

Let Evening Come By Jane Kenyon

Let Evening Come

Let the light of late afternoon
shine through chinks in the barn, moving
up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the cricket take up chafing
as a woman takes up her needles
and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned
in long grass. Let the stars appear
and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den.
Let the wind die down. Let the shed
go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop
in the oats, to air in the lung
let evening come.

Let it come, as it will, and don't
be afraid. God does not leave us
comfortless, so let evening come.

Jane Kenyon

Let Evening Come by Jane Kenyon is a deeply evocative poem that captures the essence of the transition from day to night, symbolizing reflection, acceptance, and serenity. Jane Kenyon, an acclaimed American poet, masterfully weaves imagery and emotion into her verses, creating a space for readers to contemplate the beauty of the natural world and the passage of time. In this article, we will explore the themes, structure, and significance of "Let Evening Come," as well as Kenyon's life and poetic style.

Overview of Jane Kenyon's Life and Work

Jane Kenyon was born on May 23, 1947, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. She was a prominent figure in contemporary American poetry, known for her insightful observations and emotional depth. Kenyon's work often reflects her close relationship with nature and her experiences in rural New Hampshire. She published several acclaimed collections, including:

- "The Boat of Quiet Hours" (1986)
- "From Room to Room" (1990)
- "Let Evening Come" (1990)
- "Constance" (1993)

Kenyon's poetry is often characterized by its clarity and accessibility, yet it is imbued with profound insights that resonate with readers on multiple levels. Her work has garnered numerous awards, and she served as the poet laureate of New Hampshire from 1995 until her death in 1995.

Analysis of "Let Evening Come"

"Let Evening Come" is one of Kenyon's most celebrated poems, encapsulating the beauty and tranquility of evening while delving into deeper themes of acceptance and the inevitability of life's transitions.

Structure and Form

The poem consists of a series of short, declarative statements that flow seamlessly into one another. This structure creates a rhythmic quality, inviting readers to reflect on each line's significance. The use of enjambment allows thoughts to spill over from one line to the next, mirroring the natural progression of the evening itself.

Thematic Elements

Several key themes emerge from "Let Evening Come," including:

1. Acceptance of Nature: The poem urges readers to embrace the natural cycle of life, recognizing that evening—often seen as an end—can also represent a time of peace and contemplation.
2. The Passage of Time: Kenyon reflects on the transient nature of life, encouraging acceptance of both life's joys and sorrows.
3. Solitude and Reflection: The quiet of the evening serves as a backdrop for introspection, allowing individuals to connect with their thoughts and emotions.
4. Connection to the Universe: The poem hints at a larger existence beyond the individual, inviting readers to consider their place within the natural world.

Imagery and Symbolism

Kenyon employs rich imagery throughout the poem, evoking the sights, sounds, and feelings associated with evening. Some notable images include:

- Nature's Elements: The poem references specific elements of the natural world, such as the evening sky and the sounds of the environment, which ground the reader in a sensory experience.
- Light and Dark: The contrast between light and darkness serves as a metaphor for the dualities of life—joy and sorrow, beginning and ending.
- Animals and Life: The presence of animals in the poem symbolizes the continuity of life, suggesting that existence persists despite the changes that come with time.

The Emotional Impact of the Poem

"Let Evening Come" resonates with readers because it encapsulates universal emotions tied to the human experience. The invitation to "let evening come" can be interpreted as a call to surrender to life's rhythms, whether they are joyous or melancholic.

Personal Reflections

Many readers find solace in Kenyon's words, often reflecting on their own lives and experiences. The poem has been described as a meditation on acceptance, encouraging individuals to embrace their feelings and acknowledge the beauty found in moments of stillness.

Quotes and Lines of Significance

Certain lines from the poem stand out for their poignant simplicity and depth. Here are a few examples:

- "Let the light of the moon / shine on the water."

- "Let evening come."

These lines encapsulate the poem's central message, emphasizing the importance of allowing life to unfold naturally, without resistance.

Legacy of Jane Kenyon and "Let Evening Come"

Jane Kenyon's poetry continues to inspire and resonate with readers, and "Let Evening Come" remains a powerful testament to her skill as a poet. The poem is often included in anthologies and taught in literature classes, reflecting its enduring relevance.

Influence on Contemporary Poetry

Kenyon's work has influenced a generation of poets who strive to capture the nuances of everyday life and the beauty of the natural world in their writing. Her ability to combine personal experience with universal themes has made her a revered figure in American literature.

Conclusion

In summary, *Let Evening Come* by Jane Kenyon is more than just a poem about the transition from day to night; it is a meditation on acceptance, reflection, and the beauty of life's cycles. Through her evocative imagery and relatable themes, Kenyon invites readers to embrace the quiet moments of life, allowing them to find peace and solace in the natural world. Her legacy as a poet continues to inspire readers and writers alike, reminding us of the power of language to convey profound truths about our existence. Whether you are a long-time admirer of Kenyon's work or new to her poetry, "Let Evening Come" offers a timeless reminder to appreciate the beauty in both light and darkness.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the central theme of 'Let Evening Come' by Jane Kenyon?

The central theme of 'Let Evening Come' revolves around acceptance, the passage of time, and finding peace in the natural world as evening symbolizes both an ending and a moment of reflection.

How does Jane Kenyon use imagery in 'Let Evening Come'?

Kenyon employs rich imagery related to nature and the evening, utilizing vivid descriptions to evoke a sense of tranquility and to illustrate the beauty found in life's transitions.

What emotions are conveyed in the poem 'Let Evening Come'?

The poem conveys a mix of emotions including calmness, nostalgia, and a sense of resignation, encouraging readers to embrace the quiet moments in life.

How does 'Let Evening Come' reflect Jane Kenyon's personal experiences?

Kenyon's poetry often reflects her own struggles with mental health and the simplicity of rural life, and 'Let Evening Come' mirrors her contemplative nature and appreciation for the ordinary.

What literary devices are prominent in 'Let Evening Come'?

Prominent literary devices in the poem include personification, metaphor, and repetition, all of which enhance its meditative quality and emotional depth.

In what ways does 'Let Evening Come' address the concept of mortality?

The poem subtly addresses mortality by contemplating the end of the day as a metaphor for life's inevitable conclusion, encouraging readers to find solace in the natural cycle of existence.

What role does nature play in 'Let Evening Come'?

Nature plays a crucial role in the poem, serving as a backdrop that reflects the speaker's inner thoughts and feelings, and illustrating the connection between human experience and the natural world.

How can 'Let Evening Come' be interpreted as a call to mindfulness?

The poem can be seen as a call to mindfulness by urging readers to be present in the moment, appreciating the beauty of the evening and the simple joys of life.

What impact did 'Let Evening Come' have on contemporary poetry?

'Let Evening Come' has impacted contemporary poetry by exemplifying how personal and accessible language can convey profound themes, influencing poets to explore intimacy and the natural world in their work.

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