

The Death of the Hired Man Quotations

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Quotes

“Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.” (Warren
– Irony)

Explanation: Warren defines “home” as a place where you are accepted, even when you have nowhere else to go. The line shows irony — he says this to justify his sense of duty, yet earlier he didn’t want Silas back. It expresses the theme of belonging and forgiveness.

“I should have called it something you somehow haven’t to deserve.” (Mary – Symbolism)

Explanation: Mary gently corrects Warren’s idea of “home.” To her, home is not about duty or right — it’s about love, compassion, and grace. She believes one should not have to “deserve” a home; it’s a place given by kindness.

“He has come home to die.” (Mary)

Explanation: Mary understands Silas’s condition before anyone else. This line foreshadows his death. It is filled with pathos — deep pity and emotional truth. For Mary, Silas’s return is not for work, but for rest — the eternal rest of death.

**“Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk, and nothing to look backwards to with pride,
and nothing to look forward to with hope.”** (Mary)

Explanation: This line beautifully sums up Silas’s tragic life — a man without pride in the past or hope for the future. The repetition of “nothing” creates a rhythm of emptiness, showing the sadness of human failure and loneliness.

“He hates to see a boy the fool of books.” (Mary about Silas – Irony)

Explanation: Silas criticizes educated youth like Harold, who depend only on books. Ironically, Silas himself values practical wisdom. This line shows Frost’s theme of the conflict between book knowledge and real-life experience.

LxNotes