

## **Robert Frost's Poems-A Symbol of Emotion**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Emotion is a word generally occupies in every human beings life in all situations may be happy or sad. This paper describes emotional feelings in two of the poems of Robert Frost namely "Home Burial" and "Acquainted with the Night". In these poems, Robert Frost expressed the feelings that occur naturally in people especially in the traditional life of living where the emotional feelings were revealed by an ordinary wife and a husband.

**Key words:** Transitional poet, Clarity and Simplicity, manifesting, reconciliation, isolation etc.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Robert Frost is a transitional poet. He is a bridge between the old and the new order. There was none commanding poet voice in America by the time Frost was grown up. Though Frost's development as a poet was slow, he won fame and respectable admiration from all corners of the world. "..... every new book published by Frost became a major event in the country and middle of the twentieth century; the New English poet came to occupy a position very much like the one that Walt Whitman envisaged for the ideal poet of the future.

Simplicity is the style of man is suitable for Frost. His poems are so simple that an ordinary reading can understand the impulse and meaning. Precisely his poetry is clear and specific. He doesn't give any room for ambiguity. Clarity and simplicity in Frost shouldn't be mistaken for triviality. There are many who accuse Frost of shallowness of thought. Willingly or unwillingly, one should treat Frost "as a simple bard with a gift for verifying".

## **EMOTIONAL SYMBOLS:**

Communication or the lack thereof, appears as a significant theme in several of Frost's poems, as Frost presents it as the only possible escape from isolation and despair. Unfortunately, Frost also makes it clear that communication is extremely difficult to achieve. In the poem "*Home Burial*", Frost describes two terrible events: The death of a child and the destruction of a marriage.

In this narrative poem, Frost describes a tense conversation between a rural husband and wife whose child has recently died. As the poem opens, the wife is standing at the top of a staircase looking at her child's grave through the window. Her husband, at the bottom of the stairs, does not understand what she is looking at or why she has suddenly become so distressed. The wife resents her husband's obliviousness and attempts to leave the house. The husband begs her to stay and talk to him about her grief; he does not understand why she angry with him for manifesting his grief in a different way. Inconsolably, the wife lashes out at him, convinced of his apathy towards their dead child. The husband mildly accepts her anger, but the rift between them remains. She leaves the house as he angrily threatens to drag her back by force.

In their first discussion of this traumatic event, readers learn that the child was buried in the yard by the father during the New England winter, while the mother watched from a window in the staircase landing, stunned by her husband's steadfast attendance to the task. His energy and "carelessness" at a time when she was shaken and immobilized by grief was

incomprehensible and infuriating. The husband, meanwhile, has grieved in a different way, reconciling the death of his child to fate and the caprices of nature.

When the poem opens, their separate interpretations and feelings finally are expressed, and each is surprised by what the other says. The husband speaks from the bottom of the stairs, she from a step just above the landing. Significantly, they don't come together on the architectural bridge and, when the poem concludes; readers are not assured that this marriage will regain the closeness it might have had prior to the child's death. The highly dramatic poem underscores the impact of loss and the need for communication or discussion of loss by those involved. When no reconciliation occurs, the loss intensifies to become destructive.

The exchange between the couple emphasizes what happens when difficulties strain relationships. Readers often sense a biographical reference, knowing that Frost lost a child and may have experienced a similar shift in relationship with his wife. For medical professionals, the story concerns the internal tensions that may be suppressed in physician visits, the kind of tensions that may need to be addressed if mental and physical wellnesses are to be restored.

This poem describes two tragedies: first, the death of a young child, and second, the death of a marriage. As such, the title "Home Burial" can be read as a tragic double entendre. Although the death of the child is the catalyst of the couple's problems, the larger conflict that destroys the marriage is the couple's inability to communicate with one another. Both characters feel grief at the loss of the child, but neither is able to understand the way that their partner chooses to express their sorrow.

The setting of the poem – a staircase with a door at the bottom and a window at the top – automatically sets up the relationship between the characters. The wife stands at the top of the stairs, directly in front of the window overlooking the graveyard, while the husband stands at the bottom of the stairs, looking up at her. While the couple shares the tragedy of their child's death, they are in conflicting positions in terms of dealing with their grief.

With her position closest to the window, the wife is clearly still struggling with her grief over the loss of her baby. Incapable of moving on at this point in her life, the wife defines her identity in terms of the loss and would rather grieve for the rest of her life than grieve as a sort of pretense. The husband has dealt with his sorrow more successfully, as evidence by his position at the bottom of the staircase, close to the door and the outside

world. As a farmer, the husband is more accepting of the natural cycle of life and death in general, but also chooses to grieve in a more physical manner: by digging the grave for his child. Ironically, the husband's expression of his grief is completely misunderstood by the wife; she views his behavior as a sign of his callous apathy.

Ultimately, each character is isolated from the other at opposite ends of the staircase. In order for the marriage to succeed, each character must travel an equal distance up or down the staircase in order to meet the other. The husband attempts to empathize with his wife, moving up the staircase toward her and essentially moving backward in his own journey towards acceptance of his child's death. Even so, the wife is unable to empathize with her husband and only moves down the staircase after he has already left his position at the foot.

When the wife moves down the staircase, she assumes the upper hand in the power struggle between the two by ensuring that her husband cannot move between her and the door and stop her from leaving. Without the physical capacity to keep her from leaving, the husband must attempt to convince her to stay through communication – something that, as the poem demonstrates, has been largely unsuccessful throughout their marriage. Frost highlights this inability to communicate by writing the poem in free verse dialogue; each character speaks clearly to the reader, but neither is able to understand the other.

Frost explores a similar theme in his poem "*Acquainted with the Night*". In which, the narrator is unable to pull himself out of his depression because he cannot bring himself even to make eye contact with those around him. In each of these cases, the reader is left with the knowledge that communication could have saved the characters from their isolation. Yet, because of an unwillingness to take the steps necessary to create a relationship with another person, the characters are doomed.

In this poem, the narrator describes his loneliness as he walks in the isolated city streets at night. He has walked beyond the city limits and along every city lane, but has never found anything to comfort him in his depression. Even when he makes contact with another person (such as the watchman), the narrator is unwilling to express his feelings because he knows that no one will understand him. At one point he hears a cry from a nearby street, but realizes that it is not meant for him; no one is waiting for him. He looks up at the moon in the sky and acknowledges that time has no meaning for him because his isolation is unending.

**CONCLUSION:**

These poems highlights the writer's inability to communicate by writing the poem in free verse dialogue, and commonly understood to be a description of his experiences of depression. The most crucial element of his depression is his complete isolation. Frost adds to the uncertainty inherent in the poem by incorporating the present perfect tense, which is used to describe something from the recent past, as well as something from the past that is still ongoing in the present.

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