes the external role of literature in helping readers process and heal. Taken together, they explain how poetry, whether old or new,

functions as a therapeutic tool: it helps readers articulate hidden pain, release emotional burdens, and find renewed strength.

In conclusion, this theoretical framework positions poetry as a psychoanalytic and bibliotherapeutic resource. Freud's theory helps us understand the internal mechanisms of catharsis and sublimation, while bibliotherapy emphasizes the external practice of using literature for healing. Together, they demonstrate that David's psalms and Lisa Mark's "Just Wait for the Sun" transcend their literary beauty to become instruments of solace, resilience and hope for the human spirit.

#### **1.4 Literature Review.**

Poetry has long been recognized as a medium capable of eliciting profound emotional responses and offering solace to its audience. Aristotle, in his seminal work *Poetics*, situates poetry within a framework of mimesis and catharsis, arguing that "tragedy, then, is an imitation not of men but of an action and of life, of happiness and misery" and that it functions to produce "a cleansing of such emotions" in the audience (Aristotle 37). This classical conception of catharsis illuminates the therapeutic dimension of poetry, suggesting that the structured representation of intense experiences can facilitate emotional regulation. This particular point relates directly to my work because it provides a theoretical explanation for why David's Psalms can bring solace: by expressing raw human emotions like grief, fear, and despair in a structured, poetic way, they allow readers or worshipers to process these feelings safely. In my

project, I wish to show how both the Psalms and Lisa Mark's "Just Wait for the Sun" create a similar effect, guiding the audience from emotional turbulence toward hope and reassurance, demonstrating that poetry's form is very important to its healing power.

William Wordsworth further refines the understanding of poetry's connection to emotion in his *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, asserting that "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity" (Wordsworth 249). Wordsworth emphasizes the reflective dimension of poetic creation, where intense personal feeling is transformed into structured language for communal understanding. This resonates with my research because I aim to show that the Psalms do not merely express despair or longing—they transform these intense emotions into prayerful, mediated reflections that readers can engage with safely. For instance, Psalm 13 begins with raw anguish "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?", but moves toward hope and trust, illustrating Wordsworth's principle of reflection in tranquillity. In a contemporary context, Lisa Mark's poem channels present despair into the reflective assurance that light will return. By referencing Wordsworth, my project highlights that poetry's therapeutic effect lies not only in expressing emotion but in shaping it into a form that fosters understanding and consolation.

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic framework further illuminates poetry's potential for emotional processing. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud describes the transformation of unconscious material into symbolic form as a critical mechanism for working through unresolved emotional

conflicts, noting that “dreams are the royal road to the unconscious” and that symbolic expression allows for both insight and emotional release (Freud 112). This idea relates to my work because it offers a psychological explanation for how both the Psalms and Lisa’s poem function: they translate intense emotional states into symbolic language that can be safely engaged with, allowing the reader or listener to process complex feelings. For example, Psalm 42 employs the image of a deer longing for water to express spiritual thirst and yearning, providing a symbolic representation of an internal state. Lisa’s imagery of sunlight breaking through darkness operates similarly, making Freud’s insights into symbolic mediation directly relevant to understanding the poems’ therapeutic effects.

Ruth Finnegan’s *Oral Literature in Africa* offers an anthropological and ethnographic perspective, highlighting how oral poetic forms function as social and communal resources rather than merely aesthetic artifacts. Finnegan emphasizes that oral poetry often arises in ritual, communal, or performative contexts, serving to regulate emotions, mark transitions, and sustain social cohesion (Finnegan 45). This is particularly relevant to my research because it shows that the Psalms’ therapeutic power is not only personal but communal: their origins in shared worship, lament, and praise make them effective tools for collective consolation. In my work, I wish to demonstrate that Lisa’s poem, while not composed for ritual, operates in a modern communal sense—circulated online, it reaches multiple readers and offers simultaneous consolation, echoing the social function Finnegan describes. By referencing Finnegan, my

project affirms the importance of context and audience in poetry's capacity to soothe, heal, and create connection.

Niyi Osundare's poetic work, particularly in *Songs of the Marketplace*, demonstrates the capacity of poetry to engage social realities while offering emotional and moral guidance (Osundare 27). Osundare's verse often addresses communal hardships, injustices, and shared struggles, yet simultaneously conveys resilience and hope through rhythm, repetition, and accessible imagery. This connects to my project because David's Psalms also address communal and personal suffering, offering structured pathways for solace through prayer and reflection. In my research, I wish to show that like Osundare's poems, Psalms—and even Lisa Marks' "Just Wait for the Sun"—combine acknowledgement of despair with assurance and encouragement, demonstrating poetry's dual role as both a mirror of suffering and a medium for emotional repair.

Hermann Gunkel, in his form-critical study *Die Psalmen*, emphasizes the importance of genre and ritual context in understanding the Psalms, arguing that they originated in communal lament, thanksgiving, and hymnic performance (Gunkel 62). Gunkel's work relates directly to my research because it provides a framework for analyzing the Psalms not merely as texts but as structured, performative tools for emotional and spiritual engagement. In this project, I aim to show that Lisa Mark's poem, while not part of ritual worship, mirrors this structure by offering repeated motifs and refrains that function to guide the reader from emotional tension

toward reassurance, highlighting a shared principle across ancient and modern poetic forms: structure facilitates solace.

Gerald H. Wilson's *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* explores how editorial decisions shaped the Psalms into a coherent collection, organizing diverse expressions of lament, petition, and praise into a progression that supports reflection and consolation (Wilson 101). This is relevant to my project because it shows that the Psalms' therapeutic impact arises not only from individual poems but also from their cumulative, structured arrangement. In examining Lisa Mark's poem alongside selected Psalms, my work seeks to demonstrate that the sequencing of emotional and thematic elements—whether within a canonical collection or a single lyric—affects how readers experience solace and hope, reinforcing the importance of poetic form in therapeutic outcomes.

Nicholas Mazza, in *Poetry Therapy: Theory and Practice*, provides a contemporary, clinical perspective, detailing how poetry can be used intentionally to promote emotional well-being (Mazza 42). Mazza identifies receptive, expressive, and symbolic modes of engagement with poetry, which map closely onto the ways audiences interact with both Psalms and inspirational contemporary poems. This relates to my research because it offers a structured, applied model for understanding how poetry facilitates reflection, emotional processing, and social connection. In my project, I aim to demonstrate that both ancient and modern poems can function

therapeutically, even outside formal clinical contexts, by engaging readers in guided emotional exploration.

Empirical studies, such as those by Tegnér et al. and Naz et al., provide evidence that poetry-based interventions can reduce anxiety, improve emotional resilience, and foster hope (Tegnér et al. 55; Naz et al. par. 4). These findings are directly relevant to my work because they validate the claim that poetry—whether ritualized as in Psalms or contemporary as in Mark’s poem—can produce measurable benefits for well-being. In my research, I wish to connect these empirical results to textual analysis, showing that specific poetic features, such as imagery, repetition, and symbolic language, support the therapeutic experience described in both the Psalms and Mark’s poetry.

The rise of digital and performative poetry further illustrates the evolving relevance of poetry in contemporary scholarship. “Instapoetry” popularized by poets such as Rupi Kaur in *The Sun and Her Flowers*, has gained attention for its accessibility and emotional resonance among young readers. Spoken word and slam poetry have been examined as tools for activism and community healing, highlighting the intersection of literature, social engagement, and emotional expression. Neuroscientific studies suggest that the rhythm and metaphor inherent in poetry stimulate memory and emotional processing, demonstrating poetry’s capacity to influence cognition and affect. My study shows that digital and performative poetry can help

viewers or readers connect, find their footing, and experience catharsis when they express themselves through such means.

Martin Luther, the 16th-century Reformer, contributed significantly to Psalm interpretation within the Christian tradition. Born in 1483 in Eisleben, Germany, Luther's theological training and pastoral concerns shaped his reading of the Psalter as a "little Bible." He oscillated between typological and historical interpretations, initially seeing Psalms such as Psalm 1:1 and Psalm 6 as references to Christ, later broadening them to encompass humanity more generally. Luther's exposition reflects the intertwined concerns of theology, devotion, and literary analysis, illustrating the enduring relevance of Psalms for spiritual and moral instruction.

Medieval Jewish scholarship also provided foundational insights into the Psalms. Abraham ibn Ezra, a Spanish-Jewish commentator, engaged critically with questions of authorship, dating, and textual meaning. Trained in biblical exegesis, astronomy, and philosophy, Ibn Ezra evaluated competing perspectives on whether Psalms were exclusively Davidic prophecies or later liturgical compositions. His nuanced commentary integrated linguistic, historical, and philosophical considerations, influencing subsequent generations of Jewish and Christian scholars.

Origen of Alexandria, a prominent early Christian theologian, interpreted Psalms allegorically, connecting their language to the spiritual journey of the soul. Origen's extensive training in Hellenistic philosophy, scripture, and rhetoric informed his approach, which sought to uncover

deeper theological truths beyond the literal words. For example, his reading of Psalm 137:2, “We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof,” interpreted the image of hanging harps as a metaphor for the soul’s state of ignorance and spiritual shadow. Origen’s work illustrates the historical depth and diversity of interpretive methods applied to the Psalter.

The historical-critical approach emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries, influenced by Enlightenment and humanist thought. Scholars argued that biblical texts could be understood in “human terms,” enabling readers to examine authorship, composition, and historical context critically. This approach laid the foundation for modern scholarly methods, including form criticism, canonical criticism, and rhetorical analysis. Muilenburg, in the 20th century, introduced rhetorical criticism, emphasizing the importance of studying texts in their entirety rather than in isolated passages. Similarly, Childs focused on the final form of the Hebrew Scriptures, highlighting the preservation and literary shaping achieved by ancient Israelites.

Recent scholarship has shifted toward the “shape and shaping” of the Psalter. Wilson studied the Psalms concluding each of the Psalter’s five books, demonstrating that their arrangement narrates Israel’s history: the rise of the Davidic monarchy, the division of kingdoms, the destruction of Jerusalem, the exile, and the restoration of worship. Feminist readings and trauma studies have also emerged, exploring Psalms as sources of empowerment, resilience, and coping. Psalms 90, 91, and 92, for instance, are examined for their potential to address personal and collective trauma, bridging literary study and therapeutic application.

The scholarly discourse on poetry and the Psalms reveals several thematic continuities. Across cultures and historical periods, poetry serves as a vehicle for expression, reflection, and social critique. In both contemporary and ancient contexts, it functions as a tool for emotional processing, identity formation, and communal engagement. The integration of psychological, neuroscientific, and therapeutic approaches further demonstrates the enduring relevance of poetry, whether in the form of modern “Instapoetry” or biblical psalms. Moreover, the historical-critical, form-critical, and canonical methodologies applied to the Psalms reveal a complex interplay between literary form, religious function, and social context.

Despite the wealth of scholarship, a noticeable gap remains. While considerable attention has been devoted to literary analysis, historical context, and theological interpretation, relatively little work has examined poetry—ancient or modern—as a daily coping mechanism for personal struggles and motivation. Integrating insights from poetry therapy, trauma studies, and Psalms research could open new interdisciplinary avenues, connecting literary scholarship with practical applications for mental health and resilience.

In conclusion, poetry—whether in the works of Wordsworth and Finnegan, the analyses of Freud and Mazza, or the sacred texts of the Psalter—continues to be a rich field of scholarly inquiry. Historical, cultural, and psychological perspectives converge to reveal poetry as a dynamic, evolving, and socially meaningful form. The contributions of key figures such as Aristotle, Luther, Gunkel, and Origen demonstrate the diverse methodologies employed over

time, from mimetic theory to allegorical exegesis and therapeutic application. Moving forward, scholars have the opportunity to bridge literary analysis and applied practice, exploring how poetry, in its many forms, can serve as a source of emotional support, social engagement, and personal resilience.

### **1.5 Thesis Statement**

This study affirms that David's Psalms and Lisa Mark's "Just Wait for the Sun" offer emotional and spiritual healing to loneliness, mental illness, and anxiety.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **POETRY AS A THERAPY FOR LONELINESS.**

Loneliness is one of the most profound emotional states experienced by humankind. It transcends age, culture, and time, manifesting as an ache of the soul – a yearning for connection and understanding. Poetry, with its rhythmic language and emotive imagery, often provides a bridge across the chasm of solitude. It articulates what many cannot express, transforming private pain into shared experience. Poetry emerges as a therapeutic instrument that enables individuals to confront, release and reconcile repressed emotions. In both David’s Book of Psalms and Lisa Mark’s poem “Just Wait for the Sun”, the curative essence of poetry is evident. While David turns inward in prayer, voicing his despair before God, Lisa Mark offers an uplifting, secular reminder that hope and healing are always possible. This chapter explores how poetry functions as a therapeutic tool for loneliness, drawing from Freudian psychology and bibliotherapeutic principles to illustrate the healing power of the written word.

#### **2.1. Understanding Loneliness through Poetic Expression**

##### **2.1.1. The Psalms and the Cry of the Lonely Heart**

Loneliness is not a modern phenomenon; it is a universal human condition that echoes through the ages. According to Freud, the human psyche is often burdened by repressed emotions that, when unacknowledged, manifest as anxiety, depression, or isolation. Loneliness, therefore, can

be seen as both a psychological and emotional symptom – a result of the tension between the conscious self and the unexpressed feelings hidden in the unconscious. Poetry becomes a therapeutic outlet, a symbolic language through which the unconscious finds voice. In the Book of Psalms, loneliness is portrayed not as weakness but as a spiritual reality – an emotional state that draws the soul toward divine presence. In the Psalms, King David transforms his loneliness into verse. In Psalm 25:16-17, he pleads:

Turn to me and be gracious to me

For I am lonely and afflicted

Relieve the troubles of my heart

And free me from my anguish.

Here, David's confession is not just a spiritual cry; it represents Freud's notion of catharsis – the purging of pent-up emotions through creative expression. The poetic act allows David to internalize his pain, confronting the inner turmoil that loneliness creates. Through rhythm, repetition, and imagery, he gives shape to the unspoken and thus begins his healing journey. In Psalm 6:3-4, he cries out:

My soul is in deep anguish.

How long, LORD, how long?

Turn, LORD, and deliver me

Save me because of your unfailing love.

David's way of asking for help from a grievous and lonely heart is to question the divine. The repetition of "how long...?" shows deep sorrow. This Psalm is therapeutic because it validates emotional vulnerability – crying, confessing, and voicing pain. Poetry here acts like a safe release valve, teaching that grief is not weakness but part of healing.

David's life, as reflected in the Psalms, was often marked by solitude and exile. Psalm 142:4-5 expresses this isolation poignantly:

Look and see

There is no one at my right hand

No one is concerned for me

I have no refuge

No one cares for my life

I cry to you, LORD

I say You are my refuge

My portion in the land of the living

Here, loneliness is both emotional and spiritual – the sense of being unseen, unheard, and forgotten. Yet, rather than silencing his sorrow, David channels it into poetry. The Psalms show that when the heart speaks its pain, it begins to find its healing.

The imagery of Psalm 102:6-7 deepens this picture:

I am like a desert owl

Like an owl among the ruins

I lie awake

I have become like a bird alone on a roof

Through metaphors of desolate birds, David articulates an inner emptiness that many experience in times of depression and anxiety. Yet his poetic honesty transforms isolation into something meaningful. The rhythm and beauty of his language create harmony out of chaos – a therapeutic balance between expression and faith. Psalm 34:18 affirms this healing truth, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Other Psalms like Psalm 61:1-2 and Psalm 42:9-11, reveal how loneliness can coexist with faith.

From the ends of the earth

I call to you,

I call as my heart grows faint;

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I (Psalms 61:2).

Even in desolation, the psalmist reaches upward, turning isolation into intimacy with God. In poetic form, the troubled heart learns that loneliness is not abandonment but an invitation to spiritual depth.

### **2.1.2. Lisa Mark's "Just Wait for the Sun" and the Modern Experiences of Isolation.**

Lisa Mark's "Just Wait for the Sun" explores loneliness from a contemporary perspective, where silence, exhaustion, and emotional darkness define modern life. Her poem opens gently yet powerfully:

When everything's darkness

And you feel so alone

When the rain doesn't stop

And you can't make it home

When it feels all is lost

And you just want to run

It can't rain forever

## Just wait for the Sun

These lines echo the emotional tone of the Psalms – the tension between despair and endurance. Like David, Lisa does not deny the darkness; instead, she re-frames it as a passage toward renewal.

Her refrain “Just wait for the Sun” becomes a poetic mantra, a call to patience in suffering. It recalls the assurance of Psalm 30:5, “Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.” Both writers find healing in anticipation – the belief that light follows darkness. Lisa Mark’s sun symbolizes not only hope but self-compassion; waiting itself becomes an act of faith.

The rhythm of Lisa’s verses resembles prayer. Her repetition mirrors the meditative structure of Hebrew poetry, grounding the reader in calm assurance. In her poem, loneliness is not an endpoint but a process of rediscovery. Like Psalm 42:11 says,

Why, my soul, are you downcast

Why so disturbed within me

Put your hope in God

For I will yet praise him

My Savior and my God

Her poem invites reflection, trust and endurance. For the modern reader, “Just Wait for the Sun” functions like a psalm of our age – gentle, rhythmic, and profoundly comforting.

## **2.2. Poetry as Therapy: Emotional Release and Reflection**

### **2.2.1. The Psalms as Instruments of Emotional Release**

Freud believed that when the individuals repress pain, those emotions linger in the unconscious, influencing thoughts and behaviors. Poetry provides an avenue for *abreaction* – the re-living of an experience with a view to purging its emotional dross/ the emotional discharge that comes from expressing buried feelings. This is the essence of bibliotherapy, where reading or writing becomes an act of self-healing. In the Psalms, this process is vividly displayed. David oscillates between despair and trust, reflecting the emotional movement that Freud describes as the oscillation between the ID and the Ego. For instance, Psalm 42:5, he writes,

Why, my soul, are you downcast

Why so disturbed within me

Put your hope in God

For I will yet praise him

My Savior and my God

Here, David engages in self-analysis – he questions his emotions and redirects them towards faith. This mirrors the therapeutic dialogue within psychoanalysis, where awareness and reflection facilitate healing.

Similarly, Psalm 143:4-6 expresses the poet's deep anguish:

So my spirit grows faint within me

My heart within me is dismayed.

I remember the days of long ago

I meditate on all your works

And consider what your hands have done.

This recollection and meditation are acts of bibliotherapeutic healing – using memory, reflection, and language to transform suffering into understanding.

The healing power of the Psalms lies in their honesty. David's words reveal that true therapy begins not by suppressing emotion but by acknowledging it before God. In Psalm 13:1-2, he confesses his despair, "How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?" This direct confrontation of the divine silence shows how poetic prayer can function as catharsis – the release of stored anguish.

Psalm 6:6 gives an even more intimate image,

I am worn out from my groaning.

All night long

I flood my bed with weeping,

And drench my couch with tears

Such vivid emotional imagery exposes the raw humanity of the psalmist. Yet this very act of expression is healing. By naming his pain, David reclaims control over it. His laments become sacred therapy sessions between soul and Spirit.

Many Psalms follow a pattern of descent and ascent – beginning with despair and ending with renewed hope. Psalm 77:1-2 shows this movement:

I cried out to God for help

I cried out to God to hear me

When I was in distress, I sought the Lord

At night I stretched out untiring hands.

The act of crying out is itself therapeutic; it transforms emotion into rhythm and reflection. Similarly, Psalm 143:4-8 records a journey from sorrow to surrender, So my spirit grows faint within me; my heart within me is dismayed... Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing

love.” The dawn imagery parallels the metaphor in Lisa Mark’s poem – hope rising after the night of pain.

### **2.2.2. Lisa Mark’s Poetic Reflection and Healing Expression.**

Lisa Mark’s “Just Wait for the Sun” captures the essence of emotional reflection in modern therapy. Through poetic simplicity, she invites the reader to pause, breathe, and trust time’s healing. She writes

When you just want to scream

But you can’t find the sound

When it’s all your fault

And you feel like your done

Just wait for the Sun

The Sunshine will come

These verse echoes Psalm 56:8, “Record my misery; list my tears on your scroll – are they not in your record?” Both poets acknowledge tears and sadness as sacred – not signs of weakness, but evidence of feeling and growth.

Lisa’s language is gentle but resolute. The repetition of her refrain becomes rhythmic assurance, similar to the recurring phrase “His love endures forever” in Psalm 136. Her poem thus operates

as a modern psalm – a meditative cycle that transforms pain into patience. It affirms that healing begins with acceptance and reflection.

This poetic approach reflects the principle of emotional regulation – acknowledging pain while holding hope. Her tone resembles Isaiah 41:10,

So do not fear

For I am with you

Do not be dismayed

For I am your God.

Her optimism, like David's faith, reveals that endurance is not denial but an active engagement with healing.

Together, David and Lisa illustrate how poetry becomes a mirror of the mind – reflecting pain honestly while gently guiding it toward peace. In this act of poetic reflection, emotion is not suppressed; it is sanctified.

### **2.3. The Communal Power of Poetry:**

#### **2.3.1. The Psalms and Collective Healing in Ancient Israel.**

Though loneliness is deeply personal, poetry transforms it into a shared experience. Freud asserted that human beings seek connection to ease psychic tension. Poetry, through rhythm and

language, becomes a medium of communal empathy. The Psalms were originally sung in communal worship, allowing individuals to express private emotions within a collective setting. This ritual sharing amplifies the therapeutic effect – turning isolation into solidarity. For instance, Psalm 133:1 declares, “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” Through such expressions, the lonely heart finds belonging in the collective voice of faith. Similarly, Psalm 34:18 offers reassurance to those who feel alone, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit”

In Psalm 22:26, “The poor will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the LORD will praise him – may your hearts live forever!” And also in Psalm 46:1 and 7,

God is our refuge and strength

An ever-present help in trouble

The LORD Almighty is with us

The God of Jacob is our fortress.

In exile, the Psalms became the voice of a displaced people. Psalm 137:1 recalls, “By the river of Babylon, we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.” The poetry of lament preserved collective memory and offered therapy to an entire nation. It provided language for mourning and resilience. The communal reading of psalms mirrored what psychologists today call “group healing”, where shared emotion fosters understanding and hope.

The Psalms also created a rhythm of worship that sustained the nation's mental health. Psalm 100:1-2 declares:

Shout for joy to the LORD

All the earth

Worship the LORD with gladness

Come before him with joyful songs

In collective poetry, pain was not erased but transformed through unity and praise. This shared experience allowed the community to move from sorrow to celebration, reaffirming that faith could coexist with grief.

### **2.3.2. Lisa Mark's Poem and Shared Human Empathy**

Lisa Mark's poem, though personal in tone, carries a collective message that transcends individuality. Her "you" addresses not one person but everyone who has faced darkness. The poem becomes a shared promise of empathy. This universality mirrors the communal power of the Psalms.

When it's all your fault

And you feel like your done

Just wait for the Sun

## The Sunshine will come

In a society often marked by emotional isolation, her words build connection. Readers find comfort knowing that others, too, wait for their own dawns. Her poem resonates with Romans 15:4, “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.” Poetry, whether sacred or modern, becomes a bridge of empathy – connecting human experience across time and circumstance.

### **2.4. The Modern Relevance of Poetic Solace**

#### **2.4.1. The Enduring Therapeutic Power of the Psalms**

In contemporary times, technological advancement and digital isolation have deepened the crisis of loneliness. Yet, poetry continues to thrive as a medium of connection and healing. Online poetry forums, spoken word events, and digital devotional spaces show that people still turn to verse to find meaning and solidarity.

Bibliotherapy has gained more renewed attention in psychological and educational contexts. Research shows that 51% of people who engaged with poetry during the COVID-19 pandemic found it helpful in coping with isolation. Writing and reading poetry allowed individuals to process grief, anxiety, and uncertainty – precisely the functions Freud attributed to the creative act as sublimation of the unconscious.

The enduring relevance of the Psalms lies in their emotional universality. Despite being thousands of years old, they speak directly to contemporary issues of anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Psalm 94:19 resonates deeply in today's world, "When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy." The psalmist here articulates the very language of mental health – recognizing emotional distress and finding comfort through divine reflection.

The Psalms teach emotional intelligence and mindfulness. They validate feelings without judgment while encouraging trust and surrender. Psalm 55:22 counsels, "Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken."

This balance between vulnerability and faith aligns with modern therapeutic models that emphasize expression, release, and renewal. Through poetic prayer, the ancient believer achieved what we might now call "spiritual resilience."

#### **2.4.2. Lisa Mark's Poem as Contemporary Comfort**

In an age dominated by chaos, social isolation, and emotional fatigue, "Just Wait for the Sun" offers quiet reassurance. Its tone is both psychological and spiritual, blending compassion with courage. The closing stanza reads,

When it's all your fault

And you feel like your done

Just wait for the Sun

The Sunshine will come

This promise mirrors Lamentations 3:22-23,

Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed

For his compassions never fail

They are new every morning

Great is your faithfulness

Mark's sunrise becomes symbolic of God's faithfulness, of hope renewed at dawn.

Her poem's simplicity makes it accessible to all – believers and nonbelievers alike. It embodies  
Philippians 4:6-7,

Do not be anxious about anything

But in every situation

By prayer and petition

With thanksgiving

Present your requests to God

And the peace of God

Which transcends all understanding

Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

Both Lisa and the psalmist affirm that healing is not a single moment but a journey illuminated by faith, patience, and poetry.

Both David and Lisa Mark reveal that poetry holds a sacred dialogue between pain and healing. The Book of Psalms and “Just Wait for the Sun” demonstrate that the troubled mind finds comfort not by escaping sorrow but by expressing it honestly. David transforms loneliness into prayer; Lisa Mark transforms despair into endurance. Across centuries, both voices teach that poetry – whether ancient or modern – remains a timeless refuge for the weary soul. It transforms tears into words, grief into melody, and silence into hope. In poetry, pain finds purpose, and the human heart learns once again to wait for its sun.

## **CHAPTER THREE.**

### **POETRY AS A THERAPEUTIC RESPONSE TO MENTAL ILLNESS.**

Mental illness, in its many forms, continues to challenge human existence. From the suffocating weight of depression, to the flashbacks of traumas, individuals often find themselves trapped within invisible prisons of the mind. Poetry is more than an art form – it is a sanctuary for the human spirit, a sacred space where suffering is spoken, and healing begins. Throughout history, individuals have turned to words as a form of therapy, a means of reclaiming peace from the turmoil of the mind. This chapter explores how poetry, particularly the Book of Psalms and Lisa Mark’s “Just Wait for the Sun”, acts as a restorative force for those suffering from mental illness. While theories such as Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis theory and Bibliotherapy illuminate the psychological value of poetic expression, the main emphasis here is on poetry’s lived and emotional impact – its ability to heal through empathy, rhythm, reflection, and faith.

While the Psalms reflect an ancient but timeless engagement with despair, and hope through faith, Lisa Mark’s poem captures a contemporary reflection of resilience and the endurance of light amid darkness. Both reveal that poetic language functions as both mirror and medicine – a way of understanding pain and transforming it into healing. This chapter focuses on how poetry helps with mental illness like depression and trauma, and the convergence of faith and creativity – to show how poetry gives form to suffering and becomes a pathway for recovery.

### **3.1. Depression and the Healing Power of Expression**

#### **3.1.1. The Psalms and the Art of Expressing Despair**

Depression is characterized by deep sadness, loss of motivation, and emotional numbness. One of its cruelest effects is the loss of words – the inability to describe one’s pain. Poetry restores that language. The act of reading or composing poetry allows emotions to surface, offering what Freud identified as catharsis – a cleansing release of repressed feelings. Depression silences the soul, but the Psalms prove that when pain is voiced, healing begins. King David’s laments represent one of the earliest examples of therapeutic self-expression in human history. His honesty before God gives legitimacy to feelings of despair, confusion, and sorrow – emotions that would otherwise remain buried. In Psalm 6:6, David confesses, “I am weary with my groaning; Every night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears” The vivid imagery of tears as floods reflects overwhelming emotional exhaustion, yet the act of writing and singing such lines already transforms pain into prayer.

In Psalm 42:5, David questions himself,

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?

And why art thou disquieted within me?

Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him,

Who is the help of my countenance, and my God

His self-dialogue captures the inner fragmentation that accompanies depression – a conversation between despair and faith. The same tension appears in Psalm 13:1-2, where he pleads, “How long, O Jehovah? Wilt thou forget me for ever?” Such vulnerability shows that faith is not the denial of pain but its articulation before the divine.

In Psalm 88:3-6, the psalmist laments, “For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto Sheol.” This is a cry of existential depression – a feeling of meaninglessness and isolation. Yet even this psalm, though dark becomes sacred because the act of voicing despair is itself a step toward light. The poetry validates pain without shame.

Even in his darkest moments, David finds flickers of hope. Psalm 30:5 proclaims, “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy cometh in the morning.” This spiritual optimism mirrors the cyclical rhythm of healing itself: sorrow may last, but renewal is inevitable. Likewise, Psalm 40:1-3 reveals the aftermath of depression,

I waited patiently for Jehovah

He brought me up also

Out of a horrible pit

Out of the miry clay

The imagery of deliverance portrays emotional recovery as a slow, faithful process.

Beyond David’s own words, the prophet Jeremiah – often called “the weeping prophet” – echoes similar pain. In Lamentations 3: 19-21, he recalls, “Remember mine affliction and my misery... This I recall to my mind; therefore have I hope.” Both David and Jeremiah use memory, lament, and language as healing mechanisms. Their laments teach that divine comfort often begins where words of grief are released.

### **3.1.2. Lisa Mark’s “Just Wait for the Sun” as an Expression of Hope after Darkness.**

Lisa Mark’s “Just Wait for the Sun” mirrors the emotional journey of David’s laments but with a contemporary therapeutic lens. Her poem begins in darkness and ends in hope, reminding readers that healing takes time. She writes:

When everything’s darkness

And you feel so alone

Just wait for the Sun

The repetitive phrase “wait for the sun” functions as both mantra and method – it encourages patience, resilience, and belief in future light. The poem serves as cognitive therapy in verse, guiding the reader from despair to self-reassurance.

Lisa Mark’s lines recall the spiritual optimism of Psalm 27:13, “I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah, in the land of the living.” Both poets use hope as a

bridge from inner chaos to calm. Mark's sun represents the return of clarity, paralleling David's joy after lament. She continues,

When it's all your fault

And you feel like your done

Just wait for the Sun

The Sunshine will come

These lines evoke not only a personal recovery but spiritual awakening. Her poem reflects the essence of Isaiah 60:1, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee." Mark's poetic affirmation thus transforms depression into testimony; her gentle insistence that "the sunshine will come" gives voice to endurance and faith in unseen light.

## **3.2. The Quest for Calm**

### **3.2.1. The Psalms and the Search for Inner Peace.**

What grows out of uncertainty and fear often leads to restlessness, panic, and inner disorder. Poetry, with its rhythmic structure and deliberate pace, provides counterbalance. The repetition of sounds, the measured flow of lines, and the imagery of safety and the calmness slow the racing mind. The Psalms often capture this transition from fear to faith.

David writes in Psalm 55:4-6,

My heart is sore pained within me

And the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me

And horror hath overwhelmed me.

This description resonates with what modern psychology calls a panic episode or panic attack. Yet, instead of allowing fear to consume him, David channels it into verse. The rhythm in his words becomes a breathing pattern – each repetition, each cry to God, slows the racing heart.

In Psalm 94:19 he writes, “In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.” This line encapsulates the therapeutic transformation from fear to calm. The psalmist externalizes his panic – he does not repress it but entrusts it to God. In Freud’s psychoanalytic view, such expression prevents psychic tension from turning destructive. Poetry becomes the “talking cure” of the ancient world.

Psalm 23, one of the most comforting pieces of poetry ever written, represents the antidote to anxiety. “Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want... He restoreth my soul.” Its tone is rhythmic and meditative, like a spiritual breathing exercise. The repetition of reassurance – “I will fear no evil; for thou art with me.” – centers the mind and heart, much like mindfulness practices used in modern therapy.

David's poetic reflections often transform fear into faith. In Psalm 56:3, he admits, "What time I am afraid, I will put my trust in thee." Similarly, Psalm 27:1 celebrates spiritual courage, "Jehovah is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" This rhetorical question transforms fear into praise, embodying emotional reprogramming through faith-based poetry. Psalm 34:4 captures the essence of release: "I sought Jehovah, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears." The seeking, the speaking, and the hearing – these verbs show the active process of healing through communication. The psalmist's faith is not passive but expressive, just as bibliotherapy encourages readers to engage emotionally with the text, identifying and transforming their fears through reflection.

The prophet Isaiah affirms this same principle, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." (Isaiah 26:3). Panic dissolves when focus shifts from fear to trust. Thus, the Psalms act as poetic therapies – each repetition, chant, or song retrains the panicking mind toward serenity.

### **3.2.2. Lisa Mark's Poem and the Reassurance of Calmness.**

Lisa Mark's poem offers a contemporary response to panic, replacing David's divine assurance with the calming constancy of nature. She writes,

When it feels all is lost

And you just want to run

It can't rain forever

Just wait for the Sun

This imagery reflects emotional stabilization after turbulence. Her “sun” acts as a metaphor for clarity and renewal. The poem’s gentle rhythm mirrors breathing – steady, slow, and reassuring.

Her message resonates with Matthew 6:34, where Jesus says, “Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself.” Both texts encourage patience and present-mindedness. Lisa Mark’s use of future hope – waiting for the sun – encourages readers to trust time, much like David trusted God.

Her poem’s tone of quiet perseverance provides psychological grounding similar to Psalm 131:2, “Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with his mother.” Panic, therefore, is not denied but embraced with gentleness; both poets teach that peace begins with surrender.

### **3.3. Trauma and the Reclaiming of Voice**

#### **3.3.1. The Psalms and the Cry of the Wounded Spirit.**

Trauma – whether from loss, abuse, or tragedy – often leaves the individual fragmented, detached from self and others, and voiceless. Words may feel inadequate to express such profound pain. Many Psalms bear witness to experiences of betrayal, violence, loss, and divine silence. Poetry bridges that gap by giving the unspeakable a form. Through poetry, trauma

survivors reclaim their voice, retelling their pain not as victims but as witnesses to endurance. Freud's psychoanalytic model explains this through sublimation – the transformation of painful experiences into creative expression. The Psalms embody this transformation vividly.

In Psalm 31:9-10, David pleads,

Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah

For I am in distress

Mine eye wasteth away with grief

Yea, my soul and my body

Such poetry transforms bodily pain into spiritual into spiritual dialogue. Trauma is not hidden – it is voiced, shared, sanctified. These verses mirror what psychologists describe as post-traumatic distress – a total exhaustion of body and spirit. Yet David's act of writing this lament transforms his pain into testimony. Poetry thus becomes an act of survival. Psalm 69:1-3 offers another image of trauma,

Save me, O God

For the waters have threatened my life.

I have sunk in deep mire

Where there is no foothold.

The drowning imagery represents emotional suffocation – common among trauma survivors who feel submerged by memories and grief. But by expressing his pain poetically, David reclaims control of his narrative. He becomes both patient and healer. The psalmist’s cry is a metaphorical resurfacing – he names his pain to prevent being consumed by it.

Psalm 22, the psalm Jesus quoted on the cross, also mirrors the trauma of abandonment, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” This expression of spiritual disconnection captures the universal wound of loss. Yet, by the end of the Psalm, David declares renewed faith, “You who fear the Lord, praise him!” Trauma thus transforms into testimony.

In 1 Kings 19:4-8, the prophet Elijah also experiences trauma-induced despair, praying, “It is enough; now, O Jehovah, take away my life.” But God restores him gently through rest, nourishment, and purpose. Like David’s psalms, Elijah’s story shows that healing is gradual, and poetry – spoken or written – can accompany that process.

### **3.3.2. Lisa Mark’s Poem as Reclamation and Renewal.**

Lisa’s poem speaks to trauma with tender reassurance. Her refrain “Just wait for the Sun” functions as both promise and empowerment. It tells survivors that though pain is real, it will not define them. Her verse,

When it feels all is lost

And you just want to run

It can't rain forever

Just wait for the Sun

Her poem mirrors Psalm 147:3, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Both texts empower the wounded to reclaim their story. Through repetition and rhythm, Mark reestablishes the self's relationship with time – teaching that healing is not instant but certain.

Lisa Mark's poem shows that when one has lost everything, even the power of speech, that there is still hope in the end, and that no matter what, "the sunshine will come" She writes,

When family is pain

When friends can't be found

When you just want to scream

But you can't find the sound

When it's all your fault

And you feel your done

Just wait for the Sun

The Sunshine will come

The last two stanzas show the loss of voice, of willpower, and the trauma of pain from being silenced. The refrain, “Just wait for the Sun” reminds the reader that there would be better days, and there is hope for the heart that has been in darkness.

Her simple diction hides profound psychology; hope is not imposed; it is rediscovered. Her poem encourages a return to agency – what trauma takes away, art gives back.

### **3.4. The Merging of Faith, Hope, and Creative Healing.**

#### **3.4.1. Faith and Recovery in the Psalms.**

At the intersection of faith and art lies healing. Poetry – especially sacred poetry like the Psalms – is both prayer and therapy, faith and creativity intertwined. When the mind feels broken and the heart weary, poetry becomes a sacred conversation between human vulnerability and divine grace. Faith and healing converge in the Psalms as twin forces of restoration. David’s poetry teaches that creativity is not mere self-expression – it is worship, resistance, and renewal. David’s words in Psalm 40:1-3 beautifully captures this merging:

I waited patiently for the Lord

And He inclined to me and heard my cry

He brought me out of a horrible pit

Pot of the miry clay

And set my feet on a rock

Steadying my footsteps and establishing my path

He put a new song in my mouth

A song of praise to our God

Here, depression becomes a song, despair becomes worship. The act of poetic creation becomes a spiritual resurrection. That “new song” represents transformation: pain reborn as praise.

Psalm 103:2-4 reinforces divine healing,

Bless Jehovah, O my soul

And forget not all his benefits

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities

Who healeth all thy diseases

These verses provide psychological and spiritual comfort. Similarly, Psalm 18:16-19 narrates deliverance, “He sent from on high, he took me; He drew me out of many waters.” This metaphor symbolizes recovery from emotional drowning – a theme echoes throughout scripture.

Freud's theory of sublimation – the redirection of pain into creativity – finds a perfect example in the Psalms. The psalmist's sorrow is not repressed but transformed into spiritual art. This mirrors the essence of Bibliotherapy: to find comfort and meaning in reading or writing words that heal.

In Psalm 30:11, David rejoices, "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast loosed my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness." This is the final stage of healing – the conversation of pain into praise. Faith restores what fear destroyed.

Isaiah 41:10 complements David's faith-based therapy, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; Fear thou not, for I am with thee." Such reassurance becomes part of the Psalms' therapeutic rhythm – faith translated into stability. The creative act of composing psalms thus becomes the practice of faith itself, mirroring modern therapeutic journaling and reflective prayer.

### **3.4.2. Lisa Mark's Poetic Affirmation of Hope.**

Lisa Mark's poem functions as a creative ritual of hope. She writes,

When it feels all is lost

And you just want to run

It can't rain forever

Just wait for the Sun

This verse embodies the spirit of Romans 8:18,

For I consider that the sufferings

Of the present life are not worthy

To be compared with the glory

That is about to be revealed to us and in us

Lisa Mark's poem merges faith (trust in unseen renewal) with creativity (poetic expression). Her imagery of light breaking darkness parallels David's "new song" after despair. Her writing reminds readers that recovery is not passive waiting – it is active hope.

Her voice aligns with 2 Corinthians 4:8-9,

We are pressed on every side

Yet not straitened, perplexed

Yet not unto despair

Pursued, yet not forsaken

Smitten down, yet not destroyed

In both scripture and poetry, perseverance becomes a sacred act. Mark's poem, though secular in language, carries spiritual resonance: endurance is worship; hope is prayer.

Both David's Psalms and Lisa Mark's "Just Wait for the Sun" reveal poetry's divine vocation as healer of the human mind. Through their words, despair becomes dialogue, and trauma becomes testimony. The Psalms remind us that faith transforms suffering into song, and Lisa Mark's poem affirms that endurance transforms darkness into light.

In both ancient and modern contexts, poetry functions as a mirror of the soul and a balm for its wounds. When David cried out from the caves of fear and guilt, he discovered that his lament could become praise. When Lisa Mark urged her readers to "wait for the sun," she echoes that same eternal truth – that light returns, always.

Thus, poetry – infused with faith, honesty, and hope – stands as one of humanity's oldest therapies. It comforts, restores, and renews. It does not erase pain, but it teaches us how to sing through it.

## CHAPTER FOUR.

### MUSIC AS A THERAPEUTIC RESPONSE TO ANXIETY.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines anxiety as an unpleasant state of mental uneasiness, nervousness, apprehension, and obsession or concern about some uncertain event. It is a state of restlessness and agitation, often accompanied by a distressing sense of oppression or tightness in the stomach. Music is one of humanity's oldest languages of emotion. It speaks to the soul when words alone cannot. The *Book of Psalms* stands as the greatest evidence of this fusion between melody and verse. Each Psalm was not just a composition but a living performance – a dialogue between human emotion and divine presence. This chapter explores the idea of music as a therapeutic response to anxiety. It focuses on how music can bring calmness to an anxious and restless mind or soul. This chapter explores the idea of music as therapy, focusing on its therapeutic and spiritual functions in both ancient and modern contexts. Using examples from King Saul and David's relationship, as well as several Psalms, it argues that music is a very powerful therapeutic tool when it comes to helping the agitated and restless heart. It also reflects on how modern readers, like those in biblical times, continue to find solace in rhythmic and lyrical forms of expression.

#### 4.1. Music as Therapy

##### 4.1.1. The Psalms as Balm for the Anxious Heart.

The Psalms stand as one of the richest spiritual resources for an anxious mind. They express the full spectrum of human emotion - fear, insecurity, despair, longing, hope, gratitude, and praise. What makes them deeply therapeutic is their balance: they articulate distress honestly, yet almost always resolve with trust in God. They offer language for pain while simultaneously guiding the heart toward peace. One of the most direct expressions of anxiety appears in Psalm 94:19, “In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comfort delights my soul.” Here, the psalmist acknowledges internal turmoil but affirms that God’s consolations - His presence, promises, and peace - brings emotional relief to the soul.

Psalm 27:1-3, for example, confronts fear with a bold declaration of trust: “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” Here, music becomes a proclamation. The poetic rhythm of David’s voice transforms fear into confidence. Though he speaks of enemies and encampments, the cadence of assurance - “my heart shall not fear” - works like a healing melody against anxiety’s turbulence. The Psalm not only acknowledges fear; it musically reframes it in the light of divine protection. Similarly, Psalm 34:4 offers a deeply therapeutic movement from distress to relief: “I sought the Lord, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears.” The verse reads like a whispered song - gentle, steady, and soothing. The process it describes is rhythmic: seeking, answering, deliverance. When set in musical or poetic form, these stages become a reflective pattern that helps anxious individuals slow their thoughts, breathe, and find comfort.

Psalm 46:1-3 brings this healing dynamic to its peak. It paints a picture of chaos - mountains falling, waters roaring - yet overlays it with the serene assurance that “God is our refuge and strength.” Anxiety often exaggerates danger; this Psalm counters with imagery that stabilizes the mind. The musical repetition of “God is...” acts as a grounding refrain, soothing emotional storms much like a steady beat calms an unsteady heart. Even outside the Psalms, scripture continues this musical pattern of reassurance. Isaiah 41:10 functions like a divine lullaby:

Fear not

For I am with you

I will strengthen you

I will uphold you

It creates a melodic structure that mirrors the comforting repetition found in therapeutic music.

Likewise, John 14:27 echoes the tone of a gentle hymn: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you... let not your hearts be troubled.” Jesus’ words carry the cadence of a healing song, offering a peace that intentionally contrasts the agitation of anxious thoughts. The verse functions spiritually the same way calming music functions psychologically. Matthew 6:34 also relates closely. Anxiety often comes from imagining future dangers; Christ addresses this by rhythmically drawing the mind back to the present, “Do not worry about tomorrow, for

tomorrow will worry about itself.” The gentle, almost lyrical phrasing helps interrupt the racing, future-oriented patterns of anxiety - much like meditative music slows a distressed heartbeat.

Together, these scriptures reveal why the Psalms act as balm for the anxious heart: they are musical, poetic, rhythmic, honest, and deeply comforting. They sing truth into fear, restoring emotional balance through spiritual melody.

#### **4.1.2. Lisa Mark’s “Just Wait for the Sun” and the Assurance of Hope in Moments of Anxiety.**

Lisa Mark’s poem, “Just Wait for the Sun” functions as a contemporary extension of this ancient tradition of musical-poetic therapy. Although written as a poem rather than a literal song, its tone, rhythm, and imagery mimic the qualities of musical reassurance found in the Psalms.

Where the Psalms often begin with distress before rising into confidence, Lisa Mark’s poem follows a similar emotional arc. She acknowledges the reality of anxiety - the heaviness, the confusion, the moments when darkness feels overwhelming - yet her repeated invitation to “wait for the sun” mirrors the biblical refrain of waiting on God. The line “When everything is darkness... Just wait for the Sun” resonates closely with Psalm 30:5, “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” Both use the symbolism of light emerging after darkness, a poetic image deeply associated with healing anxiety. The emotional effect is

musical; the repetition mimics a chorus, reminding the reader that relief is not only possible but inevitable.

Lisa Mark's language also reflects John 14:27's promise of peace. While she does not reference scripture directly, her tone parallels Christ's soothing reassurance - calm, gentle, steady. The poem does not deny anxiety; it sings hope into it. Moreover, the poem's imagery of waiting, rising, and renewal mirrors Isaiah 40:31: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Though distinct in voice, both texts use poetic rhythm to restore emotional resilience. Her writing functions like modern therapeutic music: its repetition calms, its rhythm stabilizes, its imagery stabilizes, its imagery uplifts, and its steady affirmation creates emotional safety.

Just as the Psalms provide divine assurance, "Just Wait for the Sun" provides human reassurance. Together, they form a therapeutic conversation across time - one ancient, one modern - both speaking hope into anxious hearts through the power of poetic musicality.

## **4.2. Music as Anxiety Therapy**

### **4.2.1. The Psalms and David's Harp: Healing Anxiety through Sound.**

The story of David and Saul provides one of the earliest recorded examples of music therapy in human history. In 1 Samuel 16:14-23, we read that King Saul was "troubled by an evil spirit," and his servants sought a musician to soothe him. David, described as skillful in playing the harp, was chosen. The passage concludes:

And it hath come to pass

In the spirit of God being upon Saul

That David hath taken the harp and played with his hand,

And Saul hath refreshment

And it hath been well with him

And the spirit of sadness hath turned aside from off him.

This moment reveals the profound psychological impact of music. The soothing melody of David's harp reached beyond Saul's conscious mind, calming his agitation and restoring emotional order. Scholars often interpret Saul's torment as symptoms of anxiety, possibly triggered by guilt, jealousy, and divine rejection. David's harp did what words could not – it communicated peace through sound.

This narrative reveals the therapeutic power of music – not merely as entertainment, but as divine intervention. The Psalms capture this same restorative energy. In Psalm 23, David writes, “My soul He refresheth, He leadeth me in paths of righteousness, For His name's sake.” These words are poetic expressions of calm and balance, just as his harp soothed Saul. Similarly, Psalm 147:3 says, “Who is giving healing to the broken of heart, and is binding up their griefs.”

Through music and poetry, David ministered to both the body and soul, bridging emotion and spirituality.

Freud believed that suppressed emotions lead to mental imbalance; thus, any medium that channels those emotions toward expression aids healing. David's music achieves this sublimation – transforming inner torment into harmony. Biblically, Saul's condition could be seen as an early depiction of anxiety disorder brought on by guilt, envy, and divine disfavor. David's role as musician mirrors that of a therapist, guiding Saul's fragmented mind back toward equilibrium through sound. This narrative also reinforces the communal aspect of healing. David's presence – his empathy, his artistry – serves as Saul's lifeline. The therapeutic encounter between them represents what modern psychology calls attunement: one soul resonating with another through nonverbal empathy.

The Psalms reflect how deeply David understood the psychological language of music. In Psalm 57:7-8, he writes,

Prepared is my heart, O God

Prepared is my heart

I sing and praise

Awake, mine honour,

Awake, psaltery and harp

I awake the morning dawn

Here, he invites his instruments to join him in worship – as though sound itself participates in healing. Music, to David, was prayer embodied; it spoke directly to the divine and could transform human anguish into peace.

#### **4.2.2. Lisa Mark's Poetic Voice as an Anxiety Depressant.**

Just as David's harp brought tranquility to Saul, Lisa Mark's "Just Wait for the Sun" offers healing through poetic rhythm. The poem speaks to those haunted by despair, whispering calm to the restless spirit. The tone is tender and therapeutic, a form of music therapy. Lisa Marks writes,

When it feels all is lost

And you just want to run

It can't rain forever

Just wait for the Sun

This refrain functions like David's harp – repetitive, comforting, and restorative. Mark's poem transforms despair into anticipation, much like Psalm 40:1-3, where David says,

I have diligently expected Jehovah

And He inclineth to me, and heareth my cry

And He draweth me up from a pit of desolation

From mire of mud

And He raiseth up on a rock my feet

He is establishing my steps

Both the psalm and Mark's poem guide the reader toward renewal through the quiet rhythm of faith and endurance.

### **4.3. The Healing Rhythm: Psychological and Spiritual Dimensions**

#### **4.3.1. Healing Anxiety Through Psalms.**

The healing power of music lies not only in melody, but in rhythm – the heartbeat of creation. Every human emotion, from sorrow to joy, has a rhythm, and when music aligns with that rhythm, it restores harmony to the soul.

In Psalm 61:2, the psalmist pleads,

I have diligently expected Jehovah

And He inclineth to me and heareth my cry

And He draweth me up from a pit of desolation from mire of mud

And He raiseth up on a rock my feet, He is establishing my steps

From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I

This verse itself flows rhythmically, like a breath – a pattern of tension and release. This expression of vulnerability becomes therapeutic – the act of voicing sorrow is the first step toward release. The musicality of the Psalms teaches that rhythm can carry emotion toward resolution.

Modern psychology supports this truth. Music therapy has been proven to reduce anxiety, stabilize mood, and enhance memory. The repetitive, melodic structure of the Psalms mirrors therapeutic exercises designed to calm neural activity and regulate breathing. In Freudian terms, rhythm channels the unconscious drives into safe expression, transforming tension into aesthetic pleasure.

Spiritually, rhythm connects humanity to God's order. The heartbeat, the inhale and exhale, the rise and fall of song – all echo divine rhythm. In Psalm 150:3-5, the psalmist commands,

Praise Him with timbrel and dance

Praise Him with stringed instruments and organ

Praise Him with cymbals of sounding

Praise Him with cymbals of shouting.

This is not mere celebration but an embodied healing practice. The body, voice, and spirit join in one synchronized act of praise, aligning human rhythm with divine harmony. David understood this innately. His harp was not only an instrument but a bridge between emotion and faith. Each note lifted his burden heavenward, turning grief into grace. In Psalm 40:3, he declares, “And He putteth in my mouth a new song, `Praise to our God.” The new song signifies renewal – a psychological rebirth through spiritual rhythm

Music in the Psalms aligns with modern understandings of therapy through sound. Melodies can reduce anxiety, influence emotions, and provide comfort. Psalm 92:1-2 affirms,

Good to give thanks to Jehovah

And to sing praises to Thy name, O Most High

To declare in the morning Thy kindness

And Thy faithfulness in the nights

Singing or reciting psalms becomes both an act of worship and an exercise mental regulation.

The spiritual dimension intensifies this healing process. The psalmist finds not just inner peace but divine reassurance. In Psalm 119:50, we read, “This is my comfort in mine affliction, that thy saying hath quickened me.” The believer’s spirit, once burdened, finds rest through divine melody. The Psalms teach that healing begins when the heart sings again, even softly.

### 4.3.2. Healing the Anxious Mind through Lisa Mark's Poetic Reassurance.

Lisa Mark's poem, though written in a different age, reflects this same pulse. The steady cadence of "*Just wait for the sun*" mimics the rhythm of breathing – in and out, holding and releasing. Her words, like a soft melody, guide readers through their own emotional turbulence toward peace. Lisa Mark's poem operates on similar psychological and spiritual levels. Through her gentle verses, readers are guided toward self-soothing and faith in renewal. Some of the lines suggest a therapeutic patience.

When it's all your fault

And you feel like your done

Just wait for the Sun

The Sunshine will come

Her poem resonates with the same truth expressed in Psalm 126:5, "Those sowing in tears, with singing do reap." The cyclical rhythm of darkness and dawn in Lisa Mark's poem symbolizes the human experience of grief and recovery.

When everything's darkness

And you feel so alone

When the rain doesn't stop

And you can't make it home

When it feels all is lost

And you just want to run

It can't rain forever

Just wait for the Sun

The repetition of her refrain is rhythmic therapy – a modern echo of biblical chant, where words heal through sound and structure.

Both David's Psalms and Mark's poem show that healing requires time, faith, and an openness to the gentle music of hope. The therapeutic response from music is not always loud; sometimes, it hums softly within, promising the return of light.

#### **4.4. Modern Echoes: Music, Poetry, and Managing Anxiety Today.**

##### **4.4.1. The Psalms and Contemporary Healing of Anxiety.**

Though centuries have passed since David's harp echoed through the halls of Saul's palace, the use of music continues to heal minds and hearts today. In contemporary therapy, it is recognized as a powerful tool for calming an anxious soul and for mental restoration. The Psalms continue to inspire music therapy, and individual believers still sing Psalm 100:1-2,

“Shout to Jehovah, all the earth. Serve Jehovah with joy, come before Him with singing.” These verses remind us that joy and praise create psychological upliftment.

Music therapy helps individuals with anxiety disorder finds relief through sound and rhythm. Patients learn to express feelings they cannot articulate, just as David’s music gave voice to Saul’s silence. Freud might not have envisioned music as therapy in the spiritual sense, but he would have recognized its psychological impact – the release of repressed emotion through beauty. The believer, however, experiences something more: a sacred exchange where pain becomes praise and melody becomes prayer. Modern psychology also affirms that singing or listening to spiritually grounded music reduces anxiety and strengthens community bonds. In times of distress, Psalm 91 offers protection and comfort, “Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.” These verses often sung or chanted, act as meditative affirmations for those seeking peace.

Thus, the Psalms remain living music – timeless therapy for modern anxious souls. Each melody, ancient yet fresh, bridges human emotion with divine serenity.

#### **4.4.2. Lisa Mark’s Poem “Just Wait for the Sun” and the Contemporary Anxious Reader.**

Lisa Mark’s “Just Wait for the Sun” speaks directly to modern readers overwhelmed by the pace and pressures of life. Its simplicity and rhythm appeal to the emotional exhaustion of the

digital age. Her poem could easily serve as a contemporary mantra – a meditative refrain reminding readers to hold on.

When it feels all is lost

And you just want to run

It can't rain forever

Just wait for the Sun

Her poetic cadence embodies what modern music therapists call “rhythmic reassurance” – a steady, repeated phrase that grounds the anxious mind. In essence, Lisa Mark has written a song of survival, one that harmonizes ancient faith with modern resilience.

Her message aligns with Isaiah 40:31,

But those expecting Jehovah pass to power

They raise up the pinion as eagles

They run and are not fatigued

They go on and do not faint

The poem becomes an anthem of endurance, echoing the same divine melody found in the Psalms. Together, the ancient and the modern show that music, whether sung or listened to, still carries the same power to heal the soul.

The therapy of music forms an eternal language of healing – one that transcends time, culture, and faith. From David’s harp to Lisa Mark’s poetic rhythm that comforts the weary heart, music therapy remains a universal gift. The Psalms teach that when words are sung in faith, they carry divine energy capable of restoring the broken spirit. Likewise, Lisa Mark’s “Just Wait for the Sun” reminds the modern soul that darkness never lasts forever – that dawn, both literal and spiritual, is always near.

Music, whether ancient or contemporary, is poetry that breathes. It speaks to the heart when logic fails, and through its rhythm, humanity rediscovers peace. The melody of healing is, therefore, the song of endurance – sung in the Psalms, whispered in Lisa Mark’s poem, and still alive in every heart that dares to hope again.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

This research has sought to explore the therapeutic essence of poetry as a means of finding comfort, with particular attention to David's Book of Psalms and Lisa Mark's "Just Wait for the Sun." In Psalms, King David transforms his emotional struggles – his loneliness, guilt, fear, and even depression – into prayerful poetry. These compositions reflect both personal lament and communal faith, showing that pain, when given poetic form, can lead to catharsis and restoration. Similarly, Lisa Mark's "Just Wait for the Sun" stands as a modern continuation of this ancient tradition. It comforts the reader with reassurance that sorrow, though deep, is not endless; that the human soul, when patient and reflective, can rise again toward light and peace.

Across all the chapters of this work, one constant truth emerges: the poetic word and the musical rhythm are both tools of survival. They allow the human heart to process grief and to reclaim the meaning in the face of suffering. David's laments in Psalms 22, 42, and 51 portray a man wrestling with isolation, guilt, and despair. Yet, in those same poems, we find the seed of healing – the courage to voice pain before God. This verbal release is a form of spiritual therapy, aligning with Freud's concept of catharsis, where emotional healing occurs through expression rather than suppression.

Furthermore, David's poetry reveals that faith amplifies therapy. The act of turning pain into worship transforms emotional distress into divine dialogue. His psalms not only heal him

personally but continue to comfort millions across generations, reminding readers that vulnerability before God is not weakness but the beginning of recovery. Lisa Mark's poem echoes this message in modern, secular language. The poem functions as a bridge between emotional chaos and hope, much like David's harp soothed Saul's tormented mind. Both texts, though separated by time and culture, converge in purpose: to heal the wounded human spirit through the beauty of language.

This research also explored the emotional themes of loneliness, mental illness, and anxiety – not merely as abstract concepts, but as lived human experiences reflected in both the Psalms and Mark's work. Through the detailed examination, it was discovered that poetic language serves as a mirror, enabling readers and writer to recognize their pain, and as a window, through which they can see a brighter path ahead. It helps individuals give structure to feelings that might otherwise overwhelm them.

The analysis of music as a therapeutic response further established that rhythm and melody enhance this therapeutic process. David's harp, which soothed Saul's torment, illustrates how sound itself can realign the mind. Both ancient and modern studies confirm that music and poetry are powerful instruments for managing anxiety, amongst other mental illness. The Psalms represent the sacred voice of a soul crying out to God; Lisa Mark's poem represents the voice of the modern individual seeking light amid emotional darkness. Both embody the same universal yearning – to be comforted, to be seen, and to find peace within oneself.

Ultimately, this work reaffirms that poetry is not only to be read but to be felt, not only to be studied but to be lived. Through rhythm, imagery, and faith, poetry teaches that pain can be transformed – not erased, but made meaningful – through creative and spiritual expression.

Based on the findings and reflections of this research, several recommendations can be made regarding the use of poetry as a medium for emotional and spiritual healing. The educational system should put in place the study of poetry not only as a literary form, but as a therapeutic and psychological discipline. Courses in English and Religious studies can explore the Psalms as case studies in emotional healing and resilience. Also, poetry therapy should be widely embraced in modern counseling and pastoral care. Just as David's harp erased Saul's distress, the reading and writing of poetry can help modern individuals articulate emotions that might otherwise remain suppressed. Churches, schools and other programs can include poetry reading amongst other things that foster emotional expression and spiritual grounding. Writers and poets can also continue to create works that engage the human condition with honesty and empathy. Poetry that acknowledges pain yet points toward hope has the power to reach. Readers can also use poetry as a tool for reflection, keep a journal of those written reflections. It allows them to translate feelings into words. When one writes, one heals.

Finally, it is recommended that future researchers continue to explore the intersection of poetry, music, and therapy across diverse traditions – comparing biblical psalms, Islamic devotional poetry, African oral songs, and modern psychological approaches.

This project stands as a testament to the enduring power of the human voice – the voice that cries, prays, sings, and hopes. David’s psalms and Lisa Mark’s poem both remind us that light is never too far away; that even in despair, the act of speaking or singing can awaken the soul to new life. Through the poetic word, the human heart finds its own music – and through that music, it finds peace. Thus, whether through David’s divine melody or Mark’s gentle modern verse, the message remains clear and eternal: there is healing in poetry, there is peace in music, and there is solace in the spoken heart.

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