

English 12: Stand-Alone Text

Scale: 5

Comment:

It displays a thoughtful analysis of contrast in the poem complemented by strong controlled writing.

Throughout each varying stage of life comes opportunity for experiences, yet also opportunity for reflection. Old age is coupled with a relatively quieter, simpler way of life than that of younger years and it is in that time that one is able to look back upon the memories of the past.

In the poem "The Dumka," by B.H. Fairchild, the old couple spends countless evenings sitting side by side as memories of their past flood over them. Their easy-going, quiet lifestyle grants them infinite opportunities to reflect upon prominent times of their younger years. "Alone in the house" (lines 29 and 30), "the music of their lives" (line 39) plays out and they are taken back to the thirties and the years of war.

In contrast to their old age, the 1930's and 1940's was a time marked by changes and eventful days. "The dust storms of the thirties" (line 12) stands out in history and the consequent hardships they experienced. Life bustled with excitement, but also with disappointment. They remember the prosperous years following WWII and the "new piano with its mahogany gleam." (line 28)

Transition to the present time, as they sit motionless, listening to the piano on the old phonograph. The times have changed and now all they're left with are the memories "[encircling] them." (line 18) Long gone are the days of new experiences and big changes – and the old couple are alone together, contemplating the days of their lives.

There is a time for making memories, and a time for reflecting back upon them. To everything there is a season...