

Echo Literary Devices

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Figures of Speech

Simile

- **Definition:** A simile is a figure of speech that compares two different things using “like” or “as.”
- **Example:** “Eyes as bright / as sunlight on a stream”
- **Explanation:** Here, the beloved’s eyes are compared to sunlight shining on flowing water. The use of “as” makes it a direct simile.
- **Effect:** It creates a vivid picture in the reader’s mind of brightness, softness, and gentle light. This makes the beloved’s beauty more lively and clear.

Alliteration

- **Definition:** Alliteration is the repetition of the same sound in consecutive or nearby words.
- **Example:** “Pulse for pulse, breath for breath”
- **Explanation:** The repetition of the “p” and “b” sounds creates a soft musical rhythm and adds deep emotion to the line.
- **Effect:** Alliteration makes the line more rhythmic and highlights the intimacy between the speaker and the beloved.

Symbolism / Symbols

- **Definition:** Symbolism is a poetic device in which a word, scene, character, or object carries a deeper meaning beyond its literal sense. In Christina Rossetti’s Echo, several powerful symbols are used to express memory, love, death, and the absence of the beloved. These symbols make the emotions more vivid and deepen the poem’s sense of sorrow, longing, and spirituality.
- **Night:** A symbol of silence, loneliness, and the awakening of memory. In the very first line, the stillness of the night highlights the speaker’s loneliness. This quiet night reminds her of her lost love and compels her to call out to the beloved. Night is the time when grief,

memory, and longing become strongest. It symbolically represents the emptiness and emotional depth within the speaker.

- **Dream:** A symbol of temporary reunion, emotional refuge, and psychological survival. The speaker knows the beloved will never return in real life, yet in dreams she can see, speak to, and feel the beloved again. In the poem, dreams break the boundary of death and momentarily bring the beloved back to life. Dreams are the most important symbol because they make lost love feel real, even if only for a short moment.
- **Tears:** A symbol of pain, unresolved feelings, and the sorrow of love. The line “Come back in tears” suggests that the memories of the beloved are sweet but filled with sadness. Tears show that the relationship has ended, but the emotions remain alive. They intensify the depth of love and the sense of loss.
- **Memory, Hope, Love:** Symbols of turning past emotions into living presences. The speaker addresses these abstract forces as though they are real people. Memory pulls her into the past, hope allows her to dream, and love continues to bind her heart. These symbols show that the emotions of the past still hold a powerful place in the speaker’s life.