

Fifteen by william stafford



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The poem Fifteen by William Stafford, describes the ideas of a young teenager and imaginations when he sees a motorcycle at the side of the rail, It tells us of how the main character gets familiar with adulthood and starts getting mature, it gives us changes. The author in his poem describes the ideas and temptations that a fifteen year old would have, and it gives us a message of how when you are blinded of your teenagedreams, at the same time to take and decide the correct paths and decisions. In the first stanza William Stafford stops realization. He describes a motorcycle below a bridge.

The cycle is abandoned, " engine running as it lay on its side, ticking over slowly in the high grass. " To begin his poem Stafford gives us a location, " South of the Bridge on Seventeenth. " If one were to assume that we as people, traveled metaphorically in any direction I would think it to be north for example: " Up" for all different purposes. Stafford's character is south, not necessarily heading south, but he is south in relation to the bridge. Changes are like bridges, connections between one p of life and the next. Points where the road which below is much less stable, where there aren't miles of solid ground below.

Changes are things that you have to get over. And thinking that Stafford's age which is fifteen years, like us all, we are heading north, then he's in for a change a bridge in the future. The motorcycle in the other hand was found " back of the willows one summer day. " Willows are beautiful flowing trees, their branches fall down and hide their trunks veiling whatever may lie at their shape from all on the other side of their barrier. Stafford's character finds the motorcycle beyond the barriers of the willows and so we can

Imagine him pulling aside the waterfall of green and revealing the perfect machine.

On the other hand everything about the scene finds of a hidden truth discovered. The high grass, tall as if to hide the treasures that are within it, and the willows, and even the picture of calm, warm serenity that comes to mind with the idea of trees in the summer. But the boy finds the cycle unexpectedly, he did not know or even awaited it. In the second stanza it connects temptation and imagination. The cycle becomes his forbidden imagination, it has a " pulsing gleam...shiny flanks...demure headlights fringed where it lay;" it is arousing him. First with its beauty it's pulsing and shiny.

It's elegant and bright as described in the second stanza . Then it's interest, he " led it gently to the road and stood with that companion, ready and friendly. " It draws him in. And for the first part he's taken with it. He " admired" it. He " stood" with it. He was young and he saw the beauty as something he wanted. He was a teenager after all chasing his dream. These moments are him being a child this is him before the " good man" from later in the poem. You can tell he is taken with it from the way he " gently" leads it to the road, he is taking care of it.

You are not gentle with things that you think are not needed or that you dislike. One does not describe these things either as having a " pulsing gleam. " Possibly freedom and perhaps bliss are shown in stanza three. The character is imagining himself on the open road. He's picturing taking the motorcycle and riding away on it. It gives to speculation if he, being fifteen can even legally drive one, let alone that would then surely be considered

stealing. Assuming that he's not there appears the forbidden imagination again. It's not legal, not okay, yet he wants it temptatiously.

Though, as for freedom and excitement, he clearly states that there is a "forward feeling, a tremble." For example a reader would take this to be excitement growing inside the main character. He is confident. He is happy and positive at least because he is "patting the handle," and receiving a "confident opinion." He is indulging or giving interest, a word used to express freedom to do something enjoyable. In the fourth stanza Stafford's poem takes a different direction shall we say, a new character is introduced, the owner of the motorcycle.

The grass which is mentioned earlier seems to be hiding more than just the cycle, but also its rider. This also shows a change in the nature of the boy, a decision being made. He thinks and "thinking...found the owner." The boy in a rush pushes aside his temptation towards freedom and excitement. He chooses. He does not choose to ride away, though, rather to be mature and responsible. To think of more than just himself and locate whomever the bike had belonged. The owner, thrown from the bike in the crash.

The rider is "just coming to," or else awakening from unconsciousness he must have got from his crash. He had "flipped over the rail. He had blood on his hand, was pale" This man is not in good shape. He just crashed his motorcycle and had blood on his hands. On the outside he is injured and broken needs help getting to his bike. Physically, he is weak while it seems that the main character being fifteen, is not. He is strong which is connected from the fact that they are young, full of life as fifteen year olds are. But the rider once at his bike, becomes strong once again, he "roared away. He is

not magically healed, he is still bleeding from the crash, but he has the inside strength of a confident adult and he still gets on his bike and rides away. Before leaving the man calls the main character "a good man". To sum it up, the main character begins as a fifteen-year-old with a change of heart in his future, he is beginning to realize this. Then he becomes, in the fourth stanza, "a good man." Most importantly, a man. He started maturing, learning of getting older, most importantly! Stating in my conclusion that the boy, as he finds the cycle and then after moments of indecision, returns it begins his own road to adulthood.

He goes from thought of the temptations of the machine to giving it back to its owner and watching him ride away. So I took myself as an example, because I am also a teenager who has his dream and goals and will be facing adulthood myself. It showed us a mature boy who fought off his temptations and teenage dreams, and choosing the correct path of adulthood. It gives a strong message of spirituality which does push us forward of following our dreams but at the same time taking the right decision, as shown with the main character.