Keeping Things Whole Essay, Research Paper

Although it?s not a lengthy poem, the few words and their layout in ?Keeping

Things Whole? certainly possess great significance. This poem is centered on

the idea that the narrator?s life is lacking purpose. In exploring the meaning

of his existence, he determined that his reason for living was to keep moving so

that people?s lives were only temporarily interrupted. Strand?s technique of

splitting up his sentences helps emphasize certain phrases and ideas. When I

read poetry I naturally pause for a brief second at the end of each line to

allow the words to sink in, therefore taking an extra moment to realize what the

author is saying. With each line in this poem only a few words long, there is a

higher pause-to-word ratio, which allows for more thought for each idea the

first time you read through it. Strand splits up the sentences in places where

he is trying to convey more meaning, with the hope that the reader will pause

and contemplate what was just read. His stanzas are concluded when he wants more

attention placed on his current idea. The narrator?s viewpoint towards life in

this poem is quite different from how most people see it. Where he writes, ?In

a field / I am the absence / of field.? (ll. 1-3) instead of acknowledging his

existence as something, he regards it as a lack of something. This negativity

towards himself is what the entire poem is focused on. He uses the idea that

when his body enters an area the parts of that area are momentarily interrupted

and are forced around him, just waiting to return back to normal once he leaves:

?When I walk / I part the air / and always / the air moves in / to fill the

spaces / where my body?s been.? (ll. 8-13) The ?air? in that line

symbolizes the existence of other people around him, and the narrator sees

himself as a nuisance to those people, always being in the way. He is saying

that whenever he enters into a location with a bunch of people, those people see

him as a bother and simply as something that they must put up with for a little

while. They can?t wait for the narrator to leave so that they don?t have to

put up with him anymore and can therefore return to what they were doing. The

last stanza explains the narrator?s reason for ?moving,? or in other words

living: ?I move / to keep things whole.? (ll. 16 & 17) He understands

that he must keep moving and going on with his life even though he is

interrupting the existence and paths of others. When I read those last two lines

I felt a sense of saddened acceptance of life in the narrator?s speech. Since

he concluded that his existence was unnecessary and bothersome, the only way he

can continue in his monotonous life is by continually moving around, so that he

disturbs everyone?s lives equally and doesn?t become too much of a bother in

one place. With that mindset, the narrator believes that his absence is what

keeps things whole.