

Types of Poetry

Some of the most common types of poetry are: **Descriptive**, **Reflective**, **Narrative**, **the Lyric**, and **the Sonnet**. The ability to distinguish between these types is important as it will help to understand more readily what a poet's intentions are.

1. Descriptive

Poems which describe people or experiences, scenes or objects.

Winter by William Shakespeare

The General Meaning

The poem is a song to criticize the winter season but the poem does not present direct and strong criticism. When winter comes, it brings several influences. Here we have an early depiction of what winter would have meant to peasants in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The Detailed Meaning

According to the poem, when winter comes it brings several influences, the walls are covered with ice, everything including human life gets influenced by the cold and due to extreme cold, each phenomenon comes to freeze. To prevent excessive cold, Dick blows his nail and Tom Carries fire logs into the house. Milk freezes as soon as it is poured into the pail. The blood of living creatures comes to freeze. The snow has covered the way and made it muddy. The staring owl sings at night while Joan is keeling kitchen pots.

Priests are unable to deliver his preaching due to his old age and coldness. Birds sit for brooding into their nests to skip away from the cold and due to heavy cold Marian's nose becomes red and raw. These all are the symptoms of the winter season mentioned in the poem that shows the arrival of the winter season. All people used to sit around the fire-place and the sounds of the roasted crabs could be heard. They ate and drank to prevent the coldness of the winter season. Through all these images, we can notice winter is not pleasant in England.

The Poet's Intention

In the poem, the poet shows clearly his dislike towards the winter season in England. William Shakespeare intends to describe that everyone has a job to do which they perform with care, diligence and dignity.

2. Reflective

Thoughtful poems often containing a great deal of description which the poet comments on or from which he draws conclusions. Sometimes these conclusions are directly stated; at other times implied.

An Irish Airman Foresees his Death by W. B. Yeats

The General Meaning

The speaker argues that the outcome of the war is ultimately meaningless for his small community in western Ireland, and that he feels no hatred towards his enemies nor love for the British. He pursues the dangerous pleasure of airborne combat not out of duty or patriotism, and is instead driven only by a "lonely impulse of delight."

The Detailed Meaning

True, the title reveals that the speaker is an Irish Airman, but the poem itself is slow to disclose this information. The speaker seeks to first identify with the reader by expressing his own knowledge that he will die. Then, the speaker claims that he is fighting people, even though he does not hate them. He also says that he is guarding people, even though he does not love them. This reveals that he is fighting in a war, protecting a land he does not love, and fighting people he does not hate. The reader can then conclude that the speaker is fighting in the air, and is certain of his death.

The speaker acknowledges that his people, the Irish people, could not be made better or worse by the loss or victory of the war. He implies that he is fighting in a war that is not his own. While most would go to war for the love of their country, or hatred for the enemy, this speaker has already ruled out both of those reasons for his going to war voluntarily. He claims that there was no law forcing him to go. Neither did he feel any duty to fight. He was not interested in "cheering crowds" or the honor and publicity that may have come with fighting. Rather, he claims that it was "a lonely impulse of delight" which "drove" him to enlist in the air force.

The Poet's Intention

In essence, the speaker argues that everything is meaningless. If his life is short anyway, and everything seems meaningless, then dying for a cause would give his life more meaning than it had before. Therefore, he risks having a shorter life in order to have a more meaningful life. This is the Airman's way of embracing his death in his final moments.

3. Narrative

Poems which tell a story. They tend to be longer than other types of poetry but it is comparatively easy to recognize the poet's intention.

Lord Randal by Anonymous

The General Meaning

As are all traditional ballads, "Lord Randal" is a narrative song—a song that tells a story. *Lord Randal* tells of a man who has been poisoned by his lover. It does not give any details about the background incident; in this case, the listener does not know why Lord Randal has been poisoned.

The Detailed Meaning

The first stanza introduces the main character, the nobleman Lord Randal. The listener also learns that he is "handsome" and "young." Lord Randal's mother asks him where he has been, and he answers that he has been hunting in the forest; he says he is tired, and he requests that she ready his bed for him because he would like to lie down.

As if she suspects that her son has been doing something other than hunting, Lord Randal's mother asks him who gave him his dinner. He answers that he dined with his "true love" in the forest and repeats his complaint of tiredness and request that his bed be readied for him. The idea of dining with his sweetheart on a hunting trip raises the first suspicion that something out of the ordinary has happened to Lord Randal.

The mother continues her questioning, asking Lord Randal what he received from his sweetheart. He answers that he ate fried eels that she gave him. Once again, Lord Randal concludes his answer with his complaint and request. At this third repetition, it seems more urgent that Lord Randal be given a place to rest.

Lord Randal's mother asks him what happened to his hounds. He tells her that they became bloated and died, and then, once again, he says that he is tired and wants to lie down. The pieces of the story begin to come together—Lord Randal's pets died with symptoms of poisoning after eating the same food that Lord Randal ate. His statement that the hunting tired him and his request for a bed, now repeated for the fifth time, suggest his own illness.

The mother finally states her suspicion that Lord Randal has been poisoned. He confirms her belief, and the last line changes. Lord Randal no longer claims that he is tired from hunting; he now asserts that he is "sick at heart," implying that he has been hurt by his "true love." The listener now knows the bed will be Lord Randal's deathbed. The association of the pain of a broken heart and the deathbed establish this ballad as one that speaks of the tragedy of love.

The Poet's Intention

The poem shows clearly the tender relationship between a mother and her son and how a person sometimes may be betrayed by another person, a lover in this case.

4. The Lyric

Usually a short poem like a song which is usually the expression of a mood or feeling.

To –by Percy Bysshe Shelley

The General Meaning

Comparing love to other beautiful experiences such as listening to music and smelling "sweet violets," the poem's speaker insists that even after their "belovèd" is "gone," the love that they shared will live on in the speaker's memory.

The Detailed Meaning

The poem contrasts a human's death to the fading of music because music "vibrates" and tends to be played even after play is finished by the artist. This also corresponds this with the flowers' persistent texture, long once they are gone. The stanza appears to be explaining the funeral ceremony and the cycle of remembrance.

Shelley coined the word "vibrate" to explain the music and what it does in certain conditions. Shelley tries to invoke the idea that the echo will not only vanish, that when one disappears, it does not actually fail to function, but instead remains in remembrance. The poem

further explains how although the flowers have “sickened”, they nevertheless work in remembrance. Shelley uses the term “sweet violets” that generates a good atmosphere about these flowers and adds the meaning to the poem.

The poem comes to an end with the idea of the immortality of man and of nature. The poem notes out, though, that the rose is gone. This tells everyone that the deceased was like a rose to Shelley. Shelley verifies that the deceased was once stunning and vibrant, to display the effect of their absence. Shelley chooses to indicate rose leaves instead of the whole because it implies that although the human body can no longer be the soul, even like the leaves stay. The ‘Are heaped for the beloved’s bed’, indicating they are collated and appears to be seen.

The Poet’s Intention

Shelley reflects on death through the medium of flowers and music, a typical characteristic of romantic poetry. Even if you lose a dear person, his memory lingers in the mind.

5. The Sonnet

A poem of fourteen lines which follows a very strict rhyme pattern. It is usually divided into two parts: the ‘octave’ (the first eight lines), and the ‘sestet’ (the last six lines). The octave and the sestet are separated by a break in thought: a general statement made in the octave is illustrated or amplified in the sestet. Sonnets tend to be difficult because a great deal of meaning is often conveyed in a few lines.

On the Grasshopper and Cricket by John Keats

The General Meaning

As one of the main figures of the Romantic Movement, John Keats portrayed the beauty of nature and its capacity to bring joy in his poems. ‘*On the Grasshopper and Cricket*’ praises the continuous beauty of nature by taking into account the song of two particular insects, the grasshopper, and the cricket.

The Detailed Meaning

The poem has fourteen lines and it can be divided into one octave and one sestet, following the Petrarchan sonnet form. It has an ABBA rhyme scheme. The use of this form can be associated with Keats’s belief regarding love and nature and how they are both related to each other. According to the poet, nature offers love and joy and the human response should correspond to

that fondness. Furthermore, the main theme in '*On the Grasshopper and Cricket*' is nature and its eternal delight and its persistent presence.

The poetic voice of the earth never dies. Even when all the birds are hiding from the sun in the cool shade of the trees, one voice still sings all through the hedges and the freshly mowed fields. That voice belongs to the grasshopper. He is a champion of summer's pleasures, and he is never tired of singing. When he is ready to rest, he just kicks back in the shade of a weed.

The poetic voice of the earth never ends. On a lonely winter night, when the whole world is silent beneath the frost, the cricket still sings from beside the stove, its music always feeling warmer and warmer. To a person daydreaming by the stove, the cricket's voice sounds a lot like the grasshopper's in the summery hills.

The Poet's Intention

The poet wants to represent the vitality and joyous mood of nature even in the boiling hot of summer and in bleak and bitter cold of winter. The sonnet is all about how the grasshopper and the cricket carry on with the endless song of the earth.