

# "a martian sends a postcard home" by craig raine essay sample

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



## **“ A Martian Sends a Postcard Home” by Craig Raine Essay Sample**

Upon first read, Craig Raine’s “ A Martian Sends A Postcard Home”, that was written in 1979, may seem to be a poem about random happenings on Earth. However, while reading the poem in depth and interpreting the poem it can be read as a Martian that was unfamiliar with Earth and its culture. This poem is filled with metaphors. In Craig Raine’s poem “ A Martian Sends A Postcard Home” the very literal in essence it is a Martian writing to his people back home. The theme of difference is represented by the Martians lack of the proper words and terms to describe everyday things. The Martian in the poem does this because he has a conceptual viewpoint.

The first time we see a metaphor is in the first line, “ Caxtons are mechanical birds with many wings.” (1) I interpreted this as somebody must have pointed at a book and called it a Claxton, or just referred to it as a Claxton, but the Martian might have thought it was a mechanical bird, seeing how an open book does resemble a bird with many wings. The Martian also notices that some books or “ mechanical birds” are more important than others because of what is inside.

In the next stanza the Martian says books “ cause the eyes to melt,” (3) probably referring to people when they cry as they are reading. The next line in that stanza shows that at times the people yell or scream because of the books and what they are reading. In stanza three the Martian has never seen a “ mechanical bird” fly but he has seen them perched on hands before.

Someone could have construed this stanza as, he never saw a book fly, but he does see them being held by people in their hands.

The following stanza, stanza number four the alien is talking about early morning fog, he says, " Mist is when the sky is tired of flight / and rests its soft machine on ground." (7-8)I interpreted this as early morning fog because the Martian might think that the fog is a machine, just like it did with the bird, and think that the machine is just taking a break.

Later on in the sixth stanza the Martian is referring to the time while it rains as the earth being television. This means when it rains the Earth turns shades of gray like the television in the home where the Martian was. This also could mean the household had a low income seeing that there was not a color television, and it was 1979, or the poem might be set in earlier times.

The Martian describes a Model T as, " a room with the lock inside/ a key is turned to free the world." (13-14) I felt the Martian saw the car as a separate room. The room could also open up the free world with the turn of a key.

On lines 17 and 18 the Martian talks about time, he says " But time is tied to the wrist/ or kept in a box, ticking with impatience." I interpreted this to be the Martian seeing many people with watches on. The line that says time is kept in a box I believe refers to a grandfather clock and its constant ticking.

In the following stanza the Martian mentions a haunted apparatus that snores when you pick it up. Simply put this metaphor is of a phone and how

voices come from the other end that might sound like snores from a distance.

In the eleventh and twelfth stanzas the Martian seems to describe what I believe to be is a baby and how humans act towards babies. The two stanzas read:

If the ghost cries, they carry it

to their lips and soothe it to sleep

with sounds. And yet they wake it up

deliberately, by tickling with a finger. (21-24)

Lines 25 through 30 explain in the Martian's words that only young children are allowed to use the bathroom in public and that the adults have to go to separate rooms. The Martian views the separate rooms as a punishment he thinks they go in and have to suffer through something because of the noises he hears. The Martian also says each time they come out it smells different.

The last four lines of this poem are about what humans do at the end of the day. The Martian says " at night, when all the colors die". I think this means he doesn't understand the concept of night and day, just color and no color. He must also not understand sleep because instead of saying sleep he says just close their eyelids.

This poem uses multiple metaphors to describe what a Martian would encounter if he visited Earth. The poem is interesting to read because it requires the reader to use their imagination. The reader must think in order to figure out these everyday things the Martian is seeing for the first time, it's somewhat of a brainteaser. It's obvious that the Martian is seeing these things for the first time, it makes the reader wonder why a simple thing such as a watch or a clock is not found on his planet, is time insignificant were he's from?