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Experience, Meaning of Life



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04/22/2013 In the poem " Sweethearts, " by Allen Branden he describes the feelings of a young couple who have to sneak out to find time to spend with each other. The line, " Through the pale statuary and falling leaves" (2) gives the poem a setting of being in a cemetery in the autumn. Their love is so strong that they never want to be apart. The speaker is a man who is telling a story about a relationship that he was in as a teenager; he is not speaking to anyone unparticular. Through diction, symbols and tone the author explains how young love can be confusing, misunderstood, and full of emotion. The diction in the first two lines introduces a young couple, but the speaker does not come out and say the word couple he uses the word " they" in the first line. " One late Friday night they grope their way through the pale statuary and fallen leaves"(1-2) The significance of using the word " they" is to go back to the theme of the poem and to keep them secrete and hidden like their relationship. In these lines are a few words that can explain the theme of the poem. The denotation of the word grope is to search about, search blindly, or even to touch in a sexual manner(Marrian-Webster). Using the word grope lets the reader know that the couple is in lust as well as love, because many young teenage boys and girls get these emotions confused. Lust is longing or desire for sexual desire which is why the speaker uses the word grope, to explain the sexual desire that this young couple feels for one another. Throughout the poem, informal diction is used because everyday language is used, although there are a few words that are used, not everyone reading this poem would understand. In the line, " with vertigo of their longing, the rush/of uncovering and pushing flesh against flesh. "(9-10)

the denotation for the word vertigo is dizziness. Putting the word in this sentence makes the reader think about the dizzy feeling that lovers get when they touch each other or the butterflies in the tummy when the couples sees each other. This word brings out the emotion in the poem. The author of this poem does reinforce the thematic concerns by using language that is easy to incorporate into the meaning of the poem. Symbols are used throughout this poem as well. There are many words that are used to represent the love that this couple shows for each other. Lines eleven and twelve say “ One tiny act is all it takes to bury themselves/in some small excuse to be somewhere else, (11-12). The “ One tiny act" describes sex and is a symbol of love; in the place that they found that fit them perfectly. The symbolism in the line, “ it seems quite natural that he is the star this season and she is the head cheerleader. "(5-6) tells the reader that this couple is young maybe in high school. Again in the lines “ for a hollow to lie in where they fit perfectly/the way their perfect bodies fit one another.(3-4) The symbol “ hollow" makes the reader think of a hollow tree where squarrels hide their acorns. The hollow is where they can hide to be perfect together. This is where they need to find a place where they cannot be found by anyone other than themselves,. This is all about their love for each other. For the couple to find a place to hide from the world is the very meaning of being in love and being misunderstood by the world. Young couples are always being misunderstood by society because the adults think that teens do not understand what being in a relationship or in love is about. Adults think that teens get the meaning of love and lust confused. It is easy to get these words confused especially for teens when in a relationship. It's that new

feeling that teens think is love, which is really the feeling of lust that they feel. The feeling that a teen couple gets when they touch each other for the first time is very confusing which is why society thinks that teens will never understand what love is. This is why young love is confusing. This poem shows this in how the couple has sex before dreaming of what their life can be. There are many symbols in this poem that incorporate the meaning of longing for the touch of your lover, “ anywhere but here where his ambitions will be planed down on the graveyard shift and hers will be spent waiting tables with trays of coffee, hot cakes and syrup. ”(13-16) The symbols of “ graveyard shift” and “ waiting tables”(13-14) means that they are dumbled to live the life a small town folks, where they will do the same thing every day. Many teens have dreams of going to college and then get married and have kids. This couple does have dreams of making it out of the small town and one day being able to not hide their relationship. The tone in “ Sweethearts” is emotional, such as affection, love, longing, sadness, and even darkness. The poem starts with them walking through pale statuary with fallen leaves, which makes the reader think of a dark, scary cemetery. The speaker refers to this because the couple is keeping their relationship in the dark, which can be a very hard and emotional thing to keep from the people that they care about. In the second stanza the lines “ for a hollow to lie in where they fit perfectly/the way their bodies fit one another. ”(3-4) show the tone of longing for their time to be alone together. The speaker is using this emotion to show the reader why they want to find the perfect place to be perfect together. The longing also shows the reader that this couple is having a sexual relationship and that they long for this. As everyone does when they

are in a loving, meaningful relationship. The fourth stanza brings the tone of love, with the words " Don't ever forget this, " (7) means that they don't ever want to forget the love that they share, and that their love is so strong that it can bring love to a room full of sadness. The fifth stanza brings up the tone of lust, in the line "...the rush/of uncovering and pushing flesh against flesh. "(9-10) brings up the idea of sex and the emotion of lust, because of the word " uncover" the speaker has chosen. Although the speaker could also be speaking about their wanting to " uncover" their relationship to the world, so everyone they care about could know that they are the perfect couple. The sixth stanza " One tiny act is all it takes to bury themselves/in some small excuse for somewhere else, " (11-12). Shows the emotions of physical and emotional intimacy that a couple young and old shares, these emotions are very strong for everyone. Stanzas seven and eight is where the sadness comes into play, the speaker talks about "...where his ambitions/will be planed down on the graveyard shift" (13-14). The denotation of the word " planed" is to be grinded down which means that his dreams will be grinded down and not become a reality that he wants. As well as the girl's dreams of serving coffee and breakfast. To have dreams of going to college and having a good, successful life is a normal thing for any kid in high school. For the speaker to say these things makes the reader think that this couple wants more out of life seeking out, to the cemetery to have time with each other. The words statuary, elegy, and graveyard; symbolize the setting of the poem meaning that the couple is in a church cemetery at night, all of these words have something to do with the darkness that surrounds a church. The darkness that Branden speaks about is the darkness that surrounds the lie,

and secret of their relationship. These words bring a very dark and sad tone to this poem. The dark and sad tone keeps with the thematic concern throughout the poem. Even though there is love, lust and longing there is also sadness and darkness within the poem and the relationship of the young couple. Throughout this poem there has been many emotions and feeling within with meaning of the poem. Young love is a good, normal natural thing, it should not be hidden from the world, it should be out in the open where they can learn from it. Young love is confusing, misunderstood and emotional in lots of ways. How is young love confusing? Because there are all these feelings that young adults have no idea what they are and how to deal with. This confusion comes from the emotion of love, it can give out many emotions, such as caring, lust, sadness, longing, and love can also hurt. The diction, symbols, and tone gives "Sweethearts" by Allen Branden character. The informal diction makes it easy for the reader to understand what is going in this poem. The symbols in this poem give a clean and precise meaning of young love, using the word "vertigo" to describe the dizziness that a new couple feels for each other is a perfect way to describe young love. The tone of the poem is so emotional because it takes the reader through all the emotions of love that is what makes this poem have character and why everyone will understand it.