

Analysis of West Hill by Mathew Dickman

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Paraphrase: My brother is happy in heaven. He is living a luxurious life, living in a big house, swimming in the swimming pool. The house is strong with pillars so that it does not crash. The purpose of building the house with that design is to ensure that the house does not decide on its own but has anchors to control the decisions. It will not decide when it is over. And my brother is lying on his back, and he is high on cocaine and Heineken.

He, the sun, the sky and the stars look similar, and it is difficult to tell them apart. My brother has become part of nature. Whenever I come here, and wonder what attracted him so much to kill, take his life and travel to nature and become part of it. I wonder what the place looked like and what attracted him so much that he left the world without thinking twice. I wonder if it was a woman, a lack of pain? A woman who pulled him towards her. The woman when he was bleeding and suffering due to the sufferings of the world and a woman when he was all chemicals. I wonder what it was that soothed his pain and suffering that he pleasantly took his life to be there.

Speaker:

Mathew Dickman (A brother)

Audience:

A friend or self

Tone:

Thoughtful, compassionate, apologetic

Imagery:

Visual: a big house built on the side of a hill on stilts, Evergreen trees, His back up at the sky, soft skin of his ways; she pulled him soaking, past the leather furniture, wet body

Organic: The sky, the sun, shining stars, West Hills

Kinesthetic: Jump, Knelt

Sound Qualities:

Onomatopoeia: Jump, Big, crashing,

Alliteration: boulevard below it. Build that way; The sun or the sky or the shining stars

Figurative Language:

Simile: Like Closet,

Symbol:

Archetypal: Razor,

- The aspect where the point refers to the stilted house, sky, and swimming drawing on the vastness of the world. The death and depression of his brother. I would like to read about the poet's brother.
- The biographical, cultural and critical sources will help me understand the situation. As it is about depression and suicide, it would be helpful to study the culture and biography of the author but not forget the importance of the critical aspect of the sources. The sources must build on the knowledge of the ways that literature focuses on issues of depression and suicide to understand and respond to it.
- What aspect of depression does the author focus on while writing the poem West Hill?

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West Hill by Mathew Dickman is a poem that describes his apologetic reaction to the death after the suicide of his brother. He starts the poem by announcing his death: "My older brother is in heaven," and he is happy there. He describes that his life is comfortable there so that "the house will not jump and decide it is over." As the poet's brother has given up on life due to the darkness and depression, life in the heavens does not allow such a depression. Depression and hopelessness cause a person to become addicted to cocaine and alcohol. His brother was also using them, but now his brother is part of nature, enjoying swimming in the swimming pool. His death has helped him to become a part of nature. In West Hill, the poet wonders about what was it that helped him decide at the end. He wonders if it was the pain or the woman that convinced him to take his life and become part of nature. The poem discusses the sensitive and difficult subject of death in the poem. Although the meaning and language of the poem are clear, the compound sentences sometimes make it difficult to comprehend the meaning. Moreover, the lack of rhyme and proper structure presents the thoughts of the family members who are trying to comprehend the suicide of their loved ones and trying to find a reason for it. The strong imagery and nostalgic tone help the readers to see the lack of immortality and death. (Dickman)

The poet discusses depression and suicide in simple language, painting pictures of the afterlife without a proper structure. It is a free verse poem that refers to death and his grief. It discusses the family members who are left behind and who are trying to find a reason for the death of their loved ones, wondering about why and what. The poem shows his restlessness and continuous search for "the house" that became "the vacation" for him. It talks about the speakers or the mourner: "I wonder." The free verse and lack of traditional structure of poetry help the readers to connect with the thoughts of the mourner. It shows the flow of the thoughts that do not rhyme nor need proper structure to express the feelings. The technique of free verse assists him in presenting the theme of death properly. The writing and the patterns of thought in the poem are crucial to find the form and structure of the poem. The lack of structure and proper poetic style provide the right structure for the topic of death and grief to manifest itself.

Moreover, the lack of excessive use of literary devices with visual words helps the readers understand the suicide, death and the role of control in a person's life. However, the person is not detached from the speaker or the reader as the poet, through the nostalgic and grieving tone, engross the reader. The poet does not use simile, allegory or any other device excessively to represent the thoughts of a family member after the death of a beloved. But he shows the temporariness of the world. It shows that life is not permanent and it will end soon using "crashing down," "won't decide it's over," and "nothing left." Also, these phrases generate a sense of hopelessness and the sense of time constraint in the reader, but contrasting life on the planet to the eternity of the afterlife keeps a smooth balance. He generates a sense of sympathy towards the person who commits suicide, showing his suffering: "he is full of cocaine and Heineken." Then, changing the concept of the person from pain to eternity as he has become part of "the sun and the sky."

The poem, although nostalgic and mourning, it kind of celebrates death and eternal life or the part of life being eternal. The visual imagery of him "swimming in the swimming pool, behind the big house" as if he is part of nature makes the death look less painful. It soothes the readers as it refers to eternity and peace in the afterlife in the "New Kingdom." It changes the imagery of "cocaine," "alcohol," and "razors" to a more peaceful "New Kingdom." He considers whether it was a woman or the prospects of luxury and peace in the next life that helped him plan his death successfully. Towards the end, he also presents the lack of connection that the depressed people feel, showing a need to be "listened to." He helps the reader visualize the concept of death as well as the peace in the afterlife. The visualization of the events and lack of permanence, although they make the reader uncomfortable, presents realistic and positive prospects for the afterlife.

Lastly, the nostalgic and sometimes apologetic tone of the speaker assists the reader in feeling sympathy with the mourner and the dead. It makes the reader emphatic towards the speaker and apologetic towards the death as the speaker of the poem feels because the speaker was unable to assist and "listen" to the person who took his life due to constant suffering. However, it does not put the blame on anyone. The tone is nostalgic most of the time, generating sympathy for the mourner as well as their relationship without making death undesired.

To conclude, the freestyle of the poem, with strong visual imagery and nostalgic tone, engrossed the reader, generating empathy in the readers, but it does not make death undesirable. By showing somewhat continuity of eternal and peaceful life, the poet has painted a beautiful picture of death and shows worldly suffering. The poem starts and ends with strong imagery that portrays a beautiful life that continues from the worldly life to the life in heaven. Thus, it achieves its purpose of presenting the thoughts of the mourner and the nostalgia with a positive perspective for the dead one.

Works Cited

Dickman, Matthew. *Mayakovsky's Revolver*. , 2014. Print.