

UNIT-I

Reluctance

By Robert Frost

Out through the fields and the woods
And over the walls I have wended;
I have climbed the hills of view
And looked at the world, and descended;
I have come by the highway home,
And lo, it is ended.

The leaves are all dead on the ground,
Save those that the oak is keeping
To ravel them one by one
And let them go scraping and creeping
Out over the crusted snow,
When others are sleeping.

And the dead leaves lie huddled and still,
No longer blown hither and thither;
The last lone aster is gone;
The flowers of the witch hazel wither;
The heart is still aching to seek,
But the feet question "Whither?"

Ah, when to the heart of man
Was it ever less than a treason
To go with the drift of things,
To yield with a grace to reason,
And bow and accept the end
Of a love or a season?

OUTLINE OF THE POEM

Describing the end of a journey in the Fall, the poet tells us that he completed his journey through the fields and forests, and over the walls. 'Over the walls' and a few other phrases that follow clearly indicate that the poet's mind was occupied with thoughts when he was travelling. He tells us that he has climbed the visible hills and looked at the world with his eyes, and then has come down. He has taken the road leading homeward, and is happy that the journey is now over. Since it is the autumnal season, the dead and dried leaves are lying scattered over the ground. But the oak is holding back some of its leaves to drop them, later on, one by one and to allow them to be carried away by the force of the wind along the earth with a rubbing and disturbing sound. These leaves will be blown over the crust of snow only to disturb the sound sleepers. Continuing the description of the dead leaves, the poet says that they are lying heaped up in a disorderly fashion and are peaceful. They are no more driven from one place to another. The Michaelmas daisy, that was lonely and last in its bloom, is gone. The yellow flowers of the shrub, known as the 'witch hazel' are now dried up. The poet's heart is still anxious to seek after the truth, but the feet stop with a big and baffling question 'Whither'. The overwhelming question with the poet is whether he should change his heart inclined to search because the feet are tired or because of the physical hindrance. Would, it not be an act or disloyalty

for him to kill the conscience? Should he change his heart with the change of material things? Should he surrender it to the control of reason? Should he reconcile himself with the fallen fate of lost love and past summer season? These are some of the fundamental issues the answer of which the poet is seeking after.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

The first three stanzas of the poem give the impression that this is a simple poem about nature. However, upon further reading the reader finds that the poem is, in fact, about lost love. The snow is symbolic of the man's pain and suffering. The leaves are symbolic of hope. This is one of the many poems of Frost's that use nature in this way. This poem is written in four stanzas with six lines in each. It is rhymed as ABCBDB. The poem is an expression of the poet's mood of melancholy and isolation. In the words of Lawrence Thompson, "On the first plane of denotation, the stanzas employ visual images which describe the end of a journey, late in the fall. Although the mood of the title is conveyed between the lines, there is no indication of the cause for such a mood." The suspense is kept unto the last line of pointed analogy between the outer sadness over the end of the summer and the inner sadness over the end of a love.

Robert Frost's lyric poem "Reluctance" explores the inner conflict related to aging and death. Now home, it seems as though his journey through life is at its end. However, he refuses to simply accept his fate and expresses reluctance to go. Frost uses an extended metaphor, specific diction and parallelism to convey the speaker's unwillingness to accept the continuity of life. Throughout the first stanza the speaker recounts a life full of travel and adventure. The terms "fields" and "woods" suggest the wilderness; "fields," "walls," and "highway," reflect civilization. This juxtaposition suggests that he has led a long life and has experienced all that life has to offer. There are many examples of consonance throughout this piece such as, "wended" and "descended;" "scraping" and "creeping;" "hither," "thither," and "wither;" and "treason" and "reason." These examples of consonance emphasize these words and add to the overall dreary mood of the poem. True to the fashion of a typical lyric poem, the ABCBDB rhyme scheme creates a very melodic rhythm that parallels both the nature of the leaves and the travels of the speaker. Leaves are often described as floating through the air; similarly, Frost makes the man's travels very ____ (as seen by the lines, "I have climbed the hills of view/ And looked at the world, and descended.") Frost paints a picture of the man traveling up and over the rounded hills, a very continuous, flowing image.

In the poem 'Reluctance' by Robert Frost the poet sets out to describe walks he has enjoyed in the Fall, just as winter is coming on, and the thoughts they engendered in his mind about beginnings and endings and our response to them as humans. Firstly, after taking us with him on some of these virtual walks, he describes how falling Fall leaves behave, before he goes on to tackle us. 'Out, over, climbed, looked, descended, come are all from the language of 'place' and help to give a sense of distance to us and to the poem, creating vistas for us as if Frost is talking about the whole world. The tone is reflective, even slightly melancholy as the poet contemplates the end of summer walks. He seems reluctant to end one phase of summer and enter another - winter. The oak too is reluctant, does not want to give up its leaves. He then moves on to us, and to how we handle change - with graceful acceptance or reluctant refusal.

The wonderous heart had seen and felt a lot while try to find the meaning in the void that was left after the disappearance of love. The world chosen by the author lead the reader to think that something is wrong and everything hurts .It is love...seen at its sunset descends and "is ended":
"And looked at the world, and descended;/i have come by the highway home /And lo it is ended".
The choice of the season is not left to chance ,seems the imagery comes to reinforce the thoughts of the author through very vivid images : "The leaves are all dead on the ground", "over the crusted snow", "scraping and creeping", "and the dead leaves lie huddled and still,/no longer blown hither and thither".

The snow ,even though is suggesting purity and maybe a new beginning, is crusted which means that everything is frozen starting with nature and ending with the flame of love : "the last aster is gone/ the flowers of the witch-hazel wither". The pain suffered due to this twilight("the heart is still aching to seek")is

emphasize by the fact that there seems to be no purpose left ,no tomorrow,no shores to be looking for(“but the feet question ‘Whither’ ”). It seems that with this loss there comes lack of purpose and desire to find a meaningful answer to all this.

The poem ends with a rhetorical question which comprises a general truth not yet found .It is a question addressed to the Gods or maybe to the human nature which is so mysterious and difficult to comprehend . This last question can be a cry for an answer that will never come , but will hunt the mind of the man/person who finds it difficult to yield in front of reality because the heart of that person will see this acceptance of defeat as a treason even though she cannot change irreversible facts. The message is a simple one which states that no matter the time or the place this state of facts will always be the same ,because man can never bow in front of the evidence and accept that which faith or the Gods has chosen for him. He will always question them and look for an answer and fight against all odds to succeed in preserving this feeling of love that makes him happy. So season may come and go and so may love but the heart of man will always consider it a treason”to bow and accept the end of a love or a season”.

It is human hubris that will make man fight and never accept the evidence of facts that everything is mortal and passing in this world and that you can never preserve ,that which is ephemeral but in the same time so beautiful(last stanza*)... The whole poem is an environmental metaphor since the loss of love is compared with the end of autumn and the choice of epithets helps the author creat a vivid imagery of loss ,lament and grief. Yet the end leaves place for hope because it is the question nature of man that keeps him going.

TITLE ANALYSIS

The title gives us a very basic opening to the topic but does not explore why it is important but the title compels readers to begin analyzing about reluctance right away displaying its significance. Furthermore, the contrast between the first stanza and the third displays the darkness enshrouding giving up. The first stanza use of imagery creates a relaxing and joyous scene in “I have climbed the hills of view and looked at the world, and descended” (3-4). The imagery shows he has reached the top of the world or is at a great point in his life and is very positive but then it ends as readers move further into the poem since he has “descended”. However in the third stanza it says “the dead leaves lie huddled and still no longer blown hither and thither” (13-14). This line is a scene of emptiness and gray. Life is gone and it gives an aura of boringness. The contrast against the first stanza shows how his life feels meaningless and unsatisfying which builds up to the importance of reluctance since one should not “bow and accept the end” (23) before even trying to change a situation fo

POEM 2

A Noiseless Patient Spider

by Walt Whitman

A noiseless patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

OUTLINE OF THE POEM

The poem 'A Noiseless Patient Spider' starts with the repetition of the title as 'A noiseless patient spider' to create an image in the mind of readers. A spider is personified when it is given the human characteristics like noiseless and patient in the poem. The speaker is looking at this tiny creature and wants us to feel about it. In this poem, the speaker observes a noiseless, patient spider on a promontory (a rock outcropping over the ocean). It leaves a mark on its vast surroundings by weaving its web. In the second stanza, the speaker compares the spider to his soul, which is always trying to make connections in the world. He addresses his soul, encouraging it to keep spinning because when "the gossamer thread [it] flings [catches] somewhere...", it will build the necessary bridges.

Analysis:

This poem is made up of two stanzas of five lines each. As usual, there is no set meter or rhyme scheme. The separation of stanzas in this poem represents a shift from literal (the speaker watching the spider make its web on the rock) to figurative (the speaker addressing his soul's attempts to make connections in the world). The aim of the poem is to draw the comparison between the speaker's soul and the spider, which is why the two stanzas mirror each other in size and structure.

In this poem, Whitman makes excellent use of imagery and metaphor. The speaker starts by vividly describing the experience of watching the spider weave its web, allowing the reader to share his fascination. In the second stanza, he elevates these images into metaphors for his soul's figurative desires: "to the bridge you will need be formed" and "till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere." Even the title of the poem is a descriptive image; the phrase "A noiseless patient spider" invokes the image of this tiny creature sitting perfectly still, waiting for its moment.

In this poem, the spider and the speaker's soul both face a similar plight. They must use their skills to build connections, searching for meaningful and effective bonds. In the first stanza, Whitman's characterization of the spider reads as somewhat hopeless - the creature is "isolated" and will be "ever unreeling" his web without any promise of making an impact on his "vast" environment. However, as is often the case with Whitman's poetry, the poem ends with an optimistic idea. Although it is difficult to "ceaselessly" search for connections, his soul will eventually be successful and then he can rest, just like a spider with a completed web.

"A Noiseless Patient Spider" is a lyric poem written by the 19th Century American poet Walt Whitman. Whitman originally wrote the poem as part of a longer piece, "Whispers of Heavenly Death," for *The Broadway, A London Magazine* in 1868. The poem was later republished in an 1891 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Although much shorter than many of his well-known poems, "A Noiseless Patient Spider" deals with one of the central concerns in Whitman's work: what it means to be an individual seeking and creating connections with the larger world.

ISOLATION AND CONNECTION

"A Noiseless Patient Spider" explores the relationship between the individual self and the larger world. The poem depicts a spider that is isolated in space but actively sending filaments "out of itself," seeking connection as it builds its web. This spider becomes an **extended metaphor** for the speaker's soul, which is likewise isolated and working to find a sense of connection. Ultimately, the poem suggests that in spite of the loneliness people might experience as individuals, the work of the soul is to constantly seek and make connections—however daunting such a task may be.

The speaker begins by describing the spider as “isolated” and in a “vacant vast surrounding,” essentially meaning it’s all by itself as far as the eye can see. Yet the spider is also described as “patient” and “tireless” as it “explore[s]” its surroundings and makes its web. It “launch[es] forth” filament after filament into this unknown space, indicating its willingness to put itself out there, as it were—something the poem thus implies is an invaluable part of establishing meaningful connections; after all, the spider can’t expect the web to build itself.

The spider then becomes a metaphor for the speaker’s soul, which is described as “detached, in measureless oceans of space”—mirroring the image of the spider’s isolation. Like the spider with its filaments, the soul is described as “ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing” out “gossamer thread” to “catch somewhere.” The spiritual work of the speaker, then, reflects the work of the spider; the soul, like the spider, must actively seek the connections it desires, and can do so by sending forth parts of itself.

What exactly this means is open to interpretation, though it’s possible that those “gossamer threads” refer to person’s personal writing, artwork, or other creative endeavor that might reflect who they are. What’s clear is that once a connection is formed, it becomes a sort of “anchor”—offering the speaker stability and comfort within the “measureless oceans of space.”

The poem switches to the future tense in its final lines, which suggests that the work of the soul is ongoing: perhaps, just as spiders have to create new webs many times, the soul too must constantly seek new connections, constantly send forth the “threads” that will anchor it. The future tense also conveys a sense of uncertainty in the poem, since the connections are not yet complete.

At the same time, however, since readers can see that the spider’s work is both natural and inevitable—readers trust that the spider *will* create its web eventually, since that is simply what spiders do—the metaphor between spider and soul imparts a sense of hope in the poem’s ending. Like the spider with its web, the poem suggests that the soul will at some point find the “bridge” it “need[s].” In other words, the soul will succeed in making a connection to someone or something else.

What’s more, while the poem depicts both the spider and the soul as isolated, the metaphor it creates between them suggests that connection already exists. The poem begins with a moment of connection between the speaker and the outside world, since it begins with the *speaker* observing the spider. Like the spider who “stood,” the soul is described as “standing,” and where the spider “explore[d]” its “surrounding,” the soul is “surrounded” by “space.” The words “surrounding” and “surrounded” imply a presence outside the self, even if that presence is at first experienced as “measureless oceans of space.” Through its metaphor of a natural web, the poem thus ultimately suggests that people seek and make connections within a universe that is already, like a web, infinitely complex, meaningful, and interconnected.

POEM 3

EDGE

SYLVIA PLATH

The woman is perfected.
Her dead
Body wears the smile of accomplishment,
The Illusion of a Greek necessity

Flows in the scrolls of her toga,
Her Bare
Feet Seem to be saying;
We have come so far, it is over.
Each dead child coiled, a white serpent,
One at each little
Pitcher of milk, now empty.
She had folded
Them back into her body as petals
Of a rose close when the garden
Stiffens and odors bleed
From the sweet, deep throats of the night flower.
The moon has nothing to be sad about,
Staring from her hood to bone.
She is used to this sort of thing.
Her blacks crackle and drag (818).

OUTLINE SUMMARY OF THE POEM

This is Sylvia Plath's last poem, written mere days before she committed suicide. It is a short, bleak, and brutal piece that reflects the depth of her depression. This poem, comprised of ten two-line stanzas, is famously difficult to summarize due to its ambiguous, abstruse nature. It seems to be about a woman who has recently committed or is soon to commit suicide. It begins with the description of a "perfected" woman, whose dead body smiles with accomplishment. She wears a toga, and her feet are bare. The feet suggest that they have traveled far but have now reached their end.

Several dead children are folded like serpents, each with a pitcher of milk. The woman has folded them into her body. She compares this effect to rose petals which close when the garden "stiffens" and the night flower's odor issues forth. The moon looks down over this scene, but has no cause for sadness because she is used to "this sort of thing."

STANZA WISE ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

Lines 1-4

In the first lines of *'Edge'* the speaker begins by describing the nature of a dead woman. In her death, she is "perfected". She appears as she should've during life, with the "smile of accomplishment". This woman presents the appearance of "Greek necessity". She finally reaches some point of accomplishment. But, in a way, it is all an illusion. The woman appears pleased with herself and as the poem goes along a reader should ask this is the case.

Lines 5-8

In the next two couplets of *'Edge'*, the poet adds details to the image of the dead woman. These are lovely, evocative images, made even more impactful when one remembers that she is dead. Her toga is perfectly placed. Plath states that her feet seem to say "We have come so far, it is over". The distance she has traversed can be interpreted to mean life itself. She has lived as a woman in the world. She has faced the struggles that all women face and made it somewhere that she is finally beyond judgement and control.

Lines 9-12

It turns out, in lines nine through twelve, that she has killed her children along with herself. They are coiled next to her. Plath uses a powerful metaphor to compare them to serpents. They are "white" in their death and each is near her breast. This alludes to a loss of the warmth of motherhood, a life force, that is now gone along with all their lives.

These lines also raise questions about the role of these children. How one might ask, did the woman feel about her children?

Lines 13-16

In line thirteen of *'Edge'*, the poet describes how the woman folded her children back into her body. They are no longer separate from her. In death, they return to her. Whatever existence they had perhaps related to the image of the serpents, she chose to remove them from it.

The poet uses a simile to compare this action to the petals of a rose closing up at night. The language in this line seems to allude to the female body. The "odors," "flower," and "bleeds" all relate to female menstruation as it is commonly spoken about in poetic works. These are beautiful images, but they are also painful. This woman's life was not something to be celebrated. She sought to flee from it and only then has she found some peace.

Lines 17-20

The reference to the moon in line seventeen of *'Edge'* can also be connected to menstruation language in the previous couplet. In the last four lines, she speaks about the moon and its place in all this. It has been watching everything play out from her spot in the sky, but has "nothing to be sad about". She stares down at the earth regularly and has grown used to "this sort of thing".

The moon is often used as a symbol for women and therefore it makes sense that the moon would be used to this kind of suffering and loss. How many women before this one, and how many after, including Plath herself, committed suicide in order to escape oppression and depression

CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE POEM

This poem was written only days before Sylvia Plath committed suicide in February of 1963. It may be the last piece of poetry she ever wrote. *'Edge'* is a complex and interesting poem that is incredibly multifaceted. It is filled with pain, sadness and longing, emotions one must speculate were part of Plath's last days as well. It explores themes of death, motherhood, and the treatment of women.

This poem is generally characteristic of Plath's late work, which, as Tim Kendall writes, features "a style of heightened detachment and resignation in the face of an intractable destiny."

The poem is made up of a series of powerful images that get to the heart of depression and the treatment of women within historical and contemporary society. She depicts this woman as finally "perfected". She has reached a state where no one can touch her and she is just as placid and calm as men would like her to be. Alongside her body are those of her two children. She took them into death with her in order to shuttle them back, metaphorically, into her body. The poem ends with images of menstruation, blood, death, and the moon.

'Edge' by Sylvia Plath is a twenty-line poem that is separated into sets of two lines, known as couplets. These couplets do not follow a specific rhyme scheme or metrical pattern. All the lines vary in length but more often than not one line couplet is significantly shorter than the other. Despite the lack of a structured rhyme scheme, there are examples of rhyme within the poem. Half-rhyme, also known as slant or partial rhyme, is seen through the repetition of assonance or consonance. This means that either a vowel or consonant sound is reused within one line or multiple lines of verse. For example, the long "e" in "Feet" and "seem" in line seven and the "l" consonant in "child," "coiled," and "little" in lines nine and ten.

Plath makes use of several poetic techniques in *'Edge'*. These include but are not limited to metaphor, simile, and enjambment. The first, metaphor is a comparison between two unlike things that does not use "like" or "as" is also present in the text. When using this technique a poet is saying that one thing is another thing, they aren't just similar. In lines nine and ten Plath uses a metaphor to describe the woman's dead, white children who are curled up as serpents next to her.

A simile is a comparison between two unlike things that uses the words "like" or "as". A poet uses this kind of figurative language to say that one thing is similar to another, not like metaphor, that it "is"

another. For example, when the poet speaks about how the woman brought the children back to her body. She took "Them back into her body as petals / Of a rose close when the garden".

Another important technique commonly used in poetry is enjambment. It occurs when a line is cut off before its natural stopping point. Enjambment 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. This technique is used throughout the poem. It can be seen in the transitions between lines two and three.

The moon is an interesting image. Personified as a woman, the moon looks down impassively because she is accustomed to such scenes of tragedy. The "perfected" woman's death is neither unnatural nor unusual, but instead merely one aspect of human existence. The ironic detachment lies in the social stigma against suicide, and the narrator's belief that it is of no great significance. It does not affect the cosmic order, as reflected in the moon's perspective. The female personification of the disinterested observer also suggests that women are more accustomed to tragedy than men are.

POEM 4

Democracy

BY Langston Hughes

Democracy will not come
Today, this year
Nor ever
Through compromise and fear.

I have as much right
As the other fellow has
To stand
On my two feet
And own the land.

I tire so of hearing people say,
Let things take their course.
Tomorrow is another day.
I do not need my freedom when I'm dead.
I cannot live on tomorrow's bread.

Freedom
Is a strong seed
Planted
In a great need.

I live here, too.
I want freedom
Just as you.

OUTLINE OF THE POEM

'*Democracy*' was published in 1949 and is focused on the fight for equal rights under the law including the ability to vote for African Americans. The diction and syntax in this poem are quite simple and easy to understand. This makes sense as the poem was meant to appeal to everyone and anyone, from any time or any place. All the lines in this poem are easy to understand but, the speaker is asking the reader to do more than understand. They should hear, feel, and support what the speaker is saying and join in with his argument that democracy and freedom are human rights.

In the short lines of this poem, the speaker makes the argument that they deserve to be free and "stand" on the "land" as much as "you" do. They have thus far been denied equal rights but it's time for things to change. Incremental change, he adds, or the promise of change in the future is not enough. He and all those in the Black community (or anyone who has been disenfranchised for that matter) want and deserve the same rights as those in power.

STANZA WISE ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

Stanza One

In the first stanza of '*Democracy*,' the speaker begins with a simple statement. He tells the reader, over the four lines of this stanza, that democracy is not going to be realized through "compromise" or through "fear". The masses will not be silenced into compliance through persuasion, freedom is not gained through incremental changes but through a complete overhaul of the system that has sought to disenfranchise Black voters at every turn. The use of enjambment in these lines makes the whole poem flow quite easily and smoothly. The arguments that Hughes puts forward are common sense. Anyone who has any empathy at all should be able to understand them.

Stanza Two

The second stanza is one of the two five-line stanzas in this poem. In it, he continues to use enjambment to make his case for democracy. The speaker states that he, as a Black man in America, has just as much right to "stand / On [his] own two feet" as anyone else. He should be able to "own the land" he lives on or works on and then be able to vote and act in his own interests. The use of rhyme in these lines makes perfect sense. There are examples of half-rhyme, but there are also full rhymes. In this stanza the words "stand" and "land" rhyme. This adds a certain solidness to the statement, lining up nicely with the equal power under a law that the speaker is looking for.

Stanza Three

The third stanza expresses the speaker's irritation and exhaustion with the arguments that put off equal rights for years and years. Some say that things should be allowed to "take their course" and that eventually, it will all work out. Hughes doesn't feel the same way. He can't live on the hopes of tomorrow. He uses a metaphor to describe that hope as food that he can't access when he's starving. Freedom 10, 20, or 100 years in the future does nothing for him today.

Stanza Four

The fourth stanza of '*Democracy*' is four lines long, and two of these lines are single words. Freedom, he says (using another metaphor), is a "strong seed" that's planted "In a great need". The Black community was, and unfortunately still is, in need of protection that the groups take for granted in the United States and around the world.

By using the seed as a metaphor for freedom, this speaker is saying that it will grow steadily and then flourish. Freedom will allow his community to blossom in strength and then benefit the larger American community and the world community.

Stanza Five

The fifth stanza of *'Democracy,'* also contains one of the very effective, perfect end-rhymes. The words "too" and "you" drive the point home that the speaker is just like "you," the listener. He deserves to "live here" and have freedom "just as you" experience it.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE POEM

Throughout *'Democracy'* Hughes explores themes of equal rights, freedom, and change. He is advocating for all three of these things while at the same time asking the reader to consider why he has to work for them at all. Equal rights for all should mean equal rights for all. He is speaking for any minority whose rights under the law have been stomped out or suppressed all over the world, but specifically in America.

'Democracy' by Langston Hughes is a five stanza poem that is separated into uneven sets of lines. The first and fourth stanzas have four lines (making them quatrains), the second and third have five (they're quintains) and the final stanza has only three lines (making it a tercet). The poem is written in free-verse but there are some examples of rhyme within it. For instance, "fear" and "year" in stanza one and "stand" and "land" in stanza two. These rhymes are used to emphasize certain lines and make sure the reader is paying close attention to how the lines work together.

Hughes makes use of several literary devices in *'Democracy'*. These include but are not limited to metaphor, alliteration, and enjambment. The first of these, metaphor, is seen twice in this short poem. The first example is in stanza three when the poet talks about "tomorrow's bread" and then at the end of the poem when he compares freedom to a "strong seed".

Enjambment is seen throughout the poem, almost every line is enjambed. Take for example the transition between lines one and two of the first stanza as well as that between lines two and three of stanza four. Alliteration is another common technique. It is used to help increase the rhyme and rhythm of a poem. This is especially important for the musical quality of verses, a fact which benefited Bob Marley's version of this poem/song. For example, "strong seed" in stanza four and "fellow" and "feet" in stanza two.

POEM 5

The Wolves

BY ALLEN TATE

There are wolves in the next room waiting
With heads bent low, thrust out, breathing
At nothing in the dark; between them and me
A white door patched with light from the hall
Where it seems never (so still is the house)
A man has walked from the front door to the stair.
It has all been forever. Beasts claw the floor.
I've brooded on angels and archfiends
But no man has ever sat where the next room's
Crowded with wolves, and for the honor of man
I affirm that never have I before. Now while

I have looked for the evening star at a cold window
And whistled when Arcturus spilt his light,
I've heard the wolves scuffle, and said: So this
Is man; so—what better conclusion is there—
The day will not follow night, and the heart
Of man has a little dignity, but less patience
Than a wolf's, and a duller sense that cannot
Smell its own mortality. (This and other
Meditations will be suited to other times
After dog silence howls his epitaph.)
Now remember courage, go to the door,
Open it and see whether coiled on the bed
Or cringing by the wall, a savage beast
Maybe with golden hair, with deep eyes
Like a bearded spider on a sunlit floor
Will snarl-and man can never be alone.