

"decade" by amy lowell essay sample

[Life](#), [Love](#)



“Decade” by Amy Lowell Essay Sample

When you came, you were like red wine and honey,

And the taste of you burnt my mouth with its sweetness.

Now you are like morning bread,

Smooth and pleasant.

I hardly taste you at all for I know your savour,

But I am completely nourished.

Amy Lowell produced the majority of her poems after her acquaintance with the actress Ada Russell, a widow eleven years older than Lowell, with whom she shared the last thirteen years of her life. Russell became Lowell's beloved companion, secretary, and nurturing muse. They lived together in a “Boston marriage” until Lowell's death and many of Lowell's most poignant love poems, including Opal, Madonna of the Evening Flowers etc. were written for Ada Russell.

The poem “Decade” was written as a celebration of the ten-year anniversary of Ada and Amy's relationship. However, there is no gender specification of a lover so one could dedicate it to someone of the opposite sex. Simple in its form, rich in imagery and symbolism the poem depicts powerfully the deep emotional bond between two people after ten years of relationship.

At the beginning of the relationship, the beloved was “like red wine and honey”, and his taste burnt with its sweetness. The “red wine” symbolizes

the passion felt in the beginning. Red is a color that denotes something sudden, passionate and strong and wine is intoxicant, making someone dizzy with its sweetness and alcohol. The red wine alludes to the forcefulness and passion of love.

Gradually, the sweet red wine has become “ like morning bread”, “ smooth and pleasant”. The taste of the bread is familiar and the poetess hardly tastes it. Nevertheless, she is completely nourished. Morning bread is something vital for our everyday nutrition. It is an invaluable article of food and keeps us full and nourished. We need it every day and a meal is incomplete without it. So, now the lover is essential to the other’s life. Life cannot exist without him. Perhaps the passion and the burning sweetness have gone, but what remains is a smooth, deep, mature love which ties lovers together in a multilevel, multifarious bond.

Amy Lowell manages to express a deeply sensuous love in simple and straightforward diction and syntax. She avoids complexity in the words she uses, thus depicting love simple in its expressions and grandeur. She lets her sexuality and sensuality be expressed using the image of a “ red wine” which “ burnt her mouth with its sweetness” and ends her poem with a statement which confirms the deep love she feels for her valuable companion.