



# Poetry Analysis Essay Examples

Ballad of Birmingham is the author of the poem that revolves around a little girl who would like to go downtown to take part in a freedom protest. Her mother, however, says that she cannot go because of the dangerous conditions outside. Her mother instead tells her to go to church despite the little girl's constant explanations that she would not be alone. Defeated and in a show of respect for her mother, the little girl gets dressed and goes to church. Her mother is contented that she would be fine at the church. Sooner her mother hears of an explosion that sets her racing downtown in search of her daughter. Unfortunately, she finds her daughter's dress and shoes in the piles and rubbles. She is left wondering where her daughter is.

The author employs the use of imagery in most parts of the poem to trigger the emotions of the readers concerning the innocence of the little girl and the gravity of the explosion. The imagery serves to create a memory in the readers' minds that are left forming the images after reading the whole poem.

The first use of imagery occurs in the second stanza, second and third lines. The little girl's mother describes the nature of the streets which are, in her opinion dangerous for a little girl's life "...dogs are fierce and wild." The little girl's mother is worried that the girl could lose her life to the guns, or get arrested as a result of the march for freedom "...and clubs and hoses, guns and jails." The imagery used in the third line depicts how the government through the police dealt with protesters. The line shows that the police would use clubs, hoses, and guns to thwart the protests. The police also could arrest the protesters and take them to jail. The readers thus form the image of how the police dealt with the protesters that eventually appeals to their emotions.

Another instance of imagery is in the fifth stanza, particularly for emotive purposes. The poet writes that the little girl "...bathed rose petal sweet" to display the girl as young and innocent. Although the previous stanzas portray the little girl as mature, the quotation reminds the reader that the girl is little and innocent, vulnerable to march for freedom. The quotation moreover portrays the little girl as delicate and defenseless against the danger and evil that lie outside. The little girl also has "... drawn white gloves on her small brown hands" to display more innocence. The little girl's defencelessness and vulnerability add emotion to the poem.

Finally, another instance of imagery is found in the sixth stanza. We are told that the little girl's mother's eye "...grew wet and wild, as she raced through the streets of Birmingham" after hearing the explosion. Instantly the reader understands the tension that befalls the mother because of her conclusion of her daughter's death. The reader forms the image of the mother, with her eyes wet and wild. The line appeals to the readers' emotions in addition to giving them the memory of the traumatic events that followed the explosion. The poet moreover describes how the mother searched for her daughter in the rubbles frenetically "...through bits of glass and brick." In a moment the reader forms the image of the effects of the explosion thus concluding that the girl has lost her life.

The poet effectively employs the use of imagery to appeal to the memory and emotions of the readers. The reader has deliberately chosen and used descriptive words to present the imagery that instantly enables the reader to form the pictures with relative ease.



# Poetry Analysis Essay

## Poetry Analysis

In the poem "One Boy Told Me" by Naomi Nye, the poet exudes sensitivity, compassion and great heart. Nye touches on her diverse personal experiences that form the backbone of the poem. It is very interesting the way she brings out wide-range emotions of different persons worldwide in her well-composed verses in the poem. In the topics and themes that Nye explores in the poem, one can note her delicate and observant eye that allows calm to be exhibited in situations of loss, longing, and sadness. Through location of a sense of normalcy and permanence, she is able to confront the adverse state of the world. Rather than merely hoping to grab a glimpse of enlightenment in the poem, the poet embraces the light.

In the poem, there are many lines that give us voices of children. This may be highly attributed to the many years that Nye has taught poems in schools. For example, "Don't talk big to me, Don't ever say "purpose" again, I'm carrying my box of faces, but tomorrow's in BOLDFACE, Yesterday's faded, and let's throw the word out". These lines are said to the persona by the boy and they are not in their quirky logic. Nye has been able to bring into light the significance of childish phrasings and from the several lines stated it is possible to see the ingenuity in them. Some lines are funny and wonderful at the same time like, "Boy and Mom at the Nutcracker Ballet".

Figurative techniques, as well as imagery, have been used by the Nye. The title of the poem "One Boy Told Me" provides a vivid picture that there was a boy who was telling someone. The young boy's image is clearly supported by the usage of very short syntax in the verse. It is also notable that Nye has a very impressive style of writing because in most cases she alternates between statements and questions. For example, "What does minus mean?" followed by "I never want to minus you." It goes without saying that the poem in more than two cases has used rhetorical

questions such as “What does minus mean?” Emotional imagery has also been extensively utilized as one can see the curious young boy in the poem asking those questions and also showing a high level of naivety.

The poem has got elements of the poet autobiography that makes it very rich in information as well as easy to understand for example the three lines, “when I grow up my old names, where we live now and will live in the house” and also the title itself points out to that same idea. It is furthermore interesting the way Nye is attentive to person’s unedited, unadorned words. For example, Nye recounts, “A little girl said to me, ‘Poetry has been eating all my problems.’” There also times that Nye has given the most unexpected characters such as young boy, a stone, a river, and a cat voices. She helps celebrate the unnoticed people and small objects by giving them a voice.

One can clearly place the authenticity of the poem from the sincere voices in the poem. This poem is a “found poem” with no made up verses. This is because the poem entails words that Nye’s son said to her when he was a young boy of about two years. Nye has a special ability to pick only the words and lines that best reflect her stance on issues. She has maintained the poetic tone as well as incorporating ideas that are common to persons worldwide. Most people are able to associate with “One Boy Told Me” poem as a young person in the way that one uniquely described the world. It is possible to reconnect with your young self as well as the lost poet inside a person.

In the poem, there are not many quotes that cannot be understood and Nye adds humor to her work as well. Some verses are mysterious and others requiring one to reflect on it for some time to enable the reader grasps the entire meaning it holds. For example, “My tongue is the car wash, for the spoon.” Nye expresses the entire emotion of the poem in unexpected and explicit ways of liveliness, celebration and the love between a child and a parent.

Humor in most of the quotes is clearly utilized and thus enabling the reader to understand the verses easily. In the poem, there are verses that seem to be mysterious and thus the reader needs time to reflect on them. The poet provides a good mood which is a celebratory one in that the

emotion of the entire poem is liveliness and love. "One Boy Told Me" is one of the many poems that Nye has contributed to literature. However, it is no different from the others where Nye attempts to create a meaningful life and grasps its meaning for the readers. This particular poem is one that the human lives are defined by metaphors.



## **‘Winter Solstice’ by Hilda Morley**

Hilda Morley’s ‘Winter Solstice’ is an overt poem primarily aimed at describing a winter solstice. Correspondingly, the author has dotted the poem with descriptive words meant to create a mental picture of a solstice in a reader. In actual sense, winter solstice is a descriptive term for the shortest day and longest night of a year. In the poem, Morley (1983) elaborately expresses intricate emotions that enliven to actual meaning of a winter solstice in a reader. Figuratively, the author, through the poem, paints the picture of time of the year (or a season) when a person ought to re-evaluate the whole reason for their existence including such associated elements as fear, concerns, successes, sadness, happiness, and even sadness. From the author’s presupposed perspective, it suffices to say that the cold and long distance between the earth, sun’s light, and the moon will always be larger than life in its entirety. In this respect, it is clear that despite the direction of the analysis (figurative or actual), the elements of the poem and the overall meaning will remain more or less similar. The use of various literary elements and poetic devices ensures that ‘Winter Solstice’ is both entertaining and informative. The following discussion delves deep into the poem in a bid to deconstruct its general structure and unearth the literary devices and elements therein.

Perhaps the most striking feature of this poem is its unique structure and layout. According to Conniff (1993) the entire poem is more of a free verse that ignores the most basic of poetic rules and standards. In particular, it does not follow any definite rhyme scheme or pattern of syllables, making the overall rhythm irregular and unpredictable. While that may look like a mere preference of the author, it could figuratively signify the mood and nature of a winter solstice. It is during this time that people take a time off their busy schedules, free from the social rules, regulations, and standards, to relax and rethink their lives. As such, just like the

structure of the poem, everyone ought to remain 'free' in a way. Hilda Morley's 'Winter Solstice' is truly transcendental in nature.

In spite of the irregularity of the poem, it entails a variety of stylistic devices including repetition, alliteration, and personification among others. In the first line for instance, 'Cold Night Crosses' has two consonants repeated at the beginning of the three words consecutively following each other which exemplifies alliteration. Moreover, 'cold night,' though inanimate, has been given a human or animate characteristic of 'crossing.' Finally, the word 'very' and the phrase 'it is... ' have been repeated throughout the poem.

Aside from the stylistic devices, the poem generally signifies the birth of the sun given that a winter solstice happens on a day of the year that is the darkest. On this note, the sun could be interpreted to signify light (a brighter future or the possibilities). Extrapolating the poem gives a notion that it alludes to the start of a new life or a new beginning after a lost hope. The words '(the dance unmoving)' are particularly special to the poem since they denote, figuratively, that the past troubles no longer matter; it is the future that and its prospects that do. Despite the deeply inscribed teachings from the poem, the author has managed to craftily attain the balance between information and entertainment that has always proven to be an uphill task for most poets. In conclusion, the poem has both overt and covert meanings. Nonetheless, the meaning remains similar as brought out by the wide spectrum of stylistic devices and structure used in the poem.

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Conniff, B. (1993). Reconsidering Black Mountain: The Poetry of Hilda Morley. *American Literature*, 65(1), 117-130.

Morley, H. (1983). 'Winter Solstice' in *To Hold in My Hand: Selected Poems, 1955-1983*. Rhinebeck, NY: Sheep Meadow Press.