

How to Find Tone

Diction and imagery are not the only ways to create tone, but they are the most common. ONE CANNOT DO A TONE ANALYSIS, HOWEVER, WITHOUT TALKING ABOUT CONNOTATION.

It is a TWO STEP process where an image or word creates the connotation that creates the tone.

Fog By Carl Sandburg

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

Diction means *words and phrases*, and 95% of the time it is better to talk about *words and phrases* rather than use the word *diction*. You should certainly never write things like, "One diction that the author uses..."

not "tone of mystery"

image from text

discussion of connotation

diction from text

discussion of connotation

connection of connotation to tone

Sandburg uses words and images to create the mysterious tone of the poem. For example, to come on "little cat feet" (2) implies some level of stealth and quiet. Although such a description could connote mental images of cat as hunter, it is clearly not intended to be the case here, as the fog "sits looking ... on silent haunches" (3-5). There is no object of the cat's prowl, no victim to track and kill. Rather, it is the cat's inscrutability that Sandberg stresses. Why it came, why it "moves on" (6) are unanswerable, as the motive is undefined by the poet. The cat, like the fog, is an alien observer who is both of this world and external to it--though more a watcher than a participant. The stealth, the quiet, the sudden movement: all of these are as enigmatic in the fog as they are in the cat, for one will never quite understand either one, this incomprehension of agency producing the tone.

DIRECTIONS: Read the three Rust Tree poems by Kut-byol Jung and complete ONE of the following activities. There is a model posted in the Supplemental Resources section for this reading. I'm also working on a tutorial for the AP Writing Resources page of my web-site. I was hoping to have it done already, but it looks like by the end of the week is more realistic.

1. If you read the three poems as a cycle ("The Rust Tree by the Road", "The Rust Tree Inside Me", and "Underneath the Rust Tree, Part Two"), the latter two poems express in a more non-literal fashion the same ideas that are found in the first poem.

In what way or ways do the diction, imagery, and especially tone (you must discuss this at some point) connect the "The Rust Tree Inside Me" and/or "Underneath the Rust Tree, Part

**three Rust Tree poems
By Kut-byol Jung**

Two” to “The Rust Tree by the Road”? The more detailed and specific your response, the more credit you will receive. You will also receive more credit if you have an actual thesis that connects the poems (i.e., in what way do they connect?).

2. Alternatively, because the second two poems (“The Rust Tree Inside Me” and “Underneath the Rust Tree, Part Two”) are so much more personal than the first (“The Rust Tree by the Road”), it is possible to view the cycle as a struggle to fully integrate the insights of the first poem, revealing discontinuities between the manner in which the ideas are presented in “The Rust Tree by the Road” and the more intimate “The Rust Tree Inside Me” and “Underneath the Rust Tree, Part Two”.

In what way or ways do the diction, imagery, and especially tone (you must discuss this at some point) contrast or show discontinuities between “The Rust Tree by the Road” and the latter two poems in the cycle, “The Rust Tree Inside Me” and/or “Underneath the Rust Tree, Part Two”? The more detailed and specific your response, the more credit you will receive. You will also receive more credit if you have an actual thesis that shows how the poems contrast (i.e., in what way do they contrast?).

This is due on the block day, November 28 or November 29 (depending on class period). If you turn in the assignment early enough, I will mark it up with comments and corrections as if it were a timed writing. If you turn in the assignment early, there will be a small grade incentive (+3 points). If you miss the midnight deadline but turn in the assignment before eight hours have elapsed, there will be a small point deduction (-3 points). If you turn in the assignment between December 18-20 there will be a larger point deduction (-10 points). If you turn in the assignment at any point after that, there will be a substantial point deduction (-20 points; this is a flat deduction, not a cumulative one based on the number of days late). If you turn in the assignment late, but do not want points deducted, you may earn back credit by completing both prompts.

