

The however, every  
individual has  
possibility to keep



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The poem “ The Emperor of Ice Cream” written by Stevens amazes with the variety of readers’ interpretations of the stanzas describing the wake of the pleasure-seeking woman. The poet has chosen the kitchen for the first stanza of his poem since, commonly, this place of the house is the best one to characterize women who spend quite a big part of their time there. In the mentioned stanza the action takes place in the kitchen of the deceased woman for the purpose of depicting her concupiscent way of life by means of the presence of muscular man preparing an ice cream, inappropriate behavior of dissolute people and general lustful atmosphere created by the attendees in the kitchen. From the very first line of the stanza we can see some “ muscular” man, who is “ roller of big cigars”, but not any woman in the kitchen.

The man is the only one to prepare foods for wake of the deceased woman; consequently, man who is cooking is a common thing for the kitchen of this house. His presence at kitchen with cigars and his preparation of an ice cream for the wake shows that woman was not a good housewife, but rather dissolute person entertaining with friends, spending her time in lust and fun, having no time for trivial things and not caring about her future. Definitely, routine life of the deceased took place not in her kitchen, as she belongs to people who do not waste their life and spend it with fun and easiness.

However, such style of life passes away too quickly as an ice cream melts. As a rule, behavior of any attendee in the house depends on hostess’s customs, habits and way of her life. Correspondingly, if wenches wear their usual dresses and “ boys bring flowers in last month’s newspapers”, it means that

is what the dead woman was likely to do, in other words she was used to disrespect and partying at her house.

For example, wenches, probably being the friends of the woman, show their carefree attitude not only to the deceased by not helping to prepare foods, but to the whole life as well, perceiving it as a sweet ice cream – symbol of sensuality and pleasure. An overall atmosphere in the kitchen of the deceased woman is clearly contradicting to the generally accepted mood. In kitchen it is usually cozy, caring and family like, while in the poem the kitchen is the place for lust, flirt and fun.

The phrase “concupiscent curds” precisely expresses physical pleasure and general spirit in the kitchen. Moreover, it is a constituent of the ice cream and consequently, the emperor of ice cream is to make all the attendees pleased though they came to wake. To sum up, a big quantity of symbols used in the poem makes it obvious that the kitchen has been chosen by the poet in order to show lickerish and thoughtless style of the deceased woman which is confirmed and shared by her friends-attendees, their careless behavior and atmosphere which is completely not suitable for wakes.

Thus Wallace Stevens has managed to create a bright example of life which seems to be a melting ice cream; however, every individual has possibility to keep it cool and solid.