

# Work and love essay sample

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The poem “ Hard Work” written by Stephen Dunn reflects on the problem of hard work and personal feelings. The author argues the purpose of hard work and shows the tiny, fragile borders that limit social responsibility and obligation and give the way to individual prerogatives – love, wishes, and desires.

The poem “ Hard Work” is characterized with a deep introspection of the protagonist. The whole mood of the poem is philosophically calm, though somewhat sad and pessimistic. At the end of the poem the author draws to the conclusion, that people have not yet realized the destroying power of “ hard work of boredom” and still the majority can not resist it. The values which can be lost in the fight “ machine versus personality” are – human soul, creative mind, and personal feelings. “ Still does the hard work of boredom, and that person can’t escape, goes there each morning and comes home each night and probably has no opportunity to say who he is.”

The poem “ Hard Work” is written with elaborate, free verse sentences. The structure of the poem much resembles a kind of a short narration. The language of the poem is easy to read, it is not overwhelmed with literary devices which to some extent hide the content and complicate the process of understanding. However, the language of the poem is decorated with some symbols, irony, metonymies, epithets: “ big mechanical eye” stands for artificial intellect and more generally symbolizes a destructing power of routine work; “ righteous hurt” – sneers at the social duties, men fulfil for centuries, which demands food and solicitation as rewards, but at the same time “ makes man separate, lost”. The epithets used by Stephen Dunn are particular in the frames of the issue of sex: “ beautiful” – which refers to

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womanhood, represented in the poem by Barbara Winokur, and “hesitant” concerning men’s social roles, their decision to destroy stereotypes and prejudices worked out by generations.

The poem explores the working experience of a young man, who started to earn his living at the Coke plant. The author gives a brief account of this work using the words: “toting empties”, “large crates”, “the assembly line”. The reader of the poem attempts to imagine this kind of work – it is dull, not creative, but still socially approved and purely men’s. The protagonist should be proud of himself, because “hard work, my father said, was how you became a man”. In this way father taught his son to follow social stereotypes, and to become a bread-winner in the future. The young man learned to fulfil duties peculiar to manhood for generations, though when he came home he felt that his job separated him from the family and made him lost.

However, the statement that hard work is good for society and harmful for an individual does not seem to be fully beyond the question in the poem. Stephen Dunn shows the alternative of a hard work – “friends away at camp”, which was equally desired by the protagonist working at the plant. In August the young man quitted the job and returned home, concluding that “job must be phased out, machine must do it”. Finally, money earned at the plant enabled the young man to achieve benevolence of a beautiful girl and thus to become happy. So, only due to the hard work, love and hopes of the protagonist came true.

All in all the author of the poem argues that there are strong barriers between work and personal feelings in our society. Hard and dull work oppresses human individuality, free will, and does not leave space for love, desires, creativity and thus deprives from a chance for happiness. Evidently, individuals can love and become happy only out of the sphere of work. But, as the poem showed it, only hard work supplies with a factor (money, material well-being) which creates favourable conditions for human happiness and can result in fulfilment of human love. This paradox was revealed in the poem “ Hard Work” by Stephen Dunn.