The Bitter Life

Life isn’t always how everyone wants it, nor the way it appears to the outside world. Many people suffer from a bitter life, due to a bitter look onto life. In Khaled Hosseini’s book—The Kite Runner—you can find a character who lives the life of the poem “A Bitterness” by Mary Oliver.

The title, “A Bitterness” explains Amir from The Kite Runner to a “T”. Throughout the book you can see that Amir is one of the most bitter characters you may ever find. “A Bitterness” as the title fits perfectly because you can see an innumerable amount of times throughout the literature that Amir is extremely bitter. In the poem it says that, “I believe no trinket, no precious metal, shone so bright as your bitterness” (Oliver, 8). This line is literally Amir.

In The Kite Runner, Amir is faced with many different periods when he can either prove his bitterness wrong, or strengthen the thought. At one point in The Kite Runner, Amir is forced to acclimatize himself to the fact that his childhood friend, his servant, is really his brother. Or *was.* Amir’s father lied to Amir and Hassan—his childhood friend and servant—and this heightened Amir’s anger which in turn, proves Amir’s bitterness, especially when immediately after he declines doing a favor for Hassan. Hassan did, and went through so much for Amir, especially when Amir, “Watched Hassan get raped” (Hosseini, 86), and Amir realizes that this was, “One final opportunity to decide who I was going to be” (Hosseini, 77), but, “In the end, I ran” (Hosseini, 77). Even after this happening, he wouldn’t even do the one thing for a boy who physically put himself through the worst just for a silly toy.

The anger from Amir’s past only added onto his pile of rage. Amir had always been filled with fury. From the moment Amir’s father showed the slightest bit of affection for Hassan when Baba asks Amir to fetch Hassan to take along to the lake, “but I [Amir] lied and told him Hassan had the runs” (Hosseini, 13), to seeing Hassan raped and, “Aspired to cowardice” (Hosseini, 77), following to Baba’s death. *Amir had always been angry.* So when Mary Oliver’s persona claims that, “I believe your busiest enemies were anger and depression” (Oliver, 4), she was correct. After Amir witnessed his life changing moment, his life switched into a life filled with anger and depression, and the memories taunted him forever.

Amir’s life was filled with pure emotion. Literally. He shut out so many people that his emotions became his interaction. Throughout, “A Bitterness”, the persona describes all these emotions such as bitterness, loneliness, misery, depression, anger, comfort, joy all as people—creating personification. The personification which creates the poem gives you such an insight as to who the person was. The personification in the poem is huge, especially when connecting to Amir; Amir is a book hibernator, he’s blocked out tons of people—or has been pushed away from people—that he is left with just his emotions. Amir has multiple times in the book let his emotions take control. In the book, Amir begins thrashing pomegranates at Hassan attempting to find joy when he screams at Hassan to, “Hit me back!...I wished he would. I wished he’d give me the punishment I deserved” (Hosseini, 92). This exact moment right here can be completely pulled from Oliver’s poem, “I believe joy was a game you could never play without stumbling” (Oliver, 5). So there we go, Amir has “stumbled on joy” (Oliver, 5).

Mary Oliver’s poem—“A Bitterness”—creates an anaphora. Every sentence begins with “I believe”. This anaphora creates the realization that Amir has tried to keep his problems and emotions to himself for the longest time, so his emotions weren’t something that could definitely be proved, so it was something the persona would have to believe. Every line follows the anaphora except for the last. The last line is a statement, like how the story ends for Amir, his life and everything that has happened is out to everyone, so everything is very clear at this point.

Reading through the poem, “A Bitterness” my head couldn’t not instantly think back to Amir and his life through, The Kite Runner. The poem truly gave me a warm feeling because it truly showed what Amir’s feeling truly were, when that was the one thing he tried to hide. “A Bitterness” was a poem that truly spoke of Amir in the utmost realist way possible.

**Works Cited:**

Hosseini, Khaled. *The Kite Runner.* New York: Riverhead Books, 2003. Print.

Arp, Thomas R., and Johnson, Greg. “”A Bitterness”” *Perrine’s Literature: Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry.* Wadsworth Publishing Center, 2011. 132.