

Poem "change upon change" by elizabeth barett browning essay sample

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Poem “ Change upon change” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning Essay Sample

The theme Change Upon Change by Elizabeth Barrett Browning is love lost.

The central character of the poem reminisces about his life five months ago.

The poet uses the change in season to refer to the emotions of the character

“ and slow, slow as the winter snow the tears have drifted to mine eyes”. As

the poem continues the emotions of the character turn with the season.

Change Upon Change shows using very emotive techniques, how hard it is to

lose the love in your life. Elizabeth Barrett Browning has written the poem

using words that were used more typically in Elizabethan times and are not

really employed widely in normal poems. This style of writing is used by her

because this language was most common in love poems. Some words at the

end of the lines do rhyme “ enow”, “ thou” and “ mute”, “ root”. This creates

a flowing effect onto the next row and achieves a link between the lines of

the poem. Change upon change is a carefully constructed poem about “ love

proved false and frail” and its consequences.

The title of this poem expresses change in itself. “ Change Upon Change”

refers to the layering and continuous adjustments that come from one

change. In this case, the title is referring to the loss of a relationship to the

breakdown of the character. In the first six lines of the text the poem is in

the past tense. The character is remembering back to the days five months

ago when her life was much happier. This is communicated through the

description of the surroundings at the time. “ Five months ago the stream

did flow, the lilies bloomed within the sedge, and we were lingering to and

fro, where none will track thee in this snow, along the stream, beside the hedge". Words such as " Flowers blooming" in these lines are used to correspond this feeling of beauty.

However in the next few lines the feeling changes. " The flowers have dried down to the root: And why, since these be changed since May, should'st thou change less then they". These lines at the end of the first stanza confirm that this beauty that was in the flowers is gone and with it the main character's lover is exposed also. The last two lines show that her lover has changed with the wilting of the flower and followed natures decay. Thus the poem follows parallel to the change in seasons. This is a technique used by E. B Browning to establish the characters moods more resolutely. The use of this metaphor is continued throughout the rest of the poem.

In the first half of the second stanza the feeling of sadness and anguish is portrayed by comparing the characters emotions with winter. " And slow, slow as the winter snow The tears have drifted to mine eyes;" Following this is the lines " And my poor cheeks, five months ago Set blushing at thy praises so," In these lines change is shown by referring to the main characters cheeks which five months ago were flushed when payed a compliment are now " pale" as they the love of the characters life is lost in the next line. The next line from the poem " Ah, sweet, be free to praise and go!"

Is much like the line first stanza and shows the opinion of the character in the present. In the last four lines of the poem the main character attempts

certifies the fact that " It was thine oath that first did fail, — It was thy love proved false and frail," Meaning that the relationship was ended with the main characters partner breaking his oath to her, proving that his love was not a true love for the main character. Emphasis is placed upon these lines with the very harmonious way they have been written. The last few lines " And why, since these be changed enow, Should I change less than thou." Communicate the change of the relationship through the asking of a question.