

# [Those winter sundays poem](https://assignbuster.com/those-winter-sundays-poem/)

A Father’s Love Poetry typically focuses on a central idea that the is trying to communicate. This is because a poem is usually too short to explore more than this. However, poets communicate these ideas in a very deep way, by appealing to our senses through imagery and by building up contrasts that help shock us into understanding. This is the case with Robert Hayden’s poem “ Those Winter Sundays” in which the poet is trying to convey a sense of the depth of a father’s love for his children.
Hayden uses imagery to grab his reader’s attention and make them feel as if they are existing within the world of the poem. The entire first stanza paints a very clear picture of the scene. The father “ put on his clothes in the blueblack cold, / then with cracked hands that ached / from labor in the weekday weather made / banked fires blaze” (2-5). Words such as ‘ blueblack’ evoke images of the pre-dawn morning just before the first light begins to lighten the sky from the pitch dark of midnight. Associating this immediately with the word cold causes one to think of the bone-chilling emptiness of space, the physical pain of crawling out of a warm bed while half-dressed. This image is compounded by the idea of his cracked hands due to his age and accustomed chores, which cause his hands to be exposed to the elements on a regular basis. In case there was any question, the author even states outright that the father’s hands ached, and yet he dragged himself out of bed before anyone else to make sure that the fire was going well to warm the house before anyone else needed to get out of bed. This scene is reinforced by the imagery of the second stanza in which the narrator describes the breaking up of the cold as if it were the breaking up of the river ice. It is heard “ splintering, breaking” (6) until the house finally becomes warm enough for the children to be called from their beds. This imagery presents the dedication of the father in ways that simply stating the father’s love wouldn’t do.
This imagery is coupled with the use of contrasts to make the meaning of the poem clear. After describing the tender scene of the father getting up in the terrible cold in order to make the house warm, the narrator talks about his fears getting out of bed in the warmth the father has provided. “ slowly, I would rise and dress, / fearing the chronic angers of that house” (8-9). While the father gets up to a bitter cold, the child rises to fears of too much heat. Throughout the poem, it is made clear that no one ever thanked the father for his services in getting the house warm and polished the narrator’s shoes as well while the others spoke indifferently to him. The tenderness of the father’s love is thus contrasted sharply against the coldness of the children’s indifference and lack of understanding.
Through imagery and contrasts, the poet is able to convey his more mature understanding of the love his father had for him as a child and the hurtful indifference his own child-self had shown toward his dad. Although he thought of his father as an angry and perhaps unpredictable man, it is clear by the actions described that the father was deeply concerned with the welfare of his children. At the same time, it is clear that the impressions of the child are set distinctly against the father, as if there had been no love involved.