

# [Both sounding ss. both poems are also](https://assignbuster.com/both-sounding-ss-both-poems-are-also/)

Both poets are writing about an experience of the same thing, a birth. Hughes' however, is a bad birth and Clarke's is a good birth. Although they are relating the same subject, the two poems are very different, not only in the style of writing but in the story and atmosphere. The themes in both are the partnership of life and death. They both start by setting the atmosphere with the weather. Hughes depicts a bad atmosphere by describing the worst of winter days: " Ice wind Out of a downpour dishclout sunrise".

In contrast Clarke expresses the loveliest day of the year: " The stillest, hottest day of the summer" Also Hughes describes the inhospitable environment of the: " Mudded slope" So right from the start it can be seen that Hughes is going to be relating a bad birth, and Clarke's is going to be good. Another similarity is a technique they use here which is alliteration, a technique that Hughes is very fond of. Here Hughes uses the hard, harsh sounding Ds to get across the atmosphere and Clarke uses soft calm sounding Ss. Both poems are also set in the poet's native area. Hughes is very straight forward right from the start in what it is about:

" A lamb could not get born." Clarke also gets the picture across straight away: " A lamb was born in a field" So as you can see the structure and use of techniques is very similar but the meaning is opposite. In the labour, Clarke, emphasizes the ease and calmness of the birth. One of the ways she does this is by making little of the physical aspect, simply describing: " Her sides heaving, a focus Of restlessness in the complete calm Her calling at the odds with the silence."

Her pain briefly disturbs the silence of this still day. It is also a fast, easy delivery: " Hot slippery the scalding Baby came and the cow stood up." Clarke, as you can see, concentrates on the ease and speed of the birth but also brings a big picture of the surroundings not just the labour and birth. Hughes, on the other hand, focuses very much just on the birth and does not bring in the wider picture of his surroundings.

He also gets across the difficulty of the prolonged birth for himself and the ewe, being much more involved in the birth than Clarke. He uses short strong words to give impact and intensity: he is 'wrestling' while the sheep 'groans'; he hauled' while she 'cried out.' The effort is reflected in the repetition of the word 'pushed' but once it is past the head and shoulders it comes, like Clarke's, fast and easily:

" The long sudden, yolk yellow Parcel of life" Clarke describes the birth as a nice comfortable experience, through imagery; she gets across the gentleness and beautifulness of the birth: " The light flowed out, leaving stars and clarity" " The cow stood up, her cool flanks like white flowers in the dark." In contrast Hughes gives a detailed, and rather gruesome description of the deformed head of the lamb: " A blood ball swollen Tight in its black felt, its mouth gap Squashed crooked, tongue stuck out, black purple."

This is great imagery describing the limp, bloated head with the purple deoxygenated blood and short black wool on its head. Although both of these poems are written in 1st person they are different, Hughes is very much physically involved in the experience and plays a big part in it. He is always referring to what it was he had to do: " I caught with a rope"; " I felt inside"; " I saw it was useless"; " I pushed" It is forced onto the reader every single little point, and this is clearly intentional. On the other hand Clarke's perspective is very different, she is much more just an observer and simply invites the reader to join her, although she does make references to her own personal experiences as a mother:

" I could feel the soft sucking Of the new born, the tugging pleasure Of bruised recording" Clarke also brings in a much wider picture than Hughes rather than picking at every one little detail. So though both are in 1st person they are put across very different. Both poets use literary techniques to boost their imagery, but like everything else they use them in very different ways, same techniques, variation in use. Obviously Clarke uses these techniques in such a way that they are soft and tender sounding for example when she uses alliteration it is soft 'S's and 'M's that are used:

" Measured the volume of the sky; the hills brimmed with incoming darkness"; " soft sucking." In contrast to this, Hughes' use of these techniques is much More graphical and harsh, in this example the use of the 'B' almost seems to give the sound of the head bobbing up and down, like Hughes says he likes to use words that you can touch, feel, hear as well as see: " Blackish lump bobbed at her backend" So here you can hear, see and almost feel the nodding head and again here you can hear and feel the lamb slipping out: " Smoking slither of oils, soups, syrups" Although he does use these harsh sounding images there is one place where he uses soft sounding alliteration it is when he is telling about how the birth should have been just to contrast against the awfulness of this birth and make just that bit worse: " Tip-toe, his toes Tucked up under his nose".

When is comes to the structure of the poem, even it reflects the mood of poem. Hughes splits up some of his sentences over lines, this makes it a bit jerky to maybe reflect the uneasiness of the birth and it is also used to give emphasis to the last word of the line, also 'February 17th' is in one big chunk of text and is not split into stanzas, this is make it tense and slightly uneasy for the reader. On the other hand Clarke has two short stanzas the maybe reflect the ease and straightforwardness of the delivery, she also uses the technique of splitting sentences over two lines but her poem in general has a much more formal structure.

So in some ways the poems are identical because they have the same subject and themes, life and death, also they use all the same techniques so without reading it and just being told this you would begin to think they were the same. But Hughes is a lot more straightforward and down to earth in the way he tells the story, also he concentrates on just the birth and goes into a lot of detail. On the other hand