Quang Huynh

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Mooney

“The Filling Station”

When you least expect it, love is there

In the poem, “The Filling Station” by Elizabeth Bishop, the author uses imagery to show the value and describe the gas station. The poem expresses the narrator’s initial reactions, feelings and shows Bishop’s positive outlook on things even in a troublesome environment. Furthermore, the message of the story is there is beauty in everything, even in the most ordinary and dullest of things. At first, the gas station is seen as filthy and discouraging. As the poem progresses, the author sheds light on the beauty of all of the little things that made the gas station a homey feeling. The optimistic vision of the disturbing gas station showed the evident care and effort that was put towards the filling station. There was more to this dirty exterior of the station than what meets the eye.

In addition, the use of repetition in the poem is used to emphasize a message. For instance, the words, ‘dirty’ and ‘oily’ were used multiple times in the beginning of the poem to show the significance in the description of the filthy scene. Then, towards the end of the poem, ‘somebody’ was used several times to show the care and time people put in towards cleaning and renovating the little things near the filling station. It shows even the most insignificant of things are taken care of. Furthermore, personification in the poem connected the readers to the story, making the read relatable. During the last stanza of the poem, it reads, “…so that they softly say: ESSO – SO – SO – SO to high-strung automobiles.” This excerpt from the poem shows personification because it is supposed to represent being soothed. It is as if the whisper or lullaby sung to the stressed car calmed the car. The car is given the human quality of being stressed and gives the gas station personal importance. The gas station is a home to the cars, a place of relief to relax.