

## The Use of Figures of Speech in Frost's "Nothing Gold Can Stay"

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### ABSTRACT

The poem "Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Robert Frost illustrates how fleeting life is. Its rhyme arrangement (aa bb cc) demonstrates the poem's brilliance. Based on the usage of figures of speech, this analysis illuminates the poem's meaning. From the analysis, it is found out that: First, Frost succeeds in using figures of speech proportionally. Second, Frost underscores that nothing in our lives—nothing ideal, lovely, youthful, or pure—can ever endure.

**Keywords:** alliteration, personification, youth, perfect, old, die

## INTRODUCTION

Robert Frost's 1923 poem "Nothing Gold Can Stay" is one of his most well-known works. It is written in an original but lovely style that uses figures of speech, imagery, diction, and symbolism. The year after it was published, the poem even managed to win a Pulitzer Prize. "Nothing Gold Can Stay," like many other Frost's poems, is written in the aa bb cc pattern with rhyming couplets, which makes the poem flow wonderfully when it is read aloud (Anderson 1964:23). This poem has been praised on multiple occasions for its elegance. However, this poem has much deeper significance than what is initially apparent, much like many difficult poems. It is replete with imagery and symbolism.

This outstanding literary work's key lesson is that everything must change. Even the most memorable moments will pass too quickly. Even the poetry itself, which is so exquisitely written, is only a few brief lines long. Frost brilliantly uses nature to further this message. He uses the color gold as a representation of something fascinating and pure (Cox 2021:61). This can happen in nature on a day when the sun is rising over the horizon and casting golden rays across the landscape or on a day in the fall when the trees are covered in golden leaves just before they fall off and disappear.

Not only do the colors change, but the regular cycle of life and death that exists in nature is akin to human life in many ways. Blossoms bloom, but soon disappear to make way for fresh flowers, and dawn only lasts for a little period before the sun shines to unveil a new day before setting once more to bring the day to an end. Life is really similar to this. Beautiful moments on earth are so brief and transitory. Through a discussion of the figures of speech utilized in the poem, this essay reveals the solution. Fowler (1980:80) says that reading literature as if it were a conversation can lead to some unusual insights, so the author approaches the poem in some ways as a discourse.

## THEORY

When it comes to the nature of literary language, analysis is a process that frequently involves complexity. The language of poetry is the language of paradox (Brooks 2006:3). The language of paradox is hard, dazzling sophistry; it rarely resembles the language of the soul. It is not a widely used language. Dillons (1980:213) likewise cautions against the use of inversions and deletions by some poets. Posner (1982:18) underlines that it is fortunately not a significant issue. He makes it clear that each word is a separate conceptual unit and can therefore convey a thought. Each word has at least one consistent meaning that, when joined with the meanings of other words, adds to the overall meaning of the phrase. Based on the views, this study proceeds.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a mechanism from The New Criticism. This strategy employs close reading to evaluate literary works. T. S. Eliot, Kenneth Burke, J. C. Ransom, Allen Tate, Cleanth Brooks, R. P. Blackmur, and Yvor Winters are pioneers of this school of analysis (Pritchard 1956:231). Reinhart (1980:92) refers to it under a different name: focus-interpretation (to distinguish it from vehicle-interpretation). Some difficult terms were discovered and, after testing them against common usage (Canfield 2016:6). It is hoped that this technique leads to a thorough discussion.

## DISCUSSIONS

“Nothing Gold Can Stay” is a pretty succinct song. There are only forty words and eight lines total in it. The word selection is rather straightforward. Only a small percentage of them include two syllables. Monosyllabic words predominate. Unusual meter, iambic trimeter, is used by Frost (a line with three strong stresses usually spread across six syllables). This astounding literary work’s expressive shortness and lyric compression are made possible by all of these lovely stylistic elements. The poetry is shown below.

<u>Robert Frost</u>	<u>(1874-1963)</u>
Nothing Gold Can Stay	1923

Nature’s first green is gold,  
 Her hardest hue to hold.  
 Her early leaf’s a flower;  
 But only so an hour.  
 Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
 So Eden sank to grief,  
 So dawn goes down to day.  
 Nothing gold can stay.

(Kennedy, X. J. and Gioia, Dana, 2005: 280)

The following is an examination of each pair of lines, focusing on how the poem uses figures of speech.

### Lines 1-2

Frost appreciates the beauty of daybreak and writes about everything in the moment. He acts in this manner. Write about what he notices, likes, and encounters. The wonderful and unique light of the morning is depicted in “Nature’s First.” The pure first green leaf it touches turns fascinatingly gold as a result. Frost compares the development of a tree’s leaves to the course of life in “The Phenomenon of Dawn.” Gold stresses the glorious experience of life whereas green emphasizes the living. Most communities consider gold to be a particularly valuable and uncommon element. The first line suggests that a newborn infant, or nature’s first production of life, is extraordinary. They are nearly flawless, unspoiled, and innocent (Perrine 1983:92). In essence, Frost is instructing the audience on how to appreciate what is “gold.” If life is wonderful in this instance, it is like gold. Nature’s first green is a metaphor for youth or childhood. Youth is the first green in nature since, undoubtedly, all life begins in youth.

Frost undoubtedly uses this type of color symbolism (green) at first to represent the renewal of life, but certain English trees actually breathe their first leaves in gold rather than green. Gold is a precious metal, but green stands in for life to indicate the richness or magnificent wealth as a bloom. “Gold” is a word that denotes “beauty” or “pleasure.” The first line therefore suggests that the first green in nature is something lovely or cheerful.

People, the ground, and the sky were all gray when the first green signs of nature first appeared. This month and winter are both somewhat depressing. Then, seemingly from the ground, a flower with a vibrant green blossom appears. Everyone is preparing for the most beautiful time of year, when the first splash of color of the year appears

shortly before spring. However, this brief moment of “gold” continues. How really valuable life is. As most people take for granted, Frost outlines it. The true value and beauty of birth, which is the most valuable time in life, are symbolized by the word “gold.” However, many exhibit an increase in “gold,” the human equivalent of riches and the worth of philosophy, emerging from the jungle. This is in line with Skilleas’ assertion (Skilleas 2001:129) that literature is often philosophical.

Perhaps the trees and the grass are also mentioned in this paragraph. People consider this to be something they need after spending the winter in their homes and only seeing brown. Frost makes the earth’s green look like gold while capturing the feeling of nature. Most people believe that gold is a valuable commodity. Gold is a beautiful material in addition to being a storehouse of wealth. It is comparable to fine wine or diamonds. The first green is hence nature’s golden hue.

Frost immersion in New England's natural environment could be used to define the two delicate hues of spring. The first line's paradoxical metaphor, "green gold," is less paradoxical because when the leaves of New England's willow and birch trees were washed for the first time, they were golden rather than green (Andrews 2012:56). He initially concentrated on good evanescent fresh growth. Pre-green buds are golden. Inferred from this sentence is that they are truly golden if they were born.

We are only aware of its innocence, which cannot last forever. Humans must alter as a result of temptation and exposure to life’s tragedies. There isn’t much of an option. No matter how much a person wants to hold onto their youth, eventually the world must let the man go. Frost allegorically employs nature (Berger 2010:73). Although gold leaf is a nice start, individuals should be aware that seasons change and the leaves eventually fall. All the way to the finish, his thoughts just jumped out. It’s difficult to retain them because Frost created them to be unique and fragile. It illustrates how youth is incredibly difficult to preserve as people become older.

From a different angle, it can also refer to the natural beauty of the early growth of plants and leaves during the spring, when the first yellow-green fruits start to appear. This denotes a purity of which gold is frequently the ideal illustration. Consider the valley’s hills and how lovely they appear when they are green. They have an emerald-like sheen. Also take note of the word combinations “green” and “gold.” Both of them have a beautiful, mellow sound.

Alliteration is one of the most prevalent sound tactics used to direct the reader’s attention to specific words or written phrases that support the poem’s rhetorical argument. Examples include “Nature’s first green is gold,” “Her toughest hue to hold,” and “So dawn goes down to day.” Here, the first example demonstrates how popular gold is in nature—even more so than green—and the second highlights how fleeting a golden color in nature is—gold that is given to a child at birth (Sung, Machler, and Jacob 2018:62). The third illustration of remnants of thought illustrates how rapidly the early morning sunlight fades.

It is remarkable how personification is used to describe nature as a lady. There has been a long-standing belief that “Mother Nature” provides the planet with its resources. Such beauty can vanish in the moment it takes for us to stand in awe of it, along with the innocence and naivety that comes with something new in the world. There are various perspectives on the first two lines. In addition to picturing Frost’s “green vision” as a feature of the springtime, it is likely that he is emphasizing the idea that all life and all things are vulnerable to the ravages of time. Mortality is about people, different life stages, and time. Thinking about youth and beauty as starting phrases is rather limited.

No one can maintain it indefinitely. People like to believe they are right and have valuable things. Nature forbids them from doing so. It demonstrates similarities between human life and nature. They are surrounded by magnificent things on all sides. People take advantage of many beautiful things. They all make an effort to avoid bumping into one another. Their youth is comparable in this regard. People desire to preserve their youthful appearance. They are unable to let go of friends or relatives. The same things they can accomplish now will always be possible for them to do. They make such a strong effort to keep these things. The poetry flows in a straightforward and quiet manner. When the vegetative world first begins to bloom in early spring, this poetry on nature presents a point at that time.

### **Lines 3-4**

As the light gradually dawns and shifts, gold leaf shimmers. It could be imagined to be a lovely flower. Youth is also described as being pure and lovely like a flower. This appears to be a return to a more traditional poetic allegory on the transience of life and beauty.

When “green” is a lad, Frost wrote on the beauty of flowers. There is a certain sense of amazement and exhilaration as a flower blooms. As her exquisite, delicate leaves unfold in greater magnificence, the blooms swell with wonder. In the poem, this paradox exists. Frost’s description of the nascent leaves’ actual emergence as blossoms or a golden yellow color before they turn green leaves. This is a feeling of beauty in full blossom prior to the beginning of life (Quinn 1966:69). People are aware of how fragile and lovely flowers are; therefore, consider how lovely each leaf on a tree might be. It’s an incredible sight, for sure. Overall, the poem’s portrayal of nature is positive so far.

Flowers and leaves have a certain beauty that she strove to depict in all of its dimensions, as well as a pleasing visual impact. On the other hand, the blossom resembles a smile and is replaced in beauty by its gorgeous colors and real green foliage.

Frost employs metaphors to describe why youthful happiness and a golden period abruptly come to an end. Frost utilizes the clock as a hyperbole, comparing little intervals of time to the years it takes children to exaggerate. Hyperbole is most frequently used to describe circumstances or things that have been overstated compared to how they actually are. But “only so an hour” serves as a final reminder to the audience.

This is the section of the poem where Frost veered off course. He informs the reader that these lovely flowers, which bloom after only a brief period of time spent watching them, will endure. The blossom then dries up. How long will they preserve the blossom in its infancy? It is always just a hunch. But just as youth and beauty eventually fade from their faces, it is passing through their fingers. One of nature’s most exquisite features is a flower, but just like people, flowers pass away (Pertwi 2019:33). A flower has a long life. Once mature, flowers will move on. However, this blooming time is relatively brief. If the first three lines paint a vivid picture of a beautiful world, line four is when the poem takes a clear turn. This implies that when the child grows older and matures, it will no longer be innocent and will begin acting inappropriately.

**Lines 5-6**

The leaves will still appear to be leaves as dawn's light fades. Frost's use of the word "subsides" seems puzzling. It is unfavorable and implies breaking or putting less importance on something of higher value. For Frost, a flower has considerably higher value than a leaf.

He feels the need to demonstrate to the reader how horrible the leaf is in order to convince them that his judgment value is accurate. He believes that the value of the flowers has been slightly raised by the desecrated modest leaf. And more yet until the end. The leaves will still appear to be leaves as dawn's light fades. "Subsides" indicates that "flower" is valued more highly than "leaf" in the poet. However, everyone should be adaptable to change in life and accept what the verbs "silent" and "sink" imply, including the loss of color and beauty (Crosby 1976:44). The loss of joy and beauty is allusively referred to when the leaves begin to fall. It ages and disintegrates.

Frost discussed the changes caused by nature. Sadly, the bloom is losing its vibrancy a little at a time. The poem illustrates the consequences of the changing seasons. The poem declares: "Then leaf subsides to leaf" after a brief moment with the promise of gold. Frost's specific language is crucial as always. Take note of the use of his peculiarly short phrase twice in the word "leaf." Literally, it demonstrates that leaf was never intended to be a golden bloom, only a simple green leaf. The poem implies that leaves live longer than flowers, which only endure an hour (Green 2005:57). This insight looks incredibly rational when taken into account as a description of the natural world. Even while a branch may only bloom for a week, the following leaves are more durable. However, the poem is prepared to be read as a seasonal observation of nature. It represents how a child loses their innocence and childhood as they grow up and become adults. They resemble a guy when you compare them to people's recollections and experiences.

Frost plays with words' many meanings by repeating the word "leaf" and ringing a bell, most of which are basic single-syllable words. "Leaf" echoes with its leaves intended for paper, turning a page in a book, and green leaves that turn as you do so to change the calendar page. The explanation is valid. Not simply a sheet, but a sheet that rivals the beauty of a flower. Nothing unique is for just them. The word "subsides" implies a kind of movement resolution or collapse.

"So Eden sank to sadness," he continues. Instead of the reverse, a leaf was expelled from paradise. Through language and structure, Frost primarily emphasizes that transition is not beauty, but the proclamation of the fall luck. It tells of the natural cycle of life that comes from a flower with a leaf and the dawn of the day and the state loses its current profit decline of Eden.

The allusion, "So Eden plunged to sadness," alludes to the Garden of Eden, the location of Adam and Eve's murder in the world after succumbing to the serpent's seduction. This allusion demonstrates how ideal and beautiful can exist alongside real people. When Frost describes the history of Eden, he gives the poem a completely new perspective. Eden was the ideal location. God gave Adam and Eve this as a gift. They only needed to adhere to the straightforward guidelines, and they would be maintenance-free forever (Andrews 2012:89). They did, however, permit themselves to lapse into transgression. As a result, Eden's beauty is now irretrievably destroyed. Its perfection won't ever exist once more.

There is a quiet sense of awe brought on the repetition of sibilants (So Eden sank) and aspirations (Her hardest hue to retain). Adam and Eve were initially formed as innocent, submissive beings, much like children. But they couldn't resist because

of the temptation. It is a universal emotion. It is present now. To be able to make adult decisions, people must develop and mature. People often make poor judgments and learn from them, just as Adam and Eve did. Sometimes they choose poorly because it seems too good to pass up. When they were younger, they never had to deal with these mistakes, but as they become older and life gets more complicated, they are forced to make these difficult choices. It has been essential for the process of growing and adjusting to change. These changes are undoubtedly sad, and those who want them will likely experience grief as a result. But all of this is a natural part of existence (Choi 2014:27). Eden not only collapsed, according to Frost, but “it sank to grief,” which refers to something much worse than a loss. For all of creation, this entails the loss of greatness. Frost introduces a human element to the poem without explicitly saying so by bringing up the concept of Eden. The “fall of man” is alluded to by the sinking of Eden.

### **Lines 7-8**

Even if it was not anticipated, the end has come. The beautiful effects of the recent sunrise are vanished. However, the sun “goes down” on the first day. What an odd thing. Again, according to Frost’s value theory, sunrise is scored far higher than an ordinary day. Going down from dawn gets a lower position in his system than “day.” The dawn position is also implied to be “dead” and to have descended as though into a tomb. It is abundantly evident that he held dawn in the highest regard, as well as the light of her singular and transformational qualities. He most certainly did not want to put a stop to something so amazing.

The time between the precise sunrise and a little distance is known as dawn. The air is lighted by the sun and appears golden. The dawn eventually turns into a day in the morning, taking us back to the first two sentences. In this phrase, Frost makes a comparison between the nature of green and flowers and sunrise and sunset (Kennedy and Gioia 2013:64). In this statement, he describes how each day starts off and then soon turns into darkness. One day has passed, and with it, all of its beauty. It can imply that the young person is done and won’t come back.

He made an attempt to describe the magnificent results and the profound sense of loss we felt at the conclusion, but the emotional impact is unanticipated. Nothing made of gold can last, he says. This is a really anxious reaction. Because gold (dawn) continues to be magical, this generalization applies to all surviving gold. When gold coins, gold nuggets, and an unending dawn travel from one area to another every hour, it is improper to be fatalistic.

Man was forever exiled from paradise as a result of this abhorrent act. It will be the conclusion of the day and a special golden light when it is finished in the morning. Trust that it will all end. However, the sun sets till the day. At one time, “dawn” was regarded higher than “day” in the poet’s hierarchy of values.

The poem’s final two lines are its most potent and effective. These phrases bare the harsh reality. The splendor of dawn, and the day will ultimately arrive. She is stunning, and people could enjoy her for all time, but almost cruelly, it passes as quickly as it appeared. They never seem to get the chance to truly take in the beauty, it seems. Childhood is brief. Innocence will never endure. They must mature and learn to live as grownups (Cox 2021:23). They will eventually pass away. All these emotions are conveyed in this poem. One of Frost’s saddest poems is this one. Frost was able to express a fact that many of us find difficult to express in this poem.



This poem's final line is quite lovely. Frost once said that everything has a conclusion. It is well appreciated by all men. They were not supposed to have it until after they left. Things they value today will vanish tomorrow. Nothing gold can remain is a really profound remark. This implies that nothing in people's life that is flawless, attractive, youthful, or pure can endure. It always goes away. This is a concluding assertion and fact. No one is exempt from this.

## CONCLUSION

The most defining characteristic of Robert Frost's use of figures of speech in his poetry is that "Nothing Gold can stay." It was the perfect length for each word count, with a wide range of meanings. In his poetry, figurative language is used in a highly proportionate manner. The reader will consequently surely have a thorough understanding of what Frost was seeing when he composed his poem. The poem is a wonderful illustration of Frost's use of metaphor. The poem is brief yet powerful since Frost's point is made and the reader is kept focused on the important things he wants to get through. The use of an allusion to Eden is another crucial component of his poem that should not be overlooked. Of course, he is referring to the Garden of Eden. It might be referred to as a mythical name.

One would anticipate being aware of the backstory. In the three interim cycles—daily, annual, and mythic—the poem expresses identical moments in precise detail. In any event, the poem captures the moment when something's pristine promise begins to falter. Unapologetically, gold is a classic representation of far higher worth and bright beauty. Each of spring, dawn, and Eden is a type of mortal paradise known as the Golden Age. Although the future is never explicitly declared, it was clearly intended. The night always follows the day. The fall and winter will experience summer. Browning and degradation eventually occur to green leaves. Adam and Eve's demise is brought on by the loss of Eden. By implication, human adolescence is followed by adulthood and eventually death. The golden moment is fleeting, making it much more valuable.

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