

Words Literary Devices

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Figures of Speech

Simile

A simile is a figure of speech that compares two different things, generally using like or as.

Example: *"Echoes traveling*

Off from the center like horses."

Here, echoes and words are compared to running horses that rush out fast. Poets' words/writing spread out fast, like running horses.

Metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which one thing is directly compared to another without using like or as.

Example: *"Axes*

After whose stroke the wood rings,"

Here, words are compared to **"axes."** They are similar because both can strike deep. The poet can strike deep into the readers' hearts by writing her emotions or feelings. Both axes and words have the ability to hurt; words can cut—those who read them and, perhaps, those who write them.

"Words dry and riderless."

This is another metaphor. Here, the poet compares words to riderless, uncontrolled horses. It implies that words can move free from the poet's control once they are written or published.

Repetition

Repetition is a literary device in which a word or phrase is repeated two or more times. The word "echoes" is repeated in the third and fourth lines.

Assonance

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in nearby words.

Example: ***“Words dry and riderless”***

Here, the “i” sound is repeated in “dry” and “riderless.”

Symbols

Axes: Axe is the symbol of the power of writing/words. When the poet compares words to axes, it means that words can cut deep and leave marks, just like an axe leaves a mark on wood

Horses: The horse is the symbol of uncontrollable movement of words. Once words are written or published, they move free from the control of the writer, like riderless horses.

Skull Under Water: Skull is the symbol of fear and death. The skull sinks under water and lies on the green, weedy plants. This image shows the poet's fear of being forgotten after death, while her words may live on.

Stars in the Pool: Stars symbolize fate. In the poem, the poet feels her life is controlled by a greater force of the universe—like the stars—that we cannot control.