

The boy at the window

People



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Boy at the Window is a poignant poem written by Richard Wilber. According to a statement made by Wilber, it was inspired by his five year old son being concerned about the possible danger his newly completed snowman was in due to a pending storm. Poetry is often recognized for its ability to evoke strong feelings in the reader and the beautifully innocent nature of Boy at the Window exemplifies this magnificently with skillful use of personification and beautiful use of metaphors.

The story starts with painting a bleak and very serious over tone, seemingly from the overly dramatic perspective of a young boy as told by an omniscient outside perspective. The dire aspect of the snowman's situation being a wholly terrifying experience to him, as seen in lines three and four of the first stanza, " The small boy weeps to hear the wind prepare/ A night of gnashings and enormous moan. " It is apparent that, to this boy, this is a huge menacing storm blowing in and threatening his snowman.

It is further defined in the use of personification to describe the prediction of the storm's violence, gnashing and moaning, both human qualities with tendencies of use in both pain and anger. Gnashing specifically paints an intense image of something being grinded between two forces until destroyed is extremely impacting. The line following in the poem is a description of the snowman's facial aspects as seen by this young man, showing a desperation and betrayal as compared to the biblical story of a God- forsaken Adam looking into Eden for the last time.

It adds a touching depth to the fear that this young man is in grips of and it is representative of the emotional transfer to the snowman in a young boys

mind. The second stanza is written from the snowman's perspective, which as a statement in its self shows personification. I find that the fact that the snowman experiences feelings in a very heartfelt way, showing a warmth of humanity and empathy. These traits come into a clear light in the 13 and 14th lines of the poem: He melts enough to drop from one soft eye/a trickle of the purest rain, a tear.

This shows the depth of humanity portrayed in the snowman and the tasteful use of it within the story. The writing in the poem is elegant and beautiful, using a rhyme scheme and the occasional assonance to keep the flow while not maintaining a strict adherence to a set pattern, throughout the poem there are moments of striking imagery and powerful emotionally gripping perspectives which adds to the innocence of the child's perspective and the humanity shown in the snowman; it is, in short, great writing. Great poetry is able to evoke strong feelings in the reader, making them think beyond the words on a page and take the images painted with the writers craft into their imagination and heart. The book says, " it is more accurate to say that poetry is an evocative response to ordinary life experience (Clungston, 2010)".

I think watching empathy grow in a child's eyes and the personification of a snowman combine to paints a beautiful picture of the innocence of youth and the amazing experiences of watching someone slowly mature and grow before your very eyes. Reference Clugston, R. W. (2010). Journey into literature. San Diego, California: BridgepointEducation, Inc retrieved XX/XX/XX from <https://content.ashford.edu/books/AUENG125>. 10.

2/sections/sec9. 2 Wilbur, Richard (1952), Boy at the Window, Things of this World, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company