

Digging Summary

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"Digging" is about the poet's love and respect for his father and grandfather, who worked hard as farmers. The poet himself is different from his forefathers. He does not dig with a spade like them. Instead, he digs with his pen through his writing.

Pen and Sound of a Spade: The poem begins with the poet sitting at his desk. He is holding a pen between his fingers and thumb. The pen feels firm and comfortable in his hand, like a gun. Suddenly, he hears the sound of a spade under his window. It is the sound of his father's spade digging into the ground. He looks down and sees his father working outside.

Remembering His Father Working: This sound and sight take the poet back into his memories. He remembers his father working hard in the fields twenty years ago. His father's body bends and rises in rhythm as he digs the potato field. The poet describes in detail how his father pressed his boot on the spade. He lifted the soil with the spade and dug out the fresh potatoes. The children, including the poet, used to pick up the potatoes. The poet proudly says that his father could handle a spade very well, just like his grandfather before him.

Remembering His Grandfather's Work: Then, the poet remembers his grandfather, who was also an excellent digger. He used to cut turf (a kind of soil used for fuel) from the bogs. He worked faster and better than anyone else. The poet remembers a time when he took a bottle of milk to his grandfather while he was working. His grandfather drank quickly. Then he immediately went back to cutting and lifting the turf with great energy and skill.

The Poet Will Dig with His Pen: The poet can still remember the smell of the wet earth and the sound of the spade cutting through roots. These memories make him feel close to his family and their hard-working life. But then he admits that he cannot follow their path. He does not have a spade to dig like them. In the end, the poet looks again at the pen in his hand and says, *"I'll dig with it."* By this, he means that his work as a writer is also a kind of digging — not in the soil, but in the world of memories, thoughts, and emotions.

Main Idea: The poem shows deep respect for the poet's forefathers and their hard work. It also shows how the poet chooses a different kind of work — writing — which still connects him to their tradition of digging, but in a new way.