

Free poetry explication richard cory essay sample

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In the Edward Arlington Robinson poem "Richard Cory," the titular character is a rich and kind man who has everything you could imagine a person needs. While he is rich, he is also benevolent with his wealth, providing charity and giving what he has to others. He is also very polite and well-mannered. Despite this outward happiness, by the end of the play he abruptly takes his own life. Robinson, in describing the hyperbolically good qualities of Cory, seeks to surprise his audience by showing that even the people's perception of Cory as happy is proven false.

There are many examples of denotation and connotation throughout "Richard Cory," describing him in terms that evoke many different things. It is said that Cory "was always human when he talked": in essence, this means not that he was a literal human being, but that he evoked characteristics of what we think of when we are 'human' - kindness, gentility, politeness and the like (Robinson, line 6). Cory is also described as "imperially slim" - this may refer to his slender frame, or the fact that he stands tall and is extremely regal in his appearance (line 5).

Robinson's use of imagery throughout "Richard Cory" is very helpful in creating a picture and elaborate on the class-centric meaning of the poem. The people who observe Richard Cory are inspired by his good qualities to go "without the meat, and [curse] the bread"; this image shows the people going hungry out of necessity (line 14). In choosing this image, Robinson shows the contrast between the poor admirers of Cory and Cory himself, who soon goes home and "put[s] a bullet through his head" (line 16). This shows how meaningless the perception of wealth is in terms of finding true happiness.

This aimless search for happiness through wealth and prosperity is clear in the poem's figures of speech. The people who worked around Cory "waited for the light"; this is a metaphor for the good times and prosperity that is waiting around the corner for them if they just hold on long enough (line 13). Robinson also says that Cory "was a gentleman from sole to crown"; this figure of speech merely implies that every part of his body from top to bottom exuded 'gentleman,' showing how completely people thought he was a good person (line 3). By imbuing Cory's descriptions with such flowery language, the audience is lulled into a false sense of security to lend his suicide more pathos.

Robinson makes great use of symbol throughout the poem. The likeness of wealth to royalty is found in the describing of Cory as having a "crown," being "imperially slim," being "richer than a king," and so on (lines 3, 4, 9). By turning him into the symbol of authority by way of wealth, Cory is shown to be considered someone who has it all figured out. His suicide, then, throws that all into question.

The steady rhythm and meter of the poem adds to the false sense of security Robinson gives to the audience. His use of iambic pentameter lends it a jaunty, happy cadence when read, and when paired with the happy language being written it contributes to a positive feeling about Cory. However, this is switched at the last stanza, in which Cory kills himself and the people are shown to be starving. The meter, in addition to the various use of figures of speech, connotation and more, contributes to a poem in which the happy lives and admiration of a seemingly wealthy (and therefore happy) man are shown to be false. I was personally very affected by "Richard Cory," as the

ultimately nihilistic ending took me by surprise, and showed just how empty the search for wealth is as a path to happiness.