

Sample:

I woke up as the sun was reddening; and that was the one distinct time in my life, the strangest moment of all, when I didn't know who I was - I was far away from home, haunted and tired with travel, in a cheap hotel room I'd never seen, hearing the hiss of steam outside, and the creak of the old wood of the hotel, and footsteps upstairs, and all the sad sounds, and I looked at the cracked high ceiling and really didn't know who I was for about fifteen strange seconds. I wasn't scared; I was just somebody else, some stranger, and my whole life was a haunted life, the life of a ghost. I was halfway across America, at the dividing line between the East of my youth and the West of my future, and maybe that's why it happened right there and then, that strange red afternoon. But I had to get going and stop moaning, so I picked up my bag, said so long to the old hotelkeeper sitting by his spittoon, and went to eat. I ate apple pie and ice cream - it was getting better as I got deeper into Iowa, the pie bigger, the ice cream richer. There were the most beautiful bebies of girls everywhere I looked in Des Moines that afternoon - they were coming home from high school - but I had no time now for thoughts like that and promised myself a ball in Denver.

Analyze :

Two tones can arguably be identified in the sample paragraph. Poetic tones can be suggested through various diction, like 'reddening', 'far away' and patterns like repetition and rhythm. Confessional tones can be identified by diction like 'strange', 'maybe', 'didn't know' and through patterns like repeating usage of 'and' and 'so'. The nostalgic tone can be identified by diction like 'far away', 'haunted'. The analysis of the three tones will be elaborated in the following paragraph.

In this paragraph, tone will be analyzed through the aspect of diction. Diction like 'reddening', 'hiss', 'creak', 'ghost', 'haunted', 'dividing line' use metaphor to describe the environment's sounds and scenes. For example, the author creates a certain mood in the paragraph and derives a poetic tone by the usage of metaphor, describing the afternoon as a 'strange red afternoon'. Moreover, symbolization of the dividing line between youth and adulthood is emphasized by the description of the line dividing west and east, creating a broad but concrete view of teenage hood and growing up, the symbolization of concrete subject also creates a poetic tone. Moreover, 'haunted', 'ghost' and other diction symbolize isolation and the detached from self, which can also be seen as a usage of symbolization. Additionally, it can be argued that in the sentence 'and footsteps upstairs, and all the sad sounds', the author projects his sadness on to the sound through providing the sound a sense of sadness. The emotion of the author is shown in a romantic and euphemistic way, therefore creating a poetic tone. Diction like 'strange', 'distinct', 'didn't know', 'just', 'maybe' create a confessional tone. The sentence 'I was just somebody else', 'and maybe that's why it happened right there and then' is a reflection of the author's thoughts and emotions. The feeling of uncertainty and hesitation, insecurity and awkwardness to share personal feelings and emotions is derived from diction like 'maybe' and 'just'. And it creates a tone of honesty to show emotion, therefore create a confessional tone. The confessional tone can also be emphasized in diction like 'strange', which expresses the author's confusion and uncertainty straightforwardly. Diction like 'far away', 'home', 'tired', 'never seen', 'haunted', 'youth' create a nostalgic tone. A feeling of helplessness and loneliness can be sensed in words like 'tired' and 'haunted'. The author is traveling in America to the west, far away from home. 'Far away' and 'never seen' create a sense of uncertainty and fear for the unfamiliar future. Besides, a perception of distance and vagueness of the past and future is conveyed by the diction, creating a feeling of wanting to go back and therefore a tone of nostalgic.

The pattern plays an important role in the creation of tones. A large amount of short sentences are found in the paragraph. For example, the sentence 'I was far away from home, haunted and tired with travel, in a cheap hotel room I've never seen, hearing the hiss of steam outside, and the creak of the old wood of the hotel, and footsteps upstairs, and all the sad sounds' divide a sentence into short parts, making it more like a line of poetry and therefore create a rhythm and poetic tone. The poetic tone is also created by repetition and rhyme. For example, the sentence 'I wasn't scared; I was just somebody else, some stranger, and my whole life was a haunted life, the life of a ghost' repeats 'I was...', 'some...', 'life', creating a rhythm in the sentence. Moreover, symmetrical patterns are created through the usage of sentence patterns such as 'XXX was XX, XX', which can create a poetic tone. In addition, in the sentence 'and maybe that's why it happened right there and then, that strange red afternoon', vernacular phrase 'there and then' is used precisely, which is a common pattern in poetry. The confessional tone is created by the repeating usage of 'and' and 'so', giving a feeling of the sincere emotional expression without a clear previous planning or logic chain, therefore creating a sense of pouring emotion and thought and a confessional tone. The nostalgic tone is created by the use of vivid and descriptive language. The author describes the sound of the steam, the old wood, the stairs using detailed and descriptive language. The detailed description of the sound of the scenario indicates the author's nostalgia for childhood and hometown.

Tone can also be created by the theme. The themes of separation from identity, isolation and loss of direction in teenage hood are explored in the paragraph. The author is far away from home, from his past identity and from his childhood. He is heading toward his future but not yet knows where his future is. He is lying on the bed on a 'red afternoon', in the middle of his way of growing up, the description creates a sense of losing direction and control in life. Moreover, the definition of teenage hood, the period that stuck in the middle of childhood and adulthood, is explored by using the metaphor of the dividing line between east and west. The writer mentioned that he felt like his life is a 'haunted life, a life of a ghost', this indicates a sense of isolation and insecurity and the strange moment of 'I don't know who I am' suggests the sense of identity loss, and it can be argued that the journey across America is a journey to find self and identity. The feeling of unreal and losing the sense of direction is a commonly explored topic in poetry and the similar theme creates the poetic tone. The paragraph is about a reflection the author made on himself and the exploration of his own mind, feeling and identity. The honesty of the confusion of identity and the reflective nature of the paragraph create a confessional tone. Moreover, the author's separation from the past and hometown, the quest for identity, for the future road express a feeling of confusion and nostalgia.