

The Death of the Hired Man Literary Device

Writer: Robert Frost | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Symbols

- **Silas:** Silas symbolizes human weakness, loneliness, and self-respect. He is an ordinary man with no glory or hope in life, yet before death, he returns “home.” His return represents not just the search for shelter, but the revival of human connection and the quest for peace at the end of life.
- **Home:** The word “Home” is the central symbol of the poem. It is not merely a place, but a symbol of love, forgiveness, and refuge. To Mary, home is a place where love is unconditional; to Warren, it is a place of duty and responsibility. Through their differing views, Frost shows that a person’s true home is where he is accepted with love and compassion, not judged or measured.
- **Warren and Mary:** Warren and Mary symbolize the conflict between reason and emotion. Warren is practical and stern, while Mary is gentle and compassionate. Together, they represent the two sides of human nature — intellect and heart, hardness and tenderness.
- **The Moon and the Cloud:** In the final scene, the meeting of the moon and the small cloud carries deep symbolic meaning. It represents the union of life and death, the blending of light and darkness. When Mary says, “I’ll see if that small sailing cloud will hit or miss the moon,” the cloud touching the moon symbolizes Silas’s peaceful and silent death — the quiet arrival of eternal rest.
- **The Farm:** The farm symbolizes life’s struggle and labor. Every task there represents a part of human effort and endurance, and every character is a traveler in that lifelong journey. Silas’s return to the farm is like a return to nature itself — to the natural cycle of work, sweat, and death.

Main Message - The Death of the Hired Man

- Home is not a place of duty, but of love.
- Humanity means compassion before judgment.
- Death is the final return to peace.