

Literary analysis of robert hayden's those winter sundays



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A father's special, often unappreciated love is the theme of "Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden. It is a simple narrative that is as plain as its plot. The son as the narrator speaks out his feelings and thoughts about winter Sundays when everyone in the family can sleep late and snuggle under the warm covers. Everyone does exactly that, except his father, who he says "Sundays too my father got up early." Hayden used imagery to describe the father's "cracked hands," and the condition of the room after his father has made "banked fires blaze."

The son would "wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking." His language appeals to the readers' senses to get a good picture of the poem's setting. Hayden's winter setting helped in creating the mood of coldness in the poem. It is also suggestive of the son's coldness towards the father when he spoke "indifferently to him."

"Hayden used direct statements like "No one ever thanked him" to emphasize the point he would like to get across the readers, that the efforts of the father go unappreciated. He used "cold" several times to create the recurring image of the absence of warmth or comfort in the attitude towards the father. The tone of the poem is emotional when the son acknowledges the things his father does for him like "driven out the cold and polished my good shoes as well." Hayden used repetition "what did I know, what did I know" to denote that the son has turned contrite and apologetic. In the poem, Hayden explored the love and care of the father that is often unrecognized and unappreciated.

The love and care the father continuously give the family, unconditionally, is emphasized. The self-denial and the loneliness of the father are relegated to the background. In doing so, Hayden all the more is able to bring the most important point of the poem, which is the great love and sacrifice of the father for the family, symbolized in the poem by his son.