

To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph essay

In the poem "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph", Anne Sexton alludes to the flight of Icarus and Daedalus and to "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Nothing" to convey a message to a friend. I think this poem was written to reassure a friend that what she did was the right thing. Perhaps a father figure of the friend advised her to do something and she defied him, making herself feel worried that she did the wrong thing.

William Butler Yeats once wrote a poem titled "To a Friend Whose Work has Come to Nothing". It was a poem believed to be written to reassure a friend that what she ended up doing was a noble thing even though in reality she failed her original task. The title of Sexton's poem is an obvious allusion to Yeats' poem. Sexton changed "Nothing" to "Triumph" in her title. Sexton's friend must have been a fellow poet to be able to catch the allusion to Yeats' poem. I believe she wanted her friend to know that what she did was the right thing. Perhaps she compared her friend to Yeats' friend. Sexton wrote "Think of the difference it made!" referring to Icarus' flight. She might have wanted her friend to realize a difference her defying her father made.

The final line of the poem has a comparably different tone than the first 13 lines. The last line, "See him acclaiming the sun and come plunging down while his sensible daddy goes straight into town.", seems more mocking of Daedalus' flight. It seems that Sexton feels that Daedalus' flight was a wasted chance and was in no way adventurous. She might also be comparing her friend to Icarus, seeing as he too failed his initial task but accomplished something greater on a global scale. I believe Sexton thought that Icarus' flight was not foolish or a failure, but adventurous and a great personal success, even though his satisfaction and personal glory was short-lived. She wrote "Admire his wings", "wondrously tunneling", and "Who cares that he fell back to the sea", therefore I think that she doesn't believe that the fact Icarus plunged to the sea is important.

Many have used the process of allusion in the past to help convey a meaning of a poem. A popular example and choice of an allusion topic is the bible or past works of art and literature. Anne Sexton obviously chose allusion as her method of conveying her emotional message to her friend.

