

The mood swing
through creative
language: comparing
two poems



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Men at Forty and The Tyger are two intense poems written using creative language that seems to alter each piece's mood drastically. These two poems discussing strong, bold things are transformed into soft spoken stanzas that float off the reader's tongue and resonate like peaceful songs. Donald Justice uses gentle words throughout Men at Forty to display a sense of smoothness and innocence in his poem while William Blake plays with rhymed couplets to portray this same reading experience.

Justice's poem, Men at Forty, written in 1967, tells the story of a young boy and how he grows up to be a man like his father. There are scenes in which the subject – an older man – looks back at himself as a young boy while he “practices tying / His father's tie” providing the reader with a strong visual image of how the boy will turn into the man that his father is. Although this aging seems graceful at first, other parts of the poem display the hardships that come with leaving childhood and becoming an older man. Examples of this are when the author describes the man “At rest on a stair landing, / [He feels] it moving.” With age the body changes and it may become less reliable which is why the man needs breaks like this one. This is where the darker, more harsh parts of the poem come in.

Blake's 1794 poem, The Tyger, is different from Men at Forty in that it immediately gives off a sense of darkness. While Justice's poem danced around and swayed between positive and negative aspects of growing old, Blake's poem delves straight into this intense poem full of questions that almost demand the reader for answers. His piece describes a strong, harsh animal and questions its creator. Blake asks what kind of creature would dare make such an intense, deadly being as a tiger.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-mood-swing-through-creative-language-comparing-two-poems/>

One would expect *Men at Forty* to be strong or harsh sounding to match the characters of the poem however this is not how the poem turned out. There is a sense of smoothness to be found at least once in each stanza. In the first stanza the word “ softly” stands out. With the second stanza one might find themselves focusing on the words “ swell” and “ gentle.” In the third stanza gentle terms like “ warm” and “ lather” are to be found. Finally, the word “ twilight” is embedded in the last stanza. Justice’s choice of language in this poem drastically changes what a reader would expect to find from reading the poem’s title. The contrast between initial predictions and the end result of the poem are therefore unexpected, very similar to Blake’s work in his poem.

The *Tyger* was unpredictable and was created in a way that the language differed from the initial thoughts a reader might have about it, similar to *Men at Forty*. However, rather than smooth and gentle language being the cause of this unpredictability, the contradictory qualities of this poem are results of rhyme. The musicality put in place by Blake throughout this poem gives it an upbeat and innocent sound that very clearly goes against the sense of harshness that the title gives off. He implements a rhymed couplets rhyme scheme in each stanza throughout the poem to give this seemingly serious poem its lighter, more musical tone and therefore the darkness of the words in this poem are metaphorically brightened by the sounds it creates.

Although Justice’s and Blake’s tactics to lighten up their initially serious or harsh seeming poems are different, the two poets manage to create a well thought out balance between the dark undertones that are present in each and the upbeat qualities that come with gentle phrases and musicality.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-mood-swing-through-creative-language-comparing-two-poems/>