

# [Notes for the poem poison tree](https://assignbuster.com/notes-for-the-poem-poison-tree/)

A Poison Tree is taken from the collection of Blake’s poem titled Songs of Experiencewhich was published in the year 1793. His works focus on the theme of human nature. In hisSongsof InnocenceandSongs of Experiencehe tries to bring a contrast between the innocence seen in achild and how this change as the child matures and learns the ways of the world which brings withit the harsh reality known as experience. It is a very simple poem that speaks volumes on humannature, the habit of keeping anger in one’s mind and behaving in a good manner externally.

Thepoem consists of four setsof rhyming couplets. Blake can be called as a mystic poet. He reveals in his poetry his soul’s relationship withGod. He thinks deeply of man’s purpose on this earth. He tries to answer the question of why andfrom where has man’s soul originated. His mysticism was a realisation of the present. ‘ Thekingdom of Heaven is with you’ such a realization is the object of Blake’s mysticism. This is thepractical side of his mysticism. The poem highlights the need for letting lose suffocating emotions like anger which if keptinside your mind keeps growing everyday.

The poem starts with the poet telling us about how heexpressed the anger to his friend and got rid of it. But when it came to his enemy he kept it withinhimself and it grew inside him to such an extent that he later had no control over it. Here he hasused the metaphor of a tree to show how he watered his ‘ wrath’ with ‘ fears’ and ‘ sunned it with smiles’ and ‘ soft deceitful wiles’ letting it grow into a ‘ poison tree’ as he calls it which bears a fruitas well. This shiny fruit when consumed by the greedy enemy leads to his death.

However we cansee that there is irony in the poem because although he says not to nurture the wrath for your enemyin the mind he seems to be glad in the end to see the death of hisenemy. Lines1-8 The original title of the poem was “ Christian Forbearance” . Thistitlehints that the poem isagainst selfrestraint. Blake believes that it is wrong to resist the natural impulses of man becauserestraint produces the apple of hate which destroys friendship and leads to a strained relationship. The speaker was able to end his hatred for his friend as he had given an outlet to hisemotions.

But when he had a problem with his enemy he did not express it and as a result it accumulated. Here too it would not have such intensity if he had expressed it to his enemy. Insteadthe speaker caressed and nursed his emotions. He kept imagining that his enemy would do himharm and he lived in suffering. This increased his agony and watered hisemotions of anger againsthis enemy. He then put on a mask of friendship towards his enemy. He pretended to be good to himand smiled at him whenever he saw him. He was a hypocrite and gave his enemy the impressionthat he was a friend.

But in real he wasactually nurturing the feeling of hatred inside. Lines 9-16 Blake, through this poem tries to bring out his idea of free expression of emotions. Blake was against suppression of feelings and bringing about a control of one’s behaviour which isnecessary in our society. As part of the hypocrisy which is promoted in our society people refuse tofreely express their feelings to a friend even when it is unpleasant. Hypocrisy teaches us to put up asmile on our face and to go on nurturing anger inside.

According to Blake this kind of falsehood, hypocrisy and selfishness replace sincerity, frankness and truthfulness in experience. The speakers feeling of anger and enmity went on growinginwardly but outwardly he putup a pleasant face. His anger finally bore afruit in the form of a bright apple. His enemy was greatly attracted to this apple and tried to steal this fruit from the speaker because he too had inwardly remained hostile to the speaker. The enemy slowly entered into the garden of the speakerand stolethe apple.

He ate it without realizing the consequences. The apple being poisonous leadsto the death of the enemy. In the morning the speaker was happy to see the enemy lying dead underthe tree. He had succeeded in his intention. The speaker’s fake friendship had tricked the enemyinto believing that he was true at heart and had cheated the enemy. Feeling safe the enemy hadtried to cheat the speaker but he fell for the speaker’s trap and met with a disastrous end. Robert Frost’s ‘ The Road not Taken’ is a beautiful poem about making choices in life.

It discusses the very common situation of coming to the crossroads and not knowing which way to choose. Like all Frost poems it begins in delight and ends in wisdom. One morning the poet came to a junction where two roads diverged in a yellow wood. He stood for a long time there, wondering which way to choose. He was sorry that he could not travel both roads. After considering the prospects of both roads, he took the second one because it was grassy and less travelled by. He kept the first road for another day. But he doubted if he should ever come back because one way leads to another way.

The poem ends quite dramatically when the poet hopes that later in his life he will be able to say with a sigh of relief that choosing the road less travelled by has made all the difference in his life. On the surface the poem is autobiographical, showing Frost’s bold choice to become a poet. He had tried his hands at many things and it was later in his life that he achieved success as a poet. But it is also philosophical, showing the great human dilemma in making a choice, especially when it is the road less travelled by.