

Parent-children
relationships: a
comparison of peter
meinke and robert
hayden's p...



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Peter Meinke's poem "Advice to My Son" and Robert Hayden's poem "Those Winter Sundays" should be compared because they are two beautifully written poems that are about relationships between a parent and their child, but they also have their differences. Peter Meinke's "Advice to My Son" concludes with a statement that is a little more difficult to comprehend because it is riddled with figurative language and symbols. Hayden's poem "Those Winter Sundays" uses language that is in a fairly straightforward and expresses one of the main themes in the last few lines. This difference in linguistic style will readily appear if you compare the concluding lines of each poem. Though these two heartfelt poems are different in many ways, in the end, they are both essentially about a loving family and the relationship that a father and son share.

Peter Meinke's poem "Advice to My Son" is about a father trying to give his son his own age-old advice on how to spend his time and how to live his life to the fullest from the perspective of one who is older and more experienced. Meinke conveys a powerful sense of a series of the opposing aspects of life: the physical and the spiritual, the sensual and the intellectual, the religious and the secular, etc. The tone of this poem is full of love and hope for the future. An example could be expressed in the lines "And always serve bread with your wine. / But son, / always serve wine." My interpretation of these final few lines are that the speaker is trying to advise the son to take a middle course, not to veer to any extreme or the other, but to also indulge in the pleasures of life. The advice given in the poem is very relatable to me because it is given to a child or young adult from their guardian, and that is the stage of life I am currently passing through. It is advice that many people

heading to college may hear from their parents and loved ones. The advice on the warning label is somewhat relatable as well because it's also advice that people may see frequently or hear from their personal physician. This poem is a fantastic example of how all a parent really wants for their child is for them to be happy and successful.

Robert Hayden's poem "Those Winter Sundays," conveys the speaker as an adult man who presents the reader with memories from his childhood of how his father expressed love for him through his actions - even though no one ever really took the time to thank him - and the regret the son feels for not appreciating him. This poem has a tone that is darker and filled with sorrow and guilt. One may interpret the lines "What did I know, what did I know / of love's austere and lonely offices?" as the speaker of the poem implying a few things: That the father does everything he does for his family out of love, not expectations of being thanked for it, and that the father feels lonely and neglected because his actions are not fully appreciated. Other than the tones, the differences between these two poems have included the situation. "Those Winter Sundays" seems more serious as the speaker reflects on how his father woke him up on cold Sunday mornings and how the boy seemingly failed to appreciate his father. On the other hand, "Advice to My Son" seems to be more of a bonding experience between two family members. Though the poems share a common theme of love, Meinke's poem also has an underlying theme of the potential one has for success in life, while Hayden's poem also has the lurking theme of ingratitude.

There are a few similarities that these two poems share. Other than the father-son relationships that are the poem's subjects, the styles that the two

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poets demonstrate are also similar. Both the poems “ Advice to My Son” and “ Those Winter Sundays” were written in free verse without any obvious rhyme scheme or any clear rhythm. The lines of both poems are longer, reflecting the ideas of the poet. Both of these well-known poems also share the prevailing idea to not taking life for granted. Another similarity they share is the mood of love the reader experiences, specifically the love a parent shows for their children. One could even argue that “ Those Winter Sundays” could actually be considered a response of some sorts to the poem “ Advice to My Son,” because the latter is advice given to a son by a loving guardian but the former is written by a loving son who is sad that he didn’t appreciate his father as much as he could have.