

The going by thomas hardy

Profession, Writer



Hardy almost appears unaware of the years passed distanced from his wife until the fifth stanza, suggesting her death has the effect of a virtual awakening, allowing him to finally accept it, yet not settle from mourning it, as is made evident by the following 1912-13 poems. The Repetition of " Why' beginning the first, third, and fifth stanza illustrate Hardy's rejection of Emma's death, probably resulting from the regret of not having taken advantage of the time she was alive. Hardy feels Emma " calmly' died with " indifference", giving way to intense feelings of remorse in the following stanza's.

His suspicion of her carelessness is further highlighted in the second stanza as she is described to have " never to bid goodbye" - " or lip [him] the softest call". Emma's apparent alienation of Hardy suggests she deliberately left him in response to " those days long dead" where she was as good as dead to Hardy. Moreover Hardy remains unsettled by the fact that death or Emma offered " no hint" of her " going". Death's unexpectedness emphasizes its fragility, and tendency to " quickly - and calmly' occur at any " moment, and alter all".

The use of the oxymoron, quickly - and calmly' to describe death may suggest Hardy's state of confusion due to the swiftness of it all happening, as well as him actually not knowing how she died because he was not there. In addition the aural imagery created through the use of the monosyllabic words, " up and be gone", has the effect of emphasizing death's suddenness. The " lloW' sound created by the feminine end rhyme of " where I could not follow - with wing of swallow' has the effect of something continuous, in this case suggesting Hardy's growing distance from Emma now that she is dead,

as well as foreshadowing the long period of grief to come. "The Going" is a reference to Emma's gradual fading from Hardy's memory. Emma's death is also described to be a "swift fleeing" and a "great going". Death and the afterlife are never referred to explicitly. Therefore Hardy's use of euphemisms illustrates his avoidance of reality, as well as his fear of acknowledging Emma's death. Furthermore, Hardy's commemorations of his courtship with Emma in the fourth stanza further stress this point. The tone of the poem shifts during this process, as the cadence begins to rise, revealing the joy Hardy feels whilst remembering Emma alive.

It almost seems as if Hardy is attempting to "follow" Emma through his memories of her. Hardy eventually recollects the moments where he and Emma were most distant and "did not speak or visit together those places that they once visited". By this point, regret dominates Hardy's feelings and the poem. Furthermore, in the first stanza Emma's death is described to have passed on "quickly after the morrow's dawn" - the use of the word "dawn" adds a sense of light to the poem, allowing readers to imagine the sun rising.

This may symbolize Emma's soul rising from her dead corpse, as well as, portraying an ambiance of increasing light. Hardy deliberately eliminates this semblance of light to depict his increasing sense of grief. In the third stanza, the use of the words "darkening dankness" and "yawning blankness" coupled with Hardy's description of his wife's hallucination "at dusk", convey this diffusion of light. In the final stanza Hardy appears to be undergoing

acceptance, suggested by the use of the words " well, well". Nevertheless his grief has not yet subsided.

The broken syntax alters the rhythm, as well as giving the impression of it faltering forward. Hardy describes himself as a " dead man held on end to sink down soon", this conflicts with the " rising" of Emma in the first stanza, nevertheless, may imply the same idea. Hardy is now plagued with a wish to join his wife in the after life, yet this does not bring them any closer to her, as Hardy feels he'll " sink down" instead of rising up. In addition, similarly to the sun " rising" in the first stanza, the use of " sink down" may symbolize the sun now sinking, bringing about darkness.