**Hamatreya**

 [**Ralph Waldo Emerson**](https://poets.org/poet/ralph-waldo-emerson)

Emerson was fascinated with the Hindu scriptures and mostly the sacred Vedas. This poem, ‘Hamatreya’, is based on a passage of the Vishnu Purana. The title of the poem is a shortened form of “Hail Maitraya”. Here, the poet records what the sage named Parashara taught his disciple Maitreya in response to the disciple’s query regarding the real worth of earthly possessions. The poet talks about the “Earth-Song” along with the story of a few landowners to clarify what the sage told his disciple about the real meaning of life.

There are three sections in the poem. In the first section, the poet talks about some men namely Bulkeley, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Meriam, and Flint who are boastful about their wealth and well-being. But they are unaware of their mortality. In the second section, the “Earth-Song”, the poet shares what earth thinks about those men. Earth is rather in a [sarcastic](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/sarcasm/) [mood](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/mood/) about their foolishness. In the last section, the poetic [persona](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/persona/) shares his reaction after hearing the story of those men and the song of the earth. In that last [stanza](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/stanza/), it is the poet who presents his realization.

**Meaning**

‘Hamatreya’ is a combination of two Sanskrit words. One is “Hey” and another is “Maitreya”. In Sanskrit, “Hey” is an interjection that is used while a person calls someone by his or her name. It is the same as the English expression, “O Maitreya!” From the title of the poem, one gets a hint that this poem deals with someone named Maitreya. As it is mentioned earlier, this poem is based on the [conversation](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/dialogue/) between the sage Parashara and his disciple Maitreya. So, here, Emerson records the guidance of Parashara to Maitreya in a story-like manner.

 **Structure**

This poem consists of three sections. In the first section, there are three [stanzas](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/stanza/). Here, the poet presents the themes of greed and mortality. In the next section, named the “Earth-Song”, the poet presents what the earth told to the [speaker](https://poemanalysis.com/diction/speaker-in-poetry/). In the last stanza of the poem, one can find the realization of the speaker after listening to the song. Moreover, it is a [free verse](https://poemanalysis.com/poetic-form/free-verse/) that doesn’t have any specific [rhyme scheme](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/rhyme-scheme/). In the “Earth-Song”, there are short lines, packed with internal [rhythm](https://poemanalysis.com/poetic-meter/rhythm/). Apart from that, the overall poem doesn’t contain any regular metrical pattern.

**Literary Devices**

There are several literary devices in this poem by Emerson, ‘Hamatreya’. There is [asyndeton](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/asyndeton/) in the first line and third line of the first stanza. The poet uses [personification](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/personification/) in this line, “How graceful climb those shadows on my hill!” Thereafter, the second stanza begins with a [rhetorical question](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/rhetorical-question/). There is a [metaphor](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/metaphor/) in “their furrows plough.” Here, the poet compares furrows in farmland to the graves. There is a palilogy in the [repetition](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/repetition/) of the word “proud” in the fourth line of this stanza. This section also contains [irony](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/irony/).

In the “Earth-Song”, one can find an [antithesis](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/antithesis/) in the beginning. There is a [simile](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/simile/) in the line, “Fled like the flood’s foam.” In “flood’s foam” there is an [alliteration](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/alliteration/) of the “f” sound. This song ends on an interrogative note, ironically. Lastly, the [speaker of the poem](https://poemanalysis.com/diction/speaker-in-poetry/) uses a simile and refers to the “chill of the grave” that puts an end toAnalysis, Stanza by Stanza

**Stanza One**

Bulkeley, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Meriam, Flint,

Possessed the land which rendered to their toil

Hay, corn, roots, hemp, flax, apples, wool, and wood.

Each of these landlords walked amidst his farm,

Saying, “’Tis mine, my children’s and my name’s.

How sweet the west wind sounds in my own trees!

How graceful climb those shadows on my hill!

I fancy these pure waters and the flags

Know me, as does my dog: we sympathize;

And, I affirm, my actions smack of the soil.”

 one’s lust. In the first stanza of ‘Hamatreya’, the omniscient speaker of the poem refers to Bulkeley, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Meriam, and Flint who possessed lands rendered to their toil. There those men produced hay, corn, roots, hemp, flax, apples, wool, and wood. Each of these landlords while walking amidst their farms, expressed their authority over their lands. One of them said by referring to his land that the land belonged to him and his children.

Thereafter, he referred to the west wind and told the speaker to hear the sound the west wind made in his trees. Ironically, those were not his trees. Those belonged to nature. However, he felt pleased to see the shadows on his hill. It seemed to him that the shadows gracefully wandered on the hill. He fancied the pure waters and the flags. His property to him was like a dog to his master, faithful and submissive. In reality, it was just the opposite. At last, the speaker said in a confident [tone](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/tone/) that his actions “smack of the soil.” It is a reference to the person’s deep relationship with his property.

**Stanza Two**

**Lines 11–16**

Where are these men? Asleep beneath their grounds:

And strangers, fond as they, their furrows plough.

Earth laughs in flowers, to see her boastful boys

Earth-proud, proud of the earth which is not theirs;

Who steer the plough, but cannot steer their feet

Clear of the grave.

In the second stanza of the poem, the speaker asks where those men are. Once they said they owned the land but now they are beneath their grounds. Strangers like them plowed the furrows, a [metaphorical](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/metaphor/) reference to their graves, to bury them. Thereafter, the poet presents the [perspective](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/perspective/) of the earth. According to him, earth laughs at the boastful [attitude](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/attitude/) of her “Earth-proud” boys. They were, once, proud of the earth which is not theirs now. It was as free then as it is now. It is not much different that can be seen on earth. The only difference is those men are no more.

Thereafter, the poet ironically says, human beings can steer their plow but they cannot steer their feet, clear of the grave. In this way, the poet introduces the theme of mortality in this section.

**Lines 17–24**

They added ridge to valley, brook to pond,

And sighed for all that bounded their domain;

“This suits me for a pasture; that’s my park;

We must have clay, lime, gravel, granite-ledge,

And misty lowland, where to go for peat.

The land is well,—lies fairly to the south.

’Tis good, when you have crossed the sea and back,

To find the sitfast acres where you left them.”

In this section of the second stanza, the poet says that humans created ridge to valley, brook to pond, and thought to redesign nature for the sake of their inner pleasure. Whatsoever, they spent the most of their lives thinking about useless matters such as which part of land best suited for a pasture or a park, where they could find clay, lime, gravel, granite-ledge, and misty lowland, and where they could go for peat.

Moreover, they desired to own the lands which were well-maintained and faced a specific direction. One of them said, “It is good when you have crossed the sea and back to find the sitfast acres where you left them.” The last few lines of this section throw light on the possessive nature of humankind.

**Stanza Three**

Ah! the hot owner sees not Death, who adds

Him to his land, a lump of mould the more.

Hear what the Earth say:—

In this stanza of ‘Hamatreya’, the poet says that the “hot owner” cannot see “Death”. Death adds him to land like a “lump of mould.” Here, the poet uses a metaphor in the “hot owner”. This phrase refers to the greedy men. Thereafter, the poet makes a [comparison](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/simile/) between those men and the lump of mould. It is true that when human beings die they turn into a mere lump of mould. However, in the last line of this section, the poet tells the readers to listen to what the Earth says about those people.

**Earth-Song – Stanza Four**

          “Mine and yours;

          Mine, not yours.

          Earth endures;

          Stars abide—

          Shine down in the old sea;

          Old are the shores;

          But where are old men?

          I who have seen much,

          Such have I never seen.

In the first stanza of the “Earth-Song”, the earth says that everyone belongs to her. It is the foolishness of humans to believe the lands are theirs. In reality, they belonged to mother earth. Earth endures and stars abide her plan. They shine down in the old sea. The shores of the sea are also old. But the old men are no more. Lastly, the earth ironically says she has seen much but she has never seen such foolishness of men.

**Earth-Song – Stanza Five**

          “The lawyer’s deed

          Ran sure,

          In tail,

          To them and to their heirs

          Who shall succeed,

          Without fail,

          Forevermore.

In this section of the song, the poetic persona or the earth says those landlords had the lawyer’s deed to transfer their possession to their next generation. Apart from that, they think by documenting how much they had, they are securing the rights of their future generation. However, this statement also reveals their stupidity. As they are ignorant kind of men, they think a mere deed or will could give them the right to own the land as long as they can.

**Earth-Song – Stanza Six**

          “Here is the land,

          Shaggy with wood,

          With its old valley,

          Mound and flood.

          But the heritors?—

          Fled like the flood’s foam.

          The lawyer and the laws,

          And the kingdom,

          Clean swept herefrom.

The third stanza of the “Earth-Song” in ‘Hamatreya’ similarly talks about those men. The earth points at the land, shaggy with wood. The old valley, mound, and flood are there. But the heritors could not. In the following line, the poet uses a smile. Here, he compares death to the “flood’s foam.” Lastly, the earth refers to the lawyer, the laws, and the kingdom which will be swept from the earth. As men are mortal, their possessions are also swept away after their death. One cannot carry one’s property after their death in heaven.

**Earth-Song – Stanza Seven**

          “They called me theirs,

          Who so controlled me;

          Yet every one

          Wished to stay, and is gone,

          How am I theirs,

          If they cannot hold me,

          But I hold them?”

The earth says that they called her theirs and controlled her. Every one of them wished to stay on earth as long as they could. They wanted to stay alive not for the love of either nature or earth. Greed and lust controlled their thinking pattern. But, at last, they are gone. Thereafter, the earth asks how she can be theirs if they cannot hold her. Moreover, the earth says she holds them. So, it is mere foolishness to think about how much one can acquire. At the end of the day, everything belongs to mother nature. And she is the sole owner of the lands about which those men boasted.

**Stanza Eight**

When I heard the Earth-song

I was no longer brave;

My avarice cooled

Like lust in the chill of the grave.

In the last stanza of the poem, ‘Hamatreya’, the speaker of the poem says when he heard this song, he was no longer brave. His “avarice cooled/ Like lust in the chill of the grave.” In this way, the poet highlights that humans being mortal cannot possess anything forever. They are the tenants of mother nature. She allows them to own a meager part of her property. And men, after acquiring it, boast about that. However, at the end of the poem, Emerson highlights the importance of spirituality. Materialistic life leaves a person with a temporary [illusion](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/illusion/). At last, it robs the person of his borrowed robes.

**Historical Context**

The [lyric](https://poemanalysis.com/genre/lyricism/), ‘Hamatreya’ was first published in 1847. It was included later in the “Selected Poems 1876.” Emerson took interest in the Hindu scriptures in his Harvard days. He studied Manu, Vishnu Purana, the Bhagavad Gita, and Katha Upanishad. This poem was based on an episode of the Vishnu Purana that Emerson copied into his journal in 1845. Later, he wrote this poem describing the essence of the episode. In that passage, Maitreya asked his guru parashar about human ambition and greed. In response to his questions, the guru told him about the kings who mistakenly believed themselves to be lords of the earth. Then he recited the “Earth-Song”, in which the earth laughs at the egotism of the kings. He told Maitreya that this song would melt his avarice.

‘A Bird, came down the Walk’ is a five [stanza](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/stanza/) poem that is separated into sets of five lines. As was common within [Dickinson’s works](https://poemanalysis.com/emily-dickinson/), she uses [quatrains](https://poemanalysis.com/poetic-form/quatrain/), or sets of four lines to structure the piece. One will also immediately take note of her characteristic capitalizations and dashes, over which literary scholars are divided. In this particular poem, the dashes only appear at the ends of the lines. This might have been done to elongate [a pause](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/caesura/) before a reader moves to the next line.

In regards to [meter](https://poemanalysis.com/poetic-meter/meter/), the poem conforms to [iambic trimeter](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/trimeter/). This means that each line contains three sets of two beats. The first of these is unstressed, and the second stressed. The [rhyme scheme](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/rhyme-scheme/) is a bit looser. There is almost a pattern of ABCB, if not for a few half or [slant rhymes](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/imperfect-rhyme/), such as that which appears in stanza three.

**A Bird, came down the Walk**

[**Emily Dickinson**](https://poemanalysis.com/emily-dickinson/)

**Summary**

‘A Bird, came down the Walk’ by [Emily Dickinson](https://poemanalysis.com/emily-dickinson/) describes the simple, yet beautiful, actions of a bird searching for food and then taking flight.

The poem begins with the [speaker](https://poemanalysis.com/diction/speaker-in-poetry/) describing a bird she sees. She is close by, making it so that she can look at the bird, but it does not immediately notice her. From where she is situated, she sees the bird pick up an “Angle Worm” and bite it in half. It moves quickly from place to place, showing the anxiety inherent to most of its species. It knows the dangers presented by the much larger and stronger worl In the last sections the speaker attempts to offer the bird a crumb. It does not want anything to do with a human being and flies away. Its movements are swift yet purposeful as if it is swimming.

**Structure**

Structure-wise, the poet has used many important poetic devices in this poem. One of the most important literary devices used in In ‘A Bird, came down the Walk‘  is [imagery](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/imagery/); the poet takes you to a whole new world of watching the action of a bird. In fact, she shows you the action of a bird through her writing, and that too by picturizing the entire scene before you.

All of us see a lot of birds eating a lot of worms and insects every day, but we hardly take note of these scenes, imagine them or even pay attention to any such event around us. However, the poet has brought forth the scene so skillfully that the entire scene looks like a reality for the readers, especially when words like ‘drank a dew,’ ‘Angle Worm in halves,’ etc. are used in the poem.

In addition, [alliteration](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/alliteration/) is one of the figures of [speech](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/dialogue/) used in this poem – ‘drinking dew,’ while ‘saw-raw’ and ‘grass-pass,’ are the [rhyming scheme used in the poem](https://poemanalysis.com/poetry-explained/why-do-poems-rhyme/).

If the poet tried representing death through the bird, the poem itself is a [metaphor](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/metaphor/).

In the **first stanza** of ‘A Bird, came down the Walk’ the speaker begins by describing the simple, yet beautiful movements of a bird. This particular bird is coming “down the Walk.” This is likely a sidewalk or path of some kind near the speaker’s home, or where she is situated. The speaker is able to observe the bird’s actions without it immediately becoming frightened. This says something about humans and their interactions with nature. Birds are rightfully wary of the presence of humans. They will not behave in the same way if they are knowingly being watched.

The speaker does not have any ill intentions though. She is simply reporting on what she’s seeing, and finding importance in the instinctual actions of the bird. It finds a worm, noted here as an “Angle Worm,” and eats it raw, biting it in half.

The next thing the speaker sees is the bird drinking the “Dew” from the grass. It doesn’t have to go anywhere else to find water, making the “Dew” and “Grass” “convenient.” So far, its life has been presented as a simple movement from need to need.

In the **next two lines** another small life is introduced, the “Beetle.” While the two creatures might be simple to human eyes, the bird makes a conscious effort to “hop” to the side and “let” the beetle crawl past. The bird is very aware of its world, as will be seen in the final [stanzas](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/stanza/).

In **stanza three** of ‘A Bird, came down the Walk’, the bird’s reactions to its world are carefully studied by the speaker. It is clear she is truly watching this creature and taking sound mental notes on what it is doing. She notices its inherent anxiety. No matter what it’s doing it looks around “with rapid eyes.” They move quickly, “all abroad,” trying to see everything at once. It is very on edge and aware of the variety of dangers it might face.

The speaker takes some liberties with the description and states how the bird’s eyes appear like “frightened Beads.” They are shiny, probably black, and moving or rolling around easily. The bird becomes scared of the speaker and “stir[s]” its “Velvet Head.” This description of his feathers is interesting. Dickinson uses the word “Velvet” implying a kind of luxury about the animal. It is clear she, or at least the speaker she is channeling, sees the bird as a lovely thing.

The **fourth stanza** of ‘A Bird, came down the Walk’  describes the one interaction the speaker attempts with the bird. She reaches out to him and offers “him a crumb” of food. The bird does not react positively to this intrusion on its space and as its instincts require, flies away.

In Dickinson’s words, the action is much more complicated and elegant. The bird is said to “unroll…his feathers.” It is a process the speaker sees slowly and is able to study. Each feather passes her by in all its “Velvet” beauty. When he takes to the sky he is said to “row” to his “Home,” wherever that may be. The use of the word “row” here, as if applying to sailing, starts a [metaphor](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/metaphor/) that continues into the fifth stanza. Dickinson closely relates water and flight and the movements which make them up.

The **last stanza** is more [metaphorical](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/metaphor/) than those which came before it. The speaker is interested in how the bird’s wings move through the air. She describes this process as being similar to “Oars dividing the Ocean.”

The bird has a clear beauty that is compared to a butterfly that takes off from the “Banks of Noon” in the heat of the day. It jumps and moves “splashless” through the air. It cuts through the air as an oar would through the water.

**Historical Perspective**

From a historical [point of view](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/point-of-view/), it is quite astonishing to know that today Dickinson is known for her poetry, but during her days, she was well-recognized as a talented gardener who loved gardening the most. Those who attended her funeral on May 19, 1886, considered her a gardener of great skill and not a poet. Many people did not even know she wrote poetry.

‘A Bird, came down the Walk’ is a beautifully written poem that picturizes the encounter of the poet with a bird in a garden. In the poem, the poet comes across a bird on the walk that feasts on a worm, quenches his thirst by drinking dew from the grass, and moves [aside](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/aside/) to let a beetle pass. The poet notices each and every action of the bird.

Since Emily Dickinson was always recognized for her poems on death, ‘A Bird, came down the Walk’  may depict death in some way because, by the end of it, she states that despite offering food to the bird, it flew away without accepting the crumb, which might mean that despite being good and kind to others, you are bound to die one day. Death will surely knock on the door of your life and snatch your soul away from your body. It is unbridled and cannot be controlled by anyone. This is what Nature is and what our world is; feasting on the weaker but frightening from the stronger.

**After Apple-Picking**

[**Robert Frost**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/robert-frost)

Having picked apples throughout the day, he is tired now. His day’s work is over, but the task of apple-picking is not yet complete. The [speaker](https://poemanalysis.com/diction/speaker-in-poetry/) tells that his long ladder still stands ‘sticking through a tree’, rising high toward heaven. He seems to have left it there on purpose to do some more apple-picking later.

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree Toward heaven still, And there's a barrel that I didn't fill Beside it, and there may be two or three Apples I didn't pick upon some bough. But I am done with apple-picking now. Essence of winter sleep is on the night, The scent of apples: I am drowsing off. I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight I got from looking through a pane of glass I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough And held against the world of hoary grass. It melted, and I let it fall and break. But I was well Upon my way to sleep before it fell, And I could tell What form my dreaming was about to take. Magnified apples appear and disappear, Stem end and blossom end, And every fleck of russet showing clear. My instep arch not only keeps the ache, It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round. I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend. And I keep hearing from the cellar bin The rumbling sound Of load on load of apples coming in. For I have had too much Of apple-picking: I am overtired Of the great harvest I myself desired. There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch, Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall. For all That struck the earth, No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble, Went surely to the cider-apple heap As of no worth. One can see what will trouble This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is. Were he not gone, The woodchuck could say whether it's like his Long sleep, as I describe its coming on, Or just some human sleep.

**Lines 1-6**

My long two-pointed ladder’s sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there’s a barrel that I didn’t fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn’t pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.

Beside the ladder, there is a barrel that has not yet been filled with apples and can accommodate some more. A few apples may still have been left on the branches of the tree unpicked or yet to be picked. That means the task of apple-picking is incomplete. But, as the speaker tells, he is fed up with or tired of apple-picking and does not feel like doing this work anymore.

**Lines 7-12**

Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.

The speaker feels tired. The scent of apples, which is the ‘essence of winter-sleep’, causes drowsiness to him, and he begins to drowse off. While falling asleep he recollects the sense of strangeness that was experienced by him at the right he saw in the morning by looking through a sheet of ice which he had picked up from his drinking vessel (trough). He looked at ‘the world of hoary grass’ or (grass covered with snow) through this sheet. It seems as if the speaker were in a confused state of mind because of the onslaught of sleep on him that sent him into a trance in which everything seemed to have been blurred or made indistinct to view.

**Lines 13-17**

It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.

The sheet of ice melted, and the speaker allowed it to fall down from his hands, and break into pieces. However, before it fell down, he was just on the verge of falling asleep. In this sleepy state, he was able to tell what form his dreaming was to take place, or what kind of dreams he was about to see in his sleep.

**Lines 18-23**

Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem end and blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.

These lines describe the dream of the speaker. The dream comprises ‘an [exaggerated](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/exaggeration/) recreation of the sensations of apple-picking experienced during the day’, Apples of an enlarged size appear and disappear everywhere – at the end of the stem and at the end of the flowering part of the tree. The speaker sees even the tiniest apples and their colours clearly in the dream. His feet do not feel only pain, but also the pressure of the ladder-round. As he picks the apples, the boughs bend down, and with their movement, the ladder also seems to sway. The speaker has given here a picturesque description of the dreamland in which he finds himself in his tranced state.

**Lines 24-31**

And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.

From the depiction of the right around him, the poet-speaker turns to a description of the sound. From the ‘cellar bin’, he keeps hearing the ‘rumbling sound’ of carts carrying ‘load on load of apples’. There is an abundance of apples, and there are tens of thousands of them for him to touch, admire and to pick or lift carefully so as not to let any of them fall down on the ground. Since the speaker has already done enough of apple-picking he feels overtired and fed up with the bumper harvest he has himself desired so much in the past. He does not want anything to do with the apples.

**Lines 32-36**

For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.

The apples are not to be allowed to fall from the hands of the speaker, because all such apples as happen to fall down on the ground, are treated as discarded or rejected, even if they may not have been ‘bruised or spiked with stubble.; They are set [aside](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/aside/) in heaps to be used for making cider and are not regarded as fit or of any worth as eatable fruits.

**Lines 37-42**

One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it’s like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep.

In these concluding lines of the poem, the poet-speaker guesses as to what will trouble his sleep, whatever kind of sleep it may be. His sleep may be troubled by the thought or awareness of the reality which has been ignored in the dream. If the wood chunk (a rodent) has not gone to his long sleep for the winter, it would be able to explain the nature of the poet’s sleep and to tell whether it is a long sleep, which may resemble its own torpor or hibernation, or just an ordinary sleep commonly loved by all human beings. The sleep may be a simple sleep or the sleep of death.

**Critical Analysis**

Similar to ‘[Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening](https://poemanalysis.com/robert-frost/stopping-by-woods-on-a-snowy-evening/)‘, ‘[The Road Not Taken](https://poemanalysis.com/robert-frost/the-road-not-taken/)‘ and ‘[Birches](https://poemanalysis.com/robert-frost/birches/)‘, ‘After Apple-Picking’ may be regarded as one of the most widely read, admired, popular, and anthologized poems by Robert Frost. Included in the volume North of Boston, it is chiefly neither a [narrative poem](https://poemanalysis.com/poetic-form/narrative-poem/) in [blank verse](https://poemanalysis.com/poetic-form/blank-verse/) nor a dramatic [dialogue](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/dialogue/) as most of the poems in this volume are. It is a nature-[lyric](https://poemanalysis.com/genre/lyricism/) depicting the experience of an apple-picker who is tired after the day’s work and falls asleep in the lap of dreams about his task. It may be regarded as a charming [idyll](https://poemanalysis.com/genre/idyll/) ‘dusted over with something uncanny’, and containing a fine bland of [illusion](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/illusion/) and reality.

The poem is, in fact, absorbed with states between not only of winter sleep but of all similar areas where real and unreal appear and disappear. The poem amply reveals the poet’s power of describing objects and scenes realistically and sensuously. For example, there is a description of the long two-pointed ladder sticking through a tree of the sheet of ice melting in the speaker’s hands, of the rights and sounds experienced by the speaker in his dream, such as ‘the rambling sound of load on load of apples coming in’, and so on. All these descriptions are vivid and concrete and based on the poet’s own observation.

Of special interest is the description of ‘magnified apples’ and ‘every fleck of russet showing clear’ Physical states like fatigue and drowsiness, and mental states and experience like the sense of the strangeness of the right seen through a sheet of ice, are nicely depicted by the poet. The poet shows equal skill in describing reality and dreams. The tranced state of the speaker has been described finely too. In fact, ‘After Apple-Picking’ is so vivid a memory of an experience that the readers absorb it physically. They can even smell the heady scent of apples; senses the strangeness of the world’ as it seems to the overtired worker; feels how definitely the instep arch:

….not only keeps the ache,

It keeps the pressure of ladder-round.

It is also so simple and exact, so casual, yet so original. A poem of reality, ‘After Apple-Picking’ has the enchantment of a lingering dream.’

Moreover, themes like Life, Death, and the Fall of man are treated by Frost in ‘After Apple-Picking’ through a number of systems. Additionally, similar to so many poems of Frost, this poem also possesses a [symbolic](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/symbolism/) quality. The description of external objects and activity conceals a wealth of deeper meaning which is conveyed through the method of [symbolism](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/symbolism/).

For example; the words like a ladder, heaven, winter sleep, magnified apples, a world of hoary grass, and some others have a symbolic significance, and even convey a deeper meaning. Thus, the poem, ‘After Apple-Picking’ by [Robert Frost](https://poemanalysis.com/robert-frost/biography/) has got all the characteristics that make it one of the best and frequently-read poems.
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Daddy**

[**Sylvia Plath**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/sylvia-plath)

 Sylvia Plath is most known for her tortured soul. Perhaps that is why readers identify with her works of poetry so well, such as ‘Daddy’. She has an uncanny ability to give meaningful words to some of the most inexpressible emotions. She writes in a way that allows the reader to feel her pain. In this poem, ‘Daddy’, she writes about her father after his death. This is not a typical obituary poem, lamenting the loss of the loved one, wishing for his return, and hoping to see him again. Rather, Plath feels a sense of relief at his departure from her life. She explores the reasons behind this feeling in the lines of this poem.

When speaking about her own work, Plath describes herself (in regards to ‘Daddy’ specifically) as a “girl with an Electra complex. Her father died while she thought he was God”. She adds on to this statement, describing her father as “a Nazi and her mother very possibly part Jewish”. Through the poem, she “has to [act](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/act/) out the awful little [allegory](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/allegory/) once before she is free of it.”

Literary historians have determined that neither of these statements about her parents was accurate but were introduced into the narrative in order to enhance its poignancy and stretch the limits of allegory.

**Summary**

‘Daddy‘ by Sylvia Plath uses emotional, and sometimes, painful [metaphors](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/metaphor/) to depict the poet’s own opinion of her father.

The poem begins with the [speaker](https://poemanalysis.com/diction/speaker-in-poetry/) describing her father in several different, striking ways. He is at once, a “black shoe” she was trapped within, a vampire, a fascist and a Nazi. While alive, and since his death, she has been trapped by his life. He holds her back and contains her in a way she’s trying to contend with. She has to “kill” her father in order to get away from him.

**Poetic Techniques**

Plath makes use of a number of poetic techniques in ‘Daddy’ these include [enjambment](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/enjambment/), [metaphor](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/metaphor/), [simile](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/simile/), and [juxtaposition](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/juxtaposition/). The former, juxtaposition, is used when two [contrasting](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/juxtaposition/) objects or ideas are placed in [conversation](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/dialogue/) with one another in order to emphasize that [contrast](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/juxtaposition/). A poet usually does this in order to speak on a larger theme of their text or make an important point about the differences between these two things. in this poem, there is a consistent juxtaposition between innocence or youthful emotions, and pain.

[Metaphors](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/metaphor/) and [similes](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/simile/) appear throughout the text in order to convey the speaker’s emotional opinions about her father. He is compared to a Nazi, a sadist, and a vampire, as well as a few other people and objects.

Another important technique that is commonly used in poetry is enjambment. This occurs when a line is cut off before its natural stopping point.  It forces a reader down to the next line, and the next, quickly. One has to move forward in order to comfortably resolve a phrase or sentence. There are instances in almost every [stanza](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/stanza/), but a reader can look to the beginning of [stanzas](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/stanza/) three and four for poignant examples of this technique.

**Themes**

In regards to the most important themes in ‘Daddy’, one should consider the conversation Plath has in the text about the oppressive nature of her father/daughter relationship. The theme of freedom from oppression, or from captivity is prevalent throughout this text, and others Plath wrote. Despite her father’s death, she was obviously still held rapt by his life and how he lived.

That being said, [life and death should also be considered important themes](https://poemanalysis.com/poetry-explained/poetry-themes) within Plath’s ‘Daddy’. Without her father living as he did, and dying when he did while Plath was quite young, this poem would not exist as it does.

Analysis,

**Stanza One**

You do not do, you do not do

In this first stanza of ‘Daddy’, the speaker reveals that the [subject](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/poem-subject/) of whom she speaks is no longer there. This is why she says and [repeats](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/repetition/), “You do not do”.  The following line is rather surprising, as it does not express loss or sadness. On the contrary, it begins to reveal the nature of this particular father-daughter relationship. The speaker compares her father to a “black shoe”. It seems like a strange [comparison](https://poemanalysis.com/figurative-language/simile/) until the third line reveals that the speaker herself has felt “like a foot” that has been forced to live thirty years in that shoe. The foot is “poor and white” because, for thirty years, it has been suffocated by the shoe and never allowed to see the light of day.

The last line in this stanza reveals that the speaker felt not only suffocated by her father, but fearful of him as well. In fact, she expresses that her fear of him was so intense, that she was afraid to even breathe or sneeze.

**Stanza Two**

Daddy, I have had to kill you.

(…)

Big as a Frisco seal

In the second stanza of ‘Daddy’, the speaker reveals her own personal desire to kill her father. The first line states, “I have had to kill you”. The next line goes on to explain that the speaker actually did not have time to kill her father, because he died before she could manage to do it. She does not make this confession regretfully or sorrowfully. Rather, she calls him “a bag full of God” which suggests that her view of her father as well as her view of God was one of fear and trepidation. She describes him as a “ghastly statue with one gray toe big as a Frisco seal”.

Her description of her father as a statue suggests that she saw no capacity for feeling in him. A “Frisco seal” refers to one of the sea lions that can be seen in San Francisco. When she describes that one of his toes is as big as a seal, it reveals to the reader just how enormous and overbearing her father seemed to her. He was hardened, without feelings, and now that he is dead, she thinks he looks like an enormous, ominous statue.

**Stanza Three**

And a head in the freakish Atlantic

(…)

Ach, du.

Here, looking at her dead father, the speaker describes the gorgeous scenery of the Atlantic Ocean and the beautiful area of “Nauset”.  However, she also uses the word “freakish” to precede her descriptions of the beautiful Atlantic Ocean. This reveals that even though her father may have been a beautiful specimen of a human being, she knew personally that there was something awful about him. In the final two lines of this stanza, the speaker reveals that at one point during her father’s sickness, she even prayed that he would recover. The last line of this stanza is the German phrase for “oh, you.”

**Stanza Four**

In the German tongue, in the Polish town

(…)

My Polack friend

In stanza four of ‘Daddy’, the speaker begins to wonder about her father and his origins. The speaker knows that he came from a Polish town, where German was the main language spoken. She explains that the town he grew up in had endured one war after another. She would never be able to identify which specific town he was from because the name of his hometown was a common name. This stanza ends mid-sentence. The speaker begins to explain that she learned something from her “Polack friend”.

**Stanza Five**

Says there are a dozen or two.

(…)

The tongue stuck in my jaw.

Here, the speaker finishes what she began to explain in the previous stanza by explaining that she learned from a friend that the name of the Polish town her father came from, was a very common name. For this reason, she concludes that she “could never tell where [he] put [his] foot”. It’s clear she will not ever be able to know exactly where his roots are from. She had never asked him because she “could never talk to [him]”.

After this, the speaker then explains that she was afraid to talk to him. She states, “The tongue stuck in my jaw” when explaining the way she felt when she wanted to talk to her father.

**Stanza Six**

It stuck in a barb wire snare.

(…)

And the language obscene

In this stanza, she continues to describe the way she felt around her father. She felt as though her tongue were stuck in barbed wire. “Ich” is the German word for “I”. This reveals that whenever she wanted to speak to her father, she could only stutter and say, “I, I, I.”. She then describes that she thought every German man was her father. This reveals that she does not distinguish him as someone familiar and close to her. Rather, she sees him as she sees any other German man, harsh and obscene.

**Stanza Seven**

An engine, an engine

(…)

I think I may well be a Jew.

In stanza seven of ‘Daddy’, the speaker begins to reveal to the readers that she felt like a Jew under the reign of her German father. This is a very strong comparison, and the speaker knows this and yet does not hesitate to use this simile. The oppression which she has suffered under the reign of her father is painful and unbearable, something she feels compares to the oppression of the Jews under the Germans in the Holocaust. For this reason, she specifically mentions Auschwitz, among other concentration camps.

She then concludes that she began to talk like a Jew, like one who was oppressed and silenced by German oppressors. Then she concludes that because she feels the oppression that the Jews feel, she identifies with the Jews and therefore considers herself a Jew.

**Stanza Eight**

The snows of the Tyrol, the clear beer of Vienna

(…)

I may be a bit of a Jew.

In this stanza, the speaker continues to criticize the Germans as she compares the “snows of Tyrol” and the “clear beer of Vienna” to the German’s idea of racial purity. She concludes that they “are not very pure or true”. Then, the speaker considers her ancestry, and the gypsies that were part of her heritage. Gypsies, like Jews, were singled out for execution by the Nazis, and so the speaker identifies not only with Jews but also with gypsies. In fact, she seems to identify with anyone who has ever felt oppressed by the Germans. In the last line of this stanza, the speaker suggests that she is probably part Jewish, and part Gypsy.

**Stanza Nine**

I have always been scared of you,

(…)

Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You——

Here, the speaker finally finds the courage to address her father, now that he is dead. She admits that she has always been afraid of him. She implies that her father had something to do with the airforce, as that is how the word “Luftwaffe” translates to English. “Gobbledygook” however, is simply gibberish. This implies that the speaker feels that her father and his language made no sense to her. In this instance, she felt afraid of him and feared everything about him.

She never was able to understand him, and he was always someone to fear. She was afraid of his “neat mustache” and his “Aryan eye, bright blue”. This description of his eyes implies that he was one of those Germans whom the Nazis believed to be a superior race. He was Aryan, with blue eyes. He was something fierce and terrifying to the speaker, and she associates him closely with the Nazis. A “panzer-mam” was a German tank driver, and so this continues the comparison between her father and a Nazi.

**Stanza Ten**

Not God but a swastika

(…)

Brute heart of a brute like you.

In this stanza, the speaker compares her father to God. She clearly sees God as an ominous overbearing being who clouds her world. This is why she describes her father as a giant black swastika that covered the entire sky. The third line of this stanza begins a [sarcastic](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/sarcasm/) description of women and men like her father. She mockingly says, “every woman adores a Fascist” and then begins to describe the violence of men like her father. She calls uses the word “brute” three times in the last two lines of this stanza. If these lines were not written in jest, then she clearly believes that women, for some reason or another, tend to fall in love with violent brutes.

**Stanza Eleven**

You stand at the blackboard, daddy,

(…)

Any less the black man who

In the first line of this stanza, the speaker describes her father as a teacher standing at the blackboard. The author’s father, was, in fact, a professor. This is how the speaker views her father. She can see the cleft in his chin as she imagines him standing there at the blackboard. Then she describes that the cleft that is in his chin, should really be in his foot. This simply means that she views her father as the devil himself.

The devil is often characterized as an animal with cleft feet, and the speaker believes he wears his cleft on his chin rather than on his feet. Her description of her father as a “black man” does not refer to his skin color but rather to the darkness of his soul.  This stanza ends with the word “who” because the author breaks the stanza mid-sentence.

**Stanza Twelve**

Bit my pretty red heart in two.

(…)

I thought even the bones would do.

With the first line of this stanza, the speaker finishes her sentence and reveals that her father has broken her heart. She says that he has “bit [her] pretty red heart in two”. The rest of this stanza reveals a deeper understanding of the speaker’s relationship with her father. Even though he was a cruel, overbearing brute, at one point in her life, she loved him dearly. It is possible that as a child, she was able to love him despite his cruelty. As an adult, however, she cannot see past his vices.

This stanza reveals that the speaker was only ten years old when her father died, and that she mourned for him until she was twenty. She even tried to end her life in order to see him again. She thought that even if she was never to see him again in an after-life, to simply have her bones buried by his bones would be enough of a comfort to her.

**Stanza Thirteen**

But they pulled me out of the sack,

(…)

A man in black with a Meinkampf look

In this stanza, the speaker reveals that she was not able to commit suicide, even though she tried. She reveals that she was found and “pulled…out of the sack” and stuck back together “with glue”. At this point, the speaker experienced a revelation. She realized that she must re-create her father. She decided to find and love a man who reminded her of her father. Freud’s theory on the Oedipus complex seems to come into play here. The theory that girls fall in love with their fathers as children, and boys with their mothers, also suggests that these boys and girls grow up to find husbands and wives that resemble their fathers and mother.

The speaker has already suggested that women love a brutal man, and perhaps she is now confessing that she was once such a woman. This is why the speaker says that she finds a “model” of her father who is “a man in black with a Meinkampf look”. While “Meinkampf” means “my struggle”, the last line of this stanza most likely means that the man she found to marry looked like her father and like Hitler.

**Stanza Fourteen**

And a love of the rack and the screw.

(…)

The voices just can’t worm through.

In this stanza, the speaker reveals that the man she married enjoyed to torture. This is why she describes him as having “a love of the rack and the screw”. She confesses that she married him when she says, “And I said I do, I do.” Then she tells her father that she is through. This means that having re-created her father by marrying a harsh German man, she no longer needed to mourn her father’s death. She then describes her relationship with her father as a phone call. Now she has hung up, and the call is forever ended.

**Stanza Fifteen**

If I’ve killed one man, I’ve killed two——

(…)

Daddy, you can lie back now.

In this stanza of ‘Daddy’, the speaker reminds the readers that she has already claimed to have killed her father. She revealed that he actually died before she could get to him, but she still claims the responsibility for his death. Now she says that if she has killed one man, she’s killed two. This is most likely in reference to her husband. She refers to her husband as a vampire, one who was supposed to be just like her father. As it turned out, he was not just like her father. In fact, he drained the life from her. This is why she refers to him as a vampire who drank her blood.

It is not clear why she first says that he drank her blood for “a year”. However, the speaker then changes her mind and says, “seven years, if you want to know.” When the speaker says, “daddy, you can lie back now” she is telling him that the part of him that has lived on within her can die now, too.

**Stanza Sixteen**

There’s a stake in your fat black heart

(…)

Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I’m through.

In this stanza, the speaker reveals that her father, though dead, has somehow lived on, like a vampire, to torture her. It is claimed that she must kill her father the way that a vampire must be killed, with a stake to the heart. She then goes on to explain to her father that “the villagers never liked you”. She explains that they dance and stomp on his grave. The speaker says that the villagers “always knew it was [him]”. This suggests that the people around them always suspected that there was something different and mysterious about her father.

With the final line, the speaker tells her father that she is through with him. While he has been dead for years, it is clear that her memory of him has caused her great grief and struggle. The speaker was unable to move on without acknowledging that her father was, in fact, a brute. Once she was able to come to terms with what he truly was, she was able to let him stop torturing her from the grave.

**Conclusion**

Sylvia Plath ([biography](https://poemanalysis.com/sylvia-plath/)) begins ‘Daddy’ with her present understanding of her father and the kind of man that he was. She then offers readers some background explanation of her relationship with her father. As ‘Daddy’ progresses, the readers begins to realize that the speaker has not always hated her father. She has not always seen him as a brute, although she makes it clear that he always has been oppressive. As a child, the speaker did not know anything apart from her father’s mentality, and so she prays for his recovery and then mourns his death. She even wishes to join him in death.

She then tries to re-create him by marrying a man like him. It isn’t until years after her father’s death that she becomes aware of the true brutal nature of her relationship. Though he has been dead in flesh for years, she finally decides to let go of his memory and free herself from his oppression forever.

**I Hear America Singing**

[**Walt Whitman**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/walt-whitman)

 Walt Whitman’s piece-de-resistance, ‘I Hear America Singing’ has been analyzed from various aspects, including the poet’s inclinations, aspirations, and devotion to the working populace of a thriving American society. All in all, his poetic [prose](https://poemanalysis.com/genre/prose/) free-flows with vibrancy, energy, and sheer respect for proletariat members of America.

[Celebrated American poet, Walt Whitman](https://poemanalysis.com/walt-whitman/biography/) published his poem ‘I Hear America Singing’ in the poetic collection titled ‘Leaves of Grass’ in 1860, along with Emily Dickinson established the foundations of modern American poetry, championing masses in his works.

Walt Whitman sees a thriving American society from his happy-go-lucky [perspective](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/perspective/). According to him, America is en-route to progress with all the members of society contributing with a will and selfless zeal. As each character sings his songs as part of the proletariat class, the poetry is simplistic and straightforward. The terms carols and songs refer to their uniqueness of character and work. Poetic Form

Walt Whitman was an experimental poet, toying with forms of poetry. He is also known as the father of free [verse](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/verse/) poetry. He deemed himself above rigors of [rhyme](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/rhyme/) and [meter](https://poemanalysis.com/poetic-meter/meter/) since Whitman used free [verses](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/verse/) freely. However, his poetry is not a bunch of non-[rhyming](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/rhyme/) lines as ‘I Hear America Singing’ is a decent, tightly moderated poem. The poem is a listing of manual workers, their work content, and singing along the way.

The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam

The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work

The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deck-hand singing on the steamboat deck

As is the case, [Walt Whitman’s poems](https://poemanalysis.com/walt-whitman/) tend to get lengthy as they progress, whereas they are tightly managed in the beginning. This phenomenon is called [anaphora](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/anaphora/) as [repetition](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/repetition/) keeps recurring. It is the polar opposite of traditional poetry norms where verses are controlled tightly in order to maintain the rhyming sequence. In the case of Walt Whitman, he aspired to seek freedom of self-exploration and discovery, rising above conventional forms like a true American.

**Poetic Structure**

Before doing into the nitty-gritty of his poetry, it’s imperative to note certain aspects of his poetry. Noted as a pioneer of [free-verse](https://poemanalysis.com/poetic-form/free-verse/) poetry, Walt Whitman wasn’t the original inventor. [Free verse](https://poemanalysis.com/poetic-form/free-verse/) is a [poetic form](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/form/), having an inherent absence of meter, rhyme, and [rhythm](https://poemanalysis.com/poetic-meter/rhythm/). However, the verses have rhyme and meter, the poem itself is erratic. [Rhythm](https://poemanalysis.com/poetic-meter/rhythm/) is invoked by using poetic devices such as repetition, [alliteration](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/alliteration/), and such mechanisms. The form harmonizes well with the content. The poetic structure breaks shackles of European adhered poetic standards. It is similar to Romantic-era poetry which revered individualism.

**Analysis of I Hear America Singing**

**Stanza One**

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,

Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,

The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,

The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,

As the patriotic poem initializes, Walt Whitman seems fixated with the working-class of American society. The poet embarks on praising the working populace of the American society, highlighting individualistic traits in sheer emotion. As a result, the poem resonates with a chirpy [mood](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/mood/), inducing affirmative notes of encouragement towards its addressed subjects. The words, ‘I hear American singing’ is imperative to ongoing praise for the American labor class, envisioning them as equally important roles in contributing to American society.

**Stanza Two**

The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,

The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,

The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,

Now, the poet sets himself in chronicling a variety of members embroiled in participating in their respective methods to American society. Each particular character/ professional is seen going on his destined path merrily, feeling prized in playing his role in the bigger picture. Each character defines their own uniqueness as he sings with his occupation. In the grand scheme of things, all of these singing characters are depicted as Americans. Creating a socio-economic divide, it’s clear that the poet visualizes his personalized vision of America, one founded upon the hard work of the proletariat class. The primary idea of the government hypothesized by Walt Whitman is that of, “for the people, by the people”. Very cleverly, Walt Whitman has removed the upper echelons of societal individuals from his magnum opus. It’s his own vision of future America, an America embracing with open arms bourgeoisie class in day-to-day roles of government.

**Stanza Three**

The wood-cutter’s song, the ploughboy’s on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,

The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,

Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,

The day what belongs to the day — at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,

Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs

It’s interesting to take into consideration the historical [connotations](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/connotation/) mentioned herein. He has specifically dedicated two lines to the female populace of thriving America, entailing a sewing girl, a wife, and a mother. He deems their respective contribution in an emerging American nation as vital pivots necessary for driving prosperity and change. It’s an allegorical linkage to a time when women were barred from national voting. They had no consequent say in government machinery or elected officials.

Walt Whitman had a polar opposite vision of American as opposed to the prevalent scenario. In this vision, women working domestically, as well as professionals, are deemed as equals, busied in contributing to society on the whole. Parenting is deemed as a noble profession, pivotal for securing a prospective future generation.

Walt Whitman appreciates and seems inclined towards individualism. The notion of individuals singing their personalized songs is worth appreciating and respecting. Singing is an outright [allegory](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/allegory/) to individualism. Each individual is a cog in the American system, and pivotal to democratic machinery in general. As a result, Walt Whitman feels prized and proud of the dedication and due diligence the middle-class section puts in cultivating a society founded on respect and rights.

As the poem concludes, he hints at the right to celebrate and party after a long day’s work. He ends his swansong on a bright, chirpy note, after highlighting individualistic contributions and all sundry professionals tied in a mechanized system.

**Historical Perspective**

‘I Hear America Singing’ was initially published in 1860 in ‘Leave of Grass’ edition. It is steeped in American patriotism, moves its reader by Walt Whitman’s emotional prose and usage of free verse. His basic premises are the proletariat class, entailing ordinary manual labor work-force working hard in contributing to American society.

As each character sings his personalized song, involved in his [carol](https://poemanalysis.com/genre/carol/); blending into the American society. As a result, the people are enrolled in the democratic process of government, based on the ideology of, ‘of the people, by the people, for the people’, each individual has a [voice](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/voice/). Interestingly, the poet has cleverly omitted the upper echelons of American society, deeming them unworthy of a place in his legendary poem. The poem portrays the proletariat class of America as its true champions.

**Personal Commentary**

‘I Hear America Singing’ is in essence, a chirpy poem and dedicated to the bourgeoisie section of the American public. From the shoemaker to the carpenter, boatman, mason, and mechanic are all playing their part in the bigger picture of America. Even the female populace is taken into apt consideration, acknowledging their contribution, prizing them with joy and blithe. The poem’s strength lies in Whitman’s opinion, the working class of America, encouraging them to go about their ways, viewing them as the future of a prospective America. For Whitman, the faith in labor is the greatest asset Americans have. Walter Whitman seems highly appreciative of the diverse work-force, detailing them in their vitality and variety, acting as a core component of American society. This collective collaboration will go a long way towards creating an empowered society.

The various workers and professions are associated via their singing. Walt Whitman gives equivalent importance to women and young girls involved in contributing towards thriving American society performing their chores. This poem is composed of a single [stanza](https://poemanalysis.com/literary-device/stanza/), entailing eleven verses. Writing in free [verse form](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/verse-form/), the poem is a drop-down list of working-class professionals, working hard to meet ends. However, he paints them in a thriving light, portraying them as true champions of present and future America. He ensures his lines rhyme as they progress along, however, abstains from conventional forms of poetry. Via music, he engenders a patriotic anthem for future Americans, appreciating and respecting them loftily.

He unites the American bourgeoisie class single-handedly with a melodious poem, cleverly shying away from praising the elite class. The poem’s overall [tone](https://poemanalysis.com/definition/tone/) is upbeat, optimistic, and chirping with energy. Using a flurry of motivational language, he downplays any notion of pessimism and hardships faced by proletariat society. Ultimately, it’s tantamount to being a national anthem for the American nation. The word ‘sing’ also represents at other times ‘writing’, since Whitman deemed pen is mightier than the sword. As is known, Walt wanted his poems to be recited loudly, instilling hope, encouragement, and vigor in fellow listeners. It transcended from mere pages to the hearts and minds of its readers. He often wrote following to rules of rhyming and music.