

Parting with a view by
wistawa szymborska
and disgrace by carol
ann duffy



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Both "Parting with a View" by Wistawa Szymborska and "Disgrace" by Carol Ann Duffy use the places which have been havens of tranquility in their previous lives to illustrate the changes which have taken place and symbolise their present emotions. In the poem "Disgrace" Duffy uses the house, that used to be her home, to indicate her broken relationship and her feelings of oppression. In "Parting with a View" Szymborska uses the image of a "special space" in the countryside to show how her feelings have developed into a negative acceptance of her present life. The poem "Disgrace" is full of powerful emotions.

The persona is feeling confined by the house and is feeling angry. The shared space is no longer a haven, it is more of a prison. She uses the house as a vehicle for her misery and despair. It is an implied antithesis between her life before the relationship went sour and her misery now. The imagery of place used in this poem is all from the persona's home, but it is not used in a positive and special way: "we had not been home in our hearts for months", it is used to express the break down of her relationship, her house is considered as a prison, the couple find it claustrophobic: "the shadows of hands huge in the bedroom". Duffy uses the idea of disease to describe what is happening in her house: "our house a coldness of rooms, each nursing a thickening cyst of dust and gloom".

She associates her destructed relationship with an unattended house by using metaphors along the poem: "Dead flies in a web", "deaths of lightbulbs pining all day", "a bowl of apples rotten to the core". The persona finds that the house is oppressive because there is no sound of life there, therefore she can hear all the low noises that the house makes: "humming fridge", "

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lightbulbs pining all day”, “ screaming alarm”, “ banging door”, and these noises irritate her. In a normal house you wouldn't be able to hear these noises because they would be hidden by louder noises such as conversation or laughter. She uses personifications to make the house feel how she feels: “ sullen kitchen”, “ the fridge hardened its cool heart”, “ house-plants trembling in their soil”, “ the telephone pressing its ear to distant, invisible lips”.

The house is now moody and it has nothing special about it, it has lost its personality because there is no love or appreciation living in it. She tarnishes the house with her thoughts: “ obscenities spraying themselves on the wall in my head. ” Duffy's tone is somber, bitter and regretful and show the deterioration of her relationship, the words she uses such as “ coldness”, “ dead” and “ sour” indicate a lack of vitality in the couple and is also reflected in the house. She also uses familiar and domestic language in her poem to create unpleasant and negative ideas of the couple's life in the house, to express these unpleasant images she uses hideous language: “ thickening cyst”, “ how the stiffened and blackened”, “ from a dead place over the other”, “ woke to the absence of grace”, “ apples rotten to the core”, “ our garden bowing its head”, “ the house-plants trembling in their brittle soil” that make the idea of a disastrous relationship. She uses personifications to make the house feel how she feels: “ sullen kitchen”, “ the fridge hardened its cool heart”, “ house-plants trembling in their soil”, “ the telephone pressing its ear to distant, invisible lips”.

The house is now moody and it has nothing special about it, it has lost its personality because there is no love or appreciation living in it. She also uses <https://assignbuster.com/parting-with-a-view-by-wistawa-szymborska-and-disgrace-by-carol-ann-duffy/>

onomatopoeic words to associate them with the noise that the house makes: “pining all day”, “the fridge hummed”, “rotten to the core”. The still-life of a meal, untouched, wine-bottle, empty, ashtray, full” this alliteration is used to demonstrate the monotony of her relationship, how it is reflected in their behaviour in the house, day a day. The poem is structured into eight stanzas of four lines each, this structure might be to show the steady progression of the relationship, it gives the sense of monotony, predictability. Duffy uses enjambements to show how she can't control her anger “to make it worse.

.. and worse”, it shows the relentless decline of her relationship. “Total.

.. disgrace”, she is regretful for what has happened to her and she is ashamed for letting it happen, but she can't do anything about it. This continuous progression is also demonstrated by the degeneration movement from “words” in the beginning of the poem to “vowels” in the end of it. In the first six stanzas there is an unpleasant silence in the house, but it all changes in the last two stanzas, when the couple have a fight and there is more noise: “vulnerable flowers unseen in the dusk as we shouted in silhouette”, “inconsolable vowels from the next room”, there are no more words to explain her feelings. The poem “Parting with a View” is relatively calm.

The persona is at the stage when she has accepted her loss, but she has not reached a point in her grief where the familiar places give her tranquility, she still feels too empty and vulnerable to find solace in shared places. She is trying to come to terms with the loss of her loved one by a process of logical analysis and she has gone to a special countryside open space

because she wants to leave the past behind and be able to live without her beloved. The imagery of place used in this poem illustrates a lake in the country in the spring season, which juxtaposes with her feelings: " I don't reproach the spring for starting up again". She is constantly comparing the views with her feelings: " the grass blade may bend, but only in the wind" (she isn't engaged enough with life to tread on the grass), " clumps of alders above the water have something to rustle with again" (it symbolises the renewal of life), " the shore of a certain lake is still - as if you were living- as lovely as before" (it all keeps the same shape even though he isn't there with her, she isn't trying to see the view from an objective point of view, trying to be emotionless), " the surf, now diligent, now sluggish, obeying not me" (the stages of the wave reflect her emotional movements), " from the depths near the woods, first emerald, then sapphire, then black" (the different tones of the lake also reflect the different stages of her relationship, black is the colour of mourning). She even allows her imagination to picture other couples in her special place and she quite enjoys this view: " that he holds her with a living arm ". On the one hand, the images used by Szymborska usually reinforce the idea of renewal of life, that contrast with the feeling of nostalgia and longing for her lover who is now dead.

On the other hand, Duffy used the imagery of home to express the decay and destruction that was happening within it, in the relationship. The tone and the diction are very connected in this poem, Szymborska uses a very sober and emotionless tone to illustrate the view of the lake comparing it with her feelings, the language used is also very detached, analytical and even clinical, she has gone past the stage of emotional language and she is

now rationalising her grief. The persona doesn't want to engage with her heart: " I don't reproach", " I know", " it doesn't pain me", " I take note", " I allow", " I don't resent", " I respect", these are all very distant ways of showing her feelings, she doesn't use typical language for love, loss and mourning, the tone she uses is calm and she is very rational about what she says and how she says it. The clinical language is used to explore very complex emotions that are generated by the view of the lake at springtime. The tone changes in the last two stanzas when she says she can allow everything but she admits that she will never be able to engage herself with life again: " The privilege of presence- I give it up", she recognizes that she has suffered a lot with this loss: " I survived you by enough, and only by enough to contemplate from afar". The persona cannot join life emotionally after the loss.

While Szymborska uses sober tone and language that have a positive intention (try to get over the death of her lover), Duffy uses a regretful tone, with negative language that illustrate a house that is breaking apart, like the relationship. Szymborska has divided this poem into thirteen stanzas of three to five short sentences each, each one reflecting a different view from the lake and she is accepting and allowing anything that might happen in this view that doesn't involve her: " it doesn't pain me to see that clumps of alders above the water have something to rustle with again". She is trying to control her grief by organising the poem into similar stanzas, but it is more natural and fluid than in Duffy's poem maybe showing that the natural environment where she is allows her to be less rigid, knowing that there is no

solution and accepting the situation, because Duffy is trying to control really chaotic emotions, she has not gone past to the stage of emotionless.