

A sense of shelter, john updike



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In "A Sense of Shelter" John Updike uses windows to show the importance of security and shelter to all humans. William is a fairly quiet teenager who is also fairly different because one of his favorite places is the school, not very common for teens. Being that William's favorite place to be is the school it's stated in the book that as William looks down at the parking lot he describes the window only being "open a crack, and a canted pane of glass lifted outdoor air into his face, coating the cedar-wood scent of pencil shaving with the transparent odor of the wet window sill".

This soon connects him to an "acute sense of shelter" which he was feeling. I believe that the reason he feels an "acute sense of shelter" at that time is simply because of the comfort he was feeling of being in a warm environment while the environment outside was almost the complete opposite.

Later in the story William is sitting in a classroom when he observes a window very carefully pointing out every description of the window up to that it's steel rimmed when he says that "the snow on a ragged slant drifted down into the cement pits outside the steel rimmed window" To me him describing very little details of the window helped to show how he felt safe in the room. I say this because he specifically said "steel rims" and "cement pits" showing that they are stronger windows and that the snow on the outside will not be able to touch him.

With the description of the window also brings a thought of warmth and comfort when I picture this classroom, I can see the windows being filled with snow which made me get the feeling that it would be dark and lightly lit in

the room giving the feeling of comfort and shelter. Near the end of the story he describes a boys "Lavatory" and a memory of a bully trying to "cure" his stuttering but he also describes a "frosted window at the end of the long room" that would "cast a watery light on the green floor and made the porcelaine urinals shine like slices of the moon. When he describes the bathroom he states that it all "gave the room's air of secrecy a great density." To me him stating that it gave density to the sense of security made it even clearer that he himself is all about be safe and sheltered. Throughout this whole story windows were described at certain parts of the book besides at the end where he described watching mary leave the building and how she looked like a "peasant" to me this actually shows some darkness in the story as she leaves I think he feels like hes above her in some ways and how hes loosing her.

So after reading the story it became clear to me that not only did the windows make William feel safe but it also gave him a sense of power over the things going on outside of the windows, for example when he said "looking down at the parking lot" "looking down" to me says that he is in ways about the object that hes looking down on. Either way you look at it William still got a constant sense of shelter because of the windows as well as the other students in the building so it makes me think, do I sometimes feel the same way?