

Do not go gentle into
that good night

Life



Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night " Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night" is a villanelle style poem written by Dylan Thomas, and is the poem he is best known for. It was left untitled by the poet therefore the first line of the poem became the title. The speaker in the poem begins by telling the reader to " not go gentle into that good night" line 1 using night as a metaphor for death. The theme of death is repeated at the end of line 2 with " close of day" and in line 3 with " dying of the light. " By the end of the first stanza it is obvious this poem is speaking of death and stating that old men should not accept it peacefully but to should " burn" and " rave" against it with great intensity. In the second stanza of the poem the speaker tells us that " wise men at their end know dark is right, " line 4 the speaker is telling us that death is inevitable. To every beginning there is an end and we will all face death at some point, a wise man knows and accepts this fate. This stanza also tells us that as we are nearing the end of our lives we tend to reflect back to the impact we made on the world. Since " there words had forked no lightning" line 5 the speaker suggest that they had made little impact on the world in which they had lived and could not simply give into death without a fight. In the third stanza the speaker proposes that " good men" fight the inevitable with all their might. Thomas uses the image of a wave " last wave by, crying how bright" line 7 about to crash into the shore or, die. As men approach the shore of life they cry out how much more fulfilling life could have been if they had been allowed to live longer. Their lives would be so much richer if they were allowed to dance in the " green bay. " The green bay representing life because it is full of living things such as algae and seaweed. However their future actions " frail deeds" will not be able to come to fruition because they must die. Stanza four speaks of " wild

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men" those who grab life by the horns and live it to the fullest " wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight" line 10 only to discover that the life they lived so charismatically is slowly coming to an end as they wither with age. The " sun" in line 10 represents the beauty that exists in the world, and " flight" as in across the sky symbolizes the life span that moves quickly to the sunset of our days. In opening with " Grave men, near death, who see with blinding light" line 13 in stanza five Thomas uses the pun " grave" to speak of the seriousness of a dying man. As men grow older they begin to lose the sense of sight, however the speaker states they will " see with blinding light. " line 13 Even though they may be suffering from loss of physical sight they can see with perfect clarity that end is near and while they may not be in control of the timing of their death they certainly choose the manner in which they handle it. The speaker suggests they " blaze like meteors" line 14 and go out with a bang instead of giving into death without a fight. Finally in the last stanza of the poem we get to the heart of the matter. The speaker is addressing his father who is on the verge of death. The father's death is devastating and the speaker implores him to fight passionately against it and leave this life heroically. The poem ends with the two lines that were repeated throughout the entire poem " Do not go gentle into that good night, Rage Rage against the dying of the light" lines 18 and 19 the speaker is begging his father to not submit to death but to fight it every step of the way. Works Cited Dylan Thomas. " Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing. Ed. Edgar V. Roberts and Robert Zweig. 10th Ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2012. 959 - 960. Print