

The poem, "joe
lawson's wife" by
lorna crozier



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The poem, "Joe Lawson's Wife" by Lorna Crozier is a symbolically rich work. The poem tells the story of a man who commits suicide, and how his wife reacts to her husband's death. There is obvious symbolism in both the sun and milk in the poem. The sun personifies Mrs. Lawson's conscious efforts to absorb and accept the news of her husband's suicide. She goes from only barely understanding what is going on, and being in complete shock to the realization that her husband is dead fully sinking in. The milk is representative of normalcy in Mrs.

Lawson's life, and it is the everyday chore of milking the cows that she clings to when her husband dies. The sun plays a significant role in symbolically showing the reader how the news of her husband's death is gripping Mrs. Lawson. The sun builds up tension as it rises, symbolically representing her husband's death sinking in as she struggles to accept this morbid news. The first mention of the sun occurs in the middle of the play. The doctor attempts to get Mrs. Lawson to go into the house and away from the gruesome scene of her husband, but she refuses to leave his side.

Crozier writes, "The sun was rising, its splinters from the cracks in the walls falling all around her". In these lines, the sun is representative of the news of her husband's death and the revelation that she is alone. The splinters from the sun, or small beams of light coming through the cracks of the barn show that the news is just starting to sink in, and Mrs. Lawson is only slightly aware of what is going on. The sun is referenced again toward the end of the poem, with Crozier telling the reader, "The sun's bright nails pounding through". The use of the sun, again, to describe how the death of Mr.

Lawson is affecting his wife is symbolic. Whereas when she first saw her husband's body, she was in shock and barely comprehending what had happened, at this point she is fully aware of her husband's death, and the realization of this hits her much harder, like nails pounding into her. The references to milk within the poem are also very symbolically significant. The ritual of milking the cows appears to be a common, everyday chore for Mrs. Lawson. For this reason, upon the news of her husband's death, Mrs. Lawson begins milking the cows, almost in a sense of grasping for something normal in her life.

The milk is symbolic of the normalcy that Mrs. Lawson had in her life prior to her husband's suicide. After the men have taken Mr. Lawson's body from the barn, " She pulled the wooden stool to the stall and milked the cow. " It is almost as if by milking the cows, Mrs. Lawson is attempting to go back to a time when her husband was still alive. Her complete focus, however, is on his death, as she doesn't even bother to put a pail under the cow to catch the milk. Mrs. Lawson milks the cows just like she probably did every other day of her life in an attempt to return any sort of normalcy to her now chaotic life.

Lorna Crozier's poem, " Joe Lawson's Wife" exhibits two symbolically important elements. The first element is the sun, which represents the news of her husband's suicide sinking into Mrs. Lawson's conscious mind. At first, only a few streaks of light shine though, but by the end of the poem the light is hitting her like a nail being pounded into her. The second important symbol in this poem is the milk. The milk is representative of normalcy in Mrs. Lawson's life. Milking the cows is obviously part of her everyday routine, <https://assignbuster.com/the-poem-joe-lawsons-wife-by-lorna-crozier/>

and she clings to this familiar chore in an attempt to return her life to any sort of normal state.