

Compare and
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In both ' Song' and ' Remember', Rossetti articulates several different attitudes towards death, avoiding any one set approach. In ' Song', she uses techniques involving the structure and tone of the poem to communicate that she is in fact happy to be out of the relationship. However, in the poem ' Remember', Rossetti uses the displays a much more consoling tone, giving a much different interpretation on death than that of ' Song'.

In ' Song', one of the main themes was the use of natural vocabulary to create a sense of relief. For example, Rossetti writes " I shall not hear the Nightingale Sing on, as if in pain". This image could possibly suggest that the Nightingale is a metaphor for her relationship, and in death Rossetti has finally escaped from her lover, who may not have cared for her in the way that he should. Another interpretation of this could perhaps be that her lover was not loving towards her, and only acted as though he did at her funeral. This would mean that the " Nightingale" was a metaphor for her lover, and she uses the words " as if" to emphasise that he is perhaps using his state of mourning as a show. The repetition of the words, " I shall not" on the three lines before the Nightingale metaphor also support the idea that she sees death as an escape due to the tone that it creates; one of hope for better after death.

Some of the themes in ' Remember' contrast with those of ' Song' due to the meaning behind them. For example, she declares, " Only remember me", which could emphasise the fact that she expects loyalty from a man that she does genuinely love; otherwise, if she didn't care then she would most likely tell her ' lover' not to bother. However, another interpretation to this line can be surfaced by the emphasis on the word " Only". The emphasis is made

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obvious by the sudden change in meter and is the first break in rhythm in the poem, which suggests to the reader that it is a key line in showing the meaning behind 'Remember'. Arguably, Rossetti is trying to use this line to plead with her lover, who has been unfaithful towards her, and telling him to remember her instead of any of the other women that he had relationships with. A common theme in both poems, is the role of women in relationships within society. In both 'Song' and 'Remember', Rossetti hints at men being unfaithful to their lovers, which shows a divide in classes which fits with the context of the time in Victorian Britain. For example, in 'Song', there are the obvious connotations of there being no real 'love' in the relationship, due to the "Nightingale" metaphor. Also, in 'Remember', there is a hint at male dominance in the relationship, which is seen when Rossetti comments on the "future that you plann'd", as if she had no say in what she wanted to do with the rest of her life. The vocabulary used in song can also communicate Rossetti's attitudes towards death. For instance, she uses the image of the "shady cypress tree", a traditional symbol of mourning, and instructs her lover not to plant one. This could be her way of asking why he should care for her now that she is dead when he didn't care for her in life. Having said that, another interpretation could be one of a completely opposite meaning. She could, in fact, want her lover to keep their memories in his mind, instead of under a "shady cypress tree".

Something similar occurs in 'Remember' in that the purpose of using the imagery is to soften the blow of her death to her lover. For example, in 'Remember', Rossetti uses euphemisms for death, such as "gone away" and "into the silent land". This usage implies that death is quite a negative

aspect of life, as it can break hearts. The fact that she is using euphemisms, clearly shows that she is being careful with her words, when addressing her lover, so as to not upset him. Another example of where Rossetti is seen to be painting death in a negative light can be found on line 11, when she writes about the “darkness and corruption” associated with it. This could hold some religious context, as in the Bible, with “Darkness” often being related to Hell. This says to the reader that she sees life apart from her lover as being similar to Hell, which further implies that death is not a happy thought for her. This fits with both Rossetti’s religious views and the general religious views of the time, what with the belief in God being the religious norm. The form and structure of both poems also contributes to Rossetti’s attitude towards death. In ‘Song’, the poem is split into two symmetrical stanzas to juxtapose the experience of death for the deceased themselves and those that they leave behind. This allows the reader to infer that Rossetti sees death as an obstacle to stability in a relationship. This instability within a relationship that is based on death, fits with the context of the Victorian era due to the high mortality rate. Back then, when a person would die was a real factor in whether one would court another person or not. The average of 6.7 syllables per line certainly conveys this sense of uneasiness and uncertainty when it comes to the future.

The poem ‘Remember’ follows the form of a Petrarchan Sonnet, which is typically a love poem made up of one octave stanza and one sestet stanza, separated by a change of thought, known as the volta. In the first stanza, Rossetti focuses on instructing her lover on how to deal with her passing, repeating the word “remember” to emphasise the main action that she

wants her lover to complete. However, in the second stanza, she is forced to accept the fact that her lover may forget her and be happy, as opposed to remembering her and being trapped in a state of mourning. The rhyme scheme in 'Remember' can also contribute towards Christina Rossetti's attitude towards death, particularly in the sestet stanza. The breaking into a different pattern than the 'ABBAABBA' of the octave, it again shows the instability that the idea of death causes in terms of love, which directly links to 'Song'. The tone in 'Song', however, contradicts the tone of sadness to one again of a possible escape from a toxic relationship. For instance, in the second line, the constant repetition of the "s" sound, somewhat adds to the 'fluffiness' of the line. This overly affectionate feature of the poem alludes to a tone of sarcasm within the meaning of 'Song'. To go with this, the third line seems to the reader to be very fast paced for a poem that should possibly be matching the lethargy of death, perhaps suggesting that she cannot wait to die.

This stance forms a stark contrast to the tone of 'Remember', in which Rossetti takes a much more consoling tone with the lover that she leaves behind in the poem. She does this by inserting caesura into the seventh and tenth line to break up the meter and create a pause. This reinforces the reassurance in her words. In many ways, the poem also takes quite a tentative tone when it addresses her over, which is shown by the fact that Rossetti even changes the message that she wishes to give to her lover, after the volta. Ultimately, 'Song' and 'Remember' are both very similar in terms of what they relay to the reader about Rossetti's views on death.

However, this is down to the reader's interpretation as aspects of both

poems, such as the tone, depend on the way that the reader deciphers the poem and therefore the meaning that they deduce from it.