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Not Understanding the Thing Parents Go Through, Exploring the Theme of Parental Sacrifice in "Those Winter Sundays".

In "Those Winter Sundays," a poem by Robert Hayden, the speaker recalls his early years and his bond with his father. The topic of parental sacrifice and how children frequently are unable to comprehend the difficulties and problems their parents encounter in raising them are the poem's main themes. Hayden demonstrates how the speaker's realization of his own ignorance and lack of gratitude leads to a deeper knowledge of the sacrifices his father made for him through the use of literary elements including imagery, tone, and symbolism.

The speaker of the poem opens by remembering the chilly winter mornings of his youth, when his father would awaken early to "crackling" fireplaces and "polished" shoes. The father is described in detail as having "blueblack" hands and serving as a "labourer," which shows that he put in a lot of effort and discomfort to support his family. But because the speaker refers to these behaviors in the past tense, it appears that they are no longer taking place, possibly because the speaker has moved on and is no longer living with his father. As a result, the poem is permeated with a sense of sorrow and melancholy.

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The speaker acknowledges in the second verse that he never expressed gratitude to his father for these sacrifices and that he took them for granted.

The speaker's

ignorance and lack of appreciation at the time are highlighted by the use of the phrase "What did I know," which is repeated. The term "austere love" implies that the father's love was both intensely caring and strict. The fact that the word "austere" is frequently linked to strictness and discipline suggests that the father's love wasn't always shown in a tender and affectionate way.

The poem's final verse exposes the father's greatest sacrifice: in addition to being "cracked" and "aching" from the hard work and the cold, his hands "made banked fires flare." The metaphor "banked fires" implies that the father's love was a slow-burning, persistent warmth that supported the family and was not always immediately apparent. The poem's concluding lines, "What did I know, what did I know / of love's austere and lonely offices," express the speaker's regret and remorse for failing to appreciate his father's sacrifices at the time. I think in this point the speaker noticed that is father did everything that he is able for him as also parents tend to do but is realization only years later only shows that when you are a kid you

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dont realize that there is no perfect parent and they are only trying their best to rise you and care for you even if you dont see that at the same moment.

The imagery in the poem does a very good job of illustrating the concept of parental sacrifice. The reader is given a clear picture of the setting when sensory details like "cracked hands that hurt from exertion in the chilly weather," "the cold splintering, breaking," and "banked fires burn" are used. These pictures of the father working physically and in the chilly winter weather show how hard he works to support his family. Also, the depictions of the father's hands and the "blueblack cold" allude to the physical and emotional toll that this task has had on him. The repeated usage of the line "What did I know" is another literary device used by Hayden in the poem. The speaker's ignorance and lack of respect for his father's sacrifices are underscored by the repetition of this line three times in the poem. The repetition also conveys a sense of regret and grief, implying that the speaker has just recently come to appreciate the significance of his father's sacrifices. It's also important to note the poem's tone. Hayden uses language to portray a sense of regret and nostalgia for the past in a sad and reflective manner. The poem is written from the viewpoint of the speaker remembering his youth and thinking back on his father's sacrifices. The father's affection is described as "austere," which adds a sense of seriousness and emphasizes the notion of sacrifice.

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Lastly, "Those Winter Sundays" serves as a moving reminder of the costs associated with parenting kids. The poem emphasizes the difficulties and hardships of parenting as well as how kids frequently take their parents' efforts for granted. The absence of a tutorial or guidebook on parenting emphasizes the challenges of the position and the need for understanding and respect for the sacrifices made by parents and sometimes that realization only comes when you have kids of your own. The poem ultimately serves as a call to action for readers to recognize the sacrifices made by their own parents and make an effort to be more sympathetic and cognizant of the difficulties associated with parenting.

Work cited:

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