

The Rose Family

By Robert Frost

Ver.1

The Rose Family by Robert Frost has many different meanings. Robert Frost was well known for his examination of very complex philosophical and social themes in his writings, which is very visible in this poem as well. This poem can be perceived through three main levels: the literal meaning, the rhetorical meaning, and the poetic level.

In literal terms, Frost states that the apple, pear, and plum are also representations of a rose. Near the end, he also states that we are, and have always been, roses. His literal message is that while all types of roses, even apples, pears, and plums, look different, they are all beautiful and belong to a similar family. Frost begins by talking about a rose when he says "a rose is a rose". He follows this opening statement with how the "theory [now] goes that the apple's a rose, and the pear is, and so's" and "the plum, I suppose". All of these phrases are Frost's form of imagery. He is using sight and smell to help the reader to better understand his meaning. For the most part, Frost's diction is very natural and comfortable to read; however, he is very vague in the use of the word "dear". Frost never elaborates on who he is referring to. His uses of the word "so's" to continue the rhyming pattern adds a little humor to the poem.

On the more rhetorical level, the rose symbolizes the ultimate historical symbol of beauty. The reader also begins to understand that the speaker is talking to his beloved when he states that "you, of course, are a rose but were always a rose". Frost is trying to make the point that in a world filled with such diversity, each individual, while so different, is beautiful in his own way. Frost also points out that while the world's definition of beauty can change, true beauty is in the "eye of the beholder", as the old saying goes. Now, it becomes clearer as to why Frost concludes the poem with "you, of course, are a rose but were always a rose". The "you" obviously refers to whoever is reading the poem. Frost is saying that everyone has their "dear", or their loved one, who shapes their definition of beauty.

Ver.2

Early American poet Robert Frost was known for using simple diction for complex themes and ironic thoughts. Although his poems were pithy and concise in word choice, he often adhered to traditional metrics and verse forms unlike most his contemporaries. In his poem "The Rose Family", construction is consistent while thought structure is infused with quiet wit.

In "The Rose Family", Frost uses literal examples to derive meaning from a perhaps abstract thought. The poem contemplates the philosophical essence of a rose logically by establishing truth that a rose is a rose and that it always was one to begin with, inquisitively inducts that other fruits are perhaps equal to roses, and deducts from both of these thoughts by stating "You, of course, are a rose". His thoughts are strictly denotative to the objects he describes, but to whom he refers to remains vague.

Purpose in "the Rose Family" is veiled and broadened by the poem's simplistic approach in style. Very little information about the speaker and addressee can be derived from the poem thus concealing the purpose of the occasion beyond the potential to either charm or sarcastically belittle.

Very little emotion is distinctive throughout the verse except a subtle curiosity and satire. The poet turns the purpose of the poem after he ironically contradicts his own logic. In the first two lines, he establishes that a rose is and always was. The next six lines he questions other's interpretation of a rose but then abruptly drops this logic to establish a curious new truth to the meaning of a rose. The redundant rhyme of the poem also adds a jeering, almost "king's jester" rhyme like rhythm. These abrupt, forced changes in thought and taunting rhyme promote a purpose to jest the poet's addressee.

The poem's significance is held by it's deceiving wit. The "safe" or even cliché theme of roses prepares the reader for a verse on beauty and love, but then goes on to undermine this mindset in the most subtle of ways. Simple language and seemingly cheery subject matter obscure the satirical nature of the poem.