

# I thought about his death for so many hours essay samples

[Art & Culture](#), [Symbolism](#)



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## **Analysis of the Wires of the Night**

### Introduction

Billy Collins is an American poet highly celebrated for his literary works. The man also doubles as a renowned professor at Lehman College in the City University of New York. He is also a distinguished senior fellow at the Winter Park Institute. As a poet, he has receives awards and honors for his various works. He was appointed Poet Laureate of the United States three years running from 2001 to 2003. He has also been recognized for his literary efforts and honored as a Literary Lion at the New York Public Library. One of his best works is the poem, “ The Wires of the Night.” This analysis paper will delve into this particular poem. In his poem “ The Wires of the Night,” Billy Collins captures the inherent and almost repugnant repetition that characterizes the process of grief by making use of a tangle of shifting

imagery and symbolism to show how grief take new forms and shapes.

The grieving process is unique for everyone. People grieve the loss of people or things they treasure through different ways. Billy Collins has his particular way, and through the poem, Billy Collins tells of his grieving process for the loss of an unnamed man. The argument that Billy Collins is grieving the loss of a man is given by the first line in the poem.

Billy Collins used introspection to give the readers an insider perspective into the incomprehensible thoughts that were running through his mind that night. He examined his own conscious thoughts and feelings. Through the thorough examination of his mental state, he paints images that describe his grieving process. For instance, in the first paragraph, the author says that his thoughts over the unnamed man went on for many hours in the night. He compares this to the ringing voice of the telephone and the obituaries.

**“ I thought about his death for so many hours,**

tangled there in the wires of the night,

that it came to have a body and dimensions,

more than a voice shaking over the telephone

or the black obituary boldface of name and dates”

Every time the author thinks he has the handle on the grief that he experiences, it assumes another form and baffles him for more hours.

Through the minute and otherwise incoherent details that the author gives, readers can tell that he is caught between the sharp and resilient barbs of introspections. I imagine that this is in an effort to understand and consequently overcome his grief.

**His death now had an entrance and an exit,**

doors and stairs,

windows and shutters which are the motionless wings

of windows. His death had a head and clothes,

the white shirt and baggy trousers of death.

The changing nature of the imagery and symbolism used shows the despair that can build up courtesy of the grief and the repeated failure to understand the grief of losing the unnamed man. When grieving, we want to wrap our minds around the fact that we have lost a treasured one and hopefully move past that tragic moment. However, through the use of symbolism and imagery in the poem, Billy Collins shows us that this is not always possible.

The images of the house with the entrance, exit, doors and stairs implies that in every aspects of our life, we are constantly reminded of the loss that we suffered (Collins 56).

The shifting imagery and symbolism also embodies the emotional changes that people experience when grieving the loss of a loved one. In the poem, the death of the unnamed man takes the form of many things.

**His death had pages, a dark leather cover, an index,**

and the print was too minuscule for anyone to read.

**His death had hinges and bolts that were oiled**

and locked,

The fact that most of these things are not abstract but things that are common in daily life is not a coincidence. This shows of the constant reminders that take us back to the emotional state we were previously in

before learning to live with the loss. The argument that the prong was too small for anyone to read implies that even the writer cannot understand why he cannot accept the death of his beloved and move on.

It is important to focus on the images that Billy Collins sees in the poem.

Firstly he saw the dead man as a body, then as a house, a clothed person, a vehicle, a house among other images. These are things that are present in our everyday lives. The use of imagery and symbolism in this way shows the state of mind of the author. This is especially in the progression of his grieving process. This shows that he was attempting to come to terms with the loss.

Towards the end of the poem, and after a long night where his mind is bombarded with constant images of the death of the unnamed man, the author wakes up to a realization. The author realized that grief is not a motorized vehicle that one can use to cruise around. He also realized that grief was not a floor on which one could lie down in the late hours of the night.

### **In the freakish pink and gray of dawn I took**

his death to bed with me and his death was my bed

and in every corner of the room it hid from the light,

In the end it dawns on the author that he has to carry the loss into the future. This helps him come to terms with the loss and embrace it as a rite of passage.

and then it was the light of day and the next day

and all the days to follow, and it moved into the future

like the sharp tip of a pen moving across an empty page

The coming of the light of the days symbolizes the new state of mind that the author finds himself after embracing the death. The sharp tip of the pen that is moving across the empty page symbolizes the new possibilities that the authors life could entail.

## **Conclusion**

Through the incomprehensible images and abstract inner thoughts tempered by imagery and symbolism, the author brings to life the process of grieving. The transformations in the images going through the authors mind goes to show the emotional nature of grieving. However, the fact that the author was able to embrace the inevitable show s that one cannot stagnate in a situation for too long because they prevent a whole new future.

## **Works cited**

Collins, Billy. *Sailing Alone Around the Room: New and Selected Poems*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2002. Print