

The voice by hardy



The poem "The Voice" is written in first person where the poet himself is the speaker and as hinted from the very first word of the first line, he is addressing a woman. The first line of the poem indicates that he has written the poem with the sense of missing someone "the woman he addresses. Connecting the phrase "call to me, call to me" (line 1) to the title of the poem, we can expect the poet to describe how he hears his deceased wife (for which we have strong evidence to believe to be the woman he addresses) to be calling him. The purpose why Hardy has written this poem is to convey his grief and sorrow after his first wife's death, especially after realizing that he has not been there for her when she's needed him the most. The tone of the first stanza is nostalgic and he expresses his hope to hear her voice again.

A sense of slight disappointment is also there, which can be noticed in lines 2-4, because [she] had changed from the one that was all to [him]. He opens the second stanza with a question which brings in a tone of doubtfulness in himself because he wants to make sure that he is not only imagining to be hearing her voice. He then continues the line with a request for her to show herself in front of him so that he would make sure that the voice he hears is real and then goes about describing the harmonious peaceful memories from the past he has about her in lines 6-8. In the first two stanzas he creates a visual image of his wife the way she looked like when they were both young, her wearing an "air-blue gown". By describing what he remembers her by and how he would like to see her looking like again, he creates a mood of longing to bring the memory to life.

The exclamation mark he has used at the end of line 8 suggests his eagerness to be able to also see and not only hear her. The third stanza begins with an indication of self-doubt and here he reconsiders his senses to make sure if the voice that he hears is really his wife's or he just converts the sounds of the breeze to what he wants to hear. He personifies the breeze in line 9, saying that it travels in its listlessness all the way to him. This whole stanza represents one idea – a question – which is again addressed to his wife, but in fact asked to himself in uncertainty whether he hears anything that might be her voice at all because in reality she is already dead.

The last stanza represents the last and strongest stage of grief in which, as he describes, he stumbles forward in a direction of the place where the voice comes from. In lines 13-15 he creates an image of himself being outdoors in an autumn afternoon, walking hesitatingly through dead leaves on the ground and the wind that blows from a northern direction, which represents the place where his wife is buried. In the last line of the stanza he again, despite the dubiety he had earlier, states that she is calling him, which means that he has trapped himself in a cycle of unsureness whether what he hears is part of reality or not. The poem is written in four stanzas of four lines, with alternate lines rhyming. The first three stanzas are written in 5-6-5-6 feet per metre scheme, whereas the last one does not follow that trend and instead slows the rhythm down which helps for the tone of deep grief to build up. In line 13 Hardy has used alliteration by repeating the 'f' sound in the words 'faltering' and 'forward' to give a greater

impact to the image he has created of himself stumbling in his movement as a result of the sorrow he feels.

In this poem Hardy expresses his sadness and mournfulness he feels for his deceased wife, Emma, allowing us to sympathise with him. I find how he has contrasted the past ??“ the beautiful memories of his wife he has, with the present ??“ himself being a lone man, a very effective way to present his devastation by her absence.