

Poetry analysis literature review sample

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



1) " Halley's Comet" by Stanley Bunitz

This passage is meant to demonstrate the excitement and joy that young boys feel at the exciting and the new - the boy does not quite understand that his life and the lives of everyone else would end. All he knows is that " there'd be no school tomorrow." The way Halley's Comet is described in the beginning evokes exciting things that boys love, including train tracks and high speeds. This visceral language makes the whole affair sound thrilling, and this appeals to the boy.

In the passage itself, he is telling God where to find him when the world ends, hotly anticipating His arrival. Looking up at " the starry sky," the images in the passage evoke childhood memories of staring up in wonder at what cannot yet be fully understood. The " boy in the white flannel gown" is doing the same, as he has built up this excitement and wonder based on the events of the day (including the teacher and the preacher). To that end, the boy waits and wonders, as many boys did on the roofs of their houses at night. The world ending, being awake after bedtime, being on the roof - all of these things are excitingly forbidden and not allowed for young boys, which makes it that much more exciting for the boy in the poem.

3) " Tenderness" by Stephen Dunn

In this passage, the young author notes that tenderness, as a concept, is something you must experience the absence of in order to fully appreciate it. This comes from his love affair with an older woman who has been hurt, betrayed, and stepped on in all manner of ways by her husband. She was " never touched gently," and as such was ever more thankful for being able to

finally bring that to her life. He, a naive young man, does not know this kind of sadness, and he recognizes that by how grateful she is toward him for showing her tenderness.

In their affair, he provided the " silk and deep balm" that she had been waiting for and was missing for so long, though he did not realize it at the time. Eventually, of course, he understands the word tenderness after their affair ends, the first step in the absence that would lead to a greater sense of tenderness in the future. This poem, and the passage in particular, demonstrates the gradual erosion of innocence as people go through romantic relationships, and their eventual heartache.

4) " Broadway" by Mark Doty

In this passage, Ezekiel demonstrates the reciprocity of the human exchange of communication - earlier in the poem, he was rewarded handsomely for his modest gift of poetry by being given a watch. This was an act that he found supremely kind, and was eternally grateful to, wishing to compensate him the only way he knew how - with the gift of poetry. This sense of personal exchange is especially poignant when considering Ezekiel's status as a homeless man, a caste of people often considered invisible and ignored. With the simple gift of a broken watch, Ezekiel is reintroduced to the human conversation, and wishes to contribute with his own inventory.

His offer of poetry is directly compared to Carlotta's friendly command of the author to " get home safe." Both of these poor panhandlers do not get the normal derision and ignorance they expect from the people they ask - Carlotta asks for change, she gets the author's hand; Ezekiel asks for nothing

and gets a watch. They are both supremely grateful for these gifts, and wish to pay them back in the modest ways they can. Carlotta returns the favor with a salutation, and Ezekiel with the skills he has to offer.

5) " Singapore" by Mary Oliver

In this passage, the author is ruminating on the nature of existence and the unfairness of life, noting that the ups and downs of life do not follow a simple binary. Oliver states that the world isn't " only pain and logic," despite what she was thinking about before (lamenting that the woman in front of her is doing such backbreaking, demoralizing work). Life is about more than just the amount of hardship that is sustained; there are more magnificent things within it.

The author clarifies that they do not wish to imply that incredible things need to happen in a life for it to be good and worth living; she refers back to " the way this poem is filled with trees, and birds." She is referring to the non sequitur passage earlier in the poem, when she laments that " a poem should always have birds in it" and other pleasant things. This small passage is part of her own poem, and is a small oasis of brightness and positivity in what is otherwise a cruel story about a humiliated woman who must work to survive. Oliver uses this to note that life should be held onto for those brief moments of pleasure and beauty.