

# Uphill

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"Uphill" by Christina Rossetti is about the journey of life, or death, to heaven. The poem is an exchange of a series of brief and succinct questions and answers between two speakers: an inquiring traveler who asks many questions about the journey of life or death in which she is heading to (heaven), and an ex-traveler or guide who has taken that path before answering with a assured, and perfectly calm tone. In the poem, the poet uses difference devices such as quatrain, common meter , and perhaps it is written in strict iambic meter with lines vary in length and in the number of feet.

The poet uses imagery, and symbolism(allegory)to express emotion and picture a traveler who has to take the road " uphill", and who hopes to find an inn at the end of her travel. The poem sends a message that though find life hard but there are always comfort, help, and generosity along the way. This poem illustrates two ways in which line length is varied in a strict meter. The first variation is seen in the first line, which has nine syllables. This is still a five foot line because feet are constructed by iterative parenthesis insertion from right to left, the leftmost foot is the last constructed and can fall short.

The second variation involves the number of feet in each line. As can be seen in " uphill" all odd-numbered lines are pentameters, whereas the even-numbered lines vary in length between three and five feet, there are 5 trimeter lines, 1 tetrameter and 3 pentameters. This difference in length reflects the fact that the poem has the forms of a dialogue where each odd-numbered (pentameter) line represents a question asked by one speaker, and the odd-numbered lines are answers given by her guide.

The difference in length of line reflects the different styles of the two participants in the dialogue. In addition, the poem can be considered it is in common meter which is a close kin to the ballad stanza, with the stanza following a characteristic ballad pattern of 4+3+4+3 stressed syllables to the line. The first stanza of the poem is an example of common meter, four line rimed a b a b and tending to fall into 8, 6, 8, and 6 syllables.

At the beginning of the poem, the speaker asks, " Does the road wind uphill all the way? (Line 1), the road is representing for the journey of life, and " wind uphill" stands for difficulties, or struggles through life. The inquiring traveler seems very worried or wondering about how hard the journey will be, and the guide softly affirms her worse hope, is that this journey will absolutely take " to the very the end" (Ln 2). The second question has the same sort of relation to life ," Will the day's journey take the whole long day? /From morn to night, my friend" (Ln 3-4).

Life is a road that takes " the whole long day" to bring us " to the very end. " The night is death that awaits us at the end of the journey. Just as an uphill journey is long, and lasting from morning to evening, life also is full of difficulties right from birth to death. From these two questions which reveals that the inquiring traveler is asking about aspects of living and the journey of life. In the following stanza is presenting a sort of reassurance answer out of the wisdom of the ex-traveler.

To begin with the speaker asks, " But is there for the night a resting-place? " (Ln 5) which is answered: " A roof for when the slow dark hours begin" (Ln 6). The night is metaphor for death, the speaker is wondering that when her

final come (death) will be there a place for resting. The ex-traveler is reassuring the inquiring traveler that she will have time for rest along the way, which can be metaphorically taken, as it already stated as the path of life. In these lines, the speaker was searching for some sign of relief to come along the way.

Then speaker continue asks, " May not the darkness hide it from my face"(Ln 7) which is then responded, " You cannot miss that inn" (Ln 8) . An " in" symbolizes for a resting place or perhaps heaven. In this case, there seems to be a comfortable " inn" for her and other wayfarers to stay at along their journey. The speaker in each successive stanza, knows that life is hard but finds that there is rest and a final resting place. The third stanza is also a continuation of this reassuring tone.

The speaker asks hopefully if she will meet other " wayfarers" along the way and " Those who have gone before"(Ln 10) was the response given. This just shows that the inquiring traveler will meet people along her lifetime that will show her the right path to take. " Then must I knock, or call when just in sight? /They will not keep you standing at your door" (Ln 11-12), the guide then again reassures her that she would not be left waited, but welcome. Thus, it suggests that though speaker has the choice to listen to the wise along the way, and she does not have to listen to anybody.

Yet again, this is another stanza of reassurance answer from the ex-traveler on the subject of the inquiring traveler 's future life. The last stanza holds perhaps the most comforting lines in the whole poem. " Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak? " (Ln 13) asks the inquiring traveler, and " Of labor

you shall find the sum" (Ln 14) is answered by the guide. The speaker seems to worry that she will not find peace after "travel sore and weak", and the guide has to calm the inquiring traveler nerves by giving her hope of future comfort.

The first two lines offer compensation for labor: the fact that the inquiring traveler can only find as much comfort as much as she puts in labor. In other words, the uphill struggle of life will lead at last to heaven. This is the last stanza out of three that suggest future comfort, "Will there be beds for me and all who seek"/ "Yea, beds for all who come" (Ln 15-16), the beds also represent death and a final resting place. After the journey of the inquiring traveler is over, she is "travel-sore and weak", and arrives at this resting place (the bed) which opens to anybody who searches for peace.

"Uphill" is an allegorical poem in which is regarded the journey of life as an "uphill" journey. Life is recognized as a painful task (it's up-hill all the way), yet it is the duty of mankind to undertake the trip in hopes of a peaceful rest in heaven as a reward, a reward for all obstacles that obstruct in life. All the pain and suffering are to be expected, not resisted. One benefits from them in the end. The poem ends with a note of hope that in heaven the weary souls will find comfort just like the travelers at the inn.