

### The Boxer Analysis/Essay

In Simon and Garfunkel's song *The Boxer*, they sing about a man who left his family at a young age and found his way to New York. The song culminates at the final paragraph, where the protagonist, the boxer the song is speaking of, “cried out/in his anger.../[that] I am leaving.../But the fighter still remains.” Overall, *The Boxer*, by Simon and Garfunkel, is a story about temporary defeat but having the perseverance to keep going.

In the verses preceding the final one, the narrator, assumed to be the boxer, tells the story of his journey leading up to the culmination of the song. The three verses following the intro speak of the boxer leaving his home at a young age, then going out and seeking to make a living in the poorer sections of New York, singing “When I left my home and family/I was no more than a boy.../Asking only workmen's wages/I come looking for a job.” He then speaks of regretting his decisions in the face of a tough winter. “...Wishing I was gone/Going home/Where the New York City winters aren't bleeding me.” In admitting that his decision to leave home was a mistake, he is showing one of the aspects of his temporary defeat; simultaneously “laying out my winter clothes,” showing the will to make it through his current situation.

The final verse, culminating the song, wraps up the story arc told through the previous verses. In it, the narrator speaks of himself in the third person, saying “In the clearing stands a boxer/And a fighter by his trade,” referring back to his metaphorical fight for a job and a better life — motivation for leaving his family, further tying into the next two lines, “And he carries the reminders/of every glove that lay him down,” showing the lasting marks from his quest for a better life.

What is (arguably) the three most important lines follow the previous. “In his anger and his his shame/[he cried out] 'I am leaving, I am leaving'.” This is the boxer's main admittance of defeat; he has

been bested by his current situation, and decides that this “fight” is not one worth fighting for. However, the boxer never loses his sense of will and determination, shown in the final line, “But the fighter still remains.”

Overall, one can see that the song culminates into a story of a young man who, in trying to forge out a better life for himself, decides not to fight a (metaphorical) fight. However, he still retains his spirit and determination, simply reacting to his situation instead of taking it to heart. As such, we can see that Simon and Garfunkel's song *The Boxer* is not the story of pure defeat or victory, but merely that of a man who, when confronted with the former, doesn't give up his quest for a better life.