

The effects of divorce essay sample

[Family](#), [Divorce](#)



When we think of divorce, most of us begin to feel sympathy and sorrow for the family that is going through it. Divorce seems to be generalized as a negative experience in life. However, after reading the poems *The Victims* by Sharon Olds, and *Beyond Pastel* by Katherine Lawrence, it can be seen that there are different effects on different families. Some are bad, but on the other hand, some are good. By comparing the tone, imagery, similes and metaphors of these two poems we will see these different effects. We will see the positive effect divorce has on some families, and we will also see the negative effect it has on others.

In both *The Victims* and *Beyond Pastel* there is a very serious tone coming from the narrator. After the divorce in *The Victims*, the children “grinned inside, the way people grinned when Nixon’s helicopter lifted off the South Lawn for the last time.” (Lines 5, 6 & 7) It can be seen that this quotation displays a serious tone as it refers to a very serious time in history. There is an analogy here between the “father” of the country and the “father” of the family. They both had to leave due to infidelity – one being unfaithful to millions, the other being unfaithful to a wife and kids. However, this quotation shows much more than just a serious tone. It also shows the positive effect divorce could have on a family. The children here are relieved and happy that their father’s gone. After the divorce in *Beyond Pastel*, the children were stuck “trying to make earth match the sky.” (Lines 12 & 13) This shows the negative effect of divorce. Without a father in this family, the children can’t make sense of life anymore. Nothing matches in their world.

Another comparison between the two poems is the colour imagery. In both cases the narrator uses many colours for certain objects to display a specific

meaning. In the poem *The Victims*, the children talk about the father's belongings being taken away from him after being fired from his job. They ask themselves if "those dark carcasses hung in [his] closet, and the black noses of [his] shoes with their large pores" (Lines 12, 13 & 14) would be taken away from him. They really display some evil within the father as they speak of his belongings being "dark" and "black". Again this simply shows that the divorce here is most likely a good thing as their father is probably a bad influence on their lives. Moving on to *Beyond Pastel* there is also reference to dark colours however the meaning is completely opposite. When the mother asks her daughter which colours she wants her room to be, she answers with "Black...It matches everything." (Line 36) Here it can be seen that the daughter's very upset about the divorce. She is referring to the divorce being "black" and not the father. She wants the father back as part of her family.

Finally, there is also the use of similes and metaphors in both poems although the meanings are completely opposite again. The narrator of *The Victims* considers her father like "the bums [she passes] in doorways... and wonders who took it and took it from them in silence until they had given it all away and had nothing left..." (Lines 18, 23, 24, 25 & 26) This metaphor shows the narrator's hatred towards her father and how she sympathises other children who had fathers like hers. But not all children feel this way. In *Beyond Pastel*, the narrator sees "two single cots on wheels fold up like praying hands." (Line 25) This child has completely opposite feelings. Unlike the child in *The Victims*, the narrator here sympathises other children who

lost fathers like hers. She prays that her father would come back and be part of her family again.

So it can be seen that couples getting a divorce is not always a tragic time. Of course, there are many cases in which it is, but there are just as many cases where it can bring relief and happiness to a family. Fathers can be the culprit in a marriage, where a divorce is best, or they can also be the victims themselves, where divorce can be a tragic time for both family and friends.