

# Those winter sundays essay sample

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



In the poem, “ Those Winter Sundays” by Robert Hayden, the author uses subtle symbolism to reflect the speaker’s distant relationship with his father. The title of the poem immediately tells the reader that the poem takes place in winter, a time that connotes both coldness and gloominess. Hayden starts his short, redolent poem by writing that the speaker’s father put his clothes on in the, “ blue black cold” (Hayden line 2). The reader instantly feels the cold and iciness inside and outside the house.

The poem continues, “ then with cracked hands that ached from labor in the weekday weather made banked fires blaze” (3-5). Very quickly, the reader is knowledgeable that the father’s cracked hands tells the reader the hard work the father labors at to support his son, a symbol of the father’s loving sacrifice. Furthermore, the warmth that the father builds out of the fire is a symbolic reminder that the house was somehow filled with love because of the father’s selfless act of getting up early in the cold to warm his family.

The coldness of the temperature outside the house also reflects the coldness in the speaker’s heart. Moreover, lines 10-11 show how the narrator treats his father icily and indifferently, speaking with him with no show of emotion. It can be inferred that the coldness in the house also symbolizes the struggle of expressing love.

In the last stanza, the polished shoes symbolize the father’s kindness toward the speaker as he thanklessly works to make his son live a more comfortable and privileged life. The final lines, “ What did I know, what did I know of love’s austere and lonely offices?” (lines 13-14), reflects the regretful realization of the speaker that even though the house was cold and his relationship with his father was indifferent, there was still love in the interior

of the house. In addition, the word “ offices” not only means a workplace, but it also denotes a service done for another. It can be implied that the father’s life was devoted to supporting the speaker and making the latter’s life easier and better as depicted in the poem.

Robert Hayden’s poem, “ Those Winter Sundays” is a reflection of the speaker about his days as a young boy who was apathetic and distant toward his father in spite of the latter’s hard work, love, and devotion.

Hayden’s symbolism indicates the speaker’s cold and remorseful relationship with his father.