

Diagnostic literary analysis – "dogs don't have souls, do they?" and "names of ho..."

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Diagnostic Literary Analysis Review of the poems “ Dogs Don’t Have Souls, Do They? ” Written by Chuck Wells and “ Names of Horses”, by Donald Hall have provoked the question; which is the better Poem? There are many similarities and several contradictions between the two pieces. Both poems address the love and loss of long time, befriended animal. In Wells’ “ Dogs Don’t Have Souls, Do They? ” we are greeted by the inception of a new puppy into the family. The puppy is cuddly, soft and innocent according to the writer. In Halls’ “ Names of Horses” the reader begins his journey learning about the duties and inequities of a loyal family horse.

The horse bares the harsh undertaking of all the household chores, hauling wood for fires and heat, plowing the fields, spreading manure, cutting the grasses, raking the same fields and taking the family to church on Sundays while wearing a cumbersome harness made of leather. The puppy in Wells’ “ Dogs Don’t Have Souls Do They? ” is growing up and learning to protect its owner. The dog waits with anticipation and a wagging tail for its owners return. Verse (20) reads, “ When I sat down to read the paper and watch TV, you would hop on my lap, looking for attention. You never asked for anything more than for me to pat your head so you could go to sleep with your head over my leg. ” This verse gives the reader the warm impression of love, loyalty and friendship.

In “ Names of Horses” verse (15), “ Generation on generation, your neck rubbed the windowsill of the stall, smoothing the wood as the sea smooths glass. In this verse the reader is given an idea that this horse is one of many in long line of family work horses. It implies this is a loyal animal but not really a pet. Both poems move forward with each of the animals getting

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older. Both writings end with the owner having to do the difficult task of putting their animal to rest.

Even though the poems are similar in context they are different in writing style. In Halls' "Names for Horses", the author has created a poem that is well written and flows like a literary work. The words progress and work well with each other. It is well structured but, it lacks emotion. Wells' "Dogs Don't Have Souls, Do They?" is written with warmth and emphasis on the love that the owner has for its' dog. The poem provokes heartfelt sympathy for the owner and his beloved pet.

This poem is more than capable of plucking the heart strings of dog lovers abound. According to the critic Coleridge, prose is "words in their best order," while poetry is "the best words in their best order." "Poetry demands precision. The novelist can get away with less than precise expression from time to time because the story will pull the reader along. The job of the poet is to create a picture in the mind and an emotion in the heart.

Every single word counts. The wrong choice of a word with the wrong connotation or the wrong number of syllables or an unlovely combination of consonant sounds will spoil all. "Wells' "Dogs Don't Have Souls, Do They?" is the better poem because it allows the reader to feel the emotions and empathize with the dog owner.