

Student Essay on Literary Techniques in "There Came a Wind Like a Bugle"

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Essay

"There came a wind like a bugle" is a poem by Emily Dickinson, in which she describes the menacing approach and intensity of a storm. Using the example of the storm, she makes this point: no matter what Nature throws at us, the world still endures. So despite the catastrophe we are left with a sense of wonder.

The poem begins with, "there came a wind like a bugle." This is an interesting simile in which the wind is described as a warning sound. Bugles were used in the army to direct soldiers to attack or to prepare for an incoming attack. This warning creates a looming feeling of approaching disaster; and brings a sense of unease, right from the start of the poem.

Lines three and six both mention the colour green. Line three uses it to describe a "green chill upon the heat." Line six incorporates another simile, comparing the sinister wind with "an emerald ghost." The green may be understood as cold and evil, which means Dickinson also uses colour to describe the weather.

Dickinson has made the whole of the third stanza appealing because the subjects of the sentence have been placed at the end of the paragraph, instead of the beginning.

"On a strange mob of panting trees,
And fences fled away,
And rivers where the houses ran
The living looked that day."

The first word is 'on', this makes the reader ask: on what? It is not until the last line that the reader discovers that it is the survivors that are observing these events. Metaphors are used with the 'panting trees', shaking in the wind and the 'rivers where the houses ran,' giving us a vivid image of the events. Dickinson describes the weather indirectly by its effect on things and people.

To conclude her poem, Dickinson talks of how with all the carnage and destruction the weather may bring the world still revolves and everything else still remains and withstands.

"How much can come
And much can go,
And yet abide the world!"

The last word is concluded with an exclamation mark, meaning Dickinson feels this line is particularly important, perhaps stressing more the wonder of the world rather than the horror. The weather, and the way she describes it plays a vital part in presenting this message of calamity and enduring.