

Wallace
stevens(october 2,
1879 august 2, 1955)

[Life](#), [Death](#)



Wallace Stevens(October 2, 1879 — August 2, 1955) Career and Life *

Stevens was born in Reading, Pennsylvania on October 2, 1879, and died at the age of seventy-six in Hartford, Connecticut on August 2, 1955. He attended Harvard as a special student from 1897 to 1900 but did not graduate; he graduated from New York law school in 1903 and was admitted to the New York bar in 1904. * The same year he met Elsie Kachel, a young woman from Reading, whom he married in 1909. They had one daughter, Holly Bight, born in 1924. * More than any other modern poet, Stevens was concerned with the transformative power of the imagination. * Stevens moved to Connecticut in 1916, having found employment at the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Co., of which he became vice president in 1934. * He had begun to establish an identity for himself outside the world of law and business, however, and his first book of poems, *Harmonium*, published in 1923. * For the next several years, Stevens focused on his business life. * He began to publish new poems in 1930, however, and in the following year, Knopf published a second edition of *Harmonium*, which included fourteen new poems and left out three of the decidedly weaker ones. * Composing poems on his way to and from the office and in the evenings, Stevens continued to spend his days behind a desk at the office, and led a quiet, uneventful life. * Though now considered one of the major American poets of the century, he did not receive widespread recognition until the publication of his *Collected Poems*, just a year before his death. His major works include *Ideas of Order* (1935), *The Man With the Blue Guitar* (1937), *Notes Towards a Supreme Fiction* (1942), and a collection of essays on poetry, *The Necessary Angel* (1951). *The Snow Man* One must have a mind of winter To

regard the frost and the boughs Of the pine-trees crusted with snow; And have been cold a long time To behold the junipers shagged with ice, The spruces rough in the distant glitter Of the January sun; and not to think Of any misery in the sound of the wind, In the sound of a few leaves, Which is the sound of the land Full of the same wind That is blowing in the same bare place For the listener, who listens in the snow, And, nothing himself, beholds Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is. This poem is one long sentence in five tercets, put together as verse. This run-on sentence gives the poem a feeling of being surreal, as if from the confusion of one's mind. Since one cannot truly know what the world would look like through the eyes of a nonliving being, imagination is a contributing factor to Stevens' rationale. There is also no particular meter; each foot varies: the poem becomes a combination of iambs (" the frost," " and not," " the sound," " that is"), trochees (" winter," " glitter,"), anapests (" to regard," " to behold," " of the land"), dactyls (" junipers"), and spondee(" pine-trees). The lack of a uniform meter throughout this poem mirrors the way in which a given situation will vary based on a person's current condition. For example, a child may be excited by the prospect of snow due to their playful disposition. On the other hand, an adult may be worried by the prospect of snow due to the presence of a new teenage driver in the family. Steven's word choice, or diction, add to the image of the winter landscape he is trying to portray. The words " crusted," " shagged," and " rough," give the vision of a very bare nature, and provide the sharpest, clearest image of nature, as seen through the eyes of the snowman. The reader is then exposed to phrases that allow them to hear with the acutest ear the cold images evoking the sense of

barrenness and monotony: " sound of the wind," " sound of a few leaves," " sound of the land," " same wind," " same bare place," " For the listener, who listens in the snow." Even the word " few" before leaves signals that little life exists. These descriptions relate to humans, and the common feeling that winter is a time representative of death, monotony, and loneliness. The repetition of the word " nothing" in the last stanza accentuates not only the idea of emptiness, but the idea that perhaps one can never truly grasp the world around them, for with imagination, the landscape is morphed, and without imagination, the scene does not exist. Afterlife: the complete

emptiness Wallace Stevens (1879—1955) wrote most of his poems during the world wars period, which took the lives of millions of people. As a result, Wallace Stevens started to question the importance of religion in the modern era, and felt that you should enjoy your life in the present and not waste time living for an afterlife. In his poem " The Snow Man", Stevens describes a harsh winter environment creating a unique dramatic situation through an effective imagery. He leads the reader from a relatively objective description of a winter scene to a subjective emotional response. Roberts Pack's essay on " The Snow Man" discusses the idea of perception, while David Perkins while focuses on the relationship between imagination and reality through the perspective of the snow man. Is Wallace Steven concerned with imagination and reality, or perception? In " The Snow Man", the atypical syntax and logic of the poem, as well as the usage of imagery, compels the reader to perceive the poem from an untraditional in order to both understand the role of nature and realize its very theme is death. The title of the poem " The Snow Man" is very confusing for the reader. At first we "

visualize balls of snow placed on top of each other, coals for eyes, a carrot nose" as Perkins implies, and don't see the relation with the poem. But after a few readings we discover the snow man and the listener are one individual. The lines " One must have a mind of winter" (1. 1) and " And have been cold a long time"(2. 1) indicate in my opinion the listener is dead. Why so? Winter implies cold, and cold equals death. So if the snow man has a mind of winter, it means he is dead. The snow man is indeed an image to describe this dead body, which is recovered by ice and snow. It is also a symbol of the cycle of life, which always ends with death. Once spring is here, the snow man will melt, it won't last forever. Just like a dead body would decompose, and turn into dust. In...[continues]