

Regarding history vs. when death comes flashcard



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Regarding history/ when death comes Luisa A. Igloria's, " Regarding History" is a very intriguing poem. Initially it seems to be a very straight forward poem, she begins by speaking of two trees that she can see from her window that lean into the wind, and goes on to describe a certain meat that she is cooking. At first glance this poem seemed to just be a description of an afternoon, but as the poem progresses it gets more complicated, which lead me to start to question if her earliest descriptions were literal, or a representation of something else entirely.

A key turning point in my interpretation of this poem is when she said: " Tell me what I'll find, in this early period at the beginning of a century. Tell me what I'll find stumbling into a boat and pushing off into the year's last dark hours. " It is obvious that she is searching for something, but what? After I reread the poem I began seeing more of a love aspect to it when I noticed her speaking of a person, who she wants to take the person's face in her hands and " Grow sweet from what it tells".

This once more brings me back to the beginning of the poem, and my initial question, what do the trees represent? I came to the conclusion that the two trees represented her and this person that she adores, and that she is not necessarily observing them, but rather the trees make her think of the relationship with this person she adores and herself, which by the description of the how the trees are: " leaning now into the wind in a stance that we'd call involuntary-" shows to me that there is a struggle of sorts that they are facing together. Another aspect of the poem that peaked my interest was the title.

After reading it and rereading it there seemed to be no logical conclusion to be made of the title until I had focused on the ending when she talks about “the beginning of a century”. It made me think that she was about to embrace something new, and this struggle that is present may have been a repeat of the past, therefore bringing about the entire poem's purpose, her questioning the future while regarding the past, or as the poem states, history. “When Death Comes”, This poem by Mary Oliver was simple, but the way she used imagery and depicted her thoughts upon death was brilliant and extravagant.

When I say simple, I meant that there seemed to be no hidden meaning of what the poem was really about. After reading over the material more than a few times it was clear that death meant death, and her position on it was firmly established. At the beginning of the poem she starts off by describing death, how it is vicious, swift, unbiased and unforgiving. “When death comes like the hungry bear in autumn when death comes and takes all the bright coins from his purse to buy me, and snaps his purse shut; when death comes like the measles-pox; when death comes like an iceberg between the shoulder blades... Then she begins to question about what death will be like when it is her time. Her reflection of death and its characteristics provokes thoughts on how she values all life and her personal relationships. She describes her relationships a brother and sisterhood, stating that she is very close to those she loves and highly values their relationship. She describes all life as a flower, but as common as a field daisy, but none the less beautiful, and any life that dares venture towards and endure life a body of

courage, like a lion, and she ends the poem describing how she wants to exit this world.

She wishes to die never having stopped being amazed by creation and never having stopped exploring new things and ideas, She wishes to have no questions or doubts. She wants to have experienced the world, not only have had visited it. Her take on the ideas and life and death themselves are very respectable, and something that I believe should be modeled, I believe that they are setup for well being, satisfaction, and a full life. In this poem, she had many literay devices.

To me, the most interesting one is on stanzas three and four: " when death comes and takes all the bright coins from his purse to buy me, and snaps his purse shut... " Its obvious that when you die you lose all of your possesions, but in ancient Greece, the culture believed that when you died you had to pay a toll to Charon, a demi-god whose only purpose is to ferry people in to the after life. These coins were mostly gold or other precious metals and were usually owned by the person who died and placed on the eyes as their final payment to the Charon, which is represented by the adjective she uses, " Bright".