

What is significant about how St. Vincent Millay shifts tone in “Sonnet VII?”

In this lesson you will learn how to determine the difference between what is directly stated and what is meant by considering the effect of word choice on tone.

## Let's Review

- Written by Edna St. Vincent Millay
- Speaker is discontent in relationship
- Sonnet Structure

### Sonnet VII

*From "Eight Sonnets"*

by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Oh, oh, you will be sorry for that word!  
Give back my book and take my kiss instead.  
Was it my enemy or my friend I heard?—  
"What a big book for such a little head!"  
Come, I will show you now my newest hat,  
And you may watch me purse my mouth and prink.  
Oh, I shall love you still and all of that.  
I never again shall tell you what I think.  
I shall be sweet and crafty, soft and sly;  
You will not catch me reading any more;  
I shall be called a wife to pattern by;  
And some day when you knock and push the door,  
Some sane day, not too bright and not too stormy,  
I shall be gone, and you may whistle for me.

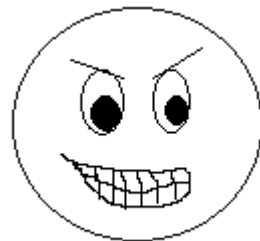
## Let's Review

“Tone” is the writer’s or the speaker’s attitude toward the material.



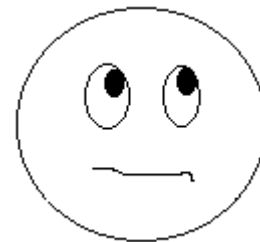
Happy

Sad



Angry

Thoughtful



## Core Lesson

- 1** Reread the text and ask yourself what words and actions in each section show strong emotion.
- 2** Label the tone of each section.  
  
Consider the tone throughout the text and ask yourself why the author shifts tone at those places and in that way.
- 3**

## Core Lesson

Reread the text and ask yourself what words and actions in each section reveal strong emotion.

“Oh, oh, you will be sorry for that word!  
Give back my book and take my kiss instead.  
Was it my enemy or my friend I heard?  
‘Such a big book for such a little head!’ ”

## Core Lesson

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“Come, I will show you now my newest hat,  
And you may watch me purse my mouth and prink.  
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## Core Lesson

Reread the text and ask yourself what words and actions in each section reveal strong emotion.

“And some day when you knock and push the door,  
Some sane day, not too bright and not too stormy,  
I shall be gone, and you may whistle for me.”

## Core Lesson

Label the tone of each section.

Upset

Angry

Sad

“Oh, oh, you will be sorry for that word!  
Give back my book and take my kiss instead.  
Was it my enemy or my friend I heard?  
‘Such a big book for such a little head!’ ”

Loving

Proud

Insincere

“Come, I will show you now my newest hat,  
And you may watch me purse my mouth and prink.  
Oh, I shall love you still and all of that.  
I never again shall tell you what I think.  
I shall be sweet and crafty, soft and sly;  
You will not catch me reading any more;  
I shall be called a wife to pattern by,”

## Core Lesson

Label the tone of each section.

Resolved

Vengeful

Calm

“And some day when you knock and push the door,  
Some sane day, not too bright and not too stormy,  
I shall be gone, and you may whistle for me.”

## Core Lesson

Consider the tone throughout the text and ask yourself why the author shifts tone at those places and in that way.

Angry

Oh, oh, you will be sorry for that word!  
Give back my book and take my kiss instead.  
Was it my enemy or my friend I heard?—  
"What a big book for such a little head!"

Insincere

Come, I will show you now my newest hat,  
And you may watch me purse my mouth and prink.  
Oh, I shall love you still and all of that.  
I never again shall tell you what I think.  
I shall be sweet and crafty, soft and sly;  
You will not catch me reading any more;  
I shall be called a wife to pattern by;

Resolved

And some day when you knock and push the door,  
Some sane day, not too bright and not too stormy,  
I shall be gone, and you may whistle for me.

- The shifting tone reveals the progressing emotions of the speaker
- The length of each section mirrors the time the speaker spends with those emotions

## Core Lesson

### What is significant about how St. Vincent Millay shifts tone in Sonnet VII?

The fluctuating tone in “Sonnet VII” masterfully mirrors the progressing emotions of the speaker. The speaker advances from anger over injustice to insincerity towards the man, who has upset her greatly. Finally, she is resolved to take action and pursue her intellectual interests. The dramatic shifts suggest a high level of emotion for the speaker, echoing the expressive diction. The abrupt ending leaves the reader feeling shocked alongside the man, who likely didn’t imagine that the speaker would leave him. Millay’s use of varied and abrupt tone takes the reader on an emotional journey beside the speaker and the man.

## Core Lesson

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- 2** Label the tone of each section.  
Consider the tone throughout the text and ask yourself why the author shifts tone at those places at in that way.
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In this lesson you have learned how to determine the difference between what is directly stated and what is meant by considering the effect of word choice on tone.