

Li po's poem drinking alone by moonlight: a critique

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People deal with their problems in different ways. Some solve it in a healthy manner such as therapy; others try to mask the pain through drugs or alcohol. Li Po's character handles his sadness through the abundant use of red wine. In "Drinking Alone by Moonlight", by Li Po, the narrator's feelings of sorrow and loneliness are expressed through visual imagery, personification, and allusion.

Visual imagery sets the scene of the poem within the first three lines: "A cup of wine, under the flowering trees; I drink alone, for no friend is near. Raising my cup, I beckon the bright moon. (Pg. 442, line 1-3)." This creates an illustration of a man drinking under a tree and looking up at the night sky. He is reluctant to embrace solidarity by trying to get the moon to join him. This indicates loneliness that the narrator is feeling. To combat his loneliness, he drinks wine to feel joyful and properly celebrate the spring season. "I must make merry before the Spring is spent. (Pg. 442, line 8)" Spring is typically associated with happiness and rebirth. Despite this, the narrator's feelings and scenery contrast with the connotation of spring.

The moon and shadow play a role through personification. "The moon, alas, is no drinker of wine; listless, my shadow creeps about my side. Yet with the moon as a friend and the shadow as a slave. (Pg. 442, line 5-7)" The moon is given the ability to refuse the man's request to drink. It is also portrayed as a friend who stays by the narrator's side. The shadow is being depicted as a slave. It is only by the man's side out of obligation. A shadow appearing outside in the night is an impossibility. The narrator may believe that the shadow is always with him regardless of the time of day. However, the man

is still lonely even when enjoying the company of the moon and following of the shadow.

The final instance of the depiction of the narrator's emotions is allusion. " Now we are drunk, each goes his way. (Pg. 443, line 12) " While under the excess influence of alcohol, the man dances and sings under the moon. This statement refers him getting so drunk to the point of passing out. He is once again alone and without his metaphorical friend and slave. " May we long share our odd; inanimate feast, And meet at last on the Cloudy River of the sky. (Pg. 443, line 13-14)" The narrator misses the moon and shadow shortly after interacting with them. The " Cloudy River of the sky" refers to the Milky Way; galaxy that possesses the solar system. The man is hoping to eternally reunite with the moon and shadow. This gives the reader a hint that the man may be suicidal. He is looking forward to embracing death and becoming one with nature. Only people who are depressed and lonely wish to end their own lives.

In " Drinking Alone by Moonlight", by Li Po, the narrator's feelings of sorrow and loneliness are expressed through visual imagery, personification, and allusion. The use of alcohol is not the proper way to overcome emotional obstacles; such as depression. It is a depressant that makes one feel worse. A person needs to be open and express one's self to truly heal and move on.