

In a common tavern response essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

My target audience will be my classmates and my professor. Unfortunately, I don't know any of these people personally, so I would have to be broad and unspecific when describing them. I know that we have all read the same material, so we have that. I hope that my audience, especially my professor, has experience with poetry. Whether that is from taking English classes in the past, or just reading it or writing it as a hobby. I myself enjoy reading poetry much more than writing it.

My classmates will have read the assigned poem (probably several times) so they will have formed their own opinion about it. They have probably looked over our other classmates' responses to find what their opinions are. I imagine that most of my classmates probably read this poem the first time and when they were finished thought to themselves, " What the...? ". I know I did! I re-read the poem several times and eventually deciphered most of it. I think that we all probably have that in common.

To my dismay, I will, in all probability, never meet my classmates or professor in person. My goal when writing this paper is to get my opinion and perspective on the poem across to my classmates so they know where I stand, but also to remain broad enough in my writing so that my readers can compare their own response to mine. Maybe in doing that, I can help a fellow classmate or two who has a block and is stuck in the middle of the assignment. " In a Common Tavern" by Thomas Thornburg is a poem about a woman and her daughter bravely fleeing from an abusive man.

In this poem, Thornburg does a wonderful job of telling this woman's story, by starting with the reasons she isn't running away. It is not because that

woman has a home in the north, or that she was originally from the north. He then backtracks to describe how the couple (woman and daughter) was happy where they were and where they were from. He described the birds, the macaws singing (screaming) outside and how the couple associated when they heard the birds with happy times. Then he goes on to finish the sentence about the birds with "...Rolled up like thunder from some poet's book. (Thornburg).

I feel this is giving some kind of warning, as if to say the macaws singing were nice but something terrible was about to happen following that. Thornburg goes on to describe the woman and daughter's happiness by saying it reflected in their eyes. The love they once felt was magic to them at one time. And then he comes to say stop, wait! One day the magic stopped and the love in their eyes disappeared. Thornburg says, " One day the magic and the mirror broken In splendid ruin on the ruined floor Could not be mended anywise; nor spoken. (Thornburg). When he refers to the broken mirror I picture the happiness reflecting in the two girls' eyes like a mirror.

Something happened to make the happiness go away, it was ruined- everything was ruined. I believe Thornburg's repetitiveness in this sentence was intentional to get the point that everything they once had is now tarnished by a certain event. He goes on to describe how the broken mirror on the ruined floor could not be fixed with actions or words- it was so awful.

I believe this event to be abusive actions of a man to the girls. The hateful word said or the word unsaid, Legend enough for the house of the dead. " Is, I believe, the most powerful sentence in the entire poem (Thornburg). This

means to me that nothing said in the household was a kind word, and every word unspoken was perhaps even worse. Conceivably the women lived in fear of the man. Thornburg says next, " O, the black dawns that opened days, the dark Dog of despair that dogged us in our work, That haunted closets, haunted every bed, Crept in the wakeful halls and bit us and we bled. (Thornburg). I also think this is a very powerful statement.

This means that their mornings are no longer gleeful, and the man they once loved is now a demon that followed them, whether that mean in person or in spirit, throughout their days. He followed them like a dog and there was never a time that the woman was not thinking about him and fearing him while doing everyday tasks. By saying they bled, I think he means the memories or happenings hurt them so much their souls bled and there was not even a glimmer of happiness anymore.

When the woman had her daughter, Thornburg says, " He seized up and struck and slew her joy..." (Thornburg). To me, this means he ruined any chance of joy her daughter could have brought to her and may have actually abused the child. To him, seeing the woman so filled with joy because of her daughter displeased him because his father was also displeased with the joy from his mother. This goes without saying, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. " Down all the darksome ways we fled his reach, Through northern lights and fearful nights we fled him. " (Thornburg). This is the defining moment in this poem.

The moment when the woman chose what was going to be best for her and her daughter, and ran away from the abusive man if nothing more than for

mere survival. She ran from the place that once made her so happy, the only place she had ever known, to protect her daughter and to find safe haven. When Thornburg refers to “ the savage vistas where his dark god led him” I believe he is referring to the man’s possible substance abuse, which could be the root of all evil for this woman and child (Thornburg). He then goes on to say that she still sleeps in terror and has nightmares.

She longs to hear the birds singing that once made her so happy. The ending statement in this poem is, to me, a quirky and perhaps even spunky one. She has associated all men with evil now, and will forevermore be weary of them. She says not even the coldest weather will diminish the hatred she has for the evil that was done to her and her daughter. This story is a very good example of a woman whose marriage took a turn for the worst due to an alcoholic and damaged husband, and felt the need to protect her child. So that is exactly what she did.