

“Out, Out” Poem by Robert Frost

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The poem “Out, out” by Robert Frost is an emotional poem telling the story of a poor young boy who was cutting the woods with a saw in his hand. His sister called him for supper near the end of the day. And just like everyone at work, the boy got happy and excited that he no longer had to work. But how little people are aware of the unpredictability of life? The saw in the boy’s hand seemed to leap in excitement and got him injured. The sister wanted to take him to the doctor, but he was well aware that enough blood had been spilled from his body and the death was near. After his death, everyone went back to their work (Frost, *The Poetry of Robert Frost*).

“No more to build on there. And they, since they were not the ones dead, turned to their affairs.”

This line can serve as a thesis statement of the poem. It tells the reality of this world and its people. The world is not sincere with anyone, and death is inevitable. The world and its affairs continue in the same fashion and do not stop on anyone’s death, whether the dying person is a well-known rich person or a poor young boy cutting the woods. The lines are quite heartbreaking, especially because the young one’s death is the most grievous one. The death of the old man is always considered expected, and a newborn’s death is forgotten as he didn’t spend any such moment of his life in this world. But a young boy who worked to help his family fulfill their needs is taken as a big loss to the family and the community. But even after such a death, the people moved on with their work like they used to (Frost, *The Poetry of Robert Frost*).

The author of the poem asserts the fact that we all work hard enough to live and survive without thinking that any moment could be our last, just like the boy in the poem. He didn’t have a bit of an idea that the saw, which helps him in his work, could be the reason for his death.

“Little—less—nothing!—and that ended it.” And this is exactly how our lives are. We move towards little, then less, and finally, we are nothing but dust. In other words, the author convinces us that dust returns to dust. We strive for more and more our whole lives, but death is actually the bitter reality of our lives. The poem makes its readers aware of the unpredictability of this world, its people, and our own lives. When someone dies, people do not pause their lives for that grief. The world and its people still continue to function and wait for any other body to become spiritless. We get attached to worldly things, our jobs, and relationships, but once we’re gone, nothing will remain. These things, jobs, and our relations, nothing will stay beside us. Hence, the living ones will keep on doing their work since they aren’t the dead ones. *“And they, since they were not the ones dead, turned to their affairs.”* One notable thing related to death is the lamenting that people do. The author laments in the poem that if the boy had been given an off day from work or just half an hour break, he could have been away from the tragic incident that led him to death (Frost, “Out, Out-”).

“Call it a day, I wish they might have said

To please the boy by giving him the half-hour

That a boy counts so much when saved from work.”

In speaking such statements, we often forget that what's meant to be happens. We can't control our lives, neither can we stop death from overcoming our lives. It can stand right in front of us wherever and whenever it has to be. It is true that death teaches us all. The living ones do not realize those things that the people who come face to face with death. When someone's near death, the realization is actual. The poem also tells that the boy became well aware of his death when he saw how much blood had been spilled from his body (Frost, "Out, Out-").

“Half in appeal, but half as if to keep

The life from spilling. Then the boy saw all

Since he was old enough to know, big boy

Doing a man's work, though a child at heart.”

The lines show that, at first, the person comes into a state of denial and appeals for help so that he may survive and not have to face death. But as the time comes near, the person accepts the reality and does not fight against it. He humbly gives himself in the arms of death. In the poem, the boy is half in an appealing mode but then sensibly accepts that enough life has gone from his body. He also refuses to go to the doctor and cut the hand off since he doesn't want to die without his one hand, the hand with which he used to hold his saw and cut the wood (Frost, *The Poetry of Robert Frost*).

“And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled,

As it ran light or had to bear a load.”

The author uses the words 'snarled and rattled' in a manner that tells something bad was about to happen or the saw had some evil intention. The ending of the poem showed that the saw actually had to bear a load, a load of a young boy's death. The author ends the poem with a complete detachment, nearly as if nobody had anything to do with the young boy's death. Just like the soldiers ignore the dead bodies scattered around on the battlefield, the people present at the time of the incident ignore the young boy's death as if nothing had happened. This truly depicts that no matter what we do in

this world, we have to die. No matter what we do for people, they forget. And doesn't matter if we're living or dead; people don't care (Frost, "Out, Out-").

Since the poem was written during the period of the First World War, it is known to demonstrate the true picture of the innocent lives that were wasted in the war. Many innocent people, like the young boy in the poem, would have been busy doing something to live, but the war ended their lives just like that saw, which leaped out of the boy's hand and cut him. Just like the saw cut the boy's hand, the war ended up cutting and destroying people's dreams, their lives, and their futures. Similar to the insensitive people in the war, the people working with the young boy turned back to their lives and their work. The author depicts the insensitivity and heartlessness of the people we are and the people we're surrounded with. But the author feels the pain for the young boy's unexpected death. The words and phrases he used, such as, "*So. But the hand was gone already,*" and "*No more to build on there,*" show his inability to express his distressing emotions and the question as to why such a young boy had to die (Frost, *The Poetry of Robert Frost*; Frost et al.).

Works Cited

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