

"solitude" by emily
dickinson essay
sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ Solitude” by Emily Dickinson Essay Sample

The poem “ Solitude” by Emily Dickinson is a poem that gives an absolutely appropriate definition for the word solitude. The poem is about a man who is left in a state of loneliness and solitude. In my opinion, the solitude that was discussed in this poem is not the just solitude that just merely means loneliness, but the complete emptiness of life. Throughout the poem Emily Dickinson portrays a very dark definition of solitude in almost every line of the poem. This poem is about a very dark definition of solitude, it shows a life of a man who has nothing left in his life, and this empty life of the man was derived from being able to see everything in this world very clearly.

In the first line of the poem Emily Dickinson wrote about what the tempter said which was “ it is easy, to rage against the sun that eats away at strength and skin, to lie prostrate in a dune of self pity”. This first stanza of the poem brings up the question “ who is the tempter?”. In my opinion, by saying ‘ the tempter’ I think Emily Dickinson meant the man’s (who was mentioned in the poem) consciousness. Since the tempter was talking about life and the only person mentioned in the poem was the man (aside from the tempter), I think that this is a good definition for ‘ the tempter’. Now that we know who is the tempter it is easier to understand what the tempter said means. In my interpretation by saying, “ it is easy, to rage against the sun that eats away at strength and skin, to lie prostrate in a dune of self pity” I think the tempter meant that it is easy to give up on life which is tortuing and just lie down in despair cycling in self-pity. By having the consciousness saying something as pessimistic as this, it gives an image that the man in this poem is in deep despair and has a very sad view of life.

However, the darkness of the poem did not ended here, it was continued on in the poem.

Emily Dickinson portrays an even darker image of the man in the second stanza of the poem.

Left with nothing

But cracked sandals, a dusty shawl,

And a soul stripped down to its fibers,

The Wanderer find that faith is born of pain.

In this stanza we have a clearer image of the man that was mentioned in the poem. After reading this stanza an image of this man appears and surely it was not a pleasant image of the man. This man is left with nothing, only cracked sandals and old piece of cloth. His soul was shattered in pieces and he is a wanderer who just found out that faith is born with pain. From this stanza and the image we could interpret many things. The word 'shawl' that was used could possibly meant a cloak that was worn by people who believes in Judaism (prayer shawl) and this definition of shawl would show a relation to the last line " The Wanderer find that FAITH is born of pain". In the next line of the poem, Emily Dickinson wrote that " " Be gone!" he rasps through his parched lips. Again, an image of a man in despair was repeated, but what could he meant by saying " be gone!"? Perhaps, he was talking to ' the tempter' which was the only character that was mentioned besides himself and since my definition of ' the tempter' was his conciousness, he might meant his conciousness or his life should go away. If that was the correct interpretation, the man was absolutely asking for an end to his life or in other words, death.

The last stanza of the poem seems to make my interpretation correct. It says that:

His eyes, no longer blinded by the visions of water, Are free to see the angels

In this stanza we can see that the man used to be blinded by the visions of water, however, now that he is free from that vision, he is also free to see the angels. To understand this last stanza we must first know the meaning of 'visions of water'. In order to understand this phrase we must first know the what Emily Dickinson might be meaning by using the word 'water'.

Water has many qualities, and one of the quality of water is giving a reflection, perhaps a mirage or an illusion. If we give this meaning to water, we could see that before this man was free, he was blinded by an illusion and perhaps it is the illusion of 'life' since this poem is talking about the life of this man. This vision that Emily Dickinson mentioned might also be referring to Plato's "the cave" philosophy which states that all of us (human beings) are in the a cave, chained and blinded towards a wall, seeing a reflection of what we only want to see. Continuing to the last line of the poem, "are free to see the angels", this line has a simple meaning that this man is now free to die. I came to this definition because if angels exist, they would probably exist in heaven, and only death could bring the man up to that place.

This poem definitely gives an appropriate definition to the word solitude. It portrays an image of a man who is fully in despair, left with nothing not even the will to live since he is no blinded by the illusion of life.