

# Analysis of "dogs death" by john updike essay



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Death is such a hard feeling to describe. How can you possibly describe the feelings of loss and emptiness? Unless you have experienced this yourself you cannot truly understand. Because John Updike's poem " Dog's Death" (1953), also speaks of the loss of a family member, his beloved dog, I lost my Dog to death and he was part of my family, one of my children. I have experienced death and loss and in my essay I am going to analyze the literary work of John Updike and his poem " Dogs Death" (Updike, 1953).

In my essay I will explain why I choose this poem, which analytical approach I am going to be using along with evaluating the meaning of the selection " Dogs Death" and why it captured my interest. It is my hope that at the conclusion of this essay you too will see why. As stated earlier, unless you have experienced this yourself you cannot truly understand. John Updike's poem " Dog Death" (1953) also shows the loss of a family member. I choose this particular literary writing because I could relate to the feelings of loss, the loss of a family member. She must have been kicked unseen or brushed by a car" (Updike, 1953) already sets the tone for this poem. From the beginning you can feel the sense of loss, confusion, sadness and feelings of frustration that the injury was unknown. Along with this, he uses imagery to enhance the tone. As our text stated, the tone of this poem was " designed to fire up feelings". (Clugston, 2010) I lost my dog to death and he was part of my family, one of my children. I was unaware my dog was sick and the death was sudden and unexpected.

When John says " As we teased her with play, blood was filling her skin and her heart was learning to lie down forever" (Updike, 1953) I was taken back in my own mind to my similar situation. In this essay I choose to use the

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Reader-Response approach because this comment especially captured my imagination and caused me to feel a lot of emotion and pain. It also took me back to a past event that I most certainly had the desire to escape from. In Reader-Response analysis I asked myself if it captured my imagination, did it connect me with a feeling or emotion and did my connection reinforce things I knew?

I can answer this with a big yes! I think the meaning of John Updike's literary piece is about love, death and loss. Most importantly in the following statement we clearly see the piece is also about dignity in death. " Drawing near to dissolution, had endured the shame of diarrhea and had dragged across the floor". (Updike, 1953) He uses statements that give the dog human qualities that we can relate to, especially on an emotional level. " In the car to the vet's, on my lap, she tried to bite my hand and died". (Updike, 1953) This statement again shows the love he had for his beloved dog and the pain she was in.

I know when I am in pain especially that of having a child I like to hold someone's hand. I imagine that the puppy biting his hand was something similar. At least that is the image that was provoked for me. Indeed, unless you have experienced this kind of loss yourself, you cannot truly understand. Even though there are those that may not have had this kind of loss, most of us possess sympathy and empathy. In this writing he is able to spark those feelings. This poem evokes emotions and links feeling to thinking (Clugston, 2012) I know he did for me and the memory of my " good dog".