

Fern Hill

NOW as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,
 The night above the dingle starry,
 Time let me hail and climb
 Golden in the heydays of his eyes,
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves
 Trail with daisies and barley
 Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
 In the sun that is young once only,
 Time let me play and be
 Golden in the mercy of his means,
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,
 And the sabbath rang slowly
 In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air
 And playing, lovely and watery
 And fire green as grass.
 And nightly under the simple stars
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars
 Flying with the ricks, and the horses
 Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all
 Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
 The sky gathered again
 And the sun grew round that very day.
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm
 Out of the whinnying green stable
 On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house

Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,
In the sun born over and over,
I ran my heedless ways,
My wishes raced through the house high hay
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs
Before the children green and golden
Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,
In the moon that is always rising,
Nor that riding to sleep
I should hear him fly with the high fields
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

Dylan Thomas's poem "Fern Hill" was first published in 1946 in his collection *Deaths and Entrances*. It consists of six stanzas and is written in free verse. Each stanza consists of nine lines. The poem is based on Thomas's own summer vacations spent at Fernhill, a farm owned by his mother's oldest sister, Ann Jones, and her husband. In "Fern Hill," Thomas presents an idyllic view of childhood on a farm, filled with vivid imagery which presents a child's view of the world. This is contrasted in the final stanzas with the regret of the adult as he recalls the loss of the innocence and splendour of childhood.

The poem can be divided into two parts: the first three stanzas are related to the poet's experience as a child when he used to spend his summer holidays at his uncle's farm (Fern Hill, it is in Wanspan in Wales). In this first half of the poem, a young child describes his carefree and enjoyable life. The world of innocence (child) as described in the first three stanzas is like the Garden of Eden. This is a world in which the child is in complete union with the nature. The child-speaker feels liberated by nature and elevated to high positions. Therefore, he thinks of himself as a prince of the wilderness and lord of the landscape. Nature is at his own beck and call.

In contrast the second half of the poem portrays the thoughts of a child threatened and thus changed by his bitter life experience, the disappointments of adulthood, the violence and atrocities of the modern world. The poem as a whole vividly depicts time's influence on our existence. The last three stanzas are about an awakening in the child which signifies the loss of the world of

innocence. At the centre of this loss of the innocence are the myths of fall of the first human beings (Adam and Eve).

It is poem by Dylan Thomas that evokes the joy and the inevitable loss of the world of childhood. The poem is nostalgic in that the speaker tends to recall the past and reflect on its significance as well as compares his dreary present with the dream-like bliss of his childhood memories. "Fern Hill" is narrated by the mature narrator whose adult self misses the delight of his young self. He suggests that people's conceptions of the world around undergo radical changes as one advances in age. Growing up and experience ruins things in the eyes of the speaker and strips beauty of its original glamour and splendour.

To the child, the summer visits to Fern Hill were replete with delights, fulfilment, and satisfaction. The farm was not a pastime or a playing ground, rather it was a harbour and a paradise of idyllic bliss. When he, as an adult, tried to relive the happiness he had experienced as a child, he failed terribly. He could not revive the sensations he remembered. Fern Hill is no long a haven of carefree pleasure to him. Apparently, Fern Hill is the lost paradise, which he will never be able to restore.

To achieve this purpose, the narrator focalizes Time which is personified all along the poem. He intentionally confuses tenses so that the present and past overlap and blend. Though he lavishes praise on time that guarded his childhood, his praise is riddled with blame. It is time that made Fern Hill of his childhood a paradise. It is also time that makes his immediate present unwholesome. The poem looks like a dream of utter bliss, which changes into a bitter reality as the sleeper wakes up.