

Rewrite - "visiting hour"

Life, Death



Rewrite - " Visiting Hour" The poem " Visiting Hour" was written by the Scottish poet Norman MacCaig. In the poem, MacCaig shows the central idea is loss and death. This central idea is achieved through the use of various techniques such as imagery, structure and narrative stance. The poem is about a visit MacCain makes to a dying relative in a hospital. Throughout the poem, MacCaig gives his thoughts and feeling to how he fails to cope with the situation. The poet also uses enjambment, metaphor and imagery at the beginning of the poem when MacCaig hints at the central idea. " Vanishes heavenward", with the use of enjambment the poet introduces the idea of death. The quotation emphasizes the theme of death and how MacCaig may not be able to speak to his loved one again. With the use of a metaphor and imagery, as the lift physically rises up, the mood of depression associates the journey to heaven. The " corpse" represents death. The person he is visiting could easily be a corpse. The poet is occupied of images of death and sees the patient in a negative way. Though not mentioning the word death, his mind automatically makes this assumption. At this point the reader just assumes the central idea is death. Repetition is used as the poet emphasises the central concern of his loved one but also of his admiration of the nurses. " So many deaths.... so many farewells" emphasises how " miraculous" the nurses seem to him and they are not overwhelmed by the emotion of grief unlike him. MacCaig uses structure as he first mentions the patient, " Ward 7. She lies". The four word line immediately links the woman with the hospital. The non-sentence " Ward 7" draws attention to the reality of the situation the poet is in. " In a white cave of forgetfulness", though suggesting a white curtain around the bed, it creates the impression of emptiness. The

vivid colours of " green and yellow" are not present. This suggests the patient's life slipping away and a fear from MacCaig that they will not remember him. A Metaphor is used once again as the poet recognises that while he can physically touch the patient, she is dying and he is alive. " And between her and me distance shrinks till there is none left but the distance of pain that neither she nor I can cross", he has entered the hospital, found her ward and reached her bedside but cannot " touch" her. The central idea is made clear to the reader in the last stanza where the poet writes, " books the will not be read". MacCaig notices the uselessness of the gifts brought for the patient. The patient's inability to eat the fruit or read the books reveals their lack of life. In conclusion, the poet achieves the central idea of death and loss by the use of metaphor, imagery, enjambment and structure. By using all of those techniques made the central idea is clear.