

# Essay interpreting "one art" by elizabeth bishop

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Essay Interpreting " One Art" by Elizabeth Bishop In " One Art" by Elizabeth Bishop, the speaker's attitude in the last stanza relates to the other stanzas in verse form and language. The speaker uses these devices to convey her attitude about losing objects. The verse form in " One Art" is villanelle. The poem has tercet stanzas until the last, which is four lines. In the first three stanzas, the poem is told in second person. " Lose something every day." seems to command one to practice the art of losing things. In the three stanzas, first person is used, and the speaker relates how she " lost her mother's watch" and other life incidents. However, the speaker addresses her beloved " you," and then in the last line, herself. Language in " One Art" is simple, yet many literary devices are used. The last line repeated, to the effect of " The art of losing isn't hard to master" suggests that the speaker is trying to convince herself that losing things is not hard and she should not worry. Also, the speaker uses hyperboles when describing in the fifth tercet that she lost " two cities... some realms I owned." Since she could not own, much less lose a realm, the speaker seems to be comparing the realm to a large loss in her life. Finally, the statement in the final quatrain " Even losing you" begins the irony in that stanza. The speaker remarks that losing this person is not " too hard" to master. The shift in attitude by adding the word " too" shows that the speaker has an ironic tone for herself in her loss or perhaps her husband or someone else close to her. Language and verse form show in " One Art" how the losses increase in importance as the poem progresses, with the losses in lines 1-15 being mostly trivial or not very important to the great loss in lines 16-19 or a beloved person. Elizabeth Bishop suggests then that mastering the art of losing objects, such as car

keys, does not prepare one for the loss of a person, which adds more irony to the title. There must be more than one art to losing, if losing a person is a separate suffering.