

Poetry college essay

Profession, Poet



Poetry Essay Draft on “ The Widow’s Lament in Springtime” by William Carlos Williams “ The Widow’s Lament in Springtime” by William Carlos Williams is a lovely poem that goes straight to the heart of anyone that has lost a loved one. Death is a physical energy that can drain and change an individual’s entire outlook on life as well as any joy that has been experienced. Some people are so affected that they see no relief in sight and want nothing more than that relief.

What is amazingly captured by the author of this poem is the woman’s separation from her husband. She feels devastated and not sure she can go on without him. She laments sorrowfully even as her surroundings are coming to life. The poet uses the element of alliteration.

This is evident in the words flames, flamed and fire; and later in the poem feel, fall and flowers. Assonance is also very visible as is reflected later in the poem with words like they, today and away. Symbolism and pathos add to the poem making it a very poignant story. Williams uses irony and imagery from the beginning of this literature. It is ironic that the character has to experience so much grief and heart ache during such a beautiful season as spring. The visual imagery that he has created gives the reader a compassionate view to the wife’s emotional grief while surrounding her with a fountain of newly born life.

The sharpness of the white flowers is in stark contrast to her cloudy and dark feelings. Everything is coming to life as she feels her life cannot go on without her husband. The tone, at the beginning of this poem is wistful and heavy hearted. She looks out over her yard “ where the new grass flames as

it has flamed often before" (2-4). A metaphor of her life as it has been in the past when her husband lived; alive and colorful.

The seasons where life was blooming, starting each season new and fresh. But this time it is different, like " the cold fire that closes round me this year" (5-6). A fire that has been comforting and warm now sadly offers only despair and an end to the life she once experienced. She takes a small break from her sadness when she remembers the thirty five years she spent with him.

" The plum tree is white today" (9) gives her a small glimpse into her life ahead that things may not always be this agonizing. As she continues to look at the beautiful life around her, the colors in the trees and bushes it gives her a brief but sought after break from her emotional state. It is short lived however as the poet emphasizes her painful state of mind when he repeats the lines " with masses of flowers. Masses of flowers" (10-11). The word masses can also give bearing to her state of mind.

This persona is heavy, just like the grief in her heart, " the grief in my heart is stronger than they, for though they were my joy formerly, today I noticed them and turn away forgetting. (15-19). Normally she would enjoy the brilliant life around her as she had with her husband these many years before. Is she also feeling guilty pleasure for noticing them today, without him? She has a son. A product of the happiness that she shared with her husband. A daily reminder of the love she felt for him.

One would think his existence would make her pain somewhat less. Trying to help, her son tells her that day, “ that in the meadows, at the edge of the heavy woods in the distance, he saw trees of white flowers. (21-24) It would appear that these could be the same type white blooms that she has in her own yard. However, they must be different as she then states “ I feel that I would like to go there and fall into those flowers and sink into the marsh near them. ” (25-28) These are further away than the ones she shared with her husband. They take her away from the sorrow and loss the ones in her yard remind her of.

Her husband’s death has left her with nothing to be happy for, not even her son can take the pain away. She needs a break from the overwhelming suffering she is feeling. She feels that if she goes to this field and becomes part of it, she may join her departed husband and hurt no more. She can sink into the marsh and disappear. Become part of the landscape, and be reborn each and every year.

Death has stolen her joy, left her no future to look forward to. Her life will never be the same; the one thing she treasured and experienced joy in, is gone. Overwhelmed, thinking about her future that now has a big hole, one that cannot be filled. She is tired, tired enough to fall into a marsh and disappear.

Williams has produced a marvelous account of feelings from a person’s perspective on the death of a loved one. He eloquently uses several of the elements that a story needs to paint a picture of grief and loss after thirty five years of joy and happiness. The pain a person feels, as this women does,

takes an emotional as well as a physical toll. When there is this much sorrow, a person feels there is no future for them and cannot imagine the rest of their life getting better. No matter the beauty of nature in springtime, when it comes to a loss as this, nothing can make it better.