
A Theme of The Love of the Mother in the Poem

Analysis of "Ballad of Birmingham" by Dudley Randall

I know you aren't a huge fan of poetry but I think you would change your mind if you just took one look at this poem. I was looking through my Literature book and saw this poem and thought that it fit what I am always telling you; if it is my turn to die I am going to die regardless of what I am doing." The poem, "Ballad of Birmingham" by Dudley Randall is about a little girl and her mom discussing why she can't go downtown. The mother thinks it is too dangerous for the little girl and says that she can go to the church instead. In the end, the child goes to the church but dies in an explosion, in the church. I thought of you when I read this because you are always concerned with what I am doing and if I am going to be all right. You are terrified that I am going to be flying in a 4 seated airplane next Friday, but you just need to remember what I always say "if it's time for me to die, then it doesn't matter what I'm doing" along with remembering this poem.

There are phrases in the poem that are more meaningful and stand out drawing you to this poem in spite of your disinterest in poetry. This has a very interesting rhyme sequencing that draws your attention even more. Every other line usually rhymes, which makes each stanza, stand out. In the first stanza, "Mother dear, may I go downtown/Instead of out to play, / and march the streets of Birmingham/ In a Freedom March today?", you can see the rhyming that occurs between lines 2 and 4.

This poem also shows a thing called persona. The author appears to be standing by and observing, but in the end you get the sense that the author is the mother looking back at what happened to her daughter. This is very evident in lines 5 and 6 "no, baby, no, you may not go, / For the dogs are fierce and wild" and lines 13 and 14 "no, baby, no, you may not go, / For I fear those guns will fire." The mother and daughter 's roles are shown by the different tones in the poem. The mother shows a protective tone, which seems to come from experience rather than speculation. A mother by nature will shelter a child at all costs to keep her child safe. There usually is a problem with what the mother thinks vs. what the child thinks should happen. The voice in the poem is shown by how the mother talks to her child in a concerned manner because she fears that something may happen to her. The child however has a different tone. The child is upset that she can't go so what the others are doing because her mother thinks it's not safe as in lines 9 and 10 "but, mother, I won't be alone. / Other children will go with me". This movement back and forth between the appearance of the different tones of the mother and daughter is unique and adds validity to the poem.

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Mom when I was reading this poem, I thought that you would relate to it. This poem shows how our lives have been and still are even though I am now an adult. You always wanted me to be safe, and I wasn't permitted to do things that you thought weren't safe. The end of the poem fits due to the fact that I've tried to reassure you that I will be all right when you express your nervousness on my upcoming trip. Just remember that life is a planned event and what is to be will be and nothing either one of us does will change the outcome.

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