

"mid term break" by  
seamus heaney and  
"the lesson" by  
edward lucie-smith  
essay sa...

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



## **“ Mid Term Break” by Seamus Heaney and “ The Lesson” by Edward Lucie-Smith Essay Sample**

In the course of this essay, I will be looking closely at the particular choices of language used by the poets, comparing the ways in which the poems are written, contrasting the feeling of Heaney and Lucie-Smith about the death of a relative and considering which of the poets are more successful in getting their feeling across and why? These two poems are about two young people facing up to the death of a loved one. The two poems are “ Mid Term Break” by Seamus Heaney and “ The Lesson” by Edward Lucie-Smith. The two poems are about two young boys facing up to the death of a beloved family member.

In “ Mid Term Break” it is Heaney’s younger brother who dies in a car accident. In “ The Lesson” it is Lucie-Smith who receives news of his fathers death. The poets are merely children when these traumatic events occur. These poems express the feelings that the two boys experience when they lose a loved one at that time. “ The Lesson” begins with Lucie-Smith at school. He is in his headmaster’s study. His headmaster enters and he is looking at various objects, which are then distorted when he is told of his fathers death. The objects are distorted because he is crying. He cries, yet he doesn’t cry tears of grief.

He then cries in shame because he wasn’t emotional for his father. He then was crying tears of relief because he was crying for his father. His emotions run wild. He and the headmaster then enter the assembly hall and is greeted by the turning heads of all the pupils. He felt a burst of “ pride like a goldfish

flashed a sudden fin. " He felt pride for a moment and then left. This is use of a simile and alliteration with the repetition of " f". " Mid term break" begins at the college sick bay of St. Columbs, Heaney's school. He is sitting inside yet he isn't sick. He is bored and listening to the " counting bells knelling classes to a close.

At the end of each class the bells rang and sounded like funeral bells. This gives us a sense of foreboding as it is associated with the word foreboding, it also may be a warning to say that someone has died. Heaney uses alliteration with the repetition of the " c". Heaney then gets a lift home by some neighbours. When he arrives he enters the house and is greeted by his father sobbing and obviously in distress. Tension is made because Heaney's father always took funerals easily and showed little emotion. Heaney is then met by a local friend to the family, Jim Evans.

He expresses his condolences through a local euphemism " it's a hard blow" He probably is afraid to express his condolences and tries to make it as manly as possible. Heaney then walks into the living room and is met by more older men. They stand to greet him and they shake his hand. This was rare for Heaney because these men were treating him as an equal. This creates more tension. He then meets his mother, crying " angry tearless sighs" she is heartbroken and has to cough out the remaining emotions inside her because there is little sorrow left. Heaney sees an ambulance lifting a " corpse" out of the back.

Here he has come to terms with his brother's death as he calls the body a corpse. He then enters the bedroom of his brother. It is tranquil and has a serenity feeling in it with the "snowdrops" a feeling of innocence and purity. This atmosphere contrasts to the atmosphere outside the bedroom, chaos and downhearted emotions. Heaney then looks at his baby brother in the coffin. He compares it to if he was sleeping in his cot. He then sees the "poppy shaped bruise on his temple."

Poppy shaped refers to remembrance. Also that the bruise was a deep red in colour. Heaney then shocks us by saying "A four foot box, a foot for every year." This shocks us because the victim is a four year old boy. It is the end of an abrupt life. Heaney uses alliteration with the repetition of "f".

American poet Emily Dickinson's poem "The Bustle In A House." can be compared to Seamus Heaney's "Mid Term Break" Dickinson's poem is actually one sentence, but it has two stanzas and rhyme scheme. Dickinson employs 4 lines stanzas in which the 1st, 2nd and 4th lines are in iambic trimeter. The 3rd line is in iambic pentameter. In Dickinson's poetry her rhymes are called off rhymes or slant rhymes. The first two lines show the bustle of domestic physical tidying away love.

Formal words solemnest and enacted neither the activity or its importance are realised until the second stanza. The poem is full of bitter bitterness and desolate sense of loss, presented ironically in terms of such familiar daily activity and this is only brought home in the last two lines. The poem is interlocked with rhyme. In my opinion I believe that Heaney's "Mid Term Break" was more successful in getting his feeling across to me than Lucie-

Smith's " The Lesson. " Heaney makes the reader stay attentive with all the tension he creates. Also he shocks the reader with his ending line. " A four foot box, a foot for every year. "