

An explication essay on a william wordsworth poem

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The poem "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal," by Poet William Wordsworth, is beautiful and reads very intimately. The word choice is strong, and the images they conjure are powerful. This eight stanza poem is to say the least wonderful, but the title does not give the reader a clear idea about what the exact subject matter of the poem might be, prior to reading it. The stanza "A slumber did my spirit seal," has some very powerful diction (1). The word "slumber" means sleep, but it is also sometimes used to refer to death (1). When someone dies, they can be said to have entered into their "eternal slumber," or even having been "sealed in their eternal rest," all of this meaning that the person has died, or passed on.

A persons "spirit" is their soul, the nonphysical part of one's self that in some religions is said to be the part that gets transferred from our physical body to an eternal place when we die; while the word "seal" means to join two things together so that they will not come apart (1). When the speaker says, "A slumber did my spirit seal," the words are seemingly meant to be gripping, and they are mysterious; so much so that they are almost too enigmatic to grasp without more information from the poet (1). The speaker goes on from the line "A slumber did my spirit seal" to say, "I had no human fears- she seemed a thing that could not feel the touch of earthly years" (1-4). He, (the speaker here is obviously male), does not give the age of the woman or girl talked about, or even a name. But the emotion behind the words is stirring.

When the speaker says "she seemed a thing that could not feel the touch of earthly years," one is given the insight that she is no longer aging, so the deducted conclusion is that she is dead (3-4). She is now forever frozen in <https://assignbuster.com/an-explication-essay-on-a-william-wordsworth-poem/>

the age at which she died. He, the speaker, says in the second stanza "I had no human fears," fear being a powerful emotion that one feels when alive, which in conjunction with the first stanza "A slumber did my spirit seal," gives one the impression that he no longer wants to live, perhaps because his spirit has been sealed with this unnamed woman who has gone into her eternal slumber; leaving him behind, and he no longer fears mortal danger because he does not have the desire to live without her, and thus he no longer worries about his physical safety (1-2). In the first two of the final four stanzas of the poem, the speaker says, "no motion has she now, no force; she neither hears nor sees" (5-6). Then the final two say, "rolled round in earth's diurnal course, with rocks, and stones, and trees" (7-8). The speaker has gone almost dead pan in his description, the sound of these words being emotionless.

The word "diurnal" means having a daily cycle or occurring every day, and the speaker says that she is "rolled round in earth's diurnal course," earth's daily cycle, "with rocks, and stones, and trees," objects that are a part of the earth (7-8). These words are such a contrast from the passionate ones in the first part of the poem, they are lacking emotion. The speaker just states it; she is now with the earth. It is after the final two stanzas of the poem that the poem's first sentence really can be grasped in its entirety, and that we can understand the poem's theme more than we had previously. The first line of the poem saying "A slumber did my spirit seal," one is given the impression he is speaking of a life altering event in his life, and the rest of the poem confirms it (1). The speaker is telling of a great loss in his life

illusorily, the loss of this woman and his "spirit" being sealed with her, being taken with her to her final "slumber" (1).

The theme of this poem can be viewed as the pain of loss, the pain we feel when we lose someone dear and the way it can make us feel and view the world around us. This poem is definitely full of depth and mystery. It is only eight stanzas in length, but conveys its message suavely. There is a lyrical quality to this poem and it leaves you thinking deeply about the power of great loss, such as the loss of a loved one. I really enjoyed this poem, and I hope the author enjoyed writing it just as much, if not more, than I enjoyed reading it. This poem has a fluid style, and the punctuation gives this poem that rhythm and aids the reader in understanding the material, and fabulous material it is.