

literal rep. verb or adj. = **ambiguous** ← adj. = subtle function relationship

**Mending Wall** singular (1914)  
 ambig. res. vague  
 Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
 That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,  
 And spills the upper boulders in the sun;  
 And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.  
 The work of hunters is another thing:  
 I have come after them and made repair

Where they have left not one stone on a stone,  
 But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,  
 To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,  
 No one has seen them made or heard them made,  
 But at spring mending-time we find them there.  
 I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;

And on a day we meet to walk the line  
 And set the wall between us once again.  
 We keep the wall between us as we go.  
 To each the boulders that have fallen to each. rep.  
 And some are loaves and some so nearly balls  
 We have to use a spell to make them balance:  
 "Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"  
 We wear our fingers rough with handling them.  
 Oh, just another kind of out-door game, — metaphor  
 One on a side. It comes to little more:  
 There where it is we do not need the wall!  
 He is all pine and I am apple orchard.

My apple trees will never get across  
 And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.  
 He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."  
 Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder  
 If I could put a notion in his head:  
 "Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it  
 Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.  
 Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
 What I was walling in or walling out,  
 And to whom I was like to give offence.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
 That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,  
 But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather  
 He said it for himself. I see him there  
 Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top  
 In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.  
 He moves in darkness as it seems to me,  
 Not of woods only and the shade of trees.  
 He will not go behind his father's saying,  
 And he likes having thought of it so well  
 He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

By end of poem, his over-responsiveness  
 to mending the wall ironically has  
 backfired; his imagination ultimately  
 contributed to the emotional  
 \*barriers bet. the speaker's  
 his neighbor's unrespon  
 wonder of energy

1st 4-sections = metaphors convey excitement + humor  
 last section = metaphors/similes turns serious + defensive + distrustful

\* **Sisyphean/Sisyphus**  
 Greek mythos - punished by gods to push rocks uphill for eternity

\* **Blank verse**  
 \* **Narrative poem**  
 \* **repetition**

\* lines 1-4 = speaker's awe of nature  
 (1st pov.)

\* lines 5-11 = he contrasts natural destruction w/ human destruction

\* lines 12-24 = describes how he + neighbor mend wall

\* lines 25-38 intro. contrast bet. the two men

\* **irony** - says one thing but means another thr. (=subtle irony)

\* lines 38-45 concludes the poem in a mood of mild frustration

anaphora "And"

Caesura

metaphorical

connects

Caesura

literal or figurative

ignorance + evil; light connects to truth

Symbolic of division bet. men

rhetorical qs = repr. internal confusion

sees neighbor as primitive "old savage" = narrow minded, dangerous

tradition

By end of poem

wonder of energy



'Out, Out—' (1916)

lit. allusion = Macbeth  
Shakespearean tragedy

The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard  
And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood,  
Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.  
And from there those that lifted eyes could count  
Five mountain ranges one behind the other

\*idealistic setting in intro.  
(lines 1-6)

Under the sunset far into Vermont. — setting

And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled,  
As it ran light, or had to bear a load. > personif.  
And nothing happened: day was all but done.

\*alliteration

\*onomatopoeia

"buzz"/"rattle"/"snarl"

Call it a day, (I wish they might have said

To please the boy by giving him the half hour  
That a boy counts so much when saved from work.

His sister stood beside him in her apron  
To tell them 'Supper.' At the word, the saw, caesura

\*iambic pentameter

\*blank verse

As if to prove saws knew what supper meant,  
Leaped out at the boy's hand, or seemed to leap—

\*repetition

He must have given the hand. However it was,  
Neither refused the meeting. But the hand! repetition

The boy's first outcry was a rueful laugh,  
As he swung toward them holding up the hand

Half in appeal, but half as if to keep simile  
The life from spilling. Then the boy saw all

play on word "saw"  
boy not man; work as burden

Since he was old enough to know, big boy  
Doing a man's work, though a child at heart—

He saw all spoiled. 'Don't let him cut my hand off—  
The doctor, when he comes. Don't let him, sister!' repetition

So But the hand was gone already. metaphor too late

The doctor put him in the dark of ether.  
He lay and puffed his lips out with his breath.

ambivalence = trans. bet. Dr.'s  
fright to callousness

And then—the watcher at his pulse took fright.  
No one believed. They listened at his heart.

caesura (midline end stop (s))

Little—less—nothing!—and that ended it.  
No more to build on there. And they, since they  
We're not the one dead, turned to their affairs.

> repetition "they" (3xs)

\*ambiguous = They  
= farmhands + doctor + sister?

✓ (callousness)  
\*briefness/brevity of one's life;  
esp. one young > attention to  
+ life both short  
symbolic of  
one another

Know the  
\*difference bet. ambiguity & ambivalence

ambivalence  
↑ mixed feelings  
or contradictory  
ideas about something

word or phrase  
that contains  
more than one  
meaning—can lead to  
vagueness unintentional humor

1st pov.  
ambig. speaker  
who?

simile  
ext. personification

narrat. shift