

Date 2 / 12 PV Log: (circle one) Poem / Movie / Picture / Lyric

Title "Around the Bend"

Author / Director / Marvin Hass

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

I was given this poem by Mr. Shakely to look at and examine for homework one night, and to draw any comparisons with another poem entitled "Gone from My Sight." The poem was found on a website called "Colorado Poets Center."

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

"Around the Bend" describes the thoughts of a speaker, as he or she contemplates about "what's up around the bend." This bend is described as something physical such as "a highway with no end;" nevertheless, it more closely relates to all human endeavors and even just life itself. The speaker then goes on to describe various instances or circumstances that spur on human curiosity and keep them pursuing their dreams, namely, what lies beyond be on the bend. For example, people in a forest who may hear a distant sound or calling, such as that of a bird, "must...know the song" until "the answers heard, / that will satisfy this searching urge." Finally, the speaker realizes that the creator of human existence, whatever it may be, has left them in such ambiguity, and that their search for a purpose or meaning to life may never be satisfied "until [they] meet [their] maker."

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

"Around the Bend" is about human curiosity, inquisition, and a search for a meaning or purpose to life. Somewhere along the continuum of time from the beginning of existence all the way up until the present, humans have somehow managed to come into existence by means of a series of improbable yet seemingly intentional events, suggesting that their presence must be of some purpose, of some greater reason than to just live. The discovery of this purpose, along with its obligations, roles, and responsibilities, has severely plagued human curiosity, provoking the creation of overly ambitious pursuits of knowledge. Human intellect is inclined to search for some sort of rationalization for everything that occurs in the universe, and so the ambiguity brought about by human existence leaves people feeling restless and desiring more in the sense that their lives may be completely worthless and insignificant in the bigger picture of things. Humans will seemingly never be satisfied until they come to better know and understand why they exist, such as whether there is a life after death, around the bend.

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

"Around the Bend" consists of eight stanzas of which are consistently alternating in a two line then four line fashion. Most stanzas consist of lines that rhyme with only a few exceptions, and the rhymes are not all exact and specific. The place discussed in the poem, a literal and physical area that always seems to escape the realms of human observation, appears to be a metaphor for heaven, an ultimate finale of a person's existence on earth. The idea that this heaven exists drives people to be their best selves and to live at their maximum potential, so it is important the idea or belief exists and persists.

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

"Around the Bend" is a great, promising poem that helps to bring clarity to human life on earth. Not only does it try to alleviate some of the doubts and uncertainties humans often face on an everyday basis, but it also gives hope and inspiration to keep pursuing and aspiring and to never give up. This desire and willingness to search and find a meaning or justification to human existence is evident in Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* as well as Walt Whitman's poem "A Noiseless Patient Spider." Both Victor Frankenstein and Robert Walton in *Frankenstein* have been entirely consumed by their inner desires and passions to profoundly and considerably contribute to society, as if their amplified versions of zealotry are used as means to justify their own existences. Just like the spider in "A Noiseless Patient Spider" "launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself" persistently in order to achieve an eventual state of satisfaction and fulfillment, Frankenstein's and Walton's determined attempts at expanding beyond the conventional horizons of humanity predominantly reflect both of their yearnings for a meaning to life (1). Still, however, an ultimate reason for humans to persist, if any, remains concealed and hidden from human capacity and intellect, making striving at one's maximum potential appear to be the only motivation for the perpetuation of mankind. Such a dismal outlook is somewhat apparent in this poem; nevertheless, the poem is also optimistic and poetic in a sense because, although a goal or motive to live may be not comprehensible, "Around the Bend" ultimately presents life as a continuous, enduring marathon with a purpose at the heart, a reality to never give up on even in times of doubt and unsureness. "Around the Bend" pushes people to keep on going and to keep on striving because, in the end, it will ultimately all work out for the best.

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