

Module 8: Change and Its Impact
Topic 2 Content: Analysis of "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night"

Introduction


Analysis of "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night"

What is the speaker's attitude toward death?

How does the poet use repetition?

What is the message of the poem?

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In this interactivity, click each of the tabs to examine the poem "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night" by Dylan Thomas.

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Take a close look at the second stanza of the poem. A paraphrase of these lines could possibly include:

Smart people, at the end of their lives, know death ("dark") is just what happens. But because their words had "forked no lightning," or had split no lightning, they do not pass away quietly.

How does the poet use repetition?

What is the message of the poem?

What do you think "fork no lightning" means, and why does that keep people from going "gentle" toward death? The phrase "to fork lightning" refers to accomplishing something huge, monumental, and impressive. It is possible that the speaker is saying that wise people, even though they know death is near, do not drift off easily because they know they have not done enough with their lives. To the speaker, life takes precedence over death, which should be avoided as much as possible.

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How does the poet use repetition?

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How does the poet use repetition?

What is the effect that repeating the lines "Do not go gentle into that good night" and "Rage, rage against the dying of the light" have on the poem?

These urgings from the speaker make it very clear from the beginning that the speaker is addressing someone who is near the end of life. It is possible that the speaker is addressing someone who has given up on living, and this appeal is all the speaker has left. The repetition emphasizes the speaker's persistent intent on making his request (or demand) clear to the intended recipient.

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What is the message of the poem?

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What is the speaker's attitude toward death?

What is the message of the poem?

By the end of the last stanza, it is clear that there are two characters in this poem: the speaker and a listener. But whom is the speaking of the poem talking to? And how do you know this?

How does the poet use repetition?

In first line of the final stanza, the speaker directly address the listener when he says, "And you, my father." Thus, the speaker is talking to his dying father. While his father lies on his death bed, the speaker urges his father to fight death and continue living.

What is the message of the poem?

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