

Acquainted with the night by robert frost essay sample

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



This poem is about sadness and solitude. The tone throughout the poem is a melancholic and desolate one. Frost is wandering through the night in a very depressed state. It seems at the time that he wrote the poem he was experiencing tremendous sorrow and isolation. The entire poem shows lack of joy and enthusiasm in the poet's life.

Owing to this depression in the life of the poet, everything around him looks negative to him and he seems to be living in absolute despair. The poet seems to be narrating his own story and is not talking about any other person in the poem. Therefore, it is quite apparent that the poet was going through some kind of personal struggle or problem in life which caused such a state of hopelessness. Frost associates the night, rain, and the city lane as all very sad and despondent. As a reader I feel that because the poet is in an utter state of despair, everything around him looks depressing to him and is of no comfort. Rain is considered to be quite positive as it brings down showers of relief (from the heat) and nourishment (for plants). But in the poem, rain also seems to have a negative connotation along with the night and the "saddest city lane" (l. 4). The poet says, "I have walked out in rain - and back in rain" (l. 2) but it sounds as if it was a completely futile effort. The rain probably could not wash away his sadness, nor bring him back to a life of joy and happiness. The life-giving and nourishing effect of rain has not shown its charm on the poet.

Another futile effort of the poet is probably when he "outwalked the furthest city light" (l. 3). I wonder if he went out searching for something/someone so far, or if he was so lost in sadness that he didn't realize how far he had walked. These are some questions which arise in my mind as a reader. If I

were to answer these questions myself, I would rather believe that he went looking for something/someone so far. He walked all that distance just to obtain his object of search but the failure experienced in doing so, brought his life to a standstill. It must be something invaluable or strongly desired that he wanted to obtain in life. And the failure he had has left him miserable and sad.

It's true that the poet feels very lonely and cut off from the world around him. Nevertheless he is surrounded by life and actions. The watchman is moving about doing his duty and the moon is following its daily routine, doing what it's supposed to do at that time of the day. Nothing else is as still and cut off as much as the poet himself. He is cut off from the world around him, from time, from people, and from all the action happening around him. He seems to be lost and buried in his sorrow, so much so that everything looks gloomy and hopeless to him. This arouses great curiosity in my mind, to know what was so terrible that happened to the poet that brought him into this state of mind. And I wish the poet had briefly talked about the reason of his misery, because it makes the poem sound somewhat incomplete. There is something important lacking in the poem because of this missing information.

Frost is "unwilling to explain" (l. 6) to the watchman what happened to him, yet he stops to hear the interrupted cry coming from far away, hoping that someone may be calling him. As a reader this brings desperation in me to know who is that that the poet is longing for, or who is it that he has lost. As he narrates his tragic state in life, he is full of self-pity which makes him sound very weak and helpless. When he says "But not to call me back or say

good-bye" (l. 10) his tone is very nostalgic and full of commiseration. This throws some light at the fact that he's probably sad over someone who's leaving for another place forever, never to return where the poet lives. And the poet probably desires that the person asks him to accompany him/her or call him one last time to say goodbye.

It's very interesting to note that the poem starts and ends with the same line - " I have been one acquainted with the night." The poet identifies himself with the negative elements and characteristics of night. For him his life is like the darkness of the night, the complete gloominess and dullness that a night brings with it everyday, and the creepy silence and isolation. He is living in solitude and sorrow which are complete opposites of daytime, when life is full of hustle-bustle and there are people all around doing their daily chores. His life is far from the hope and light of the day. Nevertheless the " luminary clock" (l. 12) tells him that the time or this phase of his life is neither right nor wrong. What has to be in life will be, and we as humans have to face the tides of time.

This poem is very thought provoking and the readers are bound to think about the poet and his sad state of life. It also gives rise to many questions as we read on. We are compelled to think about what caused such depression to the poet, why he is in such a great sorrow, when did the tragedy happen in his life and how will he cope up and come out of despair. Another interesting point is that as a reader one can actually visualize the poem and also the poet wandering away with a glum and drooping visage. I could actually imagine and feel the dreariness and darkness of the night, as it is described in the poem. One day when I went out for a stroll after dinner,

I couldn't help thinking of the poet walking alone at night. I had intermittent thoughts about the poem and how one feels lonelier at night time than during the day. Night has its looming effect wherein it magnifies and intensifies feelings of sadness and depression. We all must have experienced the intensity of a body pain or heartache more in the quietness of the night than in the daytime. In this respect we can very well identify with the poet and imagine his situation.

I believe the poet purposely left a few blanks in the poem for the readers to wonder, think and ponder about. Its amazing how he was able to provoke such inquisitiveness and curiosity in the readers' minds with an incomplete poem that ends also abruptly with only two lines in the last stanza. All the other four stanzas follow the pattern of four lines but the last stanza ends with a repetition of the first line of the poem. This device of repetition was probably used by the poet to emphasize on the fact that his state is like that of a night - dark and lonely. His life is also dark, dreary and drab like the dullness of a night. For someone to feel so low and negative about life, something must have gone terribly wrong in his life, to make him feel so distressed. And I again wonder and wish to know what exactly it was. To be honest I would confess here that while reading the poem, I even felt angry at the poet for not telling the reason behind his misery. He's going on telling about his sad experience and solitude so why couldn't he throw some light on the actual events which brought him to this state.

Notwithstanding, the tone of the poem is very strong in moving the readers to think and question. It follows a good rhyming pattern which makes it a good read. The use of words is very figurative and readers can easily

imagine the “ saddest city lane”, “ interrupted cry”, “ unearthly height”, and the “ luminary clock”.

Reference

Robert Frost. 2013. Acquainted with the night. 9 Dec, 2013.

[http://www. poemhunter. com/poem/acquainted-with-the-night/](http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/acquainted-with-the-night/)