

"chicago" by carl sandburg essay sample

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“ Chicago” by Carl Sandburg Essay Sample

“ Chicago”, written by Carl Sandburg is a strong meaningful poem illustrating the pride and confidence that pours out of the city of Chicago. Throughout the poem he points out the shortcomings of the city, but at the same time challenges the reader to find another city as majestic despite its flaws. He admits that first impressions of the city are negative, but there is more than meets the eye. Behind all its smoke and arrogance is a city built upon a foundation of confidence, pride, and creativity. Sandburg’s peculiar use of figurative language really defines the poem. His extensive use of personification throughout the entire poem sets the mood and flow of the story. Sandburg personifies the city of Chicago to give it traits of confidence, arrogance, boastfulness, determination, craftiness and pride. This is evident throughout the entire poem from “ Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing white teeth,” (30-31) to “ Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse. And under his ribs the heart of the people, Laughing!” (36-38).

From these lines, Sandburg is simply saying that if the city were human, it would show boastful and confident characteristics. Also present in this poem is great examples of metaphors. In one line, Sandburg compares the city of Chicago to an evil dog ready to attack. (7) Despite a couple of lines, every stanza is flowing with figurative language which strongly dictates the theme of the poem. Upon reading the first stanza, I believed Sandburg’s intention of writing the poem was to commend his hometown of Chicago. After reading a bit more I changed my hypothesis of Sandburg’s to an attempt to insult the

windy city. The poem disguises itself, and reveals its true identity in the last two stanzas. Sandburg uses a rather somber tone throughout most of the poem, but in reality it is not a depressing poem at all. Most of the negative sounding cons in the poem are not actually intended to offend the city at all. Instead, Sandburg is just admitting that the city has many flaws, but when it's all said and done no city is comparable.

The author actually has great pride in his city, as do the characters he portrayed. The real message of the poem is that behind all of its faults, Chicago is a proud, confident and at times boastful city. Citizens of Chicago are proud to be hard working blue collared average Joe's, and although people can put down their city, nothing can strip them of their pride. I enjoyed this poem, primarily on the fact that it kept me guessing. It kept me focused on what I was reading, because to be honest for most of the poem I didn't know Sandburg's message behind the words. The poem had an excellent flow throughout and the last two stanzas really characterized it. My favorite line of the poem came in line 13 when Sandburg says. " I sneer at those who sneer at my city". I would be interested in reading more of Sandburg's poetry, and am curious about the messages and tone of his other works.