

The Death of the Hired Man Theme

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Themes

Humanity: The central message of the poem is humanity and compassion. Silas is an old, helpless, and forgotten man whom society no longer values. Yet Mary gives him shelter out of love and kindness. She knows that Silas is no longer useful, but still says, "He has come home to die," because she believes that every human being deserves compassion at the end of life. Frost shows that the true meaning of humanity lies in love and forgiveness.

Death: As the title "The Death of the Hired Man" suggests, death is not merely physical here, but a symbol of spiritual peace. Silas returns "home" seeking his final rest. His death is silent yet deeply meaningful. Through the imagery of the moon and the cloud, Frost portrays death as calm, peaceful, and eternal rest. Death here becomes a final homecoming, where human suffering comes to an end.

Self-Respect: Though poor, Silas holds firmly to his self-respect. He refuses to beg, choosing instead to work, however little he can. In his words, actions, and even in his silence, we see a man's struggle to preserve his dignity. Both Mary and Warren understand that Silas speaks of work only to maintain that self-respect. Frost teaches that self-respect remains a part of human identity, even in life's final moments.

Loneliness: Silas is separated from society, his relatives, and even his own brother. His loneliness is so deep that, at the time of death, he seeks shelter in the only place where he once felt a trace of love — Warren and Mary's home. Although his brother is wealthy, Silas does not go to him, as his self-respect prevents it. Instead, he returns to Warren's house, trying to break his lifelong solitude before death. This loneliness is what compels him to search for a true "home" at the end of his life.