

Narrative poem

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



A narrative poem is right for the subject of John Updike's poem "Dog Death". For instance the subject about the loss of a love one is usually told in the form of stories. The narrative creates the image of the dog's value to the family. The first stanza and the title indicate that the poem is about the death of a puppy. Updike personifies the dog, to stress the impact of the loss of a love one on the family. We know that she is loved because in the third line of the fourth stanza, the narrator states that she was surrounded by love. Line fourteen reveals the love for the dog when the narrator says, "And my wife called in a voice imperious with tears." In the third stanza, the narrator talks about how the dog crawled under the youngest child's bed, indicating that the children not only loved the puppy but played with her. The narrator allows the dog to rest on his lap on the way to the vet. Even without naming the dog, the personification incarnates her and the pronoun "she" helps readers relate to the dog's value to the family. The dog is a puppy, perhaps new to the family, who has not been named. Clues are given that the dog is a puppy in lines two and three of the first stanza, "Too young to know much, she was beginning to learn to use the newspapers spread on the kitchen floor" (Updike lines 2-3). Naming the dog alone may not specifically help readers to imagine the dog or relate to the impact of the loss of a love one or a pet. Personification harmonizes the dog so that the reader can connect with the human elements of the poem.

Other Elements of the Poem

The poem is organized in five stanzas. Most of the poem consists of four lines. In the first and last stanza the phrase "Good dog" (Updike lines 4, 5, and 21) is repeated. There are only a few lines that exhibit rhyme. In the third stanza, at the end of lines one and two, the words fed

and bed rhyme. In addition, the words frame and shame rhyme. In a narrative poem, words do not have to rhyme. The narrator tells the story in past tense and as flashback. The poem is organized with a beginning, middle, and end. The events are organized into the form of a story. John Updike uses the narrative poem to allow the narrator to tell the story of the death of a dog. Updike uses personification to give the dog human like qualities. Using the narrative poem allows the narrator to tell a story. Personification is used to stress the impact of losing a love one to death. The pronoun “ she” is used to help readers relate to the dog as a family. Naming the dog would not be necessary in helping the readers relate to the impact of losing a love one or even reflect on their own experiences. Even though the poem exhibits a limited amount of rhyme, it is not necessary in a narrative poem or any forms of poetry. The story of the dog’s death is told in an organized matter. The narrator tells the story with a beginning, middle, and end.