

'follower' by heaney
and 'imitations' by
abse essay sample



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Both 'Imitations' and 'Follower' explore the relationship between father and son. They are also both written in the first person narrative. 'Follower' is set in Ireland, where Heaney watches his father care for the land. Heaney grows up in awe of his father and wants to grow up to be just like him. 'Imitations' is a poem about reflecting on the past, looking back over both the good and the bad times. Abse writes about his son growing up and maturing, just as he had done at the same age.

Heaney uses strong imagery, which gives the reader an idea of the rural area that he lived in. His shoulders globed like a full sail strung' This line portrays an image that compared to his father he was small and that his father had broad shoulders which to him resembled the sail of a boat when it was out fully. Heaney also uses aural images by using words such as 'clicking' and 'pluck'. Words such as these portray an image to the reader, they tell us of the strain that the horses were put under while Heaney's father worked the land. By the second stanza Heaney tells us that no one could compare to his father. 'An expert'

This quote shows that all Heaney wants is to be as good as his father. 'Follower' is broken up into six stanzas yet it is like a continuing story.

Heaney tells us of how he would try and keep up with his father, yet he often fell. 'I stumbled in his hob-nailed wake' This line shows how determined Heaney was to show his father that he could keep up with him. Then by the fifth stanza Heaney wanted to grow up, he no longer wanted to be in his father's shadow. However he still wanted to do everything just as his father had done. Heaney wanted independence both literally and metaphorically.

By the sixth stanza there is a role reversal Heaney gains his independence and now it is his father who stumbles and falls behind. ' And will not go away' This final line shows how Heaney's youth has turned into maturity and how his father doesn't want to accept that his son has grown up and no longer needs to follow his lead or that the father is now weak, old and now reliant on his son. Abse begins with his opinion of his son, and how he is now turning into a man. The paradox terms that he uses ' my soft diamond, my deciduous evergreen. ' Describe things opposite to how they are.

They are all based around nature and create images for the reader as just like nature his son keeps changing and maturing, as he is only the tender age of sixteen. By the second stanza Abse doesn't want to let his son grow up, he isn't ready to let go. It's like a cycle going through the seasons, just as he had grown apart from his father his son is becoming more and more independent. Abse feels lonely during the winter season, yet by the third and final stanza he hopes to see his own father again. Memories return to him as he looks out of the window. ' I, his duplicate'

This line shows how he was and still is just like his father. Then the poem finishes with a simile. ' while two white butterflies stumble, held each to each, as if by elastic and pass. ' This line shows that even though Abse and his son have grown apart time will pass and once again he and his son will become close. Both these poems, give an accurate representation of growing up. As when you're younger you have an idol of a hero whom you wish to be like, then as you get older, you become your own person. This is what both sons did. Each gained independence from their father's shadows.

Somewhere along the line you and your parents grow apart or come together again. The fathers in these poems act as the perfect role models for their sons, as in their eyes they cant do anything wrong. Overall both poems use strong imagery to get their meanings across. I felt that I could relate more to Abse's poem as I am of a similar age to his son where all you want is your own space to become independent, even if this means your parents are no longer your heroes. ' Follower', as it was written from the child's point of view shows how important it was to get out of the shadow of your parents and become your own person.