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Brother Doth Not Betray

There are many reasons people betray each other. Some do it for personal gain, others for power over the other person. Sometimes though, people betray each other because it's simply easier that way. When there is a betrayal in a body of work, many readers can easily identify why it happened. "Oh, he wanted his money," or "well, he was jealous," are simple claims to make, but sometimes a betrayal goes deeper than that. Sometimes two people, people that are closer than even brothers, betray each other because they feel they have no other choice. In *The Kite Runner*, Amir commits this type of betrayal because he feels he is too big of a coward to do anything else. Instead of seeking forgiveness from his half-brother Hassan, Amir furthers his betrayal by isolating Hassan, and ultimately drives Hassan out of the house. The poem "Thy Brother's Blood" by Jones Very speaks to this type of brotherly betrayal and ultimately emphasizes the fact that perhaps betrayal is easier than bravery.

Amir's cowardice is seen almost immediately within the first few chapters of the novel. He refuses to stick up for his friend, will not defend himself in a fight, and even denies being friends with Hassan in order to "protect" his image. Instead, he leaves Hassan to do all the fighting and so-called "dirty work." Amir's cowardice comes to a head when he witnesses Assef sexually assaulting Hassan in an alleyway. Instead of stepping in and putting a stop to such a horrendous crime, Amir "In the end, [I] ran" (Hosseini, 77). This is Amir's betrayal, and one he

almost immediately accepts because "...I was a coward" (77). The true betrayal comes in Amir's actions later however. He pretends he never witnessed the crime, and leaves Hassan alone to suffer through the trauma. Amir feels guilty of course, but he feels no true remorse for what he did. To him, it was simply something that had to happen because there was no other way it could've played out. In the end, Amir is a coward and Hassan will always suffer on account of that fact. In Very's poem, it is evident that the speaker also has no remorse from "killing" his brother, and only displays little guilt. This poem understates the betrayal of killing your loved one, and makes it seem as if there was no other choice but for the brother to die.

Even without introduction, it is clear what "Thy Brother's Blood" is trying to convey upon reading the first few lines. The narrator is claiming he "has no Brother" (Very, 1) and that he has a "hand that still betrays thy guilt" (Very, 5). This sets the mood that the narrator has killed or severely injured his own brother, which can be seen as the worst type of betrayal when it comes from your own family. The resigned tone of the poem suggests that the narrator feels at ease with his decision to kill his brother, and sees no other choice or option. The narrator also seems to be woefully ignorant of the misery he's caused, and shows no sense of responsibility, coming off as cowardly. The narrator, like Amir, also seems to think that by dismissing his brother that the blood "Shall not be seen upon thy hand again" (Very, 14). Readers see, however, that Amir can not so easily will his betrayal away, and is haunted by his cowardice for the rest of his life. Very also alludes to the fact that his narrator will never fully accept what he's done saying that the narrator's heart betrays him and reminds him each day about the deed he has done. In the end, both Amir and the narrator can never feel true remorse for what has transpired, because never will truly overcome their lack of bravery.

The hardest thing in life is to be brave. For some, that is a hardship they can never best. In Jones Very's poem, the narrator adopts a helpless tone in order to explain the choices he made due to his lack of courage. In comparing this tone to Amir's in *The Kite Runner*, readers may better understand why Amir ran from Hassan rather than stand up for him. These two pieces of literature can also be used to explain why exactly some of the closest people to you will be the one's to betray you. Both of these pieces really make you stop and think about the reasons people choose to hurt others the way that they do.

Works Cited:

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

Very, Jones. ““Thy Brother’s Blood”” *Essays and Poems*. Boston, MA: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1839. Copy.