

# No hands

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



The poem "No Hands" is about a woman who is annoyed and frustrated with the pilots who are flying their aeroplanes very low in the countryside, and are destroying the peace and serenity. The narrator feels very deeply about the countryside and thinks that it is the place of peace and thoughts.

The poet's main aim is to concern us with the low-flying of aeroplanes in the countryside. She wants us to realise how irritated she is with the pilots, as they are flying the planes extremely low.

The poet wants to engage us with her thoughts, feelings and emotions. She feels very strongly about the countryside and is very irritated why the planes are flying over the countryside. She wants us to think about the countryside's values and to know that it is not there for planes to fly across, but it is there for people to spend their time and look at the beautiful scenery. The poet is conveying a message through the poem, that we shouldn't take the countryside for granted, but we should take it as a place to express our thoughts and feelings.

The method of narration is in first person narrative which is effective as it conveys her anger and disapproval more strongly. The language is conversational, informal and direct. It is coming straight from the heart; therefore this helps to achieve her overall aim.

The form of the poem is a sonnet as the poem is made up of 14 lines, it has a set rhyming pattern and nearly each line has 10 syllables in a pattern of stressed and unstressed - iambic pentameter - "over and over; willow warbler song"; therefore it links to conveying her disapproval and anger, as they are all heavily stressed words, therefore it establishes the mood.

The title " No Hands" is immediately very effective, as it reminds you of our childhood, when the children used to ride their bikes without any hands. The poet has deliberately used this as the title as it is common to everyone, and views back on their memories. The poet's use of deliberate economical language has produced many ideas in our heads. She has used this very cleverly, as it is only two words. The title suggests that the pilots could be endangering and risking others and their lives. The title conveys lots of words such as danger, irresponsible, childishness, challenging and daring.

In the first line, " War-planes have been at it all day long" the poet may have used the word 'war' to make us think of danger and unpleasant things even if there isn't any war. The word 'war-planes' is a compound word and she uses this to give us a visual image. The poet has used all heavily stressed words to create the mood of the poem. The poet has used long drawn vowels and monosyllabic words to make the situation clear and also, exaggerated it to let us know that she is angry with the pilots. The whole nature of the poem is told in this line. The poem begins very dramatically, as the woman jumps in straight away and tells us what the problem is.

The poet's use of metaphors in the phrases " shaking the world" and " strung air" is very powerful as it conveys how much the planes are flying. She exaggerates this to emphasis how disturbing the flying is, therefore she conveys physical effect happening. The word 'strung' emphasises the vibrations in the air, therefore it shows how violently the planes are flying.

The simile in line 3 " humming like pianos when children bang the keys" is fairly effective, as the poet is comparing the pilots to children. Therefore, she assumes that the pilots are childish and foolish.

Throughout the poem, the poet has deliberately used various types of imagery. For example, in this line she uses musical imagery, 'humming like pianos' and 'children bang the keys'. These are examples of onomatopoeia, as she compares the sound from pianos to the planes; therefore she uses onomatopoeia to create the overall impact on noise. Also, she may have used 'humming' deliberately to emphasis the sustained sound coming from the planes, conveying that the pilots are flying the planes continuously.

The poet also used 'bang' instead of 'play', to emphasis that the pilots are inconsiderate and that they are behaving like children and disturbing the countryside. This conveys her anger towards the pilots as she uses harsh words - bang, strung, etc.

The poet uses enjambement and run-on lines to convey how angry she is. This is effective as run-on lines help to make anger continuously tumble out.

The poet use of repetition in line 4 " over and over; willow warbler song and jet planes;" is effective as it makes us realise that the planes are flying non-stop. The poet has also used assonance of the 'o' to sustain the line and to make us realise that the woman is very frustrated and irritated with the pilots. This, therefore, contributes to her aim.

She has cleverly contrasted 'willow warbler song' to 'jet planes'. This is deliberate juxtaposition as you cannot have both of these phrases in the

same line. She has put these two in the same line because she wants us to realise that we are missing the important things that we find in the countryside because of the planes. The noises from the planes are drowning out the sweet song from the willow warblers. This creates a visualisation of the jet planes and shows that we are losing something valuable.

The poet has used semi colons on both sides of the phrase, deliberately to make the reader stop and understand the phrase. She wants us to know that she has implicitly stated that the two don't go together- i. e. we can't have jet planes and willow warblers in the sky at the same.

The writer also aims to get her rage through by using alliteration, as she has emphasised the 'o' and the 'w'.

In the phrase " lads high on speed up there in a mindless thrum;" it conveys that the poet describes the pilots as 'lads' and not as men. This suggests that she thinks of them as selfish, insensitive and immature.

Throughout the poem, the poet deliberately uses words like 'children' and 'lads' and 'silly boys'. This clearly shows that she is using child-like imagery and considers the pilots to be thoughtless and even dangerous.

The narrator's use of punctuation throughout the poem has emphasized her disapproval and anger. It makes us empathise with the poet, as we gain some insight into how she feels about the countryside.

The poet's use of punctuation and techniques has powerfully achieved her aim and evoked pity for the countryside and for the woman. My opinion of the pilots is immature and selfish, because they are ruining the countryside.

The connotations of 'lads high on speed up there' are figurative and literal. The literal meaning is that the pilots are flying fast high up in the sky. The figurative meaning possibly is that the pilots are taking drugs; the adrenaline pumping through their body as they get a great feeling of danger. The poet conveys her anger by using the phrase 'mindless thrum' to express that the pilots don't have a care in the world about the countryside and just want to have fun flying their planes.

Also, the start of that stanza began with a positive, nice sound (willow warbler), then it ended with a negative, unpleasant sound (thrum). The poet contrasts this to get her anger out and uses a different technique - onomatopoeia to evoke our pity towards the countryside and hatred towards the pilots.

In the next phrase "down here a brake of trees churns to a rolling wave" the poet explicitly says that the pilots are flying their planes so low, that it is creating the trees to get wind-swept and get damaged. This again, shows the poet's disapproval towards the pilots as they are being so careless, they are allowing the important things in the countryside get destroyed. The poet's use of a metaphor in 'churns to a rolling wave' is effective; it conveys the woman's anger and sadness towards the countryside. She shows this by using onomatopoeia of 'churns' as this creates an image of nature being irritated and emotionally and physically hurt.

In the next stanza " there's no let in the after-quiver along air-waves struck by silly boys who think they strum guitars" the poet uses assonance of the 'a' to elasticise the line, making us think about what has happened to the countryside. The poet again conveys that the pilots are flying the planes very low; therefore there is non-stop shaking in the air even after the planes fly across.

The poet gets her anger across by using musical imagery and saying that they 'strum guitars'. This emphasises on the vibration made by the planes as it contrasts it to the vibrations made by the guitar. Yet again, this shows that the pilots are being inconsiderate towards the countryside.

The simile " who skim the fields like surfboards over crests of hedges" is particularly effective as the poet is comparing planes to surfboards because the pilots are flying them so close and also being very irresponsible with them. The poet has used an alliteration of the 's'. It is a sharp's'. The poet does this to evoke sympathy for the countryside.

In line 11 and 12 " where a tractor swims in a green wake of grass dust tossed to dry under the sun and stars" the poet gives us a beautiful description of the country life. The 'wake' is the 'v' shaped trail left behind after a boat and the sea usually, but here, it applies to a tractor and the grass. She deliberately brings this description in to make us realise what is missed when the pilots come intruding into the countryside, invading the privacy and ruining the scenery.

She immediately achieves her aim because she is making us think about the luxurious things that can be in the countryside, and then what is happening now with the planes, as the pilots flying the planes are being immature and irrational.

The lines 13 and 14 are rhyming couplets. In these two lines, " boy scaring boy off the face of his own land all do and dare, and look at me, no hands." The poet's anger and disapproval comes across powerfully in this final couplet because it reflects onto the title - No Hands. The poet is comparing these pilots to when the children used to show-off by riding a bike without any hands. This shows that he definitely thinks of them as irresponsible, intrusive boys and not well-mannered men.

The poet has used monosyllabic words - 'all do and dare' this conveys that each pilot is daring the other to do something, for example, who can skim the hedges the closest. The poet started off with monosyllabic words and also ended with them.

I responded emotionally to this poem as it helped me realise all the things to value in the countryside. I could sympathise with the poet, as I knew how she had felt.

Throughout the poem, the poet had used a variety of imagery. This, I thought was quite powerful as she used different types to express her opinion, and that also I could relate to that. The types that she used musical imagery, nature imagery, sea imagery and child-like imagery.



The countryside is not just for the beauty, but it is for spiritual, serenity and also, for a place for people to go to and let their thoughts and feelings out in privacy.