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“Piano” by D.H. Lawrence  
Poetry interpretation  
ENC 1102  
Revision

In the poem, “Piano,” D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930, England) becomes nostalgic—while a woman sings and plays the piano— and he starts to remember his childhood.

The piano’s melodic sounds would transport him back in time to his childhood years. Then, as a young child, he used to sit under the piano—accompanied by the strong vibration of the strings—while his mother played the piano, sang, and smiled. The smile was probably caused by the fact that the child was playing with her “small, poised feet” (562).

His childhood memory came suddenly, invading his new life by surprise. The entrapping piano melody allowed him no choice but to remember the past: “In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song/Betrays me back (563). This sudden encounter with his childhood memories makes the poet long for those Sunday evenings—during wintertime—when they use to play hymns. The piano was the central element, guiding them with its tinkling sounds.

The poet is now an adult. The beautiful memories of his childhood make him sad and melancholic—but he is also mad at the person who prompted these memories that make

his heart weep to “belong/To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside/ And hymns in the cosy parlour” (563). Because of the singer’s great and passionate piano interpretation, he “weep[s] like a child for the past” (563). But there’s no going back because he is now a man whose “manhood [was] cast” (563).

The only liaison between now and then remains the beautiful and dramatic piano *appassionato*, which is tearing apart his soul. His innocent childhood is, now, only an overwhelming memory of a grown man: “The glamour/Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast/Down in the flood of remembrance” (563).

This melancholic poem “speaks” to the reader who once found himself wandering down memory lane, where some things are unforgettably special.

## Works Cited

Lawrence, D. H. "Piano." *Angles of Vision: Reading, Writing, and the Study of Literature*. Eds. Arthur W. Biddle, and Toby Fulwiler. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1992. 562-563.