

Frost at Midnight By: S. T. Coleridge

Dr. Faisal A. Hayder Al-Doori

Summary

At the beginning of the poem, frost starts moving through the midnight. The poet or the speaker is living upstairs only with his baby sleeping in its cradle. The quietness and silence of the night attract the poet because it seems to be confusing. He thinks that some secrets are going to be formulated and haunted the cottage, nature and town.

A "stranger" is the term used in the poem to define "a film of soot flutters on the grate of the fireplace." The speaker feels that he is like this stranger because of loneliness and his thoughts are flickering like this fluttering "stranger." He is thinking of "how the Spirit (either the human spirit or the Holy Spirit or both) searches for an echo of itself in the world of thought. This "stranger" reminds him when he was a pupil, looking at a stranger roaming on the schoolroom's fireplace, dreaming with a visitor to come, may be one of his relatives or friends or the bell of the Church rings to change the boring state of the schoolroom.

The poet hopes that his baby son, Hartely Coleridge, will live in harmony with Nature more than his father who spent his primary study in London.

The poet believes that God have a connection with human beings through Nature. The language of Nature is eternal and it is an example to prove the creator's existence. The last lines of the poem indicate that the poet predicts that his son will be happy even in winter because of God's presence.

Speaker:

The speaker is the poet himself. His real life is discussed. The speaker is calling his memory. "Coleridge's childhood, his life in school in London and in the country, and his hopes for his son, Hartley" are revealed. Today, 'someone might've called it "confessional" poetry.'

The poem reveals "that Coleridge is a dreamer, intensely thoughtful and intelligent, very religious, and with a possible fondness for solitude and brooding. But he's also clearly someone who loves and cares about the people around him. In this case, he concentrates on his hopes for his baby son, wishing him a good life."

Setting

In "Frost at Midnight," the place where Coleridge was living at the time is described—a cottage in Nether Stowey, Somerset, England, near the Quantock Hills". The poet also recalls "on his childhood, as a student at Christ's Hospital School in London, and his birthplace, way out on Ottery St. Mary, on the southwest side of England".

The setting plays a pivotal role in the poem, since it tackles Nature, and shows the differences between life in the city and life in the country. For Coleridge, Nature is identified with God. Nature, for him, 'is really a message or a revelation from God. On the other hand, being stuck in the city seems to be a boring and rather isolating experience. Child Coleridge hopes that an unknown "stranger" will suddenly visit him as he's sitting, daydreaming in class'.

Form

The poem is written in blank verse because "it is suitable for meditation" and it is like the ordinary speech. The meter of the poem is iambic pentameter.

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After describing the silence and natural stillness of life at his cottage (now known as "Coleridge Cottage" as a fairly famous tourist stop), and relating the constricting experience of his childhood in the city, Coleridge hopes that his baby son Hartley will lead a freer, happier existence in the country, communing with God and Nature. The poem definitely prefers this more rural lifestyle to the urban way of doing things, and it's colored by [imagery](#) picked directly from that location: lakes, mountains,

clouds, frost, and icicles hanging from the cottage roofs. It
sounds like a picture postcard

