

Title: "Richard Cory"

By: Edwin Arlington Robinson

S-- The subject is Richard Cory
P-- Anytime Richard Cory came to town
Everyone stopped and stared;
He had all the appearances of a gentleman:
He was well-groomed and had a princely stature.

He always behaved in a quiet and dignified way,
And he was always friendly to all of us.
But just seeing him excited us
At a simple greeting of "Good Morning" and he seemed to glitter as he walked.

He was financially loaded, the richest man in town
And in possession of good manners that he practiced.
The bottom line is we thought he was everything and had everything
To the point that we wanted to trade lives with him.

So we kept working, day after day,
And did without luxuries like meat at meals, hating what we did have like bread,
And on a calm summer night,
Richard Cory shot himself.

L-- Diction: Extremely direct, with very little figurative language; the words used to describe RC make him sound practically royal--"imperially slim," "gentleman from sole to crown," and "richer than a king"--this is in direct CONTRAST to the kind of life the townspeople live, where they "worked," "waited," "went without," and "cursed."

O-- The occasion is probably one town's person's account of who RC was after his body was discovered. The organization is 16 lines, divided into 4 four-line stanzas, with very regular rhyme scheme--ABAB CDCD EFEF GHGH

T-- The tone of this poem helps create the shocking and ironic effect of the final line of the poem. All information is stated **directly**, and **matter-of-factly**, about a celebrated citizen who surprises everyone with his suicide.

T-- One theme in this poem involves the discrepancy that exists between the public self, or persona, and one's personal self. Perhaps being so revered by the townspeople only increased RC's feelings of isolation and helplessness, propelling him into a desperate act. The townspeople really believed they knew him based on his appearance and the version of himself he made public, without ever bothering to know him on a different level.

S-- The speaker is a citizen of the town, and one of RC's many admirers, who is probably shocked about what he did.

And now, a little paragraph about the effect of diction upon revealing a theme of "Richard Cory":

Edwin Arlington Robinson employs diction in "Richard Cory" in a direct and matter-of-fact way to reveal meaning in the poem (TS). The speaker describes him as "gentlemanly," "imperial slim," "clean favored," "richer than a king," and "always human," leaving no doubt about how the townspeople view Richard Cory (E₁). They love and admire him, as indicated by the positive and complimentary words; furthermore, they consider him deserving of such adulation (Comm₁₋₁). The speaker goes on to indicate everyone in town wishes to switch places with the idealized Richard Cory, whom they figure lives a perfect life (Comm₁₋₂). However, words used to describe the regular townspeople's way of life provides a sharp contrast, as they "worked," "waited," "went without," and "cursed" (E₂). The townspeople's struggle to provide and survive sheds some light on their near infatuation with Richard Cory (Comm₂₋₁). Because he is so kind, so rich, and so admired, he functions as a source of escape from their daily drudgery (Comm₂₋₂). Their fixation adds to the ironic twist of Cory's suicide, and illustrates the danger of judging people based on their appearance only (TO).