

Date 3 / 8 PV Log: (circle one) Poem / Movie / Picture / Lyric

Title "Acquainted with the Night"

Author / Director / Robert Frost

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

I found this poem while browsing Shmoop looking for poems to log, and, of course, I could not pass up another great work of Robert Frost.

Content / CD / Summary / Precis (Say? "Plot? Setting/Situation? Key lines/phrases scenes, etc?)

"Acquainted with the Night" begins with the speaker telling the reader of all the places he has walked at night. For example, the speaker has "outwalked the furthest city light." and has "looked down the saddest city lane" many a time at night when it is dark outside. The speaker has also walked by a watchman, but, instead of conversing within the man, decides to "drop his eyes" so that he wouldn't have to explain to him why he was out in the first place. The speaker has "stood still and stopped the sound of feet" in order to try and hear a voice, falsely hoping that it was calling him. Finally, the speaker looks up at the moon, which tells the time "neither wrong nor right."

Content / CM / Meaning? / Theme(s)?

The main themes of this poem are loneliness and depression. Although the speaker of the poem is acquainted with the night, his surroundings are all very distant and removed from himself, and he does not seem to have any friends or family. He avoids the only other human in the photo, the watchman, and he becomes even further lonely and isolated when he hears the voice of someone that is not for him. Not only does the speaker appear and seem lonely, but he also is made out to be quite depressed and miserable, as if he has done something wrong in his life. When he fails to explain to the watchman the reason behind his presence in the night, it is almost as if he is ashamed of his inner darkness that prevents him from being a conformist and becoming acquainted with the day rather than the night. His unwillingness to explain proves that he is shameful of or hiding something that he simply does not want to bring to the surface or remember. Overall, in this poem Frost conveys a lonesome feeling of isolation through the speaker, who has done something awful in life and is ashamed of it. Regardless of his wrongdoing, however, he still has hope that he can overcome his dark side.

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

"Acquainted with the Night" is written in terza rima, a form first used by Dante Alighieri in *The Divine Comedy*. The poem consists of four stanzas, the first three consisting of three lines each and the last one consisting of two lines. Each of the stanzas is linked together by a rhyme scheme that occurs throughout the entire poem. The first stanza is ABA, the second is BCB, the third is CDC, and the last two lines are DD. Symbolically, the physical distance that the speaker experiences in relation to other things directly corresponds with his psychological distance, as he feels disconnected and far away from everyone else. The dark in the poem is a metaphor for depression and loneliness, yet the light of the moon that still reaches humanity is a symbol of hope.

Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections / Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

"Acquainted with the Night" almost brings me back to my English IXL roots and reminds me of the *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson in some interesting, yet difficult way to describe. The imagery of the man walking everywhere and growing accustomed to the workings of the night somehow stimulates me to think of the dark streets of London in the creepy, mysterious, and duplicitous atmosphere that Stevenson creates with his page-turning thriller novel. Whatever it be, I actually quite frankly enjoy "Acquainted with the Night" because of its almost obscure and ominous setting, mood, and tone. The poem may be depressing and gloomy, but it also emits a thrilling and mysterious environment that is both attention grabbing and relatable. Moreover, a variety of literary works, such as *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare and *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, have depicted characters that can compare to the speaker of this poem. For example, both Macbeth and Victor Frankenstein become so appalled with their horrendous deeds (murder of a king and creation of a horrendous monster, respectively) that they too become acquainted with the night because they lose sleep worrying and overly stressing about their acts, and it is probably fair to say that most people, at some point in their lives, have lost sleep contemplating a bad decision or something that they did wrong. The major thing that stands out as poetic in this poem, however, is the fact that the guy sees hope in his future. Although he is currently alone and depressed, the speaker accepts his state of existence and desires better for himself, knowing that there is ultimately hope for change as long as he acknowledges and confronts the reality of his situation rather than denying his problems and inhibitions.

over (do not mix logs; e.g., no poem log in front, and movie log on back)