

Seamus heaney mid-term break

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



A Review of Seamus Henrys " Mid-Term Break" Seamus Henrys poem " Mid-Term Break" was written during his youth. It is a poem that he wrote in the firstperson perspective, making him the speaker in the poem. that speaks of how he learned of and dealt wit the death of his 4 year old brother while he was away at school. The poem depicts the unexpected coming of age for a boy, who now has to help his family deal with the sudden death of the middle child in the family and the way that he is affected and yet detached from the death of his brother. In effect, the poem is all about the wonders of life, its promising beginnings and how it could suddenly end without a warning, scarring those who were left behind it is wake.

Having learned of what happened while away at school, Seamus spent the school day at the sick bay or clinic where he heard the school bell ring between classes. In his mind, the bell was similar to the paling of the church bells during a funeral. The last bell of the day signaling the end of class after all.

Returning home, he did not have a very clear picture of what tragedy had just beset his family. So he met with the mourners with a sense of detachment. Henry was touched by the way that his father " Big Jim" Evans showed emotion at the death of his younger brother. Knowing his father to be a strong and somewhat stoic man, this was one of the few times that Seamus actually saw his father saddened by an event. Sadness is a very powerful emotion that the man seemed able to convey to his oldest son only by shaking his hand and letting him know what a " big blow" the death of the middle son was.

Why did the Old Man stand for Henry when he arrived and shook his hand? In

the family, he was the eldest son and as such, he was second to his father in commanding the respect of the community. By standing up to greet him, the Old Man acknowledged his presence and his authority in the family. Indeed, their situation was quite unusual and that is why Henry seemed lost and confused when the Old Man and others began to stand up to greet and speak to him upon his arrival.

This is one of the saddest poems that I have ever read. From the beginning of the second line, it was already evident that this was not a poem that was going to end with a happy recollection of a time past. Using assonance and alliteration, Seamus Henry managed to emotionally involve his readers in the death of his brother. Describing the ringing of the school bell in relation to a funeral indicates that he felt heavy at the thought of time slowly passing.

A lyrical poem, one cannot be helped by the way that Henry manages to display both a manliness and sadness to the way that he dealt with his brothers death. The tender emotions of his mother and the way he felt upon viewing his brothers body simply leaves the reader feeling heavy and quite affected by the death of the unnamed child.

In the end, we see the influence of Henrys father over him as he manages to stand almost stoic before his brothers corpse, looking at him and thinking of the way that his brother, just 6 weeks earlier was full of life. Making the reader go back to the beginning of the poem as well to marvel at how well he used the word “ pram” to depict a new life and “ cot” to depict the end of life. Henry does not allow himself to actually display any grief over his brothers death and yet throughout the poem, we can sense and grieve with

Seamus Henry over the obvious pain that he felt over the sudden death of his middle brother.