

William stafford and randall jarrell



William Stafford and Randall Jarrell There are two poetry writers that have wrote very good poems and have quite a few that are popular. To compare and contrast two, it would have to be "Traveling through the Dark" by William Stafford and "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner" by Randall Jarrell. These two authors have a different way and style they write their poems, that is why it makes sense to look at these two really close and really see how they write and how they get the message across. Both Stafford's and Jarrell's poem is in the book read in class so having read these two works it is somewhat familiar what they are about.

But further reading is needed to really understand what these poets are trying to say and what they are writing about. So it is best to read these poems or any poem in general, more than one time. Just so it becomes easier to understand the words and the theme. To compare and contrast these two poems every detail makes a difference because that way the reader understands what is going on in the poem. When a poet begins to write a poem there is always that one message they are trying to get across or a little story they are trying to tell.

So as a reader, it is important to read a poem more than once to really understand it. Imagery is a big key that both of these poets use. This is good when writing so that the readers are interested when reading the poem and to really draw mental pictures in the heads of the readers. Metaphor is also a big tool used in poetry, and without that many poems do not make sense. In both of these poems there is metaphor but it is not very clear to see sometimes. A lot of poets just ramble on with words and sometimes is not clear on what they are trying to say.

So with these two poems you see how one is easier to read than the other. In William Stafford's "Traveling through the Dark" it is very clear on what he is writing about and the theme is simple to understand. But in Randall Jarrell's "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner" it is not that easy to get if you just read the poem once. Randall Jarrell is a type of writer that criticizes a lot of other writings he does not like. He gives a lot of harsh criticism because he is a big fan of literature so by seeing work that is badly written he is not afraid to come out and say something about it.

But many other writers say over time he softens up because he is worried about the writer's extinction. Even though he was really tough on other writers work, Jarrell's passion for writing shows in his poetry. His poetry is more of the modern plain style which other famous writers use like Robert Frost. Jarrell likes to write about ordinary experiences that connect to the reader's feelings. Not all of his poetry makes sense like "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner" if it is only read once. Jarrell writes in a colloquial voice and mostly all his poems have no development in them.

He will write about a topic and just go one and one but you do not see what he is really talking about at first. When you read Randall Jarrell's work there is a lot of critical thinking that is involved and a lot of questions. For example in this poem the title says "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner" and by seeing the word "Gunner" it makes sense to say this poem might be about war or a fighter plane. Jarrell's other work was a lot about war because that is what he enjoyed to write about, so it only seems right that this poem is about war. But when you read it at first it seems as if he may be writing about an abortion.

Because he uses the word mother, it may throw off the reader but he uses a lot of imagery in the poem, so when you think about it, it may connect to an abortion. The "Gunner" in this case could be the doctor and the Ball Turret could be the mother's womb. Since he connects a lot of his work to war the Ball Turret could be the sphere like space where the pilot of a jet fighter would be in and the Gunner of course would be the enemy. And when the character in the poem was attacked he went upside down in the turret, little sphere, and looked like a fetus in the womb.

But when a reader reads it for the first time it is not as clear, so it is safe to say that Randall Jarrell's type of writing is not as clear and makes the reader think while reading. Jarrell's poems were meant to have the reader really think about what they are reading to a point where one might get confused. So now there is the other side where it is much easier to read and comprehend what the author is saying. Stafford's work is mostly always dealing with the outdoors and that's mainly because of where Stafford grew up. He is also known for his unique method of composition and soft spoken voice.

You can easily tell by reading his work because he does not try to confuse the reader and just gets the main point of the poem out there. Unlike Jarrell, Stafford goes into a lot of detail and uses imagery to show the reader what to think about while reading. For example, his poem "Traveling through the Dark" is taken place along a roadside near the woods. The poem is viewed as a dramatic lyric because Stafford develops the scene just like a playwright. You have the characters (speaker, deer); setting (nighttime on Road)

complication (" swerve might make more dead"); action (" dragged") climax (" pushed deer over the edge").

When you first read the poem it seems simple, that there is a dead deer on the road and the speaker pulls over and pushes the dead deer over the bank into the river. Yes the dead deer is pregnant because the character explains how he could feel the warmth on her belly, and yes he decides to roll it into the bank to prevent accidents. But why does Stafford write about a dead deer on the road. It is to show how a person unexpectedly faces a crisis which tests his or her moral sensitivity in everyday life. And that is what Stafford mostly writes about, everyday life situations.

So by looking at these two poets you can see that Randall Jarrell likes to write with so much passion and wants it to be so perfect that sometimes his work is not easily understood. Jarrell wants the reader to think about what they are really reading, but sometimes bores the reader. Now William Stafford also wants the reader to think about the theme but it is much clearer on how he sets up his poems. He uses more and clear imagery so that the reader can see what the main point to the poem is. And these two pieces of work are good examples on how these two poets write their feelings and thoughts down.